

The Prison of Regina Coeli:
A Laboratory of Identity in the Post-Risorgimento Italy

by

Olga Touloumi

B.Arch

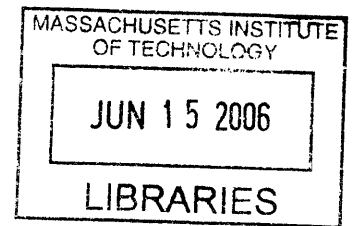
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Submitted to the Department of Architecture on May 25, 2006 in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in Architecture Studies.

ABSTRACT

In my thesis I am studying the prison of *Regina Coeli* in Rome. Completed in 1892, it occupies the space of the convent after which it was named: the convent of *Santa Maria Regina Coeli*. The particular prison was built in the aftermath of the Italian unification when national identity was still formulated and the economy industrialized. At the same period, the discussion on prison architecture was shifting from an interest in the panopticon-centered structures to the architecture of the cell. Penitentiaries were transformed from sites of mere constrain, to sites of correction, to later develop into laboratories of identity. Along with the research on the typical cell, the field of criminology was objectifying the criminal body, in pursuit of the delinquent type. Although rarely documented, *Regina Coeli* was built in this transition before modernity appeared in the structure of the penitentiary institutions.

I explore the particular prison not only as the product of this multiple transition, but also as the vehicle to forge it. Being the main custodial prison of the Kingdom of Italy, *Regina Coeli* constituted the portal to the Italian penitentiary network. The convicts awaiting trial, executing the last part of their sentence or pending transfer to other prisons or penal colonies were situated in the prison. In my thesis the issues of national identity, architectural historiography and identity politics are addressed through the study of the prison of *Regina Coeli*.

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INTRODUCTION

In order that punishment should never be an act of violence committed by one or many against a private citizen, it is essential that it be public, speedy, and necessary, as little as the circumstances will allow, proportionate to the crime and established by law.¹

When Cesare Beccaria was writing his treatise under the title "Of Crimes and Punishments" in 1764, the Italian peninsula was far from what we currently perceive as Italy. Crime and methods of punishment were defined by diverse administrative bodies; clerics, religious orders, the papacy, noble families. Each one of them defined as crime the act opposing or in conflict with their interest and prisons constituted part of the institutions under their custody: palazzi, charity institutions, convents, monasteries and so on. To be more precise prisons did usually function as the place where the to-be-executed convicts were withheld. Punishment was spectacular, the penal system was fragmented and prison architecture rarely pre-designed as such.

To my perception, there were two crucial moments in the history of the penitentiary system. The first one was the introduction of Beccaria's utilitarian vision in penal systems. The call for an accurate and unified definition of what a crime and the establishment of modes of punishment appropriate to the crime, elevated the penitentiary into a discipline. Influenced by the theoretical discourse, architecture undertook the task of materializing a unified and systematized proposal on prison architecture. The Benthamian panopticon, the "perfect"

¹ Beccaria, Cesare. *Of Crimes and Punishments*. Trans. By Jane Grigson (New York: Marsilio Publishers, 1996 [c. 1764]), p. 119.

penitentiary apparatus of control and surveillance became one of the first prison models to disperse, transform and be applied internationally. My focus applies mostly, however, on the second shift. Hence, the period when the penal system and prison architecture coincided the ethnic revolutions of the mid-nineteenth century and was connected to the emergence of the new nations, a concept new at that time. Within this context, my thesis focuses on the prison condition of the Risorgimento Italy and especially the prison of *Regina Coeli*.

Referred to as the Risorgimento, the unification of Italy was the political and social process to gradually unite the diverse countries of the peninsula into a single nation. Once the task was almost achieved in terms of geography, the government moved towards the political and cultural Risorgimento. The objective was two-fold: on the one hand to invent and apply Italianism as an overarching concept, and on the other hand to propagate modernity as the foundations of the new state. One of the first initiatives to guarantee and announce Risorgimento, was penal reform. The government undertook the task of organizing the Italian prisons into a centralized network operated by the *Direzione Generale delle Carceri* in 1861.

The discourse on penal reform engraved the promise of correction to what was previously described as mere punishment through the depriving of the citizens' civil rights and freedom. Prisons were perceived as places of rehabilitation where the convict would be instructed and transformed into a proper citizen. In a period when the Italian peninsula was gradually industrialized, the penitentiary network was soon elevated into the main apparatus to facilitate the country's economic development and, furthermore, to educate the forthcoming working class.

However, the custodial prisons mainly, were soon shifted from places of correction through prison labor, to places where identity politics were formed and applied. When anthropology exercised by the imperial powers of Europe was trying to define and study the natives of the colonies, Italy was analyzing its criminal population. Prisons were transformed into open laboratories where the Risorgimento project acquired the additional character of colonization.

Being the first custodial prison to be built in Rome as the main penitentiary portal through which prisoners would be distributed to the prison network across the peninsula, *Regina Coeli* entails a quite interesting story. The birth of the institution through the anxiety of the Italian unification process, its role in the propagation of a unified national identity, prison historiography and the industrialization of the country constituted the primary stimuli for this thesis. However, during the research the main inquiry of the thesis had to be restated. It is not how *Regina Coeli* was the byproduct of the Risorgimento process, but rather how the particular prison participated in its completion. Therefore, the prison of *Regina Coeli* is studied both as the product and the vehicle to forge identity politics and the Italian unification.

In my paper I study the prison of *Regina Coeli* through three different axes. In the first chapter I situate the prison within the broader penitentiary discourse of the post-Risorgimento era. The position of *Regina Coeli* within the discourse on penal reform, along with its history and architecture, bring forth the role of the institutions at the early post-Risorgimento era. The research on the history of the site where the prison was located, the decisions that led to its creation and the mode of its construction entail an interesting story of how the Italy transformed from

a dispersed peninsula ruled by conflicting powers to a unified nation and the role the institutions played.

At my second chapter, I focus on a period that intervened between the decision of the prison's construction and its final completion. Through the prison exhibition of the 3rd International Penitentiary Congress in Rome, I locate and analyze the shift of interest regarding prison architecture from prison typology to cell typology. Not only did the particular exhibition influence the development of prison architecture in Italy in general, and the design of the *Regina Coeli* typical cell in particular, but also it documents an anxiety to standardize production in such a way that the cell would be elevated into the "perfect" apparatus of equally distributed surveillance and rehabilitation.

At the same time that the government was trying to standardize the design of the perfect typical cell, the Italian positivist school of criminal anthropology was in pursuit of patterns among criminals. At the third chapter I present the research on the typical criminal by the field of the criminal anthropology, as a research juxtaposed to the one for the typical cell that, however, supplemented it. I especially analyze the notion of the delinquent man as it was introduced by the positivist school and, by extension used by the School of Scientific Police that was established at *Regina Coeli* after the construction was completed.

CHAPTER I

The Prison of *Regina Coeli*:

Penal Reform and the Architecture of the Penitentiary in Italy.

The prison of *Regina Coeli* was one of the first penitentiary establishments to be built following the unification of Italy. Referred to as the Risorgimento, the unification of Italy was the political and social process to gradually unite the diverse countries of the peninsula into a single nation. Once the task was almost achieved in terms of geography, the government moved towards the political and cultural Risorgimento. The objective was two fold: on the one hand to invent and apply Italianism as an overarching concept, and on the other hand to propagate modernity as the foundations of the new state. One of the first initiatives to guarantee and announce Risorgimento was penal reform. The new government undertook the task of organizing the Italian prisons into a centralized network operated by the *Direzione Generale delle Carceri* in 1861.

1.1. Penal and Prison Reform towards the Italian Unification.

The reorganization of the prisons included the establishment of a unified penal code that would indicate and define modes of punishment and methods of rehabilitation. The architecture of the prison would be designed on the basis of the penal reform. The discourse on penal reform had already been initiated by the powers of the Risorgimento, before the Kingdom of Italy was inaugurated. Each distinct power of the peninsula conducted its own speculation and historiography on prison reform, in an

effort to dominate the domain. All of them tried to exemplify the local experience and tradition.

The first proposal on penal reform driven by the vision of the Risorgimento was the "Della Condizione Attuale delle Carceri e dei Mezzi di Migliorarla" by Carlo Ilarione Petitti di Rorero (1790-1850). Published in 1840, the treatise situated at the center of its interests the "moral amelioration of the convicts"² (Fig. 1). The promise of correction was embedded into the penitentiary as institution. The book was discussing the penal reforms that took place in Europe and the issues postulated by them: the prison labor, night and day segregation and work in common. In his proposal Petitti classified the prisons into four types: the preventive, the repressive, the corrective prisons and other prisons for special occasions.

The treatise that focused on the architecture of the penitentiaries and how correction could be addressed by architecture was the "Sulla Riforma delle Prigioni in Toscana," published in 1850 by Carlo Peri (Fig. 2). He proposed the distinction between two categories of prisons: the custodial where the convict was only deprived of any civil rights, and the correctional where the prisoner was rehabilitated.³ The prisons of Volterra, Lucca, S. Gimignano, Firenze were presented as the architectural examples that Tuscan had to address. All four penitentiaries were accompanied by architectural drawings and a textual description of their function and history.

In a similar fashion, Carlo Luigi Morichini published the "Istituti di Carita per la Sussistenza e l' Educazione dei Poveri e dei Prigionieri in

² Petitti di Rorero, Carlo Ilarione. *Condizione Attuale delle Carceri e dei Mezzi di Migliorarle* (Torino: Giuseppe Pompa e Comp., 1840), p. 1.

³ Peri, Carlo. *Riforma delle Prigioni in Toscana* (Firenze: Coi Tipi della Stamperia, 1850), p. 6-7.

Roma” in 1870 (Fig. 3). The treatise was meant as a survey on the architecture and history of the charity institutions in Rome. The promise of correction and the rehabilitation system of the Papal States was examined through the institutions that introduced it and exercised it. According to Morichini there are two principles to be addressed by the penitentiary institutions: the moral and the economic.⁴ The roman paradigm of charity institutions exemplified how the two principles could be combined. Hence, the rehabilitation of the convict was presented as the outcome of prison labor and religious education.



Figure 1. The front page of Petiti's treatise: Carlo Ilarione Petiti, *Condizione Attuale delle Carceri e dei Mezzi di Migliorarla*, Torino: 1840.



Figure 2. The front page of Peri's treatise: Tuscan: Carlo Peri, *Notizie sulla Riforma delle Prigioni in Toscana*, Firenze: 1850



Figure 3. The front page of Morichini's treatise: Carlo Luigi Morichini, *Istituti di Carità in Roma*, Rome: 1870

The first effort to combine and create a unified proposal on prison reform that would be applied throughout the Kingdom of Italy emerged with the publication of the "Sul Governo e sulla Riforma delle Carceri in Italia" in 1868 by Martino Beltrani Scalia. The treatise announced the birth

⁴ Morichini, Carlo Luigi. *Degli Istituti di Carità per la Sussistenza e l' Educazione dei Poveri e dei Prigionieri in Roma* (Roma: Stabilimento Tipografico Camerale, 1870), pp. 47-48.

of the penitentiary discipline as a science to organize the historiography of prisons and penal reform and the government of the institution. The three entities of the book focused on the penal reform that would be "appropriate for the [Italian] government and Nation,"⁵ the history of the prison administration as it was practiced by the Papal states, the civil states and the Italian communities of the peninsula and on the prison architecture introduced by the various administrative bodies.

1.2 In Pursuit of the Appropriate Prison Program.

Three years later Martino Beltrani-Scalia, the head of the Italian prison administration launched a forum on the pages of the "Rivista di Discipline Carcerarie" so as to convey the prison architecture and penal systems operative both abroad and in Italy. The journal mainly focused on the foreign experience on prison reform and the local practice of the penitentiary, especially the new projects. In particular, it emphasized role of the Italian prison architecture and propagated the projects conducted by the Italian prison administration, while a major part of the articles conveyed the programs used abroad. It becomes apparent that the Italian administration was in pursuit of the appropriate prison program abroad, but when it came to architecture the Italian heritage was underlined.

As far as the prison program was concerned, the main debate involved two systems, both imported by the United States: the Auburn and the Philadelphian system. The Auburnian system was initially introduced in 1816 at the Auburn Prison in New York. According to the prison program, cellular isolation was applied to convicts during the night.

⁵ Beltrani-Scalia, Martino. *Sul Governo e sulla Riforma delle Carceri in Italia: Saggio Storico e Teorico* (Torino: Tipografia G. Favale e Comp., 1867), pp. 13-14.

During the day, the prisoners were working in common and under the rule of silence. The concept of the program was pretty much based on the catholic penitentiary model. Labor in common and under silence educated the forthcoming working class, while cellular isolation during the night provided the time and space for self-reflection on the deeds of the individual. In the Auburnian system there was a severe distinction between the place of production and the living space, turning the cell into a kind of typical home for the modern laborer. Almost simultaneously to the Auburnian, the Philadelphian system was introduced. Initially applied to the Cherry Hill penitentiary in 1822, the prison program addressed night-and-day cellular isolation. Unlike the Auburnian system of rehabilitation, the Philadelphian did not intend to create a collective class consciousness for the modern laborer. Each individual was "corrected" separately and the cell was transformed into a space of both living and production.

Apart from the two prison programs, the journal popularized other methods as well: the Netherlands program of gradual transfer from the absolute isolation of the convict to his return within the social fabric or the deportation system as it was exercised in Great Britain and Italy. However, the main debate involved only the two American systems as they proposed two different prison architectures: on the one hand the Auburnian postulated a design of both the places of work in common and the cell, the in-between the two transition and the choreography of prisoner's movement and on the other hand the Philadelphian focused mainly on the architecture of the cell as an hybrid structure of both production and living. More than that, the two systems were compared on the base of economy, meaning which one of them was less expensive in

construction and facilitated prison labor production. Even though they were both discussed during international penitentiary congresses and partially applied, the debate was never really resolved.

Especially in Italy, the prison administration did never really promote the one over the other. They were both applied throughout the peninsula. Regarding the fact that, especially the Auburn system, strongly resembled the rehabilitation program of the *Correctional House for the Juveniles* in San Michele, the prison administration kept insisting on the foreign origins of the program. However, the particular program was connected to the papal authority and the prison administration intended to apply a rehabilitation method perceived as modern and unassociated to any of the former Italian penal systems. In order to neutralize the program applied, the prison labor and cellular isolation program was imported as from abroad.

1.3 In Pursuit of the Appropriate Prison Architecture.

When it came to prisons as edifices, although the dominant typology was also imported from abroad, its origins back into Italian architecture were reclaimed. The architecture of the cell, the prison corridor and the panopticon surveillance tower, constituted the elements of prison architecture to be connected with the Italian tradition: the cell was traced back into the cell of the monastic architecture, the prison corridor as a spatial configuration of cellular isolation to the charity institution of San Michele and the panopticon surveillance tower to the joint altar in the intersections of hospital's wings.

One of the core penitentiaries to be propagated as the first to introduce cellular isolation in prison architecture and correctional

institutions was the *House of Correction for the Juveniles* in Rome. The program of the correctional house involved cellular isolation at night and labor in common during the day. Even though both the program and spatial configuration of the correctional house were exported and transformed abroad, the government was more concerned of reclaiming the architecture of cellular isolation as Italian more than its program.

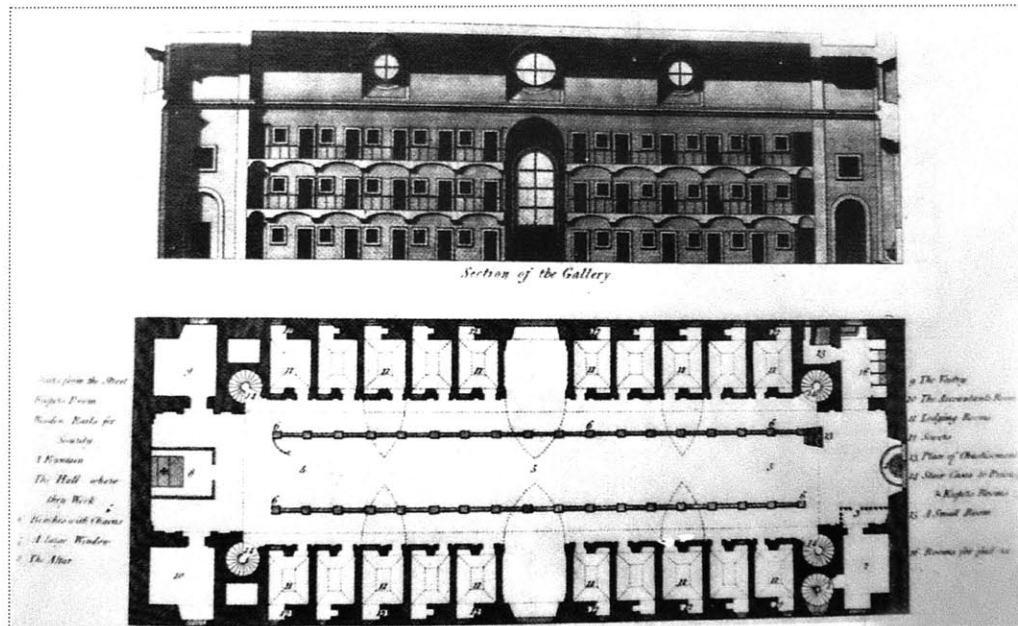


Figure 4. Longitudinal Section and Plan of the House of Correction for the Juveniles in the Ospizio di San Michele, 1704.

The *House of Correction for the Juveniles* was designed by Carlo Fontana as an addition to the main body of the charitable institution *Ospizio di San Michele* in 1704. As far as prison historiography is concerned, it is documented as the first penitentiary to introduce prison labor and cellular isolation. The three-storey extension consisted of a corridor flanked by two arrays of cells and roofed by a vault. The cells segregated the prison population during the night, while the corridor hosted the work in common under the law of silence during the day (Fig.

4-5). The inscription above the doorway of the institution was announcing its function and its patron:

Pope Clement XI
For the correction and instruction
Of profligate youth:
That they, who when idle, were injurious,
When instructed, might be useful
To the State.
1704.⁶

The correction of the misbehaving subject was a fundamental function of the 18th century papal state of Rome. Idleness and laziness were rendered as the primary causes of youth crime, while instruction of crafts was considered necessary for the proper rehabilitation of the adolescent delinquent. The minors entering the institution were spending the night in cellular isolation, while the day they were instructed the crafts of weaving, shoe-repairing and so on, within the main room of communal labor.

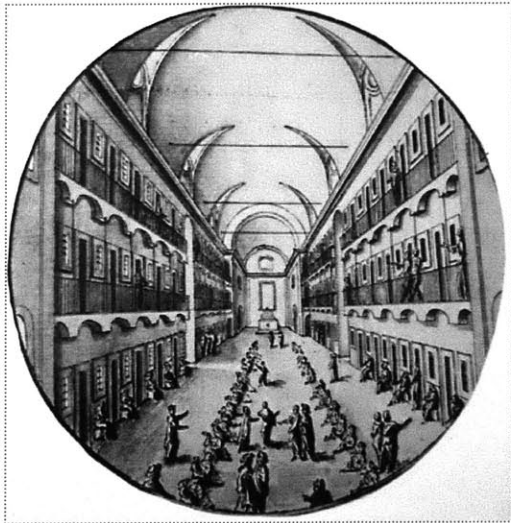


Figure 5. Engraving showing the main corridor and convicts working in common at the House of Correction for the Juveniles in the Ospizio di San Michele, 1704.

⁶Quotation found translated in: Howard, John. *The State of the Prisons*, (London; Toronto: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1929 [c.1776]), 94.

It is of little advantage
To restrain the Bad
By Punishment,
Unless you render them Good
By Discipline.⁷

This second inscription inside the common room, announced the essence of cellular division; to provide discipline and to transform the malfunctioning youth into a proper laborer for the advancement of the state. In 1776 John Howard, sheriff of the British prison administration, documented both the program and the architecture of San Michele and elevated them into the leading prototype for prison architecture. The spatial configuration of the corridor flanked by two arrays of cells was exported and propagated as the dominant schema for cellular isolation. The corridor structure removed the cell from its catholic context of monastic architecture and resituated it within the context of prison as a social institution. Within this framework Howard exemplified cellular isolation at prisons:

I wish all prisoners to have separate rooms; for hours of thoughtfulness and reflection are necessary The beneficial effects on the mind, of such a punishment, are speedy, proceeding from the horror of a vicious person left entirely to his own reflection.⁸

The cell was benefited by prison architecture as an environment of absolute solitude. Completely insulated within the cell, the convict reached correction by self-retrospection on ones own "before the eyes of God." It was not the criminal as a miasmal body that should be segregated, but the potentially corrected subject. The monastic life, the

⁷ Howard, p. 95.

⁸ Howard, pp. 209-210.

life of the cell, constituted the model for the modern penitentiary system; the institution engraved with the promise of correction. Within this framework, the Papal States invented the modern prison where the imprisoned was subject to correction and rehabilitation came with self-reflection and prison labor as Morichini claims.⁹ The Papal States displaced the criminal from the social fabric as a threat to the moral values established by religion, and undertook the custody over the convict. According to the nature of the crime, the prisoner was either publicly executed as a paradigm addressed to the social body, or relocated within the constraints of a papal institution so as to be corrected. The rehabilitation of the individual was actually achieved through the restoration of the link with the religious authority.

The exportation of the Catholic's Rome cellular model abroad, was followed by its transformation. Even though the cell preserved its monastic characteristics, labor in common was removed from the corridor into places designed as such. From Pope Clement XI to John Howard, and with the intervention of Beccaria's work "On Crime and Punishment," the notion of the charitable institution shifted to the notion of a place where rehabilitation took place through the depriving of ones own civil rights. Apart from a place where the malfunctioning will and psyche was situated so as to be corrected, the cell acquired the additional characteristic of a place of restraint, where the loss of liberty was exemplified as the primary mode of punishment. Unlike the capital punishment where the social body

⁹ Morichini, Carlo Luigi. *Degli istituti di carità per la sussistenza e l'educazione dei poveri e dei prigionieri in Roma: libri tre*. Ed. novissima (Roma: Stabilimento Tip. Camerale, 1870), p.685-686.

was educated through the spectacular and public nature of the event, the cell mystified the effects of cellular isolation.¹⁰

Apart from the cell and the corridor structure, the third element of prison architecture to be reclaimed as of Italian heritage, were the panopticon towers. Originally proposed by Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) as a prison typology in 1791,¹¹ the panopticon tower soon dominated prison architecture. However, the panopticon tower applied to penitentiaries world-wide, had a major difference from the initial ideal model; the tower did not constitute the focal and articulation point of the cells per se, but rather of the cellblocks. Thus, in the application of the panopticon its major function as a surveillance mechanism shifted: from the surveillance of each individual separately to the surveillance of each class of convicts and of their motion from cell to work and back again.

When Marchese Carlo Torrigiani (1807-1865) and the civil engineer Francesco Angiolini,¹² traveled around Europe and the United States in pursuit of prison typologies, the panopticon tower was already in use. Their educational trip ended with the proposal of an altered surveillance tower where the central tower would be removed and replaced by an altar for catholic masses. Actually what Torrigiani and Angiolini proposed, was an architectural scheme that has been originally introduced by the roman

¹⁰ “The Marquis Beccaria justly remarks, in chap. Xxviii, that ‘the death of a criminal is a less efficacious method of deterring others, than the continued example of a man deprived of his liberty.’ And that ‘the punishment of death is pernicious to society, from the example of barbarity it affords.’ ” Howard, p.98.

¹¹ Bentham, Jeremy. “Panopticon , or the Inspection House: Containing the Idea of a New Principle of Construction Applicable to Any Sort of Establishment, in which Persons of Any Description are to be Kept under Inspection; and in the Particular to Penitentiary Houses, Prisons, Poor Houses, Lazarettos, Houses or Industry, Manufactories, Hospitals, Work-Houses, Mad-Houses, and Schools: With a Plan of Management Adapted to the Principle”, *The Works of Jeremy Bentham* (1787), Vol. IV, Ed. By John Bowring, New York: Russell and Russell, 1962.

¹² Dubbini Renzo, “Carcere e architettura in Italia nel XIX secolo: tecnologia punitiva e strategie spaziali,” in *Le Macchine Imperfette: Architettura, Programma, Istituzioni, nel XIX secolo*, ed. Paolo Morachiello and George Teyssot, (Roma: Officina Edizioni, 1980), 223.

hospitals and charitable institutions; a central void where the catholic masses took place and the warden could survey the intersecting wings and their inhabitants.¹³ However, their proposal was aligned to the Benthamian circular prison typology with the central tower removed. The first architect to connect the Angiolini with the central void for catholic masses found in charity institutions of the Papal States, was Giuseppe Polani (1815-1894) at the juridical prison of Turin.¹⁴ Polani designed the intersections of the cellblocks as voids that would host the catholic masses and would facilitate the “attendance of the divine masses from their same cells.”¹⁵ The adjusted to the Italian architectural heritage panopticon soon dispersed throughout the peninsula and was favored towards the British panopticon in prison architecture.

1.4. The Prison of *Regina Coeli*

Prison architecture in Italy was systematized and standardized only after the establishment of the prison administration directed by Beltrani Scalia and the foundation of a technical office for the design of the prisons. The prison of *Regina Coeli*, along with the custodial prison of San Vittore in Milan, was one of the first projects designed and executed by the civil engineers of the technical office.

Built only a decade after the defeat of the Papal States and their unification with the Kingdom of Italy, *Regina Coeli* was announced as the prison of the “one thousand cells,”¹⁶ in 1880. The minister of interior,

¹³ On an exchange of opinions with Carla Keyvanian, she undelined the fact that the use of the cylindrical towers on the intersection of the wings were actually introduced by the hospital typology of the charity institutions.

¹⁴ Dubbini, p. 224.

¹⁵ Dubbini, p. 229

¹⁶ With this name, “mille celle,” the construction of the prison was announced by Agostino Depretis, Minister of Interior. Citation found in:

Agostino Depretis (1813-1887) characterized the proposed project as the "great prison analogous to the contemporary culture and the Rome as capital" that however, would be "limited to an easier project that would be promptly executed by the broad of finance and the technical office of the state."¹⁷ It was one of the first prisons erected by the prison administration of the government following the discussions on the proper character of the modern Italian penitentiary. Along with the custodial prison of Milan, *Regina Coeli* constituted the built paradigm of how the government defined prisons as institutions and modern Italian identity. Thus, the prison reflects how the process of unification and industrialization of the country influenced its construction, but also, reveals the mode in which the government addressed both the Risorgimento project and the industrialization of economy through it.

The question of modernity in Rome, and in Italy in general, encompassed the open question of national identity that would have to critically incorporate, or even appropriate, fragments of its past and re-articulate them in one single narrative thread under the custody of the state. Built on the location of the former convent of *Santa Maria Regina Coeli*, after which it was named, the prison along with its site constitutes a kind of palimpsest on how crime, punishment and the penitentiary institutions changed as concepts through the history of the Italian peninsula. The story of *Regina Coeli* prison reveals the transformations of the prisons and the causes that motivated the transformations.

Adinolfi, Giuseppe. *Storia di Regina Coeli e delle Carceri Romane*. (Roma: Bonsignori, 1998), 57.

¹⁷ Adinolfi, p. 57.

1.4.a. The Prison of *Regina Coeli*: From Convent to Prison.

Founded originally in 1654, the convent of Santa Maria *Regina Coeli* was commissioned by Anna Maria Colonna Barberini (1605-1658), daughter of Filippo Colonna and wife of Taddeo Barberini. The convent was designed by Francesco Contini,¹⁸ architect of the Barberini family, to accommodate the Carmelite Order. The story of the convent from plans to construction started with the marriage of Anna Colonna, daughter of the noble and powerful family of Filippo Colonna, duke of Paliano and constable of Naples, to Don Taddeo Barberini, nephew of the Pope Urban VIII (Maffeo Barberini), descendent of the powerful Florentine family of the Barberini, in 1627.¹⁹ Following a long tradition of marriages based on politics and economy, Anna Maria Colonna, suspended her own desire to enter the monastic life, and moved from the house of her father, to the house of her husband. Three years later and during the complicated delivery of her son, she vowed to *Maria Regina del Cielo, Regina Coeli*, to built a convent dedicated to her, in exchange of a safe childbirth. The privileged position of the Barberini family allowed her to approach and convince Pope Urban VIII to provide her a brief, later suspended by Pope Innocent X due to his opposition to the Barberini family and its economic activity in Rome.²⁰ Despite the pope's objection in the admittance of the Discalzed Carmelite nuns, the construction work had been evolving since 1643, when the first stone was placed on the convent's foundation.²¹ During the reign of Pope Innocent X, a sue for the recovery of her dowry,

¹⁸ Dunn, Marilyn. "Piety and Patronage in Seicento Rome: Two Noble Women and their Convents," in *Art Bulletin*, Vol. LXXVI, no. 4, (1994): 645.

¹⁹ *Art Bulletin*, p. 644.

²⁰ With Taddeo Barberini in exile in Paris and her family's denial to the return of their dowerless daughter due to the alignment of the family with the kingdom of Spain, Anna Colonna was left in Rome managing the property and the economic affairs of the Barberini.

²¹ *Art Bulletin*, p. 646.

an additional land lease, the construction of a higher fortification for the convent, and finally a marriage between her daughter and the duke of Modena²², were propagated as mandatory for papal's approval for the opening of the convent. In 1655, a poster entitled "Indulgenza Plenaria" announced the inaugurating mass in the church of Santa Maria *Regina Coeli* and offered plenary indulgence, to any faithful Christian that would attend the first public mass.²³ Flanked by text on top and bottom and the figures of two angels at the right and left side, a graving of the Assumption of the Virgin was occupying the center of the poster, doubling pictorially the name of the convent (Fig. 6).

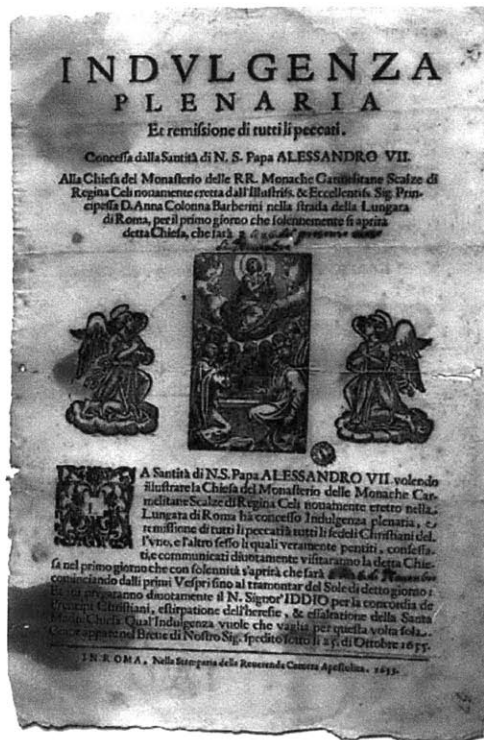


Figure 6.
The poster of plenary indulgence.

²² Art Bulletin, p. 648.

²³ "Alla Chiesa del Monasterio delle RR. Monache Carmelitane Scalze di Regina Coeli nuovamente eretta dall' Illustriss. & Excellentiss Sig. Principessa D. Anna Colonna Barberini nella strada della Lungara di Roma, per il primo giorno che solennemente si aprirà detta Chiesa, che sarà a [illegible] del presente mese di Novembre." San Juan, Rose Marie. *Rome: a City out of Print*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), p.43.

According to the convent's general plan in the "Pianta grande di Roma" of 1748 by Giambattista Nolli²⁴, the complex consisted of a church addressed to the public that occupied the corner of the block closest to the Vatican city, and a convent organized around a courtyard surrounded by the arcade of the cloister wall (Fig. 7). Accessed by a gate on the rear elevation of the courtyard, a fortified garden adjoined the rear side of the complex. The cells were organized around the main interior courtyard, while the whole complex was sharing neighbor with the *Monastero di S. Croce della Penitenza alla Longara*, a convent and correctional institute for female delinquents. According to a second drawing of the main elevation from 1835,²⁵ the church was distinguished from the convent both in terms of height and ornament. Being almost twice as high, the front elevation of the church was organized around a central axis flanked by embedded columns. The central portal was emphasized by the two arched openings and the pitched roof (Fig. 8). The division between the monastic part of the complex and the nave, was reinforced by the two separate entrances that prevented the mixture between the nuns and the public attending the masses: the first leading directly inside the nave of the church, and the second inside the courtyard of the convent. Among the two distinct entrances and the two separate functions, a second courtyard surrounded by the edifices for the facilities of the convent and the space designed for the attendance of the mass by the nuns.

²⁴ Since the convent was fully demolished, its description relies on the maps of Rome that document it. There are two maps: The one is the Nolli map conducted in 1748 and the other the Letarouilly map in 1852. For the Nolli map of Rome see: Nolli, Giambattista. *Rome 1748 : the Pianta grande di Roma of Giambattista Nolli in facsimile*. Highmount, New York: J.H. Aronson, 1984.

²⁵ Prospetto geometrico delle fabbriche di Roma, 1835, Art Bulletin, 647

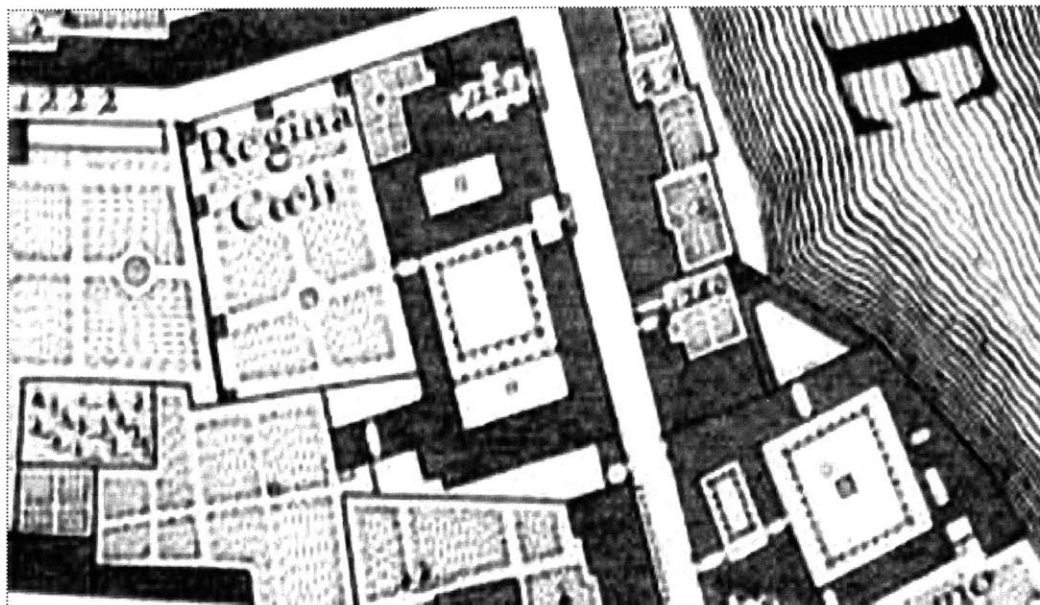


Figure 7. General Plan of the convent in Giambattista Nolli's Rome Plan, 1748.

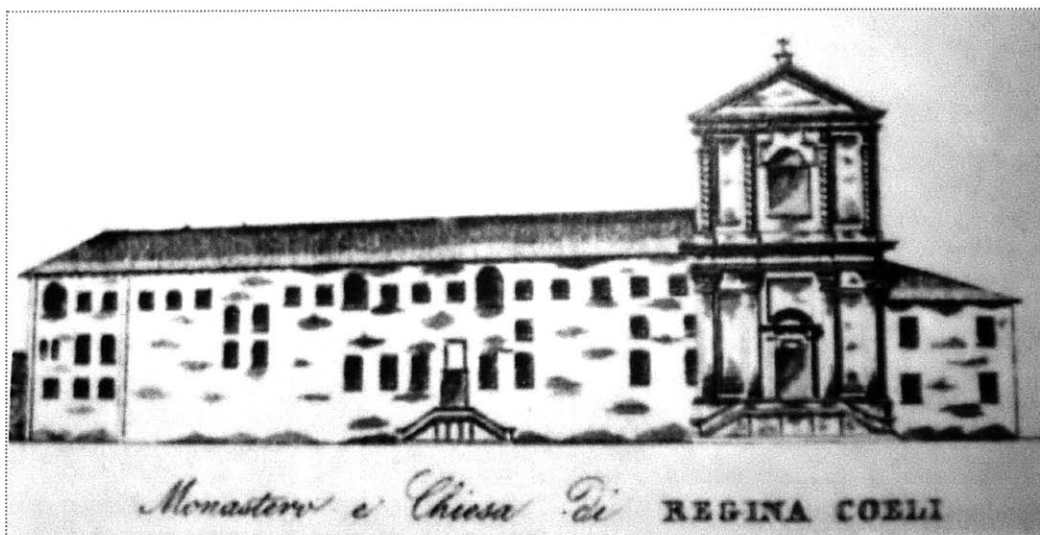


Figure 8. The main elevation of the Convent of *Santa Maria Regina Coeli*.

This second courtyard, however, did not constitute the innovation of its architect, but rather the byproduct of a very careful and strict application of the papal guidelines, as they were described in and imposed by the "Instructionum fabricate et Supellectilis Ecclesiasticae", a manual

conducted by S. Carlo Borromeo(1538-1584) in 1577.²⁶ According to the canon, "in the intermediate space, outside the limits of the enclosure, an establishment containing the necessary parts and functions of the monastery should be constructed a common dormitory, the kitchen [etc]"²⁷ The building guidelines were part of papacy's long pronounced war towards any heretical movement and deviation of the catholic canon. The manual was indicating the spatial configuration that a religious building should have, based on its function, in order to represent and reinforce the catholic canon, even when the patrons/matrons were civilians. In particular for female convents, the instructions did quite clearly prescribe the need for a wall dividing the space from which the nuns would attend the mass, from the rest of the nave. In particular, communication between the two walls would be restored through the existence of a window on the top of the high altar that would allow the nuns to participate in the mass and would simultaneously forbid any visual contact with the priest.²⁸ The nuns were segregated from the rest of the secular world and at the same time they acknowledged the distinction made. They were part of the church but, yet, a quite distinct part, suspended between the civil life and acceptance by the papal authority into the catholic order.

The most astonishing, however, suggestion of this manual is the suggestion for the construction of a prison within the convent where "the nuns who had acted against the order and had sin, would be enclosed

²⁶ Borromeo, Saint Carlo. *Instructionum fabricate et Supellectilis Ecclesiasticae*, Trans. Massimo Marinelli. Roma: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000 [c.1577].

²⁷ Borromeo, Saint Carlo, 191.

²⁸ Borromeo, Saint Carlo, 41-43.

according to the nature of their sin.”²⁹ The manual described the existence of the prison as necessary, especially in the convents, a guideline followed by the lateral half-convent and half-female prison under the name *Il Buon Pastore della Lungara*. In the perception of the papal Rome, the penitentiary was part of the religious institutions and punishment was exercised by diverse religious administrative bodies. Rehabilitation was practiced either through self-reflection and prayers within the cell.

In 1656, two years after its construction and under the order of the papal authority, the convent of *Santa Maria Regina Coeli* was transformed into a lazaretto in order to accommodate part of the roman population that was affected with plague and should be segregated from the rest of the population, in opposition to the nuns’ will to retain its previous function.³⁰ *Regina Coeli* was not the only convent to be transformed into a lazaretto for the segregation of the infected population. Almost all the convents and monasteries of the era adjust their spatial configuration so as to become the lazaretti to host the infected population. The cellular isolation of the convents and the monasteries acquired the additional quality of guarantying the constraint of the disease and the diminution of the dispersion. With the end of the plague, *Regina Coeli* continued to function as a prison. The malicious body of the plague-infected was replaced by the criminal as a malicious body that could potentially infect the hygienic of the social fabric and needed to be cured.

²⁹ Borromeo, Saint Carlo, p. 187.

³⁰ Adinolfi, Giuseppe, p. 47.

Only after the Napoleonic invention (1792-1814)³¹ was the cellular system popularized as a penitentiary method exercised by the central authority of the state. During the French occupation, all the papal property was confiscated by the Napoleonic forces and most of the convents and monasteries were turned into prisons and asylums for political prisoners. The Napoleonic state was established through a gesture of appropriating the religious apparatus and transforming it into a penitentiary network. Among the religious institutions to transform into prisons was *Regina Coeli*. Following the confiscate, the monastic life was never re-established and *Regina Coeli* continued to function as a prison for short sentenced criminals.³² After the restoration of the papal government in Rome and until its fall, most of the monasteries continued to function as prisons, while new extensions to the older edifices were added in order to accommodate more prisoners.

1.4.b. The Prison of *Regina Coeli*: From Convent-Prison to the new Prison.

With the unification of the Papal States with the Kingdom of Italy in 1870 and the proclamation of Rome as the kingdom's capital in 1871, the papal property was again confiscated by the municipality of Rome. However, the government proceeded to demolitions of edifices and the urban development of Rome based on the land acquired. Within the framework of urban development, the municipality proposed a juridical

³¹ The period includes the two wars of the Napoleonic France and the Franco-Prussian war, during which the Kingdom of Piedmont was involved and certain Italian noble families were gaining control over their territories supported by France. See: Mellosi, Dario and Massimo Pavarini. *The Prison and the Factory; Origins of the Penitentiary System*. Trans. Glynis Cousin (Bologna: The Machmillan Press, 1981), 81-95.

³² Adinolfi, Giuseppe. p. 51.

complex that included the Palace of Justice and the main custodial prison of Rome. However, due to financial shortage the Italian government decided to separate the two parts of the complex and to build the prison on the site of the former convent.

The prison of *Regina Coeli* was finally situated on the block defined by the convent of *Regina Coeli*, Il Buon Pastore and the convent of the Mantellate. Apart from the convent of the Mantellate that was transformed into a factory publishing the official documents of the state,³³ the other convents were gradually demolished so as to provide the space for the new prison. Located on the outskirts of the historical center, on the western bank of Tiber River (Fig. 9), the construction of the prison was supervised by the civil engineer Carlo Morgini. From 1880 to 1892, the prisoners confined within the existing convents were building the prison. As soon as a part of the prison was built, the convicts were transferred there, and the empty convent was destroyed. Prison labor elevated *Regina Coeli* into a kind of national experiment on how to construct in an economic and efficient manner a penitentiary institution.



Figure 9. The location of the Prison in the Urban Development Plan of 1872.

³³ The *Convento delle Mantellate* was transformed into the publishing house for the official documents of the government. The *Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno*, the proceedings of the penitentiary conferences, along with any treatise around the penitentiary system were published there. Not only was the publishing process hosted by the prison, but also the publications were based on prison labor; a fact that generated arguments on the legitimate character of the decision to have the same people that break the law to publish it. See:

Rivista di Discipline Carcerarie, Anno XIX. 1889, PP. 585 – 592.

The new edifice was organized into three entities, connected by a central axis: a group of two parallel linear buildings hosting the administration and the facilities of the prison, a radial wing configuration and a cross-shaped wing configuration. Each four-storey wing consisted of a central corridor flanked by two series of cells, while central polygonal surveillance towers connect the wings and host the catholic masses (Fig. 10-11).

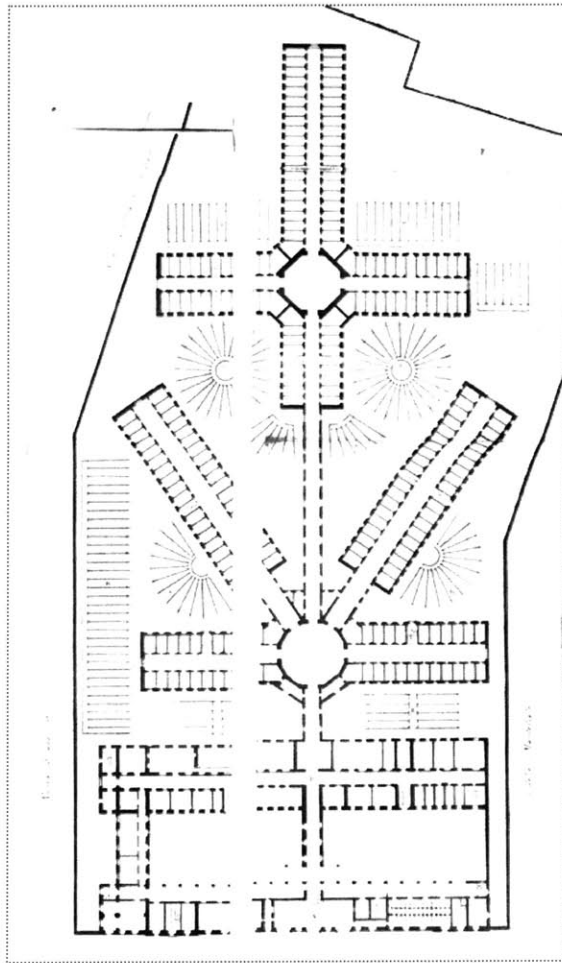


Figure 10. General plan of the prison, 1889.

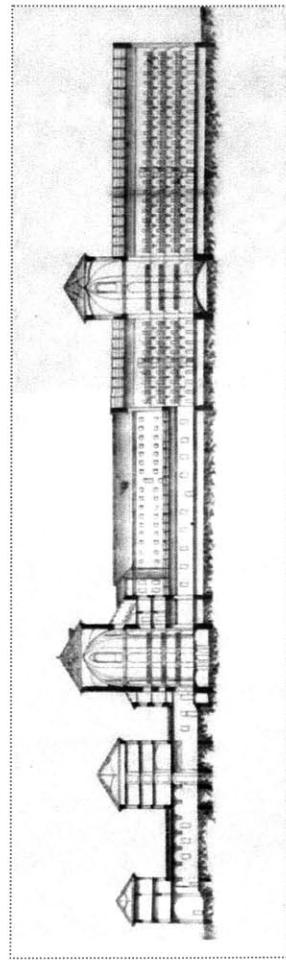


Figure 11. Longitudinal section of the prison, 1889.

The typical cell of *Regina Coeli* was an evolution of the one introduced by the penitentiary of Milan. The dimensions of *Regina Coeli* were slightly smaller, the spatial configuration, however, was approximately the same, while the technologies of the doors and the windows differ only in the replacement of the oblique window and its function with a louvered one that permitted the illumination of the room but directed the gaze of the imprisoned only towards the sky. Fragments of cell architecture around the peninsula were now represented in the cell, transforming it into a micrographic map of the Italian penitentiary system. Constructed by prison labor, the demolition of the former convent and the construction of the new prison was gradual, as gradual was the transfer of the criminal from the custody of the papal authority to the custody of the state.

The influence of the juridical prison of S. Vittore in Milan, built in 1879 (Fig. 12-13),³⁴ not only was apparent in *Regina Coeli's* cell, but also at the general spatial configuration of the prison. The Milan prison was the first to introduce the radial wing configuration of the cellblocks with a group of parallel buildings projecting towards the urban fabric. Apart from the radial structure which actually constituted an influence coming from the Pentoville prison and reflected the prison typologies used that era, the *Regina Coeli* typology introduced something more. From Lombardy to the Papal States, the cross-shaped configuration was added as a symbol of both the catholic past of the penitentiary and the charity institutions and as a reminder of the panopticon's origins. From the latin cross-shaped part of the complex, to the radiate structure simulating the Pentonville's spatial configuration, to the two parallel wings, *Regina Coeli* reconstructs

³⁴ Magriglio, Tranquillo. "Carceri e Tribunali," in *Milano Tecnica*, (Milano: Ulrico Hoepli, 1885), 249.

spatially a historiography of the penitentiary system and prison reform in Italy.

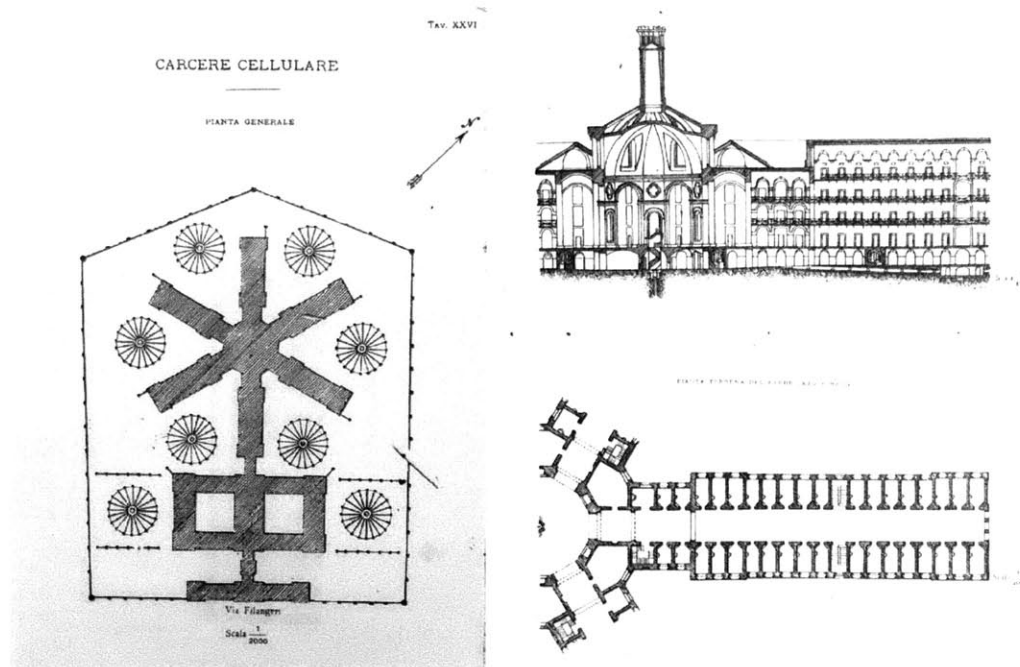


Figure 12. Plan of the San Vittore Prison **Figure 13.** Plan and Section of one of the cellblocks.

1.5. The Prison Program and the Schools hosted in *Regina Coeli* Prison.

From the convent of *Regina Coeli* to the prison, the only prison operation that was suspended for a period and then re-launched on a completely different base was the School of Prison Guards. The initial school had strong military characteristics and was established in 1873 following the 1st International Congress in Penal Reform of London in 1872. The project was announced as an achievement of the Italian government to realize what emerged as necessary abroad. The school occupied the main courtyard and the cloister wall of the former convent, by then prison, and constituted an educational experiment, during which the students

were instructed, as the bulletin claims, both in practice and theory. The alumni would be distributed to the Italian prisons after the completion of their practice in the *Regina Coeli* prison. Beltrani-Scalia claimed that “the foundation of this school, although recognized as necessary by many civil countries, would be realized for the first time by the Italian administration,”³⁵ and proceeded in the inauguration of a second school of “Capi e Sotto-Capi Guardie delle Carceri,” two years later, in 1875.³⁶ The two different classes of guardians received a distinct education and occupied different positions in the hierarchal structure of the penal system. The operation of the school was suspended with the initiation of the construction work and after the completion of the edifice, a new school of police officers was established: the School of Scientific Police.

Regina Coeli prison constituted the main custodial prison of Italy. The convicts to be confined within the prison were either awaiting trial, or executing the last part of their sentence, or pending their transportation to another penitentiary institution across the country. As a portal to the Italian prison network, the prison adopted the more flexible Auburnian system: the prisoner was isolated during night and working in common during day. Apart from the publications, prisoners would mostly work on the preservation of the edifice and were occupied with cooking, repairs and other functions of the prison. By 1903, the administration eliminated the prison labor to the necessary for the operation of the prison and the prison transformed from a place of correction to a place of restrain.

³⁵ Rivista di Discipline Carcerarie, Anno III, p.445. “La istituzione di questa scuola, fu da molti paesi civili riconosciuta necessaria, ma l’Amministrazione italiana fu la prima ad attuarla.”

³⁶ Rivista di Discipline Carcerarie, 1875, pp. 286-287.

CHAPTER II

Exhibitions of the Penitentiary: Prison Labor Products, Cell Typology and Prison Architecture in the 3rd International Penitentiary Congress.

This same program of the reunion proves how much important its tasks are: to assure the efficacy of the sentences, to research within the prisons' regime, within these same details of their construction, within the Disciplinary and hygienic guarantees of the establishments, within the moral and intellectual direction of the prisoners, the solution of the great problem that preoccupies humanity: here it is what shapes the object of our scientific discussions.³⁷

Standing in front of a crowded audience and with the statue of *Athena Pallada*, right behind him, guarding and authorizing his words, Agostino Depretis (1813-1887), Minister of Interior, inaugurated the proceedings of the 3rd International Penitentiary Congress in Rome at November 2, 1885 (Fig. 14). During his quite short speech, he presented what was perceived as the "great problem of humanities"; the contradiction inherent in a modern society's effort to defend the rights of one part of its citizenry by suppressing the rights of the other. In the application of enlightenment's project for humanity, the theoretical problem appeared. In order to reach the point where there would be no need for the rights-suspension of the delinquent, the misfits had to be converted

³⁷ *Actes du Congrès pénitentiaire international de Rome*, novembre 1885; publiés par les soins du comité exécutif. Rome, Impr. des "Mantellate", 1887-88, vol. 1, p. 52.

into "good citizens"³⁸ and the state had to invent methods of rehabilitating the malicious subject. Removal from the social fabric was the fundamental step that, however, had to be accompanied by the proper method of remedy enacted in penitentiaries. The suppression of rights was engraved with the promise of correction and prisons were studied as the place where penal reform and rehabilitation, were, not only enacted, but also tested.



Figure 14. Engraving showing the inaugural ceremony during the introductory speech delivered by Agostino Depretis, Minister of Interior

The growing fever of penal reform reached its first peak with the 1st International Penitentiary Congress that was held in London in 1872. "International," so to speak, as the participating countries were limited to the designated by the congress committee: USA, Great Britain, France, Russia, Italy, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Mexico, Greece, Denmark and Spain. The countries participating constituted formed nations, with a central state authority governing them that had or

³⁸ *Actes du Congrès*, vol. 1, pp. 51-52.

were industrializing their economies. To be more precise, penal reform was an issue that concerned mainly the western industrialized world, or even was the vehicle to forge such a concept.

Although, the main ethical inquiry on the imprisonment of criminals and its correctional function remained the same through out the congresses, the general debate gradually shifted. In the 1st International Penitentiary Congress, the discussion was devoted primarily to the selection between the Philadelphian system of day-and-night cellular isolation and the Auburnian system of night cellular isolation and day labor in common. Considering as granted the system of cellular isolation, the 2nd Penitentiary Congress in Stockholm focused on systems of transportation, the development of penal colonies and the methods of classification that would indicate how the imprisoned should be distributed through out the penitentiary network of each country. By the time of the 3rd International Penitentiary Congress in Rome, the discourse had returned to prison labor, its relation to the state's economy and the promise of correction embedded in prison as institution and cellular isolation as the method to proceed.

During his speech, Depretis postulated prison architecture as the primary resource in the pursuit of an answer on the penal reform inquiry. Prison architecture was intrinsically connected to the discussion from the very beginning. One of the first prison reformers, John Howard (1726-1790) had started traveling around Great Britain to study the architectures of confinement in 1773.³⁹ According to Howard, a prison was efficient when it could provide a decent environment in terms of hygiene, respect the prisoner as a human being and, at the same time, succeed in

³⁹ Howard, John. *The State of the Prisons* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1929), p. xi.

correcting him/her. Howard, was not the first to bring forth the need for penal reform. However, he was the first to initiate a documentation of prison architecture that aspired in including the "foreign" experience, foreign here implying penitentiaries mostly from the European continent. Using Howard's work as a model, the French would later send Alexis Tocqueville, Piedmont Carlo Torrigiani and so on, as state's representatives to document and to bring back the current trends in prison architecture world wide. The more inclusive a research was, the more innovative the proposal on prison reform would be.

The discourse on prison architecture got intensified with the international congresses. From the first congress to the third, the role of architecture on penal reform transformed from a dispersed application of diverse national experiments to a "scientific" laboratory for the extraction of useful, for the state, assumptions through observation; from a scattered catalogue of innovations in prison architecture typology to an articulated and systematized documentation of the field. Not only did prison architecture constitute the built paradigm of the intended penal reform, but also it functioned as a pedagogical tool for the formulation of the basic inquiries.

By the third congress, the cellular isolation emerged as the dominant issue to be studied and the cell as the fundamental component of prison architecture. Each participating country was asked to provide the current cell types in use at the most outstanding examples of prison architecture in its domain. The various cell types were selected, reproduced in full size and exhibited. In the third congress, the promise of correction was examined and studied through the architecture of the cell. In this chapter I will study this particular shift from prison architecture as

a general typology to the typology of its unit, from prison as an apparatus of surveillance and rehabilitation to the cell as its condensed and sufficient counterpart and how it was expressed through the exhibition accompanying the proceedings of the third congress. Taking into consideration that the Italian committee elevated the issue of cell typology as of high importance for penal reform, I will examine the issues raised by the Italian participation in particular.

2.1. The 3rd International Penitentiary Congress and the *Palazzo delle Esposizioni*

The generation of a discussion on the penitentiary condition in the post-Risorgimento Italy, was one of the state's first initiatives following the completion of the unification in 1871. The commission of the 3rd International Penitentiary Congress to Italy in 1878 was, in fact, considered as the reward to the state's effort to systematize the discourse, and furthermore, as the opportunity to impose an Italian schema in the "international" market. Within the state's fragile political condition, the congress offered an occasion for the articulation of a unified language over the penitentiary network and its institutions. Beltrani Scalia, the director of the Prison Office, had already initiated discussion on the form and structure of the congress program through the pages of the *Rivista di Discipline Carcerarie*. The congress served so as to announce Italy as a competent, modernized state on the proscenium of the western world powers.

Italian government's desire to regain the lost ground became apparent in the construction of the *Palazzo delle Esposizioni* at Via

Nazionale (Fig. 15), as the official site of the exhibitions.⁴⁰ Situated right in the center of the urban fabric of Rome, the building constituted part of the broader program of urban development to re-organize the urban fabric of Rome. It fell in line with the *Palazzo di Giustizia*, the *Regina Coeli Prison*, the organization of the Tiber River banks, the opening and expansion of roads as the *Via Nazionale* and the *Via del Corso Vittorio Emanuele II* and the Termini railway station.



Figure 15. Engraving showing the front elevation of the Palazzo delle Esposizioni from Via Nazionale.

Exhibitions played a pivotal role to the integration of the cultural, agricultural and industrial production into entities bearing the Italian mark.

⁴⁰The project was commissioned to the architect Pio Piacentini after a short competition in 1876. The building was inaugurated in 1883 with the 1st International Art Exhibition. See: Valeriani, Enrico. "Pio Piacentini Architetto Romano." In *Il Palazzo delle Esposizioni: Urbanistica e Architettura, L'Esposizione Inaugurale del 1883, Le Acquisizioni Pubbliche, Le Attività Espositive* (Roma: Edizioni Carte Segrete, 1991), pp. 39-42

Built within this exhibition fever, the *Palazzo delle Esposizioni* was designed as a permanent landmark in the urban landscape of Rome. Piacentini's design was selected as the winning project in the architectural competition that was initiated for the needs of the building. In a period when the "stile romano" was dominant, Piacentini's proposal was chosen for being the most simple and appropriate to the nature of the new institution.⁴¹ Facing *Via Nazionale*, the main elevation of the building was organized around a main portal resembling the roman triumphant arches, while the rest of the building was in a "stile francese," as some of its critics called it.⁴² Twelve statues of artists on the cornice of the building guarded the entrance, while the portal was projecting with four statues of female figures on its top, representing architecture, industrial arts, painting and sculpture. Even though statues created by different artists⁴³, *Luca della Robbia, Fidia* and *Apelle, Apollodoro, Bramante* and *Michelangelo, Raffaello, Rembrandt, Cellini, Canova, De la Roche* and *Bernini*, along with *Architecture, Painting, Sculpture* and *Industrial Arts*,

⁴¹Pasquarelli, Silvio. "Immagini per l'architettura di una capitale: via nazionale e i concorsi alla fine dell' '800." In *Il Palazzo delle Esposizioni: Urbanistica e Architettura, L' Esposizione Inaugurale del 1883, Le Acquisizioni Pubbliche, Le Attività Espotive* (Roma: Edizioni Carte Segrete, 1991), p. 24.

⁴² Actually the comment belongs to Victor[sic]. However, the building was criticized by architects as not roman enough.

Siligato, Rosella. "L' edificio, senza eccedere in Decorazioni, dovra avere un' impronta speciale che caratterizzi la sua destinazione." In *Il Palazzo delle Esposizioni: Urbanistica e Architettura, L' Esposizione Inaugurale del 1883, Le Acquisizioni Pubbliche, Le Attività Espotive* (Roma: Edizioni Carte Segrete, 1991), p. 61.

⁴³ Giovanni Biggi was responsible for the statues of *Sculpture* and *Painting*, G. Trabacchi for the statues of *Architecture* and *Industrial Arts*, *Luca della Robbia* was conducted by Cesare Aureli, *Fidia* e *Apelle* by Filippo Ferrari, *Apollodoro* by Emlio Dies, *Bramante* and *Michelangelo* by Stefano Galletti, *Raffaello* by Giuseppe Luchetti, *Rembrant* by Luigi Guglielmi, *Cellini* by Giuseppe Fallani, *Canova* by Luigi Maioli, *De La Roche* by Giuseppe Salvi, and *Bernini* by Augusto Viola. With Musolini's coup d' etat and the exhibition *Mostra della Revoluzione Fascista*, the statues were removed as non representing the new Italian reality, away from the at that time constructed national identity and history. See:

Siligato, Rosella. "L' edificio, senza eccedere in Decorazioni, dovra avere un' impronta speciale che caratterizzi la sua destinazione." In *Il Palazzo delle Esposizioni: Urbanistica e Architettura, L' Esposizione Inaugurale del 1883, Le Acquisizioni Pubbliche, Le Attività Espotive* (Roma: Edizioni Carte Segrete, 1991), pp. 61-75.

they were all directing their gaze towards the border, surveying the entryway to the exhibition space. Each allegorical figure was forged holding a representative of its art tool or product: the figure of *Architecture* a tableau, of *Industrial Arts* a hammer, of *Painting* a palette and of *Sculpture* a bust. The statues functioned as allegories to define the method, the tool and/or the product, to authorize the fields allowed entering the exhibition hall. Apart from their vigilant gaze, the selection of the particular statues indicated how the state defined the various fields of art and its authoritative power (Fig. 16).

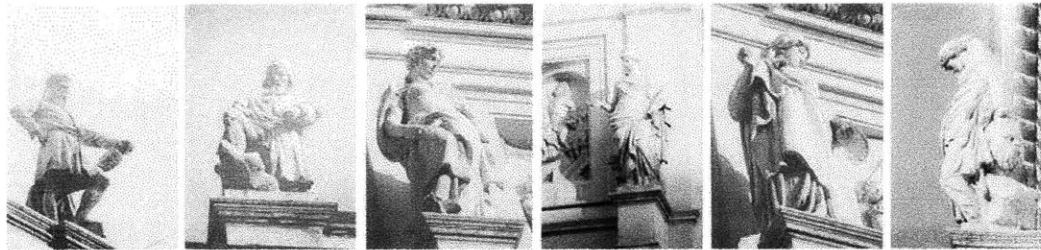


Figure 16. Details of the statues. From right to left: *Cellini*, *Michelangelo*, *Industrial Arts*, *Architecture*, *Painting* and *Sculpture*.

2.2. Prison Labor Products, Cell Typology and the Prison Architecture.

The *Palazzo delle Esposizioni* was the place to host the proceedings of the 3rd International Penitentiary Congress, along with the accompanying exhibition of prison labor products, cells of prisons and technologies of construction and confinement. The exhibition was divided into three distinct groups: the trade fair of prison labor products and the technologies of construction and confinement were located inside the building, while the diverse cell types were set on display outside the

building and in close proximity.⁴⁴ Each part of the exhibition tried to convey a diverse aspect of the penitentiary system developed in each nation and suggested a diverse correlation between institutions and state. If the proceedings of the congress focused on the promise of correction as propagated by the penitentiary institutions, the exhibition underlined how rehabilitation was defined and perceived. The promise of correction was the promise of converting the delinquent into the modern industrial worker and the cell was the house where the transformation of the delinquent would take place under the equally distributed surveillance of the state.

2.2.a. The Exhibition of Prison Labor Products

The fair of prison products constituted one of the vital parts of the exhibition. The objects were organized first by nation, then by the prison where they were produced and, finally, by category of object in the eight halls of the *Palazzo delle Esposizioni*. Mounted on the center of the corresponding wall, a flag on the wall announced the nation of origins, while a ribbon bore the name of the penitentiary. Furniture, utensils, fabrics, typographic tiles, hardware were all set on display before the eyes of the visitor and perspective consumer (Fig. 17). Hungary sent works in straw and wooden furniture, Denmark and Switzerland special blouses and fabrics, Norway wooden children's games and Belgium, among its other products, a carriage for the transportation of criminals (Fig. 18).⁴⁵

⁴⁴ The information on the spatial structure and configuration of the exhibition is based on the texts and engravings published later in the:

Actes du Congrès pénitentiaire international de Rome, vol. 3, part. 2, p. 3.

"Il Congresso Penitenziario Internazionale e la Sua Esposizione," *L' Illustrazione Italiana*, Novembre 17, 1885.

⁴⁵ "Il Congresso Penitenziario Internazionale e la Sua Esposizione," *L' Illustrazione Italiana*, Novembre 17, 1885.

An article dedicated to the exhibition at the *L' Illustrazione Italiana* claimed that "it is a fact that work in the penitentiaries is well done and one can find almost everything among the various prison labor products exhibited in the exposition."⁴⁶ Prison labor products represented how the state was fantasizing industrial production; absolute control of production, a laborer deprived of rights, minimum wage based on the essentials to keep the imprisoned working and, as a result, maximum profit.

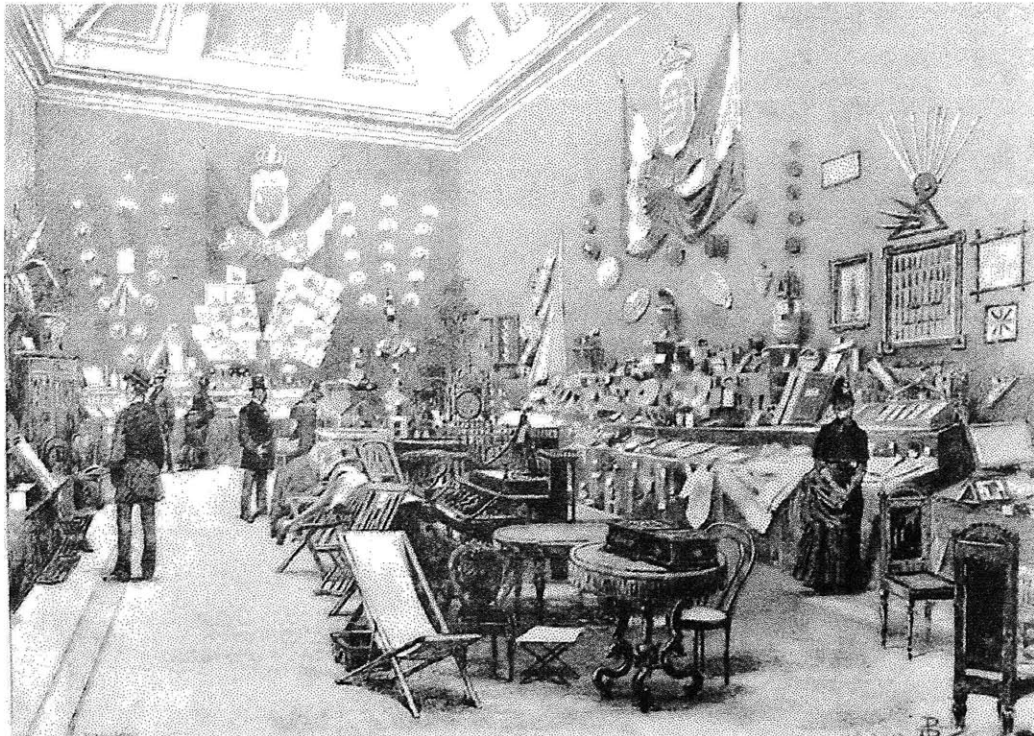


Figure 17. Engraving showing the hall hosting part of the foreign participation to the prison labor products' exhibition.

Prison labor and its merits were, of course, highly embellished. They constituted the state's fantasy of how industrial production should be; a fantasy that, especially in Italy, had generated the protest of both the capitalists for monopolizing the market due to low prices and the

⁴⁶ "Il Congresso Penitenziario Internazionale e la Sua Esposizione," *L' Illustrazione Italiana*, Novembre 17, 1885.

workers for dropping the wages to a minimum. "It is said that the work of the imprisoned creates a pernicious competition to the work of the free men"⁴⁷ *Illustrazione Italiana* would claim in the same article that would later appraise the qualities of prison labor products. Moreover, one of the questions addressed to the members of the congress to be postponed for the next congress was the relationship between prison labor and free-industry. The problem had already been located, but for the time being, the states were celebrating their prison-factories and their fantasy of exemplified industrial production.

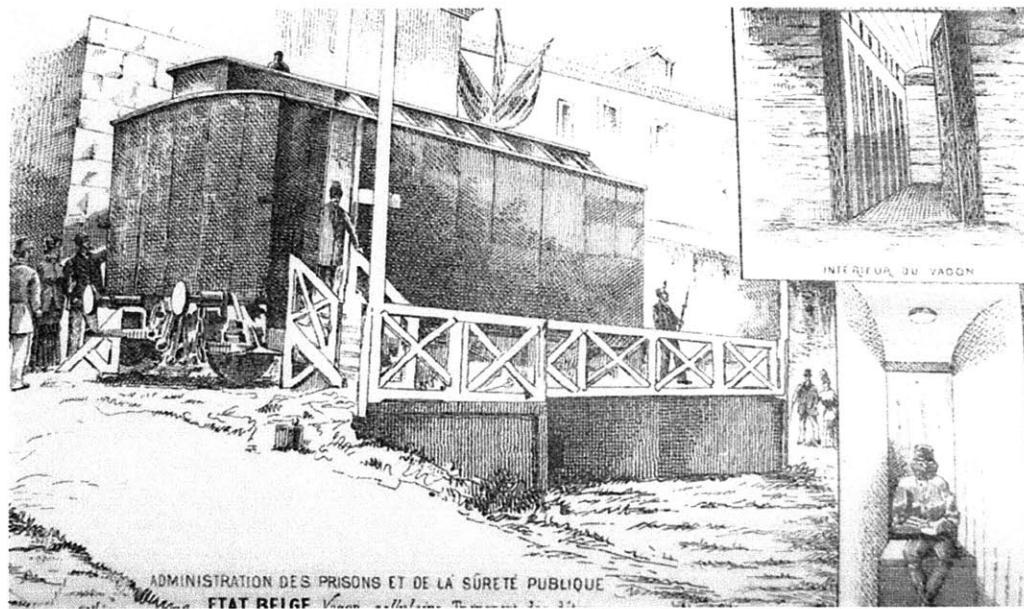


Figure 18. Engraving showing the carriage for the transportation of criminals exhibited by Belgium

Being a trade fair, the exhibition acquired the additional characteristic of being a place of consumption. What was produced within the prisons, would be exhibited and, "hopefully" sold in the *Palazzo delle Esposizioni*. The products were all advertised as of high quality, while the

⁴⁷ "Il Congresso Penitenziario Internazionale e la Sua Esposizione," *L' Illustrazione Italiana*, Novembre 17, 1885.

Italian press exemplified prison labor as a prototype for industrial production in general and the imprisoned as the perfect laborer.⁴⁸ The profits of the trade fair were later documented in the published proceedings of the congress with tables showing the total value of the products provided by the different Italian prisons and the amount of money earned.

2.2.b. The Exhibition of Technologies of Confinement

If the exhibition of prison labor products had supplied a hint of how the state fantasized industrial production, the exposition of prison architecture set on display the way in which each country systematized the realization of this hallucination. The exhibition was divided into two parts: the first one organized around the methods, materials, construction details and other technologies used in prison architecture, and the second one around the cell types in use by the various countries participating in the congress. The cell was intensively examined as the housing condition of the imprisoned laborer. Each penitentiary presented the technologies that were used in order to construct the housing reality of the imprisoned, turning prison architecture into a specialized branch of housing typology. "Models of the fabrication materials, bricks, cement, etc, for the walls, the pavements, the windows, etc; samples of clothes for the prisoners' personal use and the guardians' armament for both men and the women; the iron models of instruments of punishment and correction used by the different establishments for different categories of prisoners; types of locksmiths; models of frames and grills for the windows and the doors of

⁴⁸ "Il Congresso Penitenziario Internazionale e la Sua Esposizione," *L' Illustrazione Italiana*, Novembre 17, 1885.

the cells"⁴⁹ were distributed and exhibited in the three halls of the two edifices constructed ad hoc outside the *Palazzo delle Esposizioni*.

The objects and prison technologies were grouped first by country of origin and secondly by the institution where they were used. The efficacy of each penitentiary to constrain, survey and control the imprisoned, was not judged upon the high-performance of its components separately, but rather upon the system created out of their combination; the penitentiary technology as a whole applied to the prisoner as a unit. Along with the products and equipment related to prison architecture, "models of the principal penitentiary establishments and the most remarkable prisons that exist in the different states participating in the congress"⁵⁰ would be exhibited in the same room. Not only did they constitute the product of the discourse on penitentiary reform, but they, also, exemplified an architectural guideline, an index of diverse prison typologies to provide the models for future projects; a building code.

2.2.c. The Exhibition of Cell Typology

Nonetheless, the main focus of the exhibition and its contribution to the history of the international penitentiary congresses was the exhibition of cell typology. The issues of cellular isolation, its efficiency and role in "correcting" the imprisoned, along with the use of prison labor, were central in the proceedings of the congress. "Which is the classification of prisoners used in your country?", "Upon which system are the prisons of your country organized?", "In which category of imprisoned do you apply

⁴⁹ *Actes du Congrès*, 1887-1888, vol. 3, part II, p. 1.

⁵⁰ Unfortunately there is no documentation of the particular prison establishment that were exhibited as models. The only penitentiary we know to have been exhibited is the Philadelphian Penitentiary. The original model is now exhibited in the Museo Criminologico di Torino. For the rest information please see: *Actes du Congrès*, 1887-1888, vol. 3, part II, p. 1.

the system of cellular isolation?”, “In which proportion is the system of continual cellular isolation applied?”⁵¹ were some of the questions that each participating nation was called to answer. Inquiries on the use of the cellular model and the modes of prison labor formed the content of the congress, while statistical tables, qualified the answers.⁵² Furthermore, every participating country was called upon providing a thorough description of the types of cells used in their “most perfect” penitentiaries. The description included a detailed analysis of the cell typology in text, its dimensions, the materials used, the construction details, the equipment and the machinery of daily life provided within the cell.⁵³

The exhibition of the cells was organized into three entities, each one of them with a central corridor in the middle flanked by two arrays of cells.⁵⁴ Sixteen cells by seven countries were included in the main corridor, eight from seven countries in the second and four from three countries in the third. They were all reproduced in full size model built of the same materials that were originally used, according to the textual description and the construction documents that their respective countries provided. “Each cell was fully furnished and equipped with all the objects and utilities that were originally contained; mannequins covered dressed with the prisoners’ costume were located within the cell and other mannequins were placed along the corridor in front of every door in order to represent the guardian dressed with different uniforms and

⁵¹ An appendix of the questions addressed to the participating countries can be found in the published proceedings of the congress. See:

Actes du Congrès, 1887-1888, vol. 2, part II, pp. 601-609.

⁵² The use of statistical tables was actually introduced by the 2nd International Penitentiary Congress, where there was a call for a unified mode to document changes in the prison population in order to extract conclusions on the proper function of the penal code and the penitentiary system.

⁵³ *Actes du Congrès pénitentiaire international de Rome, vol. 3, part.II, p. 13.*

⁵⁴ Unfortunately there are no information on the particular spatial configuration of the corridors.

armament"⁵⁵ (Fig. 19). Every cell was different from the other in terms of material used, size of cells and type of windows, while an inscription over the window arch of each cell announced the country of origins.



Figure 19. Engraving showing typical cell of the Belgian Brussels Penitentiary

On the outside the ad hoc construction appeared as a patchwork of a variety of cells lacking alignment. The differentiated cells were crowned with a cornice that defined the height of the overall structure. Two mannequins in the courtyard, one of a guardian and one of a prisoner, were provided, where the prisoner was envisaged working by himself under the loose surveillance of the guardian; an impression that was far from "real" as the actual penitentiary establishments were equipped with

⁵⁵ Actes du Congrès, 1887-1888, vol. 3, part II, p. 2.

partitions for the individual walks of the imprisoned in open-space. Inside each construction, the central corridor was flanked by wings of cells and roofed by a vault with skylights and resembled the prison corridor. According to the engravings published in the proceedings of the congress, the different sizes and morphologies of the doors destabilized the homogeneity that was produced by the use of the pavement revetment and the vaulting (Fig. 20, 21) and the cells were transformed into cabinets of curiosity. The visitor to the exhibition would wander through the three different corridors in order to take a glimpse of the prisoner's daily life. The visitor was transformed into a spectator that observed the prisoner's life inside the cell, but could not enter, as the view inside each one of the cells was limited to an opening on the door that functioned as the communication window between the imprisoned and the guardian. The existence of this particular opening represented and reproduced the distinction between the observer and the object of observation; where object of observation we find not only the replica of the prisoner, but the whole technological apparatus constructed around the imprisoned.



Figure 20. Engraving showing the interior of the main corridor.



Figure 21. Exterior view of the main ad hoc construction of the cell exhibition.

With the exhibition of cell types the discussion on prison architecture focused on the cell as the core issue where the objectives of penal reform should be investigated. As propagated by the *Illustrazione Italiana* the architecture of the penitentiary was condensed in the architecture of the cell: "the cells [were] in natural size: the cells [were] real, with real doors, real bolts and the whole arrangement of a real penitentiary."⁵⁶ After providing an extensive catalogue of all the "commodities" introduced by different prisons, the same article in the newspaper would reach the point to claim that "only few of us have rooms so elegant in our houses."⁵⁷ The cell was propagated as an almost utopian house, where the under-correction delinquent would be transformed into the modern industrial worker. The diverse types of cells were exhibited in

⁵⁶ "Il Congresso Penitenziario Internazionale e la Sua Esposizione," L' *Illustrazione Italiana*, Novembre 17, 1885.

⁵⁷ "Il Congresso Penitenziario Internazionale e la Sua Esposizione," L' *Illustrazione Italiana*, Novembre 17, 1885.

correlation to the products produced by the imprisoned population and the construction details of every respective cell. The more efficient the production and the more economic the construction of the prison, the better the penitentiary was. Thus, the efficiency of each prison was judged upon its capacity to maximize profit and minimize cost. Prisons exemplified the absolute factory, an argument that was enforced by Melossi and Pavarini in their book "The prison and the factory".⁵⁸ Interestingly enough, one of the questions to be postponed to the next congress was the inquiry on the damage that prison labor could generate to "free-industries" and the competition between the imprisoned working class and the free working class.⁵⁹

One of the pre-designated inquiries on penal reform and penitentiary systems addressed to the participating states was in which way to change the prison architecture based on the up to date experience.⁶⁰ The answer initially appraised prison labor as a beneficial to the economy factor, and continued by indicating methods to reduce the cost of constructing a prison. Among the proposals, was the diminution of the central pavillion's size in favor of a better connection between the wings' corridors, the systematization of lighting, heating, ventilation and plumbing, the reduction of any "useless" open space and "unnecessary" openings, and so on. The underlying objective was to reduce the cost of construction by minimizing the amount of material to be used and the total surface that the prison would occupy. Thus, not only was cell typology examined as the architecture to enhance the laborer's

⁵⁸ Melossi, Dario and Massimo Pavarini. *The Prison and the Factory*. Translated by Glynis Cousins. Bologna: Macmillan Press, 1981.

⁵⁹ Actes du Congres, 1887-1888, vol. 1, p. 751.

⁶⁰ Actes du Congres, 1887-1888, vol. 1, p. 747.

productivity, but also as the fundamental component of prison architecture where reduction of construction cost should be pursued. The height and width of the cell should not exceed the necessary for the prisoner's daily life, while vaulted ceilings were preferred over flat ones in order to lower the total distance between floors. The architecture of the cell was, therefore, exhibited as the fundamental structural unit of the prison that when standardized and multiplied it would form the prison. Thus, the need for land acquisition would be reduced, decreasing the cost even further.⁶¹As documented at the answer to congress' inquiry on the changes that prison architecture should undergo, the monumentality of the prison could only be the product of simplicity, severity in architectural form and lack of any ornamentation.⁶² The cell's spatial configuration was formed out of the need for efficiency and economy in construction; an economy that even acquired an aesthetical value, along with its social.

2.3. The Italian Participation in the Exhibition.

Even though it indicated a general call for standardization and economy in prison construction, the exhibition of cell typology constituted an initiative by the Italian committee. The presence of the Italian example was quite overwhelming and disproportional to the participation of the other countries. Especially in the main corridor which was the most "populated", Italy participated with eight replicas, as opposed to England, France, Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway and Bavaria that contributed eight examples. Denmark, Belgium, Hungary, Russia, Austria and the Netherlands supplied the cell types for the second corridor, while

⁶¹ Actes du Congrès, 1887-1888, vol. 1, pp. 747-748.

⁶² Actes du Congrès, 1887-1888, vol. 1, p. 747.

Italy was represented once more with the *Penitentiary of Volterra* in the third corridor, along the USA and Spain in the third.

The reasons for this classification are clarified neither in the proceedings of the congress, nor in the publications of the committee at the *Rivista di Discipline Carcerarie*. The grouping was not also based on a general criterion of geographic proximity, similarities in the structure of states' economy and governance, or even political alliances among the participating countries. The driving force was rather the desire of the Italian state to juxtapose its penitentiary system to the dominant cell schemes of Europe and the United States, so as to reclaim the origins of prison architecture, to construct a narrative over its historiography, to exhibit and to export the narrative. More than that, the Italian congress committee propagated through this exposition the continuous development of the penitentiary system in Italy up to the current prison condition in the post-Risorgimento modernized state.

The penitentiaries to represent Italy in the exhibition were the *Carcere Penitenziario di Alessandria* (cellular isolation during the night), the *Penitenziario Femminile nel Carcere di San Giorgio di Lucca* (continuous cellular isolation), the *Carcere Giudiziario di Milano*, *Carcere Penitenziario di Palianza* (cellular isolation during the night), *Carcere Giuridicario di San-Michele* (continuous cellular isolation), the *Carcere Penitenziario di Perugia* (continuous cellular isolation), the *Casa di Correzione* a Tivoli (cellular isolation during the night), the *Prigione nel Palazzo Ducale di Venezia* and the *Stabilimenti Penali di Volterra* (for life sentenced imprisoned) (Fig. 22).⁶³ The cells exhibited covered the period from the 14th century until 1880, providing a sample of the diverse penal

⁶³ Actes du Congres, 1887-1888, vol. 3, part II, pp. 53-66.

establishments, the existing programs and architectural histories narrating the birth of prison and its development in the Italian peninsula.

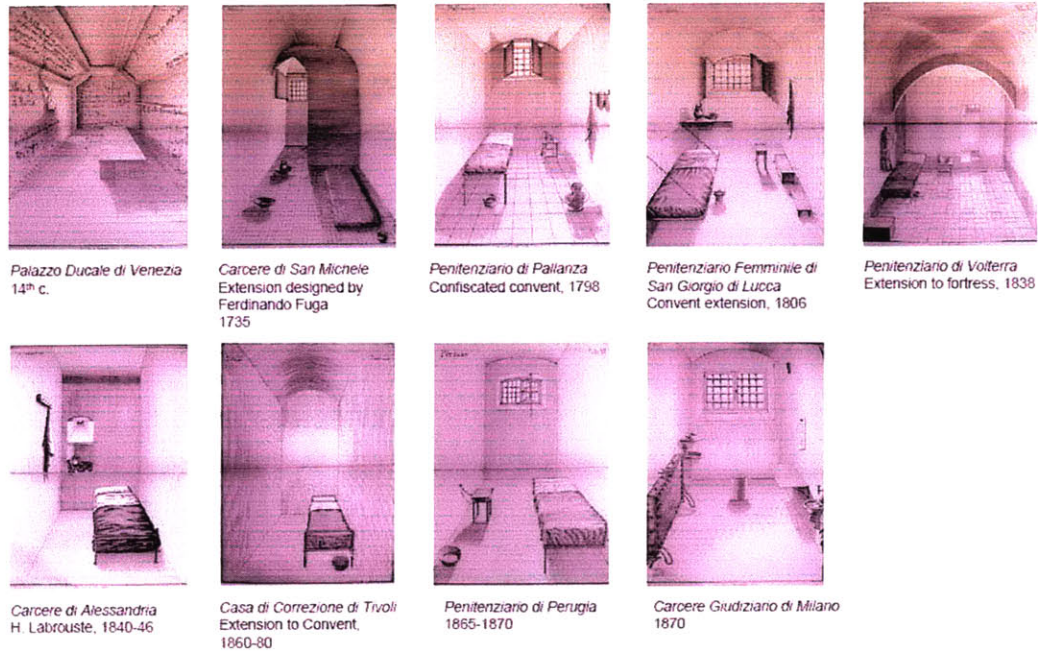


Figure 22. Selected engravings showing the Italian participation in the cell exhibition. Top line from left to right: Venice, San Michele, Pallanza, Lucca, Volterra Bottom line from left to right: Alessandria, Tivoli, Perugia, Milano.

Important prisons to contemporary historiography, as the *Carceri Nuove*, the first organized and institutionalized prison, or the *Civitavechia* were peculiarly missing. The committee did not even intend to provide a general survey on the prison condition in Italy, judging from the lack of any penitentiary establishment coming from the former Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. The Italian participation in the exhibition was certainly inadequate and full of lapses in favor of the overall statement under articulation; a historiography of the cell typology that would bring together the diverse penal systems of regions where the process of industrialization has already begun. With three cell examples representing the former Papal States, two Piedmont, two Tuscany, one Lombardy and

one the province of Venice, the distribution of the influence over the formation of the prison architecture of the cell was quite equal among the powers of the Italian north. The Italian south was left out of the general picture, as no penitentiary represented it. The absence of the south signified an imbalance between Italian north and south, with the second acquiring qualities of the colony that the state was missing as opposed to France and England.⁶⁴

Moreover, the cells constituted part of a quite diversified body of prison architecture typology. The penitentiary of Volterra was initially a fortress, later transformed into a penal institution with the addition of wings of cells to the original structure, providing a paradigm of a military establishment turned into prison. The prison in Lucca was located within the convent of San Giorgio that was first confiscated in 1806, during the Napoleonic invasions, and later transformed into prison. The cell in Venice was actually part of the *Palazzo Ducale di Venezia*, offering thus, the architectural example of a cell within a governmental public edifice. In addition, the San Michele cells that were designed by Ferdinando Fuga constituted part of the San Michele Ospizio (House for the Elderly), a vast structure built as a charitable institution by the papal authority.⁶⁵ Finally, three different cell types within penitentiaries built just before and after

⁶⁴ Adolfo De Foresta, in particular, would propose to Beltrani-Scalia to negotiate with France and Great Britain in order to acquire a share over places not occupied by them, as the Polynesia and part of the coast of Africa. Beltrani-Scalia withdrew the proposal for not offering benefits to the Italian economy. See:

De Foresta, Adolfo. *La Reforma Penitenziaria: Ne Patibolo, Ne Carcere; Lettera Aperta al Comm. Martino Beltrani-Scalia, Direttore Generale delle Carceri del Regno* (Bologna: Nicola Zanichelli, 1873), p. 61.

Beltrani-Scalia, Martino. *La Deportazione* (Roma: Tipografia Artero e Comp., 1874), pp. 32-41.

⁶⁵ The Ospizio di San Michele constituted a vast complex where wings of cells were added in different periods. The edifice was famous as being the first place where the cellular isolation was applied as a mode of correction in 1703 at the wing designed by Carlo Fontana. However, the cells exhibited were part of the wing designed as a female prison by Ferdinando Fuga in 1735. See:

Morichini, Carlo Luigi. *Degli istituti di carità per la sussistenza e l'educazione dei poveri e dei prigionieri in Roma : libri tre*. Ed. novissima. (Roma: Stabilimento Tip. Camerale, 1870), pp. 423-458.

the Risorgimento, exemplified cell architecture within prisons constructed as such. The history of the cell was traced back to each architecture where it had appeared, to palazzi, hospitals, convents, and was narrated as a history of transformations up to the point that the state would acquire custody over the criminal, would unite the various architectural approaches and, finally, would create the modern Italian penitentiary.

The architecture of the cell brought forth a variety of issues related to the national identity: industrialization of the national economy, the systematization and historicization of prison architecture, fabrication of its construction and new aesthetic values. If “the factory-form [of a prison] sets up an analytical structure of interiority,”⁶⁶ as Arindam Dutta claims, then the cell becomes the structural unit to quantify and qualify this analytical structure. Even though, the rest of the participating countries were forced to condense their contribution in one, maximum two, representative of the country’s architectural examples, Italy, the youngest of the nations to participate, was represented through eight. Apart from the committee’s interest to demonstrate how the state did competently correspond to the “international standards”, the Italian state had not reached the stage of unification so as to provide only one architectural example as representative of the whole nation. To be more precise, national identity was still under development and the political forces of the regions of Piedmont, Lombardy and Tuscany, along with the papal authority, were hoping for a greater influence on its construction.

⁶⁶ Dutta, Arindam, “Cyborg/Artisan: On a Certain Asymmetry Deriving from the Binary System; or, Notes on a Moment in the Development of a Taylorist Feudalism” (....), Chapter 5, p. 45.

2.4. The Catalogue of the Exhibition.

The Italian participation in the exhibition exemplified the particular condition of the state and the effort to forge a type of cell that could be applied throughout the peninsula and characterized as both modern and Italian. This effort was exemplified and systematized in the published proceedings of the congress, where a full graphic description and illustration accompanied every cell that participated in the exhibition. The spatial configuration of the exhibition was reproduced in the plates of the publication, with the drawings of the cells primary grouped based on the corridor grouping, and secondary by country.

The graphic representation of each cell was methodical and followed particular guidelines. The name of the institution, along with the type of isolation practiced, hence the program, were announced on the first plate. The second plate provided the scaled plan of the cell, flanked with two transverse sections, one looking at the door and the other looking at the window, while an index on the bottom of the page offered definitions the cell's equipment. The third plate contained the two longitudinal sections of the cell, whereas the forth plate included construction details of the door, the window and significant other innovative technology applied, such as plumbing, heating and ventilation systems. The two dimensional representation of the cell was completed with the design of a perspective view from the doorway on the fifth table. Each cell was excessively documented in terms of dimensions, construction details, machinery and technologies used.

The documentation was designed to facilitate comparison. Dates of construction, plans of the institutions and names of architects/engineers were subtracted from the tables, transforming the catalogue of the

exhibition into a construction textbook. Within this context, Italy's participation was enriched by the intention to construct a historiography of the cell up to that date. Among the eight types, the cell in the *Carcere Giuridicario di Milano* constituted the most recent and important cell exhibited, as it was the first custodial prison to be built by the state as such after the unification (Fig. 23-26). It was, therefore, important to construct a narrative thread between the current cell typology and the ones already in use at the Italian peninsula. Hence, an imaginative reader of the proceedings would assume that the current cell synthesized the architectural elements and technologies of the older cell types used in Italy, denying, thus, any influence from abroad.



Figure 23. Plate announcing the name and type of the prison.

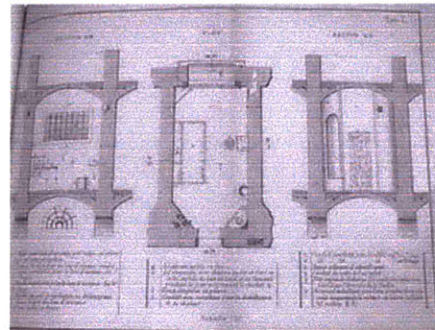


Figure 24. Plate I: Plan flanked by two transverse sections of the cell

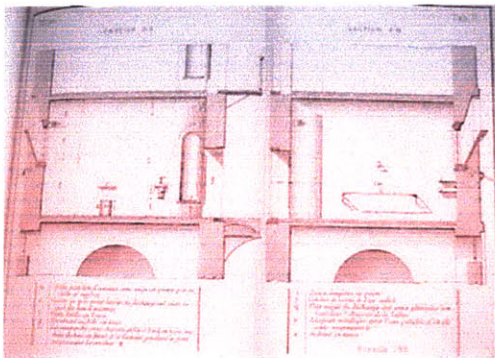


Figure 25. Plate II: Longitudinal Sections of the cell.

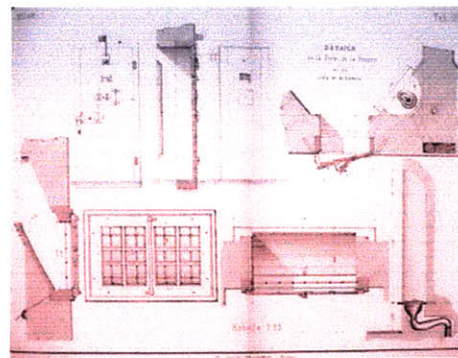


Figure 26. Plate III: Construction details.

Allowing the illumination of the room and simultaneously directing the gaze of the imprisoned to the sky, the typology of the window was presented as extracted from the one used in the *Penitenziario Femminile nel Carcere di San Giorgio di Lucca*. Even though it was already in use in France, England and the USA, the plumbing system of the Milan prison was presented as a development of the one introduced by the *Carcere Giuridicario di San-Michele*. Finally, the door with the three openings, one for the communication of the imprisoned with the guardian, one for the inspection of the room and one pinhole, was combining three different technologies found in the *Carcere Penitenziario di Perugia*, the *Stabilimenti Penali di Volterra* and the *Prigione nel Palazzo Ducale di Venezia*. Bits and pieces of prison architecture around the Italian peninsula were represented in the cell, transforming it into a micrographic map of the Italian penitentiary system and simultaneously reflecting the current discourse on penal reform, as it was formulated through the two preceding international congresses. Furthermore, the Milan cell would become a leading prototype for prison architecture under construction in Italy.

2.5. The Prison of Regina Coeli and the Exhibition.

Four years after the exhibition and two years after the publication of the proceedings, the designs of the Regina Coeli prison, along with a text that described the process of construction and the spatial configuration of the edifice, were published in the *Rivista di Discipline Carcerarie*. Still under construction, the prison was advertised as the "first experiment of such scale that would be built by prisoners due to financial

reasons,"⁶⁷ in the same fashion that prison labor was appraised in the congress. To be more precise, Regina Coeli had already advertised the process of industrialization in Italy when exhibited in the congress, basically due to the fact that its construction was based on prison labor and aspired in the transformation of the prisoner into a worker, and secondly because it hosted the publishing house of *Tipografia delle Mantellate*; the one to publish most of the state's official documents: the *Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno*, the *Rivista di Discipline Carcerarie* and the acts of the congresses.

Apart from appraising its construction method, the article emphasized the architecture and typology of cellular isolation used in the building. Along with two initial plates that contained the general plan and a general longitudinal section of the edifice, the following four plates were organized under the same order that was established by the congress exhibition: a first plate showing a plan of the cell flanked by two transverse sections, a second plate with the two longitudinal sections, a third section with the construction details of the door and the window and a last plate with a perspective view of the cell from the gate (Fig. 27). The similarity between a typical cell in *Regina Coeli* and a typical cell in the penitentiary of Milan is astonishing. Though the dimensions of *Regina Coeli* were slightly smaller, the spatial configuration was approximately the same, while the technologies of the doors and the windows differ only in the replacement of the oblique window and its function with a louvered one that permitted the illumination of the room but directed the gaze of the imprisoned only towards the sky. To be more precise, the *Regina Coeli* prison represented the perfect product of state's effort to

⁶⁷ *Rivista di Discipline Carcerarie*. Roma: Anno XIX: 592.

standardize production and to diminish cost by using prison labor and reducing the amount of material to be used. The prison propagated the state's capacity to realize large-scale construction projects in minimum expenses and its fantasy of ultimate control over the industrialization of the country.

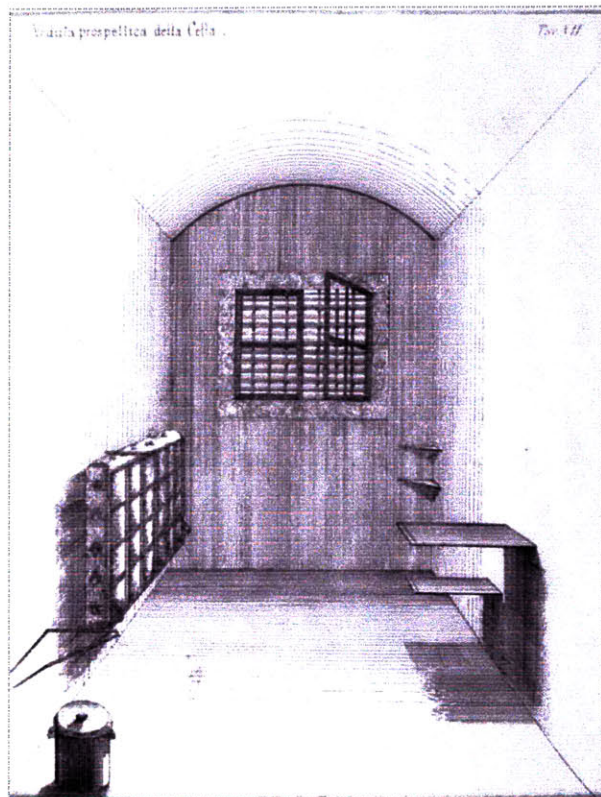


Plate VII: Perspective view

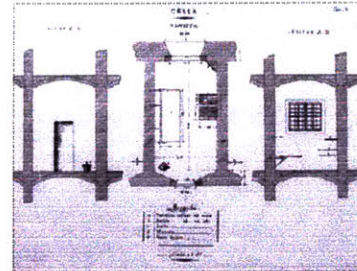


Plate IV: Plan and transverse sections

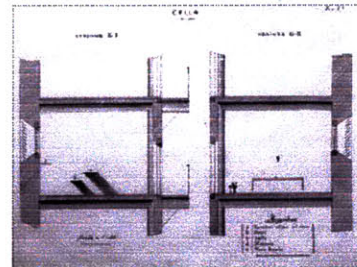


Plate V: Longitudinal sections

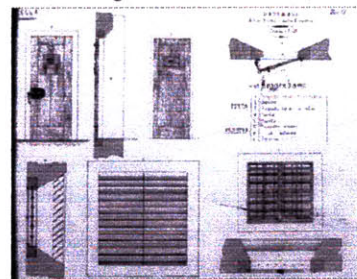


Plate VI: Construction details

Figure 27. The Plates presenting a typical cell in the prison of *Regina Coeli*.

Nonetheless, *Regina Coeli* did not only constitute the architectural evolution of the prison typology practiced by the Italian state. During the proceedings of the 3rd International Penitentiary Congress in Rome, *Regina Coeli* was one of the four "core prison establishments" that were included in the four tours organized by the committee. They comprised of

a trip to the penal colony of Castiadas in Sardinia, a visit to the “Tre Fontane” penal colony outside Rome, a tour to the School of Guardians in the establishment of *Regina Coeli*, and finally to the *Regina Coeli* prison. Although the program of the tours appeared to be of secondary significance compared to the congress, it actually completed the exhibition of prison architecture by setting on display penitentiaries per se in the midst of their “natural” surroundings.” Furthermore, the visits would consummate the picture of the current prison reality in Italy and the state’s effort to modernize the institutions and to industrialize economy.

The three establishments were either in the midst of their construction, or have just been completed. Inaugurated in 1875, the penal colony in Castiadas represented the state’s attempt to revitalize abandoned areas in the Italian campaign through prison labor. Prisoners sentenced to life imprisonment were deported to *ergastoli* (forced labor) located at the underdeveloped Italian periphery, where they constituted the driving labor force to construct the built environment, to cultivate the land and to found industrial production. Castadias exemplified how the model of the *ergastolo* operated as a vehicle for economic development.⁶⁸ Designed by Bucci and Mars in 1881, the penal colony of *Tre Fontane* was celebrating the re-appropriation of the *Agro Romano*. “We reclaim the roman campaign, we raise Rome from the desert that circulates it, and then we can assert that we were the ones to vote for this law. And in this condition sirs, Rome will obtain the right to become the capital of Italy,” Agostino Depretis claimed in the parliament.⁶⁹ The tours concluded with a

⁶⁸ *Actes du Congrès pénitentiaire international de Rome*, vol. 3, part. 2., pp. 568-598.

⁶⁹ *Rivista di Discipline Carcerarie*, Anno XI., 129.

visit a double visit in the establishments of *Regina Coeli*; one focused on the School of Prison Guardians and a second one showing the construction work in the prison itself.

The dormitory and the refectory of the imprisoned and the infirmary, the barracks of the guardians, the baths, etc, leave the visitor completely satisfied from the point of view of good development and maintenance. Leaving the establishment, Mr. Stevens turned to the members of the congress and addressed praises-awards of merit to the director Alexander Doria, for the distinguished way with which he administrates the penitentiary of Regina Coeli.⁷⁰

Being in the midst of its construction process, half-convent and half prison, *Regina Coeli* constituted a paradigm for industrial production exercised by the state in Italy. The prison was constructed completely out of prison labor and was built gradually so as not to interrupt the publication of the *Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno* and any other process of production. More than that, the “prison of the thousand cells” companied the cell types exhibited in such a way that its architecture would propagate both economy in construction and Italian identity in architectural structure. *Regina Coeli* was the perfect factory where industrial production was enacted and the forthcoming working class was educated as such.

Five years later, and this time with the participation of *Regina Coeli*, Italian prison architecture would be exhibited as official part of the *Prima Esposizione Italiana di Architettura* in Turin. The 3rd International Penitentiary Congress constituted the preparatory stage for the formulation of prison architecture’s building codes, typology and

⁷⁰*Actes du Congrès pénitentiaire international de Rome*, vol. 3, part. 2., 558.

historiography. As soon as the field was defined, it re-entered the broader discipline of architecture as one of its components. "Italianism" was negotiated in the exhibition through the debate on the proper architectural style that edifices should adopt in order to appear "Italian," in order to reproduce an icon of what "Italian" means. Prison architecture as practiced in Italy moved the discussion one step beyond by negotiating identity within its structure and propagating economy on architecture's construction process and aesthetic values long before modernity appeared as a movement.

The exhibition of the 3rd International Congress focused on cell typology as the medium to standardize the prison construction and to disperse surveillance and confinement technologies throughout prison buildings. The cell was celebrated as the mediating apparatus between the state and the individual. It constituted the mechanism to realize the state's projects of total control and education of the forthcoming working class, and to propagate its power by transforming the state into something that was both very abstract and very particular. By the late nineteenth century, the already formed European states had almost completed and stabilized their political condition. Sovereign power did not need any more a specific architectural morphology to signify its presence within the institution. It has been embedded in the architecture, in the partitions of the open-space, in the grills of the windows, in the morphology of the opening directing light and gaze, in the technologies of the doors. Even, the centralized surveillance gaze of the panopticon was replaced by the equally distributed glimpse of the spy-eye. Offering a position to be occupied by central authority, or at least signifying the existence of one even when it was absent, the panopticon tower was

considered as uneconomic and redundant by then. The cell as the perfect penitentiary technology facilitated what was long awaited by the state: the celebration of the state's power in the midst of its anonymity and its democratic distribution to each individual separately.

Chapter III

Prison Palimpsest: L' Uomo Delinquente, Criminal Anthropology, and the Scientific Police.

Look, 41, do not tear the pages the librarian gave you.
Goodbye, your friend. (41 is the number of the cell)

Hello 265, whose name I don't know. We will meet today
misfortunate companion.

Dear 63, we are both cured for good. Courage, and we will
meet at 2 or 3 months.⁷¹

In 1891, Cesare Lombroso (1835-1909) published his "Palimsesti del Carcere" with the subtitle "Raccolta Unicamente Destinata agli Uomini di Scienza;" a collection of observations from the life inside penitentiary institutions, as experienced by the imprisoned. His observations were based on short-messages written on sheets of paper, sketches of tattoos, interviews, graffiti on the walls and the vases, verses of short poems and songs, fragments of the prisoner's *microcosmos*. For Lombroso, each constituted part of a "palimpsest" that revealed the different layers of the criminal's character; he named himself as in this, a "paleologist."⁷² As, an architecture of absolute isolation, the prison was forcing the imprisoned to develop a diversified communication method that included the

⁷¹ These are three short messages presented in the book under the chapter "Thieves' Messages." See: Lombroso, Cesare. *Palimsesti del Carcere: Storie, Messagi, Iscrizioni, Graffiti dei Detenuti delle Carceri alla Fine dell' Ottocento* (Firenze: Ponte alla Grazie, 1996), p. 39.

⁷² Lombroso, Cesare. *Palimsesti del Carcere*, pp. 37-38.

architecture of the prison, its walls, numeration of cells, corridors etc. Acknowledging that, Lombroso was inviting the "scientist" to return to prisons and to "read" their architecture, so as to decipher criminal behavior.

But how did the study of criminality come into play? By the end of the 19th century a great discrepancy became apparent. The intention of the neoclassical school in penal studies to locate and correct the criminal by means of prison labor and cellular isolation appeared to fail. The statistics in fact documented an increase of the size of the criminal population. The demand for more prisons has raised, while existing ones were reaching their capacity. The "penitentiary" character of the prison institutions and their architecture was gradually collapsing, while the state's aspiration to educate the modern laborer and to create a disciplined working class, was far from being realized. Already in the proscenium of penal reform, the positivist school of criminal anthropology, as it was named by Lombroso, undertook the task of explaining the phenomenon by studying, analyzing and classifying the "criminal."

The positivist school introduced the organic into the penitentiary discourse as the point of view from which discourse on penal reform should be initiated. According to the new school, crime did not constitute a mere enactment of free-will that was not aligned to the penal code. Crime was enacted by an "uomo delinquente," an evolutionary "throwback," who was incapable of adapting to the modernized condition and "civilization." Enrico Ferri (1859-1929), a second generation pioneer in the positivist school of criminology, explicitly described the argument in the following words:

It is impossible to conceive of a will as an autonomous psychic force, foreign and anterior to any organic element. The will is conceived only as the resultant and function of an organ upon which it doubtless reacts. There is no organ without an actual function. It may also be said that we are not even able to conceive of a crime without a criminal to commit it, while it is possible, in the biológico-social, if not the legal sense, that there should be a criminal who has never committed a crime.⁷³

In the evolutionary perception of the positivist school, criminal activity constituted an exercise of will-subjugated to the improper function of the correspondent organ: the brain. The assassin, the thief, the prostitute were born as such, with traces of their malfunctioning will imprinted on their bodies. Regardless of the fact that they might, or might not, have developed such a behavior, they constituted latent criminals that potentially would imperil social order. The objective of criminal anthropology was, thus, to distinguish the criminals from "proper citizens" and to develop strategies to identify them by reading the morphology of their body.

The positivist school introduced already established disciplines so as to provide the necessary qualification towards its objective to identify delinquency. Building on the "science" of phrenology and Joseph Gall's division of the brain into 27 separate organs corresponding to diverse human faculties, Della Porta's physiognomy, Haeckel's theory of monism, and Darwin's "The descent of Man," criminal anthropology combined diverse disciplines and fields in pursuit of the pattern to distinguish the criminal population. Since the only available specimen irrefutably

⁷³ Ferri, Enrico. *Criminal Sociology* (New York: Agathon Press, 1967 [c.1917]), p. 297.

recognized as criminal by law and state, was the imprisoned, the positivist school converted the prisons and the asylums, quite literally, into the laboratories to provide the primary material of research.

My argument is that not only did the prison offer the primary resources, but also it provided the architecture to facilitate the research. In order to locate the morphological pattern of the criminal, the specimen should be studied individually and the authorship of any imprints should be directly attributed to their owner. Hence, the cell acquired a two-fold function: on the one hand it segregated the specimen from the rest of the criminals and on the other hand it transformed into the spatial capsule where the imprint of the individual would be traced and studied as such. The cellular isolation of the prison supplied the architectural apparatus to science for the practice and development of identity technologies and politics in the Post-Risorgimento Italy.

3.1. *La fossetta and L' Uomo Delinquente*

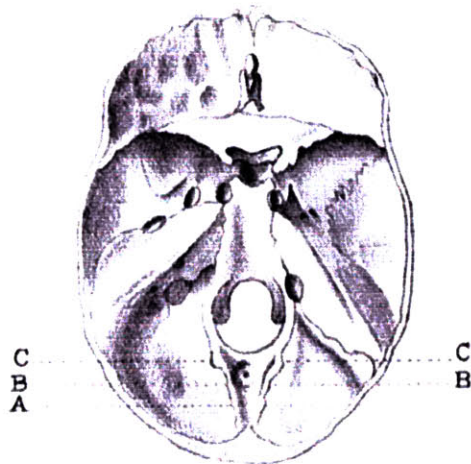
Let us start with the basic theoretic premise and the moment of its disclosure, as described by the founder of criminal anthropology in Italy, Cesare Lombroso:

I seemed to see all at once, standing out clearly illumined as in a vast plain under a flaming sky, the problem of the nature of the criminal, who reproduces in civilized times characteristics, not only of primitive savages, but of still lower types as far back as the carnivores.⁷⁴

This revelation came to Lombroso while performing an autopsy on the skull of Giuseppe Villela, an Italian brigand, in 1872. He located a *fossetta*

⁷⁴ Quote found in: Gibson, Mary. "Cesare Lombroso and Italian Criminology: Theory and Politics." In *Criminals and Their Scientists*, edited by Becker, Peter and Richard Wetzell, 139. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

(small fossa, cavity) on Villella's head (Fig. 28), a dimple on the back of the skull with a part of the spinal column below it, that, according to Lombroso's reading of evolution theory, constituted a morphological characteristic of "inferior races and lower types of apes, robents and birds,"⁷⁵. As Mary Gibson has explained, the story of Villella's skull fashioned "a dramatic founding event for his new discipline of criminal anthropology."⁷⁶ Like the scientists of his era, Lombroso was also motivated by the vision of Italian unification and yearned for a new discipline that would depart from the traditional sciences of the old regime. Science simply slated, had to be reinvented on the base of the Risorgimento politics and social conditions. In this case, the *fosseta* provided Lombroso with a tool to identify the delinquent man, and, by extension to develop strategies so as to distinguish race and class.



VILLELLA
 A. Fossa occipitale media
 B. Creste che la limitano
 C. Tubercoli ossei

Figure 28. Plan of Villella's skull indicating the area around the "fosseta": a. Medial occipital fossa (fosseta), b. Crests limiting it (the fossa), c. Tubercle bones

⁷⁵ Lombroso, Cesare. *L'uomo delinquente in rapporto all'antropologia, giurisprudenza e alle discipline carcerarie* (Torino: Fratelli Bocca, 1878 [2nd ed.]), p. 6.

⁷⁶ Gibson, Mary, p. 139.

L' uomo delinquente constituted a broader term to describe and to include different classes of criminals: the born, the epileptic, the insane criminal and the criminaloid (between occasional and born criminal). As the field of criminal anthropology was enriched by the results of the empirical research, the classification of the delinquent man kept changing. Ferri later suggested the division of the criminal man into the insane, the born, the habitual, the criminal by chance and the criminal by passion;⁷⁷ a proposal that was welcomed by Lombroso. Regardless of the shifts on the classifications, the fundamental theoretical concept remained unchanged. The delinquent man ⁷⁸ constituted a degeneration to an earlier anthropological type and delinquency could be traced on the signs of the body and its morphological deviances [sic].

The *fossetta* was only a pretext, an invented “break-through” for research that had already begun while Lombroso served as physician in the Calabrian military during the period 1859-1863.⁷⁹ Graduating from the School of Medical Studies in the University of Padua, he joined the Risorgimento forces and was transferred to Calabria where he extensively documented the tattoos covering the soldiers’ bodies (Fig. 29). For him, every tattoo was a “palimpsest” that could reveal layers of the soldier’s mindset. The criminal anthropologist perceived the color, shape, complexity and position of the tattoo as fragments of a pattern waiting to be deciphered. The more elaborated the form, the more dangerous the

⁷⁷ Ferri, Enrico. *Criminal sociology*. Translated by Joseph I. Kelly and John Lisle. Edited by William W. Smithers. With introductions by Charles A. Ellwood and Quincy A. Myers (New York, Agathon Press, 1967 [c1917]), pp. 138-139.

⁷⁸ Lombroso was less concerned about a theory on female criminality in the beginning of his career. The delinquent man was addressing exclusively male criminal types. At 1892, however, he published his treatise on female criminality under the title “Criminal Woman, the Prostitute and the Normal Woman.”

⁷⁹ Wolfgang, Marvin. “Cesare Lombroso”. In *Pioneers in Criminology*. Edited and introduced by Hermann Mannheim (Montclair, N.J: Patterson Smith, 1972 [2nd ed.]), p. 170.

owner; the more sensitive the area, the more rough and violent the individual. As he would later claim, this time for the delinquents, "a special characteristic of criminal tattooing would seem to be its complexity, multiplicity, and its situation upon the most sensitive portions of the body, where even savages avoid placing it, showing the greatest insensibility on the part of the criminals."⁸⁰ Lombroso's anxiety to discover an underlining pattern in criminal tattooing motivated the intensification of his survey drawings. In favor of the tattoo documentation, the arms, upper body, legs, head of the criminal were graphically dissected and scattered on the plates of the "Atlante,"⁸¹ the fifth volume to accompany his treatise on the delinquent man and illuminate with illustrations the theoretical framework.

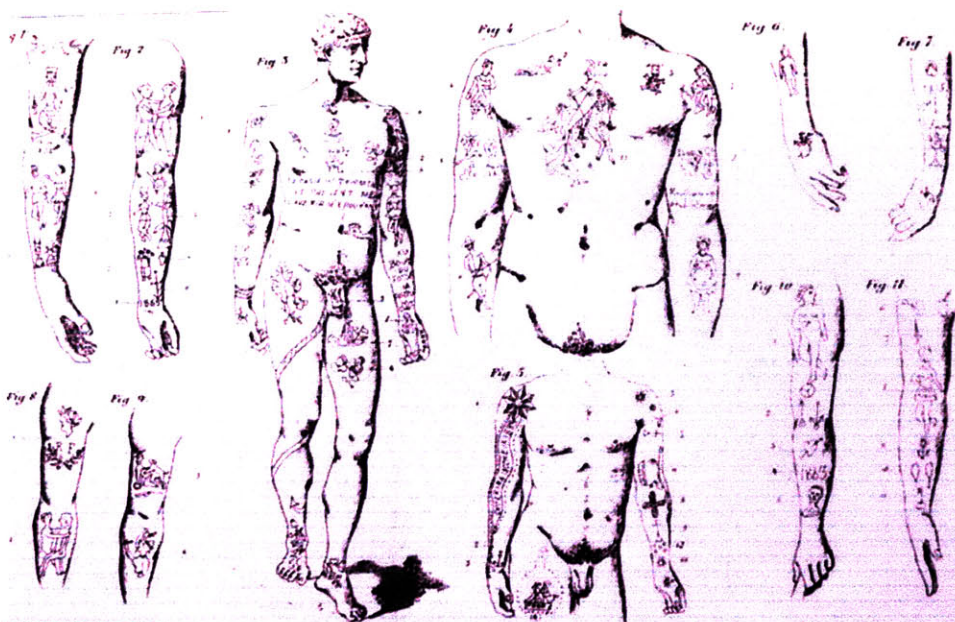


Figure 29. Sketches of tattoos on the 5th volume of "L'Uomo Delinquente"

⁸⁰ Lombroso, Cesare. *The Criminal Anthropological Writings of Cesare Lombroso Published in the English Language Periodical Literature During the Late 19th and early 20th Centuries*. Ed. Horton David and Katherine Rich (Ontario: Edwin Mellen Press, 2004), p. 128.

⁸¹ "Atlante" is the 5th volume at the second edition of "L' Uomo Delinquente." It consists of plates with drawings surveying the different tattoos, forms of skulls, types of scars and bodies in general, that Lombroso had carefully collected throughout his career.

With the end of the Italian unification process and Lombroso's transfer to the University of Torino and the Pesaro Asylum in 1872, not only did he extend the research to include the criminal's body as a morphological entity, but he also took into account art-objects created by the criminal. Graffiti on the walls and the vases, "pictografia", "the peculiar and atavistic tendency to express the thoughts and specially those that preoccupy him [the criminal], with figures,"⁸² petit sculptures, and even hand-writing, were all compared to the skull's diameter, the nose's form, any asymmetries between the left and right side of the body, the length of the hands and so on. Abnormal behavior and criminality was perceived as already embedded in the body of the imprisoned, and the task of criminal anthropology was to decipher the traits found in the body.

To sum up in a few words the results of a study of six thousand three hundred and four living criminals, I found that the delinquent, when a minor, has a higher stature, and when an adult a lower stature than normal, and darker hair. Thieves especially are apt to have submicrocephaly more frequently than normal beings, but less often than insane, while swindlers, bandits, and assassins are apt to have a head of exaggerated size, similar to that of the racial type, but larger. Congenital criminals present frequent cranial and facial asymmetry; this is especially the case with ravishers and thieves, and yet less in them than in the insane, although they exhibit more traumatic lesions of the head, and greater obliquity of the eyes.

There are several differential points in the various classes of criminals. In assassins we have prominent jaws, widely separated cheek bones. Assailants have brachycephaly and

⁸² Lombroso, Cesare. *Palinsesti del Carcere: Storie, Messaggi, Iscrizioni, Graffiti dei Detenuti delle Carceri alla Fine dell' Ottocento* (Firenze: Ponte alla Grazie, 1996), p. 81.

long hands Ravishers have short hands, medium sized brains ⁸³

In Lombroso's perception, the organic element indicated a natural bent for a particular criminal activity. A humped back instigated the development of forgery habits, as it offered the individual the "natural" privilege, over somebody with a straight back, when working over the desk. Long hands constituted the biological advantage of the pickpocket and the assassin who need to act rapidly and keep them in a distance. Abnormalities on the genital organs were perceived as the main cause of sexual perversion. The positivist school not only interpreted criminality in terms of "evolutionary throwbacks", but also upheld in the "organic" catalogues in the sense that the weaver, blacksmith, peasant, soldier were all born as such and they could never develop to something else. More than that, it provided a guideline to morphologically identify, classify and distinguish diverse parts of the population.

3.2. The discipline of Criminal Anthropology

The catalog created by the Lombroso team was extremely detailed and extensive. Statistical tables showing the percentage of certain body configurations (height, size of head, color of hair etc) among the criminal population, index cards of noses, ears and skulls, survey drawings of any morphological abnormalities supplemented the theoretical premises. "Among Europeans the custom [of tattooing] has gradually disappeared in the higher classes, and persists only among peasants, workmen, shepherds, sailors and soldiers, but especially among criminals," ⁸⁴ Lombroso would claim among others. Short hands, long hands, cranial

⁸³ Lombroso, *Selected Writings*, p. 119-120.

⁸⁴ Lombroso, Cesare. *Selected Writings*, p. 124.

asymmetry, mutations of the spinal column, ornamentation of the skin were some of the morphological peculiarities to be connected with the character and respective class and race of the criminal. The task of identifying "who is who" almost acquired an aesthetic value with criminal anthropology. The symmetrical, unornamented, average body juxtaposed to the asymmetrical, ornamented, excessive body of the criminal implied a further correlation that anathematized certain morphologies and privileged others, engrafting, hence, ethics into aesthetics.

Though Lombroso was not the first to postulate the formal analysis in pursuit of behavioral patterns, he was the one who brought it within the framework of the modern institution. It was because within it, that each individual to enter the penitentiary network, or already within it, was thoroughly documented with the use of the latest technologies available: instruments of measurement, photography, and other microbiological laboratories. Accompanied by a short description of the specimen's background, the extracted data was entered on an index card that was later archived for the pedagogical use of the departments of criminal anthropology and other scholarships. The deciphering of the atavistic behavior required the participation of diverse disciplines, but, more than that, it called for a highly standardized study that could simultaneously emphasize the singularity of each case study and systematize the data as if the individual constituted a unit of the system. Statistics came into play as the tool to proceed with such a systematization of data, to regulate the results of the research, to organize the assumptions of the research and to, at last but not least, qualify the thesis of the researcher.

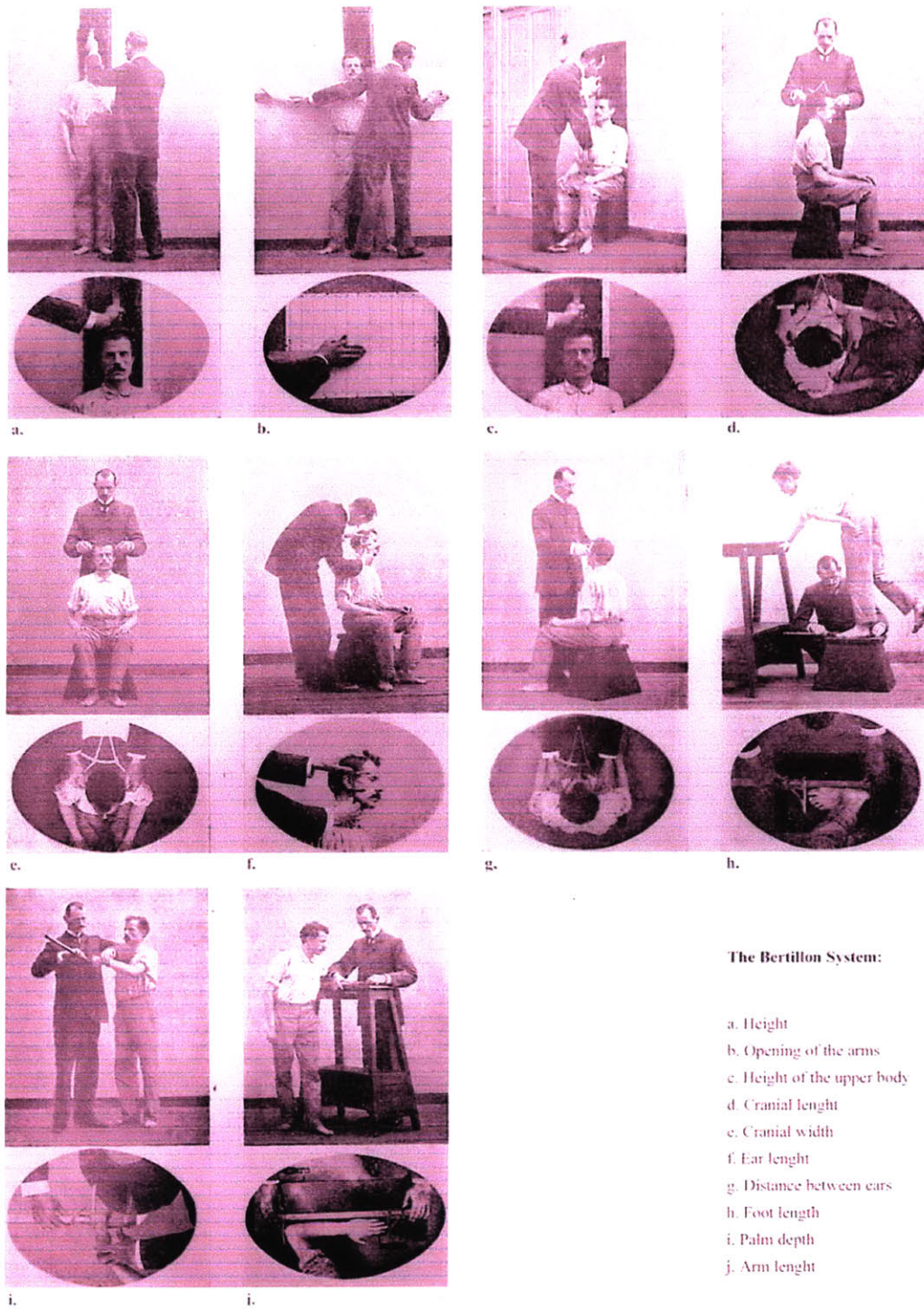
With Cesare Lombroso lecturing on Criminal Anthropology and conducting research in the University of Turin and simultaneously

publishing the results of his researches in the *Rivista di Discipline Carceraria* and the *Archivio di Psichiatria, Neuropatologia, Antropologia Criminale e Medicina Legale*, the Positivist School soon dominated the discourse on penal reform in Italy. Beltrani-Scalia, fascinated with the results of Lombroso's research and the influence of his school, invited him in 1882 to organize the proceedings of the 1st International Congress on Criminal Anthropology so as to accompany the 3rd International Penitentiary Congress, both held in Rome in 1885.⁸⁵ Presenting in the penitentiary congress the invention of a standardized measuring system for the documentation of the body, and exhibiting in the other congress the machinery developed around it and plates conducted upon the new system, Alphonse Bertillon (1853-1914) systematized the method of identifying individuals based on anthropometry. Before the invention of the fingerprint, identification was structured around the geometry of the body: the height, the length of arms, the length of the upper body, the dimensions of the skull and the foot, palm and arm size. Bertillon geometrized the body in such a generic way that the system could be applied to a variety of diverse bodies, while the combination of the measurements could only resemble the body of one individual.

Apart from templates of the Bertillon measurement system, the exhibition that accompanied the congress of criminal anthropology included index cards of criminals, plates with the diverse morphological types of ears (Fig. 30), noses etc and the language developed in order to describe them, along with a collection of art-objects created within prison for the personal pleasure of the imprisoned.⁸⁶ All the objects exhibited

⁸⁵ "Corriere di Roma," L' *Illustrazione Italiana*, Novembre 17, 1885.

⁸⁶ "Corriere di Roma," L' *Illustrazione Italiana*, Novembre 17, 1885.



The Bertillon System:

- a. Height
- b. Opening of the arms
- c. Height of the upper body
- d. Cranial length
- e. Cranial width
- f. Ear length
- g. Distance between ears
- h. Foot length
- i. Palm depth
- j. Arm length

Figure 30. The Bertillon system of measurement as it was presented for the needs of the School of Scientific Police.

were reflecting the positivist's school anxiety about locating and defining the criminal type through close observation and classification of all its aspects. Typology was the core topic at the cell exhibition of the penitentiary congress as well. Architecture was addressed as the surveillance and confinement technology to be built around the "criminal type." Unlike the renaissance perception of the human body as something extending in space, the criminal body appeared in the exhibitions as something to be confined by architecture. Preceding, and may be foreseeing, the meaning modernists attributed to the human body, the "uomo delinquente" was geometrized as the subject matter to designate the dimensions of the architecture around it. The height and width of the cell, the vault structure of the ceiling, the dimensions of the door and the window, were all designed so as not to exceed the minimum standard of prison living conditions. With criminal anthropology the measurement of the delinquent man acquired an additional implication; that of the metrical unit to be addressed by architecture in order to reduce the cost of prison construction.

3.3. The School of Scientific Police

After the conference the ideas of the positivist school bequeathed to gradually be noticed in diverse fields, like sociology and psychiatry. In particular, Enrico Ferri's division of the criminals into five categories in the field of sociology, addressed distinct kinds of punishment based not on the type of crime, but on the type of criminal: the insane should be treated in asylums, born criminal should either be sentenced to death or constrained for life; habitual criminals, chance criminals and criminals by

passion should be placed in prisons and be held in cellular isolation.⁸⁷ Lombroso welcomed Ferri's proposal, and even suggested the establishment of appropriate institutions across the Italian peninsula, mainly asylums.

Responding to Lombroso's call for modernizing institutions in accordance with the positivist school at thought, another student of his, Salvatore Ottolenghi (1861-1934) founded the School of Scientific Police in 1897.⁸⁸ The reform of prisons on the base of the new discipline proved to be a slow process, as bureaucracy delayed its application while the discrepancy between the more perfected crime and the way-behind-perfection penal system, was raising an issue of "public security."

[The] Penal Code does not anymore correspond to the scientific progress while on the contrary, the growth of crime continues to, more-or-less, address the advancements of civilization for its perfection.⁸⁹

The suggested mechanism to overtake crime's spread was the School of Scientific Police, designed at the intersection of the existent penal system with the field of criminal anthropology and would guard.

The school was transferred to the *Regina Coeli* prison in 1903⁹⁰ so as to be closer to the available "specimens," led by the positivist's school call for empirical research. "This teaching [of the School of Scientific Police] naturally should not be theoretical. That's why many of the courses are dedicated to the study of the sentenced. They are objects

⁸⁷ Ferri, Enrico. *Criminal sociology*. Translated by Joseph I. Kelly and John Lisle. Ed. William W. Smithers. With introductions by Charles A. Ellwood and Quincy A. Myers (New York: Agathon Press, 1967 [c1917]), pp. 138-139, 506-516.

⁸⁸ Ottolenghi, Salvatore. *L' Insegnamento Universitario della Polizia Giuriziarica Scientifica* (Torino: Fratelli Bocca, 1897), p. 3.

⁸⁹ Ottolenghi, Salvatore. *L' Insegnamento Universitario...*, p. 27.

⁹⁰ Ottolenghi initially launched the theories of the positivist school at the Università di Siena, in the department of medical studies, where he was a lecturer.

selected by the imprisoned of the *Regina Coeli* prison that are presented at the alumni of the school"⁹¹ Ottolenghi explained to continue by claiming that "our [Italian] prisons should function as criminal hospitals."⁹² By 1903, the construction of the prison had been completed and *Regina Coeli* was operating as a custodial prison for the criminals waiting trial, executing the final part of their sentence or awaiting transfer between institutions. Hence, the prison functioned as a portal to the Italian penitentiary network and, therefore, provided a potential wealth of material for the school's research.

The idea of a school for guardians and policemen, however, was not new at all. Already from the 1st International Penitentiary Congress in London, the need for special schools in order to educate prison officers had been emphasized.⁹³ The Italian government was among the first to respond and, in 1873, created a School of Guardians and Sub-Guardians in the same establishment that would later host the Scientific Police, *Regina Coeli*.⁹⁴ The school was mostly occupied with the instruction of methods to preserve the uneventful proper operation of the prisons and to repress any kind of misbehavior within the limits of penitentiary establishments.⁹⁵ The old school had, more-or-less, a military character and the students were engaged to a soldiers' training that was centralized

⁹¹ Ministero dell' Intero. *L' Insegnamento della Polizia Scientifica e le Funzioni del Segnalamento e delle Investigazioni Giudiziarie nell' Amministrazione della Pubblica Sicurezza in Italia* (Roma: Tipografia Mantellate, 1914), p. 4-5

⁹² *Rivista di Discipline Carcerarie*, Anno XXVIII, 22.

⁹³ The committee of the congress did actually postulate two questions regarding the formation of a school for police officers: the first regarding the supervision of the convicted and the most effective ways of supervision (effective in the sense of discipline) and a second one regarding the necessity of special schools for the education of prison officers. See: Transactions of the 1st International Penitentiary Congress, *Prisons and reformatories at home and abroad, being the transactions of the International penitentiary congress held in London, July 3-13, 1872, including official documents, discussions, and papers presented to the Congress*. Edited by Edwin Pears, at the request of the International committee (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1872), p. 395-401.

⁹⁴ *Rivista di Discipline Carcerarie*, Anno III, 1873, pp. 444-445.

⁹⁵ *Rivista di Discipline Carcerarie*. Anno V, 1875, pp. 286-287.

around the prison events and daily life. With the foundation of the Scientific Police,⁹⁶ the operative field of the old school extended outside the boundaries of the prison. Scientific Police would not only focus on the restraint of the imprisoned, but also on the “general identification for the awareness of man and the specialized identification of the dangerous classes among the social fabric and the individuals that compose them.”⁹⁷

With the emergence of the “public security” issue and the School of Scientific Police, the study of *L’ Uomo Delinquent* acquired new implications. Apart from its study as a malicious body in pursuit of the remedy to criminal activity, the imprisoned was analyzed as a body of knowledge that could facilitate the distinction between “the criminal and the gentleman”⁹⁸ within the social fabric. The trained officer would learn how to “apply the new finds of anthropology and normal [sic], pathological and criminal psychology, of sociology and medical science for the research and surveillance of criminals and the identification of the delinquents.”⁹⁹ In the post-Risorgimento Italy, as well as at most of the European countries and the USA, identity theft was flourishing. Ottolenghi offered a rich catalogue of criminals with more than one identity cards to use upon circumstances: an Italian pickpocket in France registered as a French citizen, an Italian bandit appropriated the identity of a Tunisian and was recognized by a Sicilian as her son and by a teacher of Arabic as a native speaker; a murderer sentenced to

⁹⁶ The School of Scientific Police took advantage of the initially temporary suspension of the School of Guardians and Sub-Guardians due to the demolition of the former convent and moved to the Regina Coeli prison. Once the new school was launched, the temporal suspension of the old school turned into permanent. See: *Rivista di Disciplina Carceraria*. Anno 1889, p. 5.

⁹⁷ Gasti, Giuseppe. *Il Corso di Polizia Scientifica*. (Roma: Tipografia ditta L. Cecchini, 1903), pp. 6-7.

⁹⁸ Ottolenghi, Salvatore. *Il Segnalamento del Delinquente in Servizio della Polizia Giudiziaria* (Palermo: Stabilimento Tipografico Lao, 1898), p. 24.

⁹⁹ Ministero dell’ Intero. *L’ Insegnamento della Polizia Scientifica...*, p. 3-4.

imprisonment at different locations along the Italian peninsula was registering with diverse identification data each time and so on and so forth.¹⁰⁰ Great Britain, France and Italy were in fact, at this time all in pursuit of an identification system that could securely distinguish and identify the “criminal individual.”

Since no method had proved to be superior over the other, Italians decided to apply them all: the Bertillion system for measuring the body, the photograph used by the French, the fingerprints as introduced by the British, the Lombrosian system of documenting scars, tattoos and morphological deviances. The task of Scientific Police was to try to bring these methods into accordance so as to standardize the identification card and to systematize the archive. The body of the imprisoned was “dissected” and deployed along the diverse laboratories and offices of the front wing of Regina Coeli, the individual was reconstructed as a representation in the “cartellino segnaletico” (Fig. 31) and the “specimen” was removed inside one of the numerous and identical cells.

A modern laboratory for the microscopical and chemical examination of sperma, traces of poison and blood is here installed, which is of the greatest value to the public prosecutor, the investigating magistrates and the Roman police. In the psychological laboratory the most up to date apparatus is used for registering psychological phenomena, but very simple instruments are used also, which police commissioners may have at their disposal later on.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Ottolenghi, Salvatore. *Il Segnalamento del Delinquente...*, pp. 3-25.

¹⁰¹ Borsini, Victor, “The School of Scientific Police in Rome.” In *Journal of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology*, Vol. 3, No. 6 (1913): 883.

Cartellino segnaletico Molengui

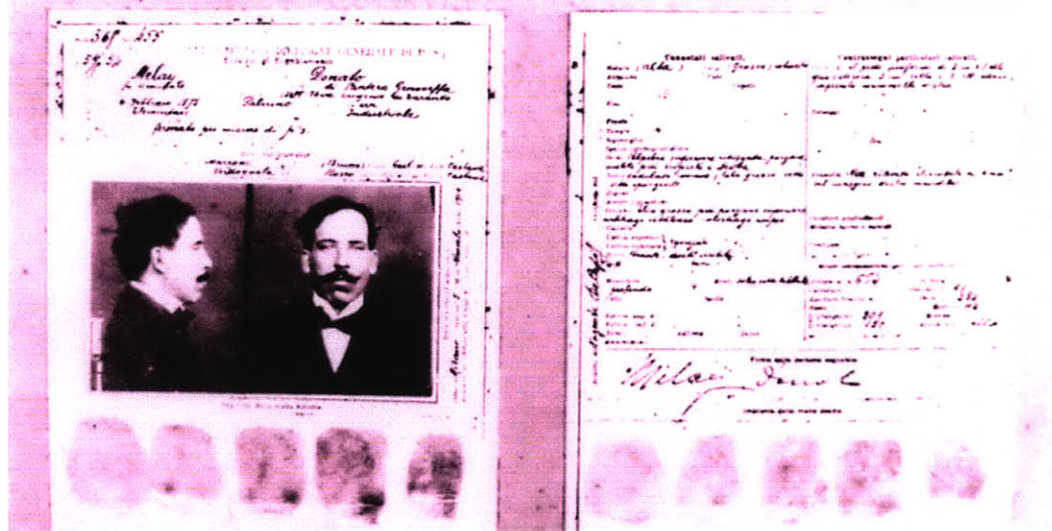


Figure 31. Paradigm of a "Cartellino Segnaletico" used at the School of Scientific Police.

The laboratory was only a part of the broader identification apparatus housed in the *Regina Coeli* prison and occupying the wing along the Via della Lungara: a museum of criminology, laboratories for chemical analysis and an archive of identification cards of Italian criminals were located on the first floor, services of identification and fingerprint, along with classrooms and amphitheatres on the second floor and a photographic laboratory on the third floor. As Victor Von Borosini reports in his article published in 1913 in the official *Journal of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology*, *Regina Coeli* prison could provide a "wealth of material which can be used for school purposes."¹⁰²

¹⁰² Borsini, p. 881.

The body of the criminal acquired a two-fold function within the educational operation of the Scientific Police. On the one hand, reduced to a representation on the "cartellino segnaletico" and archived at the police headquarters, it served as a tool to identify the individual as accurately as possible. On the other hand, replicas of its "significant" parts, death masks, footprints, fingerprints, survey sketches of skulls, detailed drawings of the tattoos and scars, plasters of noses, ears and so on, entered the respective index cards, so as to become the pedagogical tool for the needs of both the field of criminal anthropology and the school of scientific police (Fig. 32). Between the classified material and the object of observation, intervened the subjective interpretation of the officer, which Ottolenghi tried to control by standardizing the "cartellino segnaletico" and the language used for the description.

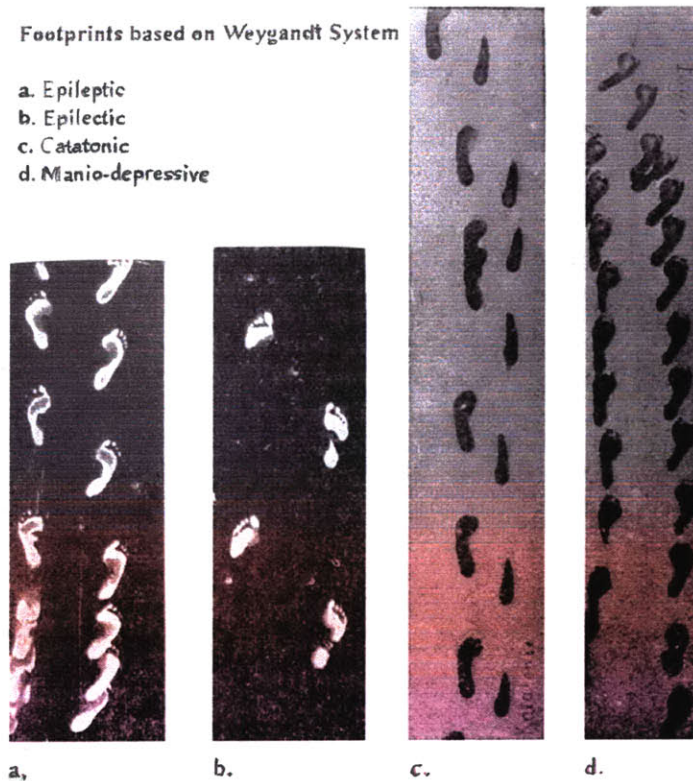


Figure 32. The Weygandt System of identifying footprints in the service of the School of Scientific Police.

onde il contorno

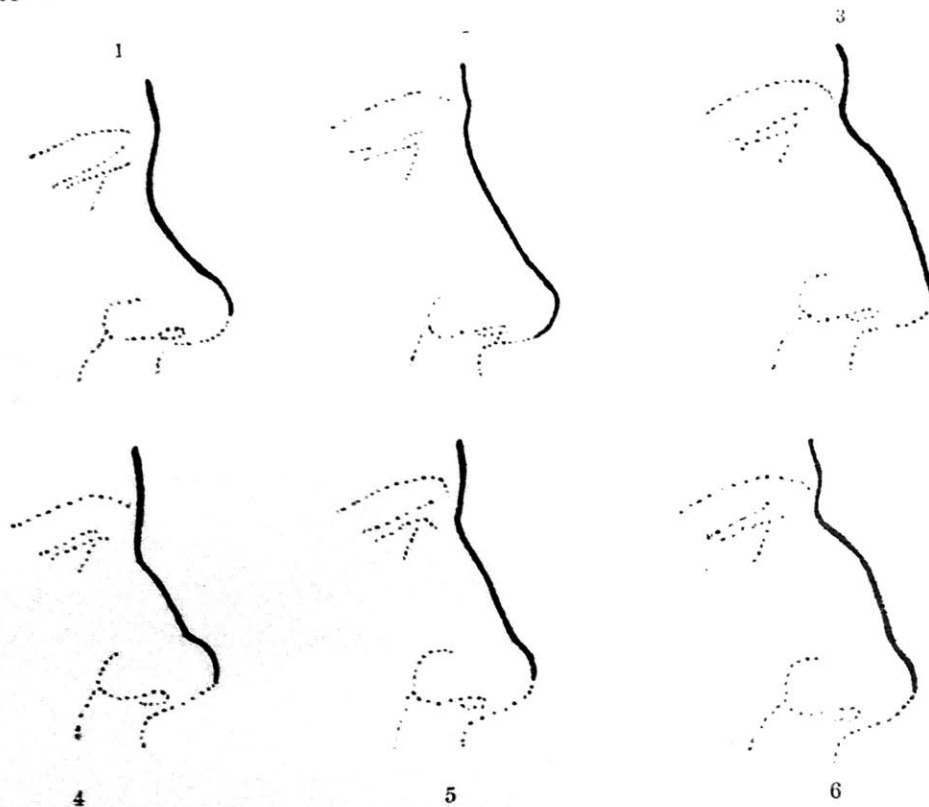


Fig. 9. — Profili del dorso del naso.

1, Profilo concavo; 2, Profilo quasi rettilineo; 3, Profilo convesso; 4, Profilo ondolato; 5, Profilo misto; 6, Profilo gibboso.

Figure 33. Terminology to describe the morphology of the nasal spine.

Since the officers trained within Regina Coeli would later be resituated in penitentiary institutions along the Italian peninsula, it was crucial to establish a common language of formal analysis between the dispersed body of policemen. In the "Trattato di Polizia Scientifica,"¹⁰³ a book published after his experience in the School of Scientific Police and addressed to both the students of the school and the already appointed officers, Ottolenghi provided a manual of how to document and describe the body; a manual that was a development of the Bertillon terminology.

¹⁰³ Ottolenghi, Salvatore. *Trattato di polizia scientifica*. Milano: Società editrice libraria, 1910-1932.

Hence, the profile of the nasal spine could be described as “concave, convex, almost rectilinear, wavy, mixed, and hooked,”¹⁰⁴ (Fig. 33) the form of the ear as “triangular, rectangular, oval, round, or with crossed dell,”¹⁰⁵ the tattoos as “complex or simple in form.”¹⁰⁶ The body, and especially the head, was mapped in diagrams that indicated the terminology to be used for its respective parts, while index cards designated the geometrical terms eligible for each form. The positivist school was not only in pursuit of the underlining pattern indicating and distinguishing the “criminal nature,” but also of the language that that would describe it.

In 1902, Ottolenghi proposed the “Cartellino Segnaletico,” an identification card that combined a condensed version of the index card he invented for the examination of the “delinquent”¹⁰⁷ and the generic diagram/guideline that designated the diverse areas of the head and how they should be described. Entitled “Descrizione Topographica della Testa” (Fig. 34) (Topographic Description of the Head), the diagram indicated the points of reference that an officer should use in order to describe the distinct parts of the head. Thus, the forehead was defined by the limit of the hair, the nasal area by the meeting point of the forehead with the nose, the edge of the nasal spine and the ending of the nostrils, the area

¹⁰⁴ Ottolenghi. *Trattato di polizia scientifica*, pp. 12-14.

¹⁰⁵ Ottolenghi. *Trattato di polizia scientifica*, pp. 12-14.

¹⁰⁶ Ottolenghi. *Trattato di polizia scientifica*, pp. 12-14.

¹⁰⁷ As Ottolenghi had not yet “discovered” the diagram, his standardized examination of the delinquent was rather detailed and excessive. Apart from a general introduction with the name, surname, citizenship, profession and social condition of the examined, the rest of the index card was divided into three parts: The somatoanatomic exams, the psyche exams and the memory exams. On the first phase the body’s height, arms opening, particular signs and marks, hair, functions of the vital organs, sensibility, mobility and the head were documented. The exams were, in particular, focusing on the head section, which was subdivided into the analysis and the synthesis of the data, with the first part being occupied with the description of the form and the second part with the categorization of the examined into an anthropological type, an ethnic type and, finally, a type of criminal according to the data provided. See: Ottolenghi, Salvatore. *Prospetto Sinottico per lo Studio dell’ Uomo Delinquente* (Palermo: Stabilimento Tipografico LAO, 1897), pp. 1-4.

around the eyes was defined by the beginning and ending of the eyebrows and the eyes, the mouth by the meeting-point between upper and lower lip and their respective higher and lower apex points and the jaws by their lower point in profile view and the meeting angle with the rest of the head's rear.¹⁰⁸ This detailed analysis of the human head was additionally supported by the Bertillon system of measurement and the French type of photograph that dissected the front and side view of the face in two frames.¹⁰⁹ The result was an identification card announcing the name, surname, date and place of birth, the social class and the crime committed, above a front and side portrait of the imprisoned on the front page, and a full standardized description of the body on the back side of the card. The card was signed by the registered individual, while all ten fingerprints were imprinted on the bottom band of the sheet.

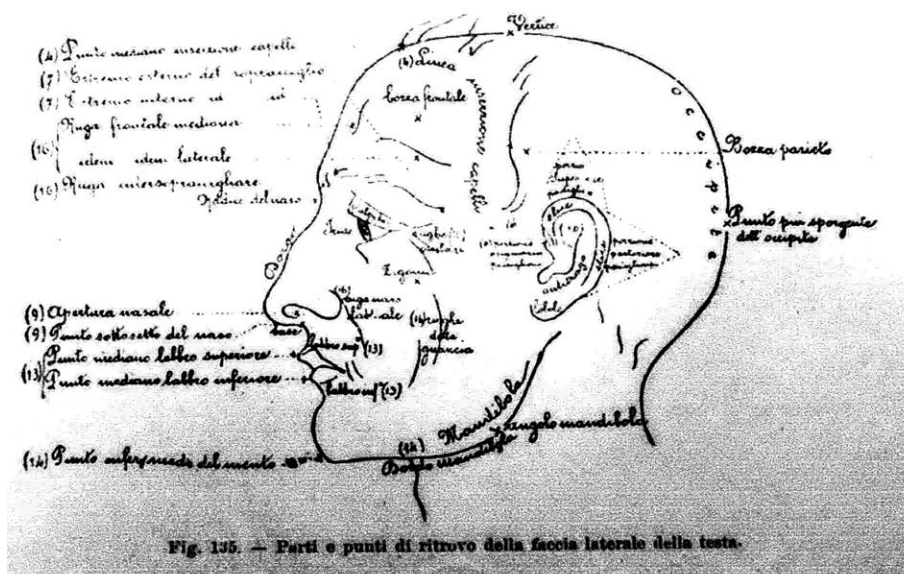


Figure 34. Descrizione Topografica della Testa (Topographic Description of the Head).

¹⁰⁸ Ottolenghi. *Trattato di polizia scientifica*, pp. 98-99.

¹⁰⁹ Preceding the French type of photograph, the British one combined the two views of the head in one frame by the use of an oblique mirror. Criticized as confusing, it was abandoned for the more standardized French type.

The motto was pretty much “divide, deploy, schematize, tabulate, index and record everything in sight (and out of sight) make out of every observable detail a generalization and out of every generalization an immutable law,”¹¹⁰ as Edward Said puts it. *Regina Coeli*’s front wing was, for sure, the place where Italy exercised this schema of colonization for its own “good.” It might lack a colony, a *topos* to impose its presence and, therefore, re-assure its existence and power, but it had more than enough provinces within the country’s borders to “colonize” under the Italian Risorgimento project. The establishment of Scientific Police was initially motivated by the need to standardize the identification system of the criminal population. The identification methods that emerged through the study of the delinquent later exceeded the constraints of the prison to be applied to the rest of the population. Even though, both the school and the Italian criminal anthropology in large were heavily criticized by their French counterparts as lacking any scientific grounds, the identification systems launched by the positivist school invaded the social fabric and were applied to the rest of the population.

However, what I really want to claim here is that, regardless of hosting the function of the new school and its “services,” *Regina Coeli*’s front wing did not play the pivotal role at the development of identity politics; it was rather the necessary architectural supplement. Prison architecture was tied to identity politics not by providing space for the identification services, but, rather, by segregating the criminal masses and isolating the individual. The “cell” constituted the architectural

¹¹⁰ The quote is found in: Sengoopta, Chandak. *The Imprint of the Raj: How fingerprinting was born in Colonial India* (Oxford: Macmillan, 2003), p. 43.

element to facilitate this multiple shift, from prison as a correctional institute to prison as a place of mere constrain, from the formal analysis of the criminal body to the formal analysis as a method to identify social class and behavioral patterns. In the late 19th century, the panopticon towers were removed as sovereign power moved towards abstraction. What remained though, and interestingly still remains, was the cell-based structure of the prison, the need to architectonize the crowd and to transform it into a multitude; to segregate each one individually but, yet, in a way that all potentially appeared as the same, or, to be more precise, as versions of the same average “criminal type.” The transfer of the Scientific Police from a university to a prison was not motivated by the space available on the front wing of *Regina Coeli*, but rather by the spatial configuration of cellular isolation; an architecture that introduced segregation as the tool to insulate individuality so as to produce generalization and abstraction. And here is where the Benthamian quote comes into play:

In the condition of our prisoners you may see the student’s paradox, *nunquam minus solus quam cum solus*, realized in a new way: to the keeper, a multitude, though not a crowd; to themselves, they are *solitary* and *sequestered* individuals.¹¹¹

To exaggerate the argument, modernity in Italy, was not announced by the state’s capacity to centralize, but, rather to disperse its power; to

¹¹¹ Bentham, Jeremy. “Panopticon , or the Inspection House: Containing the Idea of a New Principle of Construction Applicable to Any Sort of Establishment, in which Persons of Any Description are to be Kept under Inspection; and in the Particular to Penitentiary Houses, Prisons, Poor Houses, Lazarettos, Houses or Industry, Manufactories, Hospitals, Work-Houses, Mad-Houses, and Schools: With a Plan of Management Adapted to the Principle”, *The Works of Jeremy Bentham* (1787), Vol. IV, Ed. By John Bowring (New York: Russell and Russell, 1962), p.47

apply it on its individual separately. And prison architecture was all the way a faithful companion.

CONCLUSIONS

In the post-Risorgimento Italy, modernity was introduced by institutions: prisons, universities, hospitals, asylums and so on. Between the government reorganizing the state and the very particular reality of the prison cell with its grilled window, vaulted roof, security door, intervened the apparatus of the institution creating a distance, a gap between the two. Sovereign power was no more directly personified in the name of the ruler, king or pope, but rather something as abstract as the term *per se* implies. The modern state was announced with this exact dispersion of sovereign power into the social fabric through the founded institutions.

The prison of *Regina Coeli* entails a very particular story within this framework. As an example of prison architecture it reveals an anxiety to incorporate symbols of the former administrative bodies: the catholic cross, the front elevation of the Tuscan palazzo, the radial spatial configuration applied to penitentiaries at the north. The architecture of *Regina Coeli* overstated the victory of the new-born state over the former diverse powers of the peninsula before the Risorgimento project was actually completed. Unlike the public eponymous architecture of its era, the outshined prison did not negotiate national identity in terms of style, but rather in terms of spatial structures deprived of ornament.

However, the research on the connection between the particular prison and national identity soon departed from the discourse on Italianism to engage with the notion of modernity. The relationship between prison architecture and modernity is multileveled. First of all, prisons were among the first, if not the first, buildings to elevate

functionalism, program, economy in construction and simple unornamented forms into the ultimate values of their architecture. Precisely because prisons occupied an ambivalent position in the state's value system: on the one hand they propagated power and authority over the social fabric and, therefore, they reassured the state's existence, and on the other hand they were perceived as "places of shame." Aesthetics could be exercised at the design of a university, an exposition hall, the palace of justice, but not on a penitentiary institution.

More than that, Regina Coeli exemplified the intersection of two parallel researches; the one on the typical cell and the other on its typical inhabitant, the imprisoned. On the one hand, the cell constituted an architecture designed around the typical criminal; an architecture meant to transform the imprisoned into the future industrial laborer. Hence, the cell, far from being a mechanism of confinement was designed as an apparatus to form the future typical laborer. On the other hand, in pursuit of the typical criminal, the field of criminal anthropology objectified the body of the imprisoned. To be more precise, the body was carefully measured and documented, in a way geometrized. In the late nineteenth century, the architecture of the cell was based on the dimensions of the typical imprisoned. The issue was not to provide a comfortable environment, but rather to standardize the design so as to foresee and designate all the functions of the imprisoned in the most efficient way. Prison architecture was in pursuit of the necessary height, width, lightning conditions and nothing more than that. To exaggerate the argument, in prison architecture we find one of the first efforts to standardize massive housing. During the research on the typical cell and criminal, prisons

launched the interval of the institution between individuals and the space they inhabit.

Finally, it was the architecture of cellular isolation that facilitated the initiation of this research. Following the call of the positivist school for empirical research, prisons provided a spatial configuration appropriate for it. The cells segregated the multitude of available specimens, guarantying and even qualifying the "scientific" character of the discipline. After all, the penitentiary was already announced as a science. By the time Regina Coeli was completed, the need for practice of its scientific premises emerged. Awkwardly enough, the same place where the criminal was studied in favor of the penitentiary discipline, was the one to give birth to identity politics applied throughout the Italian peninsula. *Regina Coeli* stands as a martyr of where and how 20th century modernity launched its foundations.

Returning to the beginning of this paper, the architecture of *Regina Coeli* was forged out of the effort to establish a cell type and an architectural structure identified as both Italian and modern; an effort that was documented at the pages of the journals on penal reform, at the congresses and at the cell exhibition. However, in the pursuit of the typical cell, the typical criminal, and the appropriate prison architecture, *Regina Coeli* did something else: it became the laboratory of identity in the Post-Risorgimento Italy; one of the central knots to the process that was left half-finished with the inauguration of the Kingdom of Italy, the Risorgimento per se.

APPENDIX

Figure 1:

Petitti di Roreto, Carlo Ilarione. *Della condizione attuale delle carceri e dei mezzi di migliorarla*. Torino, G.Pomba e comp., 1840.

Figure 2:

Peri, Carlo. *Notizie sulla Reforma delle Prigioni in Toscana*. Firenze: Coi Tipi della Stamperia Esistente nel Carcere delle Murate, 1850.

Figure 3:

Morichini, Carlo Luigi. *Degli istituti di carità per la sussistenza e l'educazione dei poveri e dei prigionieri in Roma : libri tre*. Ed. novissima. Roma: Stabilimento Tip. Camerale, 1870.

Figure 4, 5:

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Figure 8:

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Figure 9

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Figures 10, 11, 27:

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Figure 29:

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Figure 31:

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Figures 28, 30, 32, 33, 34:

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