

# RESTLESS ANTHROPOMETRIES: THE POSITIVIST PHOTOGRAPHY AND CAGLIARI "YOUNG CRIMINALS" BETWEEN THE NINETEENTH AND THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

## 1. Dominating the bodies

The topic of this paper is the role of the photographic image in positivist criminal anthropology in Italy and its relationship, in the construction of cultural differences based on racism. I will discuss the topic with reference to a Sardinian case.<sup>1</sup>

Assume racism as an ideological construct (or doctrine), which selects and offers value judgments on cultural diversity, basing them on the fact that natural data cannot be appealed. The judgments, in this context, determine precise "ordering" social practices of a claimed cultural chaos, of a cacophony that threatens the existence of a given universe. Generally speaking racism arises through speeches and images about the other, while personally it takes the form of prohibitions, censorship, restrictions to access some places or corporeal limitations which makes it an ideology dedicated to governing and controlling (if not eliminating) people in a physical sense.

The cultural differentiation processes in a racist sense also happens through operations on the bodies of the members of a particular social group, establishing the discriminating value of some of their connotations. The belief that within the genes of the individual is hiding the stigma, the physiological trait that determines his/her cultural personality as a doomed destiny, therefore, produces a precise idea of social difference as a pathology or a recessive factor. This logic legitimates the policies of domination or cultural exclusion, from the most deceitful to the most violent, as healing practices and disinfection of the social body.

When the "abnormal" cultural trait identifies or overlaps with the somatic one, and these are the most frequent cases, you enter an order where objectifying the body of the other is the inevitable premise to control and dominate its culture. Dominating the body of others, both materially and through knowledge, can be made through disciplinary actions, about which Michel Foucault has reflected for a long time (see his *Discipline and Punish*). The *panopticon* of the modern prison is a good example of the process of constructing the cultural difference as deviance, produced by controlling both physically and visually the misfit (Foucault, 1976). Another

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<sup>1</sup> For the draft of this contribution I would like to thank my colleague Francesca Giraldi, who informed me about the existence of the photographic collection at hand and whose related study has been the fundamental basis for this research. My grateful thanks are also due to prof. Silvano Montaldo, director of the Museum of Criminal Anthropology Cesare Lombroso in Turin, for having kindly allowed me the access to the archive of the museum and to Dr. Elena Gai for having generously given me assistance in her survey.

type of disciplinary action may consist in the control of his picture, with the purpose of perpetuating and recognizing in it the somatic reason of the insurmountable difference between “us” and “them” ( Pinney, 1992).

The history of total institutions in the West and that of the beginnings of cultural anthropology bring to light, that the problem of understanding the connections between racism and photography is considerably complicated by the presence, between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, of philosophical, scientific and ideological contradictory stances. These are characterized by alternating between the desire to meet and know empirically the extensive field of human and cultural differences, and the need to explain these same differences with concepts such as race, atavism or degeneration, in a logic whose danger seems not to be recognized by its advocates.

## 2. The fault in the genes

This is the case, in my opinion, of the representatives of the so-called “Scuola Positiva di Diritto Penale” (positive school of criminal law). As is known the history of this school, became famous for the promotion of its ideas and slogans, originated in Italy from the work of Cesare Lombroso and from some of his most successful publications, as *L'uomo delinquente* (*Criminal man*), 1889. What distinguishes this school is the extensive use of concepts such as atavism and degeneration, first used to explain individual and marginal phenomena, then applied to macro-social phenomena (Puccini, 1985). The positive school interprets the social and cultural phenomena in a criminological manner, where deviance appears in modern societies as the worst aspect of the eternal struggle for existence, where is concentrated «all the social and individual negative aspects, biological and cultural» (Da Re, 1978, p. 289).

Renzo Villa underlines (1984), referring among the others to Ferdinand Tönnies, that here we have an important metaphor that seems to be a significant outcome of the development of human sciences in the second half of the nineteenth century, that of the society as a body, as a biological organism. This approach allows you to switch, without changing interpretive categories, from individual to collective phenomena, to extend the concept of individual disease to that of social disease and to conform the exponents of the medical science to those of the social ones, as the “curators” of the community; an overlap that Cesare Lombroso and his followers actually practiced.

The idea of deviance as the result of an individual and social genetic disorder at once, will be developed in different and divergent ways. While Enrico Ferri intended crime as a specific form of the struggle for existence on the anti-judicial and anti-social levels, according to Guglielmo Ferrero and Scipio Sighele crime and social life mingle together in a story as a struggle for the survival of the fittest and the strongest, where the idea of progress is overshadowed by that of evolution. We move from the idea of *struggle for life* in terms of adaptation to the environment, to the struggle for

survival among men, «eternal and universal mechanism as natural» (Da Re, 1978, p. 291).

Lombroso's theories are affected by both Haeckel's Biogenetic Law, which affirms the principle of the genetic relationship between the state of the organs and their function (e.g. between the skull and brain anatomy and mental activity), and the law of "layering of character" by Giuseppe Sergi, according to who the individual character consists of two main parts: one fundamental, the other temporary. Individuals summarize in themselves different layers corresponding to different stages of humanity (Da Re, 1978, p. 297). When diseases occur, negative influences of the environment or organic weakness ancient stratifications come to light, and with them the primitive instincts. This explains why the born criminals were more frequently found among the working and the subordinate classes, «whose living conditions were just the right ones to bring out the primitive instincts buried in the deep psyche.» (Ibid.). According to Sergi - Da Re concludes - «the lower classes are therefore still at the violence stage (...) swelling, then, that big group of ancestral and hypoevolutives beings made up of born criminals, deranged, children, fierce, southerners, 'colored', women who have not yet reached – and some will never reach - the apogee of evolution where is the civilized man, white, western, adult and male!» (Ibid.).

Following the same line of reasoning, Alfredo Niceforo with *Antropologia delle classi povere* (1908) contributed to the study of the subordinate social classes<sup>2</sup>. Instead of focusing on crime as an abstract "legal entity", the positive school of criminal law focused on the "natural" study of the criminal as a human act. There is thus the possibility to naturally study the poor man. «The *soma* is where everything happens and thus where the positivist scientist must seek and verify everything» (Da Re, 1978, p. 309). The emphasized individual heterogeneity appears, however, in the logic of the positive school, as an ambivalent element whose contradiction emerges as perhaps the most interesting aspect of this season of positivist studies, that Maria Gabriella Da Re (ibid) has got. Looking at the results, the subordination of certain social groups to others seems the mere effect of the *struggle for life*, a phenomenon that simply certifies the effectiveness of a series of socio-Darwinian laws appealed to explain the "scientific" social inequality. If one looks at the deep causes, the subordination appears as a disease, as an anomaly to be fought with reformatory instruments to restore balance to the social body. Therefore, the position of the social scientist fluctuates between those who certify a factual

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<sup>2</sup> About Alfredo Niceforo's research in Sardinia see also his famous *La razza delinquente* (1896), a weak study in Lombrosio's positivist style, which provoked in the island and outside more than a few wild reactions on which the reader can refer to Tiragallo, 1980, and Da Re, Tiragallo, 1985; on the studies about anthropometries on a large scale, criminality, diseases and deviance in Italy carried out by Enrico Ferri and others in the same period, refer to Farolfi, 1984.

situation, which appears as the structural condition for the proper unfolding of social life, and those who are called to 'correct' individuals nature-culture distortions, providing with operations of "social hygiene".

To grasp the issue in its historical and political aspects, the story of the Zanardelli Criminal Code is to be mentioned. The first criminal code after the unification of Italy was approved in 1889 and entered into force on the first of January of the following year. The debate that preceded its introduction saw the contrast of the classic orientation to the other, defined as "positive." The first conceived the crime as a voluntary and conscious violation of rules of criminal law, and from this one descended the principle of the chargeability of the offender, of his ability to sound mind and therefore the idea of punishment as 'necessary salary' of evil accomplished, afflictive, staff, proportional, determined, mandatory. The positive school instead declared that the crime should not be construed as a legal entity distinct from the agent, but as an individual and human event based on the bio-psychic structure of the criminal. So instead of the will, the responsibility and the offender's free will it was to be considered its social danger, that is to say the probability that the person could commit a crime. It followed that the retributive punishment was needed to be replaced by a system of security measures. The biological criminology model of the positive school aims for becoming an institutional model of the deviance treatment that, if accepted, could easily be turned into a criminal justice system with strong racist connotations, where the breed criminal, the crowd of born criminals once identified by positive science, would have had a treatment clearly far from the principle of personal responsibility. Therefore it would have given rise to precautionary internments in prisons or preventive measures of various types, including forms of prophetic "final solutions" (Mantegazza, 1897, cit. In Villa, 2005, p. 36).

### 3. Clues and visual evidences

The Museum of Criminal Anthropology "Cesare Lombroso" in Turin offers a good example of the use of the images in this logic of treatment of deviance. The materials collected in the Museum goes from 1850 to 1910; they are drawings, collections of artifacts, including extraordinary items made by inmates, photographs, books, skulls, heads and body parts in formalin, plaster casts of faces, wax replicas of faces of corpses, folder signs, among which stand out some human remains, collected to test the relationship between organic lesions of the brain and brain dysfunction. All this material is a "cabinet of curiosities" of deviance. «An almost complete declination of a primer of expressions and manifestations of the body far from the norm. Collecting evidence of all kinds Cesare Lombroso has collected the virtual body of the theories of that time» (Turzio, 2005, p. 3).

For Lombroso the photographs have a proof value, they are required to confirm the strength of the test results of the research. First observation: neither Lombroso, nor his students have ever practiced directly photography, (with the exception of the investigation on "young Sardinian

criminals”). In the disorder and heterogeneity with which the photographic material has come to us, we can nevertheless recognize a high representative value of all the functions that the photograph was called to fill in the positivist meaning. The main can be considered to “thematize the clue.” The “finger pointed” to the object is for Silvana Turzio the DNA of photography in the positivist meaning. Today this documentary photography can be understood as an extraordinary “machine to think” of the circumstances under which it was made. To do this we need to overcome the easy dichotomies between *art and document* or *illusion and truth* and move towards the binomial *clue/interpretation*. This leads us to focus attention on the use that is made of images, in which emerges the importance of their seriality. Many photographs collected in the Museum have recurring features, such as the distance of the subject from the machine, the front position of the subject, the focal length, the lighting, the presence in the frame of references to anthropometric measurement.



**Image 1)** Museo “Cesare Lombroso” di Torino. Folder *Delinquenti sardi*. From *verso*: “M. Antioco”.



**Image 2)** Museo “Cesare Lombroso” di Torino. Folder *Delinquenti sardi*.  
From *recto*: “T. Francesco detto Pezza de porcu”.

The purpose of those who had made them was not initially to identify a particular hidden in the subject, but to classify the individuals to be able to recognize them more easily. It was necessary to provide records for social control. Note that it is the archive in itself to work as a machine to control, not the individual image. Previously the repressive apparatus had used other tools to identify people 'at risk': branding, extirpation of anatomical parts, tattoo. Since 1870 has spread the mug shot: a fixed shot system, accompanied by textual profiling with types of universal definitions.

In England it is introduced the double shooting with mirror<sup>3</sup>, and fingerprints, while in France it is adopted the anthropometric data and the fixed shot with two devices. With the mug shot the direct visibility of deviant under control disappears. The photograph of the criminal, published by newspapers, replaces the public punishment. In the production of images it is marked a clear separation between the individual, state-run, medicalized, judged, examined, tested, isolated and the subject fixed in its intimacy or portraiture. At this point in the process enter the scientists of the positive school. “The institutional photographic procedure not only does become the indispensable means to observe and analyze the subject in retrospect, but also the most eloquent topography to identify the mental symptoms of the individual” (Turzio, 2005, p. 13). The institutional image not only does serve as evidence to strengthen the argumentations, but by actual text of “decryption” of the signs, a reading that can only be entrusted to the holders of the expert diagnostic look: forensic anthropologists (Villa, 2005).

#### 4. Sardinian young criminals

The case study shown below regards the files about the “*Sardinian criminals*” kept in the Archive of the Museum of Criminal Anthropology “Cesare Lombroso” in Turin. The collection contains 288 photographs that are a primary document source of the investigation conducted by Mario Carrara and one of his assistants, Efisio Murgia, in Cagliari, between 1899 and 1901, on the social and “criminal” condition of the children and young people known at the time as the *piccioccus de crobi*, literally “children of the baskets,” because of the container they used to carry, for a few coins, food to the “gentlemen” who purchased it. The collection is perfectly linked and uniform both for technique and style. The images portray invariably faces and bodies, often in full length, of about fifty boys aged between 10 and 17. The prints collected in the binder (the negatives are not traceable) more often depict each one a single child, in a frontal position with, in some cases, a mirror supported by an assistant put at 45 ° on the side of the head in order to obtain, according to the already mentioned procedures, a double vision, front and side of the skull of the subject. Another fact that emerges is that, as a rule children are portrayed with their poor clothes and always barefoot, only a few photographs document their naked bodies, in order to highlight specific diseases. In this collection, there are very few images of girls.

All photographs were taken in the rooms of the Anatomical Pathology ward of the University of Cagliari. Some laboratory instruments appear in the background of many images: microscopes, Bunsen burner, worktops, chairs, etc. The boys were then summoned to the place of work of the two

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<sup>3</sup> This technique will be also used by Efisio Murgia for some photographs of the “young criminals”, see pictures 3 and 4.

scholars, were visited and were detected their anthropological, anatomic-functional, psychological data together with their medical history and, finally, conclude Carrara and Murgia, «(...) we used the photographs to reproduce them» (Carrara, Murgia, 1901, p. 286).

In addition to this study there are various historical, literary and journalistic sources which say who were the *piccioccus de crobi*. The latter, apart from a dramatic oral memory existing in the city until a few decades ago, suggests that they are the first result of a phenomenon of urban youth maladjustment, already spread elsewhere. Cagliari at the turn of the century is a center that is growing in its bourgeois and commercial physiognomy, surpassing its aspect of mere administrative and military center that had distinguished it up to the mid-nineteenth century. The economic and demographic expansion, a certain business dynamism, the strong bond with the agricultural hinterland and with the mining basin in the Iglesiente area, the city planning under the town administration of Ottone Bacaredda, between 1892 and 1921, had favored its economic and population growth. In this city of fifty thousand inhabitants grow fringes in distress and disadvantaged brackets of the population. When the political movements and trade unions that defend the lower classes interests settle, it also increases the exposure of the less protected groups to marginality and misery, which is considerable different from the rural one. The lack of family protections, deportation or abandonment of primary education in many cases lead to waifs and strays. For many kids, Carrara points out, the alternative to education, that is the finding a job, does not occur. The daily life of many children is marked by intolerance of work and restlessness. After all their families do not offer them any protection or support, indeed, they are one more mouth to feed. So the “idle” straying of the *piccioccus de crobi* becomes a lifestyle and a social alternative separated from everything and fully enters into that deviance perceived as “criminal” by the Lombrosian school. Carrara and Murgia are seriously consistent with their disciplinary approach, the question of what type of crime is that practiced and experienced by these children who, if asked, candidly admit that yes, they “steal” (p. 287). At the top of the interest of researchers is the desire for the identification and classification of a clear social pathology. How to deal with the crime of these guys that is expressed in modest thefts of food, coins, pieces of coal or small tools? Also, how to consider the offenses against morality, such as heterosexual and homosexual promiscuity or prostitution and its exploitation that emerges in some cases? Carrara and Murgia note that despite the experience that many of them have made of imprisonment, even for 15 or 20 times, almost none of the *piccioccus*, once overtaken the adolescence, will pursue a real criminal career. «Our investigation has produced the result that among these kids it is rare to find a real criminal type. In each of these faces can be found true degenerative anomalies, but, especially in the most severe cases, they are never found accumulated in the same individual, which is, according to Lombroso, the criminal type» (p. 286). Family, economic and social factors are therefore

primarily responsible for their deviance, where the load of the “individual anthropological factor” is secondary.



**Image 3)** Museo “Cesare Lombroso” di Torino. Folder *Delinquenti sardi*.  
From *recto*: “T. Gabriele, S. Francesco, T. Francesco”.

In my opinion these words dictated by Mario Carrara allow to better understand what type of ethnographic encounter was activated between the two scholars and their little ‘patients’. Anatomical elements were measured: « (...) the skull, face, lower limbs, the size». The «pathological or degenerative abnormalities» sometimes encountered also emerged thanks to the measurements performed on a sample of students in public schools, which were considered “normal” (ibid.). What was the specific role attributed to the photographic documentation? Scholars say explicitly that

the set of anthropometric measurements is not able to express synthetically the situation, more or less pathological and deviant, of these young patients: «The analysis of the pictures reveal the abnormalities of these children and they are more demonstrative than the simple measurements and analytical description» (ibid.). The direct vision and the fixed image, according to the two researchers, “reproduce” the individuals and allow to capture synchronously the whole signs of individual pathology. Malnutrition, skin diseases, scoliosis, rickets, trachoma, intellectual deficits are revealed under the analytical action of the camera-microscope, according to an analogy emphasized by Francesco Marano (2007), documenting in this way, along with the physical pathology, the social one. Here intervenes a new element of reflection. The essay by Carrara about the *petits criminels* of 1901 clearly indicates that in addition to the case history, to the medical examination, measurements, and photographs, the boys were interviewed, although in ways that the report does not clarify. In some cases the history was revealed and the names recorded, other personal details and also their nicknames, generally reported on the back of photographic prints, data that provide additional information on the social and the imaginary life<sup>4</sup>. It is also clear that the guys answer to specific questions about their way of life, their families, about the causes of their straying, on their ways of feeding, of protecting from the cold, on the reasons of the school dropout and then, given the relevancy, they answer questions about their aspirations and their future. All of this constitutes the presence of an embryonic ethnographic dialogue and therefore an early indication of the development of a socio-urban anthropology that will emerge later with a research like that by Oscar Lewis on young people in Mexico City, which gave them the chance to speak (Lewis, 1966).

Carrara’s positivist ethnography can be fully understood only by connecting closely the text of the report presented at the conference in Amsterdam with the photographic collection preserved in the Lombroso Museum. In this way it can be understood that Carrara starts from the individuality of the boys, atomizes them by examining and documenting a number of bodies, then presents them as a collection of fully-enclosed case studies and made as individual objects of investigation. Carrara and Murgia summon the boys and place them in an environment other than their own. The guys are guests in a foreign territory. In the dynamics of this ethnography it can be felt, beyond the images of the *corpus*, the Largo Carlo Felice, the market of the town, the narrow streets of the Marina district, the arcades of Via Roma and the various parts of the port where the *piccioccus de crobi* roamed during the day and where they find shelter at night covering

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<sup>4</sup> Here is a list of the nicknames recorded: *Brocciscedda*, *Bucconi*, *Cabriolu*, *Chicchibacchis*, *Malicenau*, *Mincacciu*, *Muzzola*, *Peddicotta*, *Peddizzoni*, *Petzeresi*, *Pezza de Porcu*, *Pitticcheddu*, *Quadrittu*, *Rigoletto*, *Strattallau*, *Su Nimigu*, *Su Para*.

themselves with rags. This 'field' of observation will be subsequently made by the photograph, for example with amazing images of the children in the twenties by the linguist Max Leopold Wagner. In the same years the situation of the *piccioccus* will find keen observers and narrators, who can not avoid describing them with indulgent, colourful or even vivid accents, that is, as signs of memory and past, a "Cagliari that no longer exists." The photographic work of Carrara and Murgia presents no trace of sketching, color, nostalgia. In the images we can not find any trace of an allochronic distance today in the specific sense indicated by Johannes Fabian (1983, 2000), that is, the lack of coevalness between observer and observed. Instead, we can recognize in them the will to include the time of the guys in a synchrony adherent of scientism. The bodies of the boys, once caught in the plate, attest the fulfillment of the experimental process and become physical-anatomical data, part of a potentially unlimited archive that spans the time and that, moreover, intends to organize it. Following Francesco Faeta it is compulsory to « (...) rethink the time node behind the creation of the image and its observation, working on the antinomy existing between allochrony and anachronism (...)» (Faeta, 2011, p. 21). In this direction we must therefore ask ourselves "who observes whom" in the occasion given by Cagliari in the late nineteenth century, caught in one of the aspects of his incipient modernity. Regarding the size of the place it is always Faeta who notes that it is not element of interest in itself, «(...) but it becomes the intersection of an articulated procedural dynamic that is based on the multiplicity of connections reverberated in it » (p. 19). The Clinic of Anatomical Pathology, of the University of Cagliari is the place where they met the 288 photographs have documented the binder.

We can better explain the crucial analysis of this vision as that of a new moment where «(...) what we see is what we want to see taking for grant something told by others» (Faeta, 2011, p. 19). In this phenomenological spirit it is possible to ask: what did the two scholars want to see in the image of the *petit criminels*? What have they shown of themselves? What did they want to see who has come to our attention?

The complexity of these dynamics has been broached in very close terms, by Joanna Scherer (1992) with an empirical approach; for her the photographs as objects become reliable sources of analysis and interpretations if evaluated through the interrelationships between photographer, subject and observer. They produce a field of inquiry that include «(...) the study of the photographer's vision of the Other, as well as the academic's perspective on the photographer; study of the subject's influence over the image, as well as an analysis of the subjects themselves; and the study of the viewer's construction of the Other, as well as the audience's use of the image». (Scherer, 1992, p. 32)

Following this direction, the closer examination of the images of the young Sardinian "criminals" thus brings to clarify first that Mario Carrara and Efsio Murgia observed in the *petit criminels* clues of potential diseases, but at the same time they have turned on them a look, certainly paternalistic,

but that did not exclude care and participation. The visual data primarily expresses the desire to objectify the body of the young criminals to take the evidence of abnormalities. Francesca Giraldi noted Cesare Lombroso's little use of the photographic documentation (Giraldi, 2008, p. 20). His disciples, including Carrara, will make extensive use of them getting especially from the archives of prisons and the various offices of the Ministry of the Interior. Their confidence in the objectivity and the evidence of the factual evidence provided by the photography make it an irreplaceable tool to be able to establish, for example, the origin of innate or acquired crime in individuals. The confidence in this method of investigation on a large scale and the lack of an appropriate institutional archive about Juvenile delinquency may have been, according to Giraldi (p. 23), the reasons for the decision of the scholars to realize the photographic *corpus* of the *piccioccus de crobi*. A specialized corpus, accessible only by the scientific community and possibly by a public informed and attentive to the social debate.



**Image 4)** Museo “Cesare Lombroso” di Torino. Faldone *Delinquenti sardi*.  
From *recto*: “S. Francesco”

How did the portrayed children participate in this meeting? The examination of the images can only help to build some largely questionable hypothesis. We start from the premise that the children visited, measured and photographed *agree to be there* and agree to leave a trace of this consent. So this meeting was based on some kind of previous encounter. Mario Carrara and Paola Lombroso had settled in Cagliari in the district of the Marina in March 1899. Carrara was teaching as professor of Forensic Medicine at the University of Cagliari, while Paola Lombroso was completing her study on the living conditions of the underprivileged classes of Italian society, later published under the title *Nella penombra della civiltà* (Carrara, Lombroso, 1906). The situation of the *piccioccus de crobi* becomes a daily experience for them, and we can reconnect the familiarity with this district to the relative ease with which the boys accept the meeting. They bring in the images their physicality, but what is striking, as a permanent trait, is that their eyes seem to escape the situation, they seem to stand outside the visual meeting allowed by the shot. The relationship between the photographer and the subject, in this case, was that of the hierarchical subordination, of the control by the first of all the situation. The point of view of the subject emerges vaguely, as a residual part. Some looks 'do not read' the situation, others give an unclear reading: they recognize a goal, a logic in the action without sharing it. The boys' eyes sometimes express absence, directed over the shot, sometimes concentration to obey a request from the photographer. The body of the examined individuals determines the image without individuality and an awareness of the observed and portrayed children. Ultimately, the looks of the subjects are not "intentional" as David MacDougall meant (2006, pp. 3-9) and that we have often used, they do not express any projective will and mimetic intention on the other, nor a further understanding of what they have ahead.

Except in one case. That of a boy nicknamed "Rigoletto" (fig. 5), characterized by a severe form of rickets, which was also portrayed naked full-length, leaning against a wall, a case that renew a lot of questions, related to the intention of his photographers. Was the scholar really interested in the relationship between these abnormalities and a possible tendency to delinquency?

Or is it an interest connected to a desire of redemption, to restore the decay conditions such as malnutrition, promiscuity, misery that can have caused them? It must be remembered that it is rarely found among these images one in which a boy is smiling in front of the lens. Among these there are all the images of "Rigoletto", that will address to the photographer a gentle and confident smile, perhaps because he appreciates the photographers interest and to whom he desires to return a deliberate and precise attention. A look that strikes the modern observer because it witnesses, no doubt, that in this case a web of looks, a polyphony of communication occurred with the full knowledge, albeit perhaps only for a moment.



**Image 5)** Museo “Cesare Lombroso” di Torino. Folder *Delinquenti sardi*.  
From *verso*: “F. Pietro, detto Rigoletto”.

In conclusion it is important to remember again that the observations discussed in this paper are based on hypothesis, where to the trace left by Barthes of the event eternalized through the image (“it happened, and it is happening,” v. Barthes, 1980) it has been associated the information obtained outside of these images. The arrival of Mario Carrara and his wife in Cagliari in 1899, the interests of Paola Lombroso for the subordinate female and juvenile world and then gradually the contacts to concretize the investigation, as described by Francesca Giraldi, are essential to make the mosaic of interpretation of these images, which also witness a cultural change. They give in my opinion a confused account of an attempt to articulate a discourse on modern society and its differences. Some parts of this attempt go in the direction of an empirical concreteness, which

dissolves the heaviness of the theoretical assumptions of the positive school. Carrara and Murgia conclude, as already mentioned, their report in Amsterdam declaring that they do not recognize in the boys of Cagliari any degenerative hereditary defect or trace of the “born criminal”, and they ask for them a rescue of solidarity, food and education. Other elements are the distance, paternalism, evolutionist ethnocentrism and a latent ideological racism that remains in the shadows, as a lifeless guest in this discourse on cultural diversity.

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