

A Scientific Defence of Jewish Emancipation in *fin-de-siècle* Italy: Cesare Lombroso's *L'antisemitismo*

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Abstract

In 1894, Cesare Lombroso (1835–1909) published L'antisemitismo e le scienze moderne (Anti-Semitism in the Light of Modern Science), the most important among the few thematic books released in fin-de-siècle Italy. Himself an Italian Jew, the renowned criminologist tried to build an authoritative defense of Jewish emancipation challenged by European anti-Semitism, by adopting the tools of his social science. The alarming political phenomenon was interpreted through the lenses of his Darwinian psycho-sociological thought, and anti-Semitic racist ideology was rejected in the name of a scientifically 'correct' solution of the anthropological problem of Jewish racial status. This essay focuses on Lombroso's L'antisemitismo through an intellectual-biographical approach, which is also attentive to the criminologist's subjective Jewishness. I will regard it as the climax of a decades-long Lombroso's scientific engagement with the Jewish question, by reconstructing the genesis of his ideas on Jewish racial status and on the origins of anti-Jewish hatred well before the 1893 project of the book. Then, I will reconstruct its publication process, its contents and its reception by Italian public opinion, both Gentile as Jewish.

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In 1894, the renowned Cesare Lombroso (1835-1909), a controversial advocate of positivist social science and culture,¹ published *L'antisemitismo e le scienze moderne* (*Anti-Semitism in the Light of Modern Science*), one of the few thematic books released in *fin-de-siècle* Italy. According to the preface,² the celebrated criminologist approached the subject with some discomfort, initially finding the question of the legitimacy of “a hatred between peoples” irritating and antithetical to the standards of modern civilization. Nonetheless, socio-anthropological analysis enabled him to resolve the issue, in a manner he deemed both satisfactory and, more importantly, free from “the danger [...] of partiality.” Lombroso claimed his objectivity was validated by the fact that he was in alignment with the findings of prominent international “masters” of science, who had studied anti-Semitism from impartially perspectives distinct from his own. His “[righteous] judgment,” he asserted, would convince public opinion and be rejected only by “fanatics” who, due to “congenital tendencies” and “instinctive feelings,” politicized an “ethnic question”³ to gain “unhealthy glory.” His goal, however, was

¹ The bibliography on Lombroso's science is vast. For a critical review, see Silvano Montaldo, “Lombroso: The Myth, The History,” *Crime, Historie & Sociétés / Crime, History & Societies* 22, no. 2 (2018): 31-61.

² Cesare Lombroso, *L'antisemitismo e le scienze moderne* (Turin-Rome: Roux, 1894), 5-7 (henceforth ‘ASM’). On this book, see Nancy A. Harrowitz, *Anti-Semitism, Misogyny & the Logic of Cultural Difference: Cesare Lombroso and Matilde Serao* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994); Delia Frigessi, “Cattaneo, Lombroso e la questione ebraica,” in *Nel nome della razza. Il razzismo nella storia d'Italia 1870-1945*, ed. Alberto Burgio (Bologna: il Mulino, 1999), 247-264; Emanuele D'Antonio, “Aspetti della rigenerazione ebraica e del sionismo in Cesare Lombroso,” *Società e Storia* 92 (2001): 281-309; David Forgacs, “Building the Body of the Nation. Lombroso's *L'antisemitismo* and Fin-de-Siècle Italy,” *Jewish Culture and History* 6, no. 1 (2003): 96-110; Roberto Finzi, *Il pregiudizio. Ebrei e questione ebraica in Marx, Lombroso, Croce* (Milan: Bompiani, 2011); Xavier Tabet, “Cesare Lombroso, the ‘Blast of Antisemitism’ and ‘Socialist Neo-Christianity’,” in *The European Left and the Jewish Question 1848-1992*, ed. Alessandra Tarquini (Cham: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2021), 53-66.

³ Lombroso used the word “ethnicity” as synonymous with “race” in biological terms. Since the vocabulary of racial and racist discourses reflect the cultural and ideological constructs of their

not to use rational arguments to persuade unrepentant abnormal individuals but to disseminate the scientific response to an issue he regarded as dangerous to the progress of European society.

Lombroso's investigation aimed to develop a critical understanding of an alarming political phenomenon that, on the eve of the Dreyfus Affair in France, was undermining the process of Jewish emancipation, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe. Over the course of the previous century, European states had modernized and secularized political citizenship, dismantling centuries-old legal anti-Jewish discriminations. By the early 1870s, Jews, apart from those in the Russian Empire and Romania, enjoyed full civil and political rights and had become full members of modern nations.⁴ Their political equality with Gentile compatriots—promoted in the name of egalitarian principles and intended to integrate into national societies a group regarded as partially different and separate—was seen in liberal and progressive cultures as the definitive solution to the Jewish question.

This optimistic assumption, however, was unexpectedly shattered from the 1880s onward by a range of phenomena soon defined as anti-Semitic, which expressed resistance to emancipation.⁵ Anti-Semitism, whether ideologically based on religious prejudice or scientific racism, was rooted in the belief that Jewish diversity represented an alien and disruptive force within European nations. Jews, therefore, were to be marginalized—even in the absence of a unified anti-Semitic platform—through policies of exclusion from the political body. Anti-Semitic campaigns, increasingly politically organized, often with mass appeal and sometimes shockingly violent, spread the perception of an ongoing crisis in the emancipatory process throughout the Old Continent. Defenders of

proponents, such terms are typically placed in quotation marks. However, I have chosen to avoid this practice, except when directly quoting, in order to improve the fluidity of the text.

⁴ For a long-term historical reassessment, see David Sorkin, *Jewish Emancipation: A History across Five Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019).

⁵ Among the extensive bibliography on the subject, see at least Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction: Anti-Semitism, 1700-1933* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980); David Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition* (New York-London: Norton, 2013); Steven Beller, *Antisemitism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

emancipation, both Jewish and Gentile, who saw it as integral to modernity,⁶ responded to this crisis by questioning its causes and debating possible solutions. The 1894 book represented the climax—but neither the beginning nor the end—of Lombroso's scientific engagement with the Jewish question, initially driven by publicly undeclared, subjective concerns. A social Darwinist and progressive intellectual with a medical background, and a recent adherent to the Socialist Party, Lombroso was, above all, a modern Italian Jew committed to defending emancipation, which he experienced as a supporter of the Risorgimento and as a medical officer in the national army during the height of the Italian wars of independence.⁷

Lombroso's Jewishness, though evanescent, was not irrelevant to his identity. Born in Verona into a wealthy bourgeois family connected to the local Jewish community, Lombroso felt no personal attachment to Jewish religious faith, which clashed with the materialistic worldview he had developed in his youth. This detachment from Judaism distanced him from Jewish institutions in adulthood, enabling him to rationalize an assimilationist vision of relations between Jews and Gentiles in his reflection on anti-Semitism. His advocacy for their "fusion" into the modern world, however, did not render him an "assimilated" Jew—a term historically denoting an individual of Jewish descent fully estranged from his/her Jewishness.⁸

Throughout his life, Lombroso always regarded himself as a member of the Jewish race, to which he felt bound by the biological bond of "the Semitic [blood]."⁹ His "ethnic identity," rooted in this racial self-perception, was reinforced by his personal integration into a Jewish family network that saw itself as Jewish and was perceived as such by the outside world. This identity influenced many choices in

⁶ Cristiana Facchini, "Le metamorfosi di un'ostilità antica. Antisemitismo e cultura cattolica nella seconda metà dell'Ottocento," *Annali di storia dell'esegesi* 27, no. 1 (2010): 214-215.

⁷ For a biography of Lombroso, despite its somewhat hagiographic tone, see Gina Lombroso Ferrero, *Cesare Lombroso. Storia della vita e delle opere* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1921).

⁸ Michael Stanislawski, *Zionism and the Fin-de-Siècle: Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism from Nordau to Jabotinsky* (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London: University of California Press, 2001), 8-9.

⁹ Cesare Lombroso to Achille Loria, 31 July 1890, Loria Archive, 10: 24.1.1, Archivio di Stato di Torino. On the racial self-representations of emancipated Italian Jews see Carlotta Ferrara degli Uberti, *Fare gli ebrei italiani. Autorappresentazioni di una minoranza (1861-1918)* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2011), 57-65.

his private life,¹⁰ the most significant being his 1870 marriage to Nina De Benedetti, whom he described to a Catholic friend as a “Jewess by birth and even [...] conviction.”¹¹ This marriage, which was celebrated with a religious wedding, confirmed his distinction and transmitted it to his offspring.¹² Lombroso also assimilated a Jewish historical self-consciousness from his kinship system. His awareness of belonging to a minority with a common past, partly distinct from the Gentile past and plagued by long-lasting oppression only recently alleviated through emancipation, occasionally surfaced in his works related to the Jewish question.¹³ His assertion of the centrality of Jews in the history of European civilization—an idea shared by his coreligionists but often dismissed by Christian and Gentile cultures¹⁴—apologetically expressed an intimate conviction rooted in his Jewishness. While his defense of emancipation incorporated several beliefs common within modern Jewish, liberal, or socialist cultures, it was nonetheless intended to be—and indeed was—scientific.

Lombroso’s critique of anti-Semitism emerged from his effort to examine the phenomenon critically, using the analytical and interpretative tools of his social science. His inquiry centered on anti-Semitic political actors and their ideology, which he interpreted through the lenses of evolutionary anthropology and delegitimized as alien to modern civilization. Lombroso approached anti-Semitism through his recently developed, utilitarian sociology of political phenomena, assessing such ideologies based on their supposed ability—or inability—to foster social progress, which he believed was revealed by the psycho-

¹⁰ Delfina Dolza, *Essere figlie di Lombroso. Due donne intellettuali tra '800 e '900* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 1990), 28-32.

¹¹ Cesare Lombroso to Ettore Righi, [December 1869], Ms 619: 90.40, Biblioteca Civica di Verona.

¹² On endogamic marriage in the age of emancipation see Barbara Armani, *Il confine invisibile. L'élite ebraica di Firenze (1840-1914)* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2006), 214-266.

¹³ Michael Berkowitz, “A Hidden Theme of Jewish self-Love? Eric Hobsbawm, Karl Marx, and Cesare Lombroso on ‘Jewish Criminality’,” in *The Cesare Lombroso Handbook*, eds. Paul Knepper and Per Jørgen Ystehede (London-New York: Routledge, 2011), 253-267; Knepper, “Lombroso’s Jewish Identity and its Implication for Criminology,” *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Criminology* 44, no. 3 (2011): 355-369. On the historical culture of nineteenth-century Italian Jews, see Gadi Luzzatto Voghera, *Il prezzo dell’eguaglianza. Il dibattito sull’emancipazione degli ebrei in Italia 1781-1848* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 1998), 157-168.

¹⁴ Cristiana Facchini, *David Castelli. Ebraismo e scienze delle religioni tra Otto e Novecento* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2005), 123-130.

anthropological character of their proponents.¹⁵ The concept of atavism—central to his Darwinian criminology but here adapted differently from its original criminological articulation—framed his understanding of anti-Jewish actions, whose performers revealed abnormal individualities driven by psychological traits linked to regressive stages of human development.¹⁶

While distancing anti-Semitism from European civilization, Lombroso—apparently oblivious to its religious forms—scientifically examined anti-Semitic ideology rooted in scientific racism. As a proponent of the racial anthropology that dominated the late nineteenth century, he could not refute anti-Jewish stereotypes outright in the name of anthropological equality or cultural pluralism, as this last approach was simply foreign to the mindset of contemporary practitioners of race science. Jewish anthropologists, however, did not perceive race science solely as a threat to emancipation but also employed it as a tool to build “a new form of Jewish self-[defense],” historically defined by John Efron as “scientific apologia.”¹⁷ Lombroso shared in this strategy, countering anti-Semitic claims in various ways, but especially by dismantling—similarly to many European colleagues and coreligionists¹⁸—essentialist views of Jewish diversity in favor of environmentalist, historically-based ones. Jews were not the disruptive racial outsiders imagined by anti-Semitism but, as proven by modern science, had played and continued to play a highly progressive role in the history of European societies. This position was crucial to celebrating them as purveyors of modernity, and—more politically significant—to reaffirming the legitimacy of Jewish emancipation. While he could not rely on arguments of political egalitarianism,¹⁹ Lombroso effectively re-established the political equality of the Jews on social utilitarian grounds.

¹⁵ Ernesto De Cristofaro, “Gli anarchici e il delitto politico tra Italia e Francia (1878–1900),” in *Beccaria* 6 (2020–2021): 231–264.

¹⁶ Delia Frigessi, *Cesare Lombroso* (Turin: Einaudi, 2003), 359–360. On atavism, see Silvano Montaldo, *Donne delinquenti. Il genere e la nascita della criminologia* (Rome: Carocci, 2019); Paolo Mazzarello, *Il darwinista infedele. Lombroso e l'evoluzione* (Milan: Hoepli, 2024), 87–101.

¹⁷ John M. Efron, *Defenders of the Race: Jewish Doctors and Race Science in Fin-de-Siècle Europe* (New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 1994), 59.

¹⁸ Mitchell B. Hart, *Social Science and the Politics of Modern Jewish Identity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 11–12.

¹⁹ On his anti-egalitarian socialism, see Marco Scavino, “L’interesse per la politica e l’adesione al socialismo,” in *Cesare Lombroso cento anni dopo*, ed. Silvano Montaldo and Paolo Tappero (Turin: Utet, 2009), 123–124.

This essay examines Lombroso's *L'antisemitismo*, reconstructing its genesis, content, and reception within *fin-de-siècle* Italian culture. The book had a highly stratified structure, being the product—as was usually the case with his works—of a “progressive accumulation” of ideas developed in earlier phases of his scientific engagement with the Jewish question.²⁰ Accordingly, this analysis traces the formation of Lombroso's principal theses—most notably, his claims regarding the racial equality between European Jews and Gentiles and the atavistic nature of anti-Semitism.

The discussion begins with the “prehistory” of *L'antisemitismo*, exploring Lombroso's earlier ideas, which, while formulated three decades before the book, are crucial to understanding the strong emphasis he would continue to place, in an apologetic key, on the issue of Jewish racial status. The essay then examines his initial attempt to understand anti-Semitism critically in the 1880s, responding to racialist and racist interpretations of the contemporary wave of anti-Jewish agitations. Following an analysis of the book itself and its publication process, I will focus on the question of its reception by Italian public opinion, both Gentile and Jewish.

The study draws on published and unpublished sources, including Lombroso's private correspondence, which was made available online in 2018 by the Museum of Criminal Anthropology at the University of Turin (<https://lombrosoproject.unito.it>).

The Semites of Europe

In 1873, Lombroso was eager to participate—as he wrote to his friend Isacco Pardo, the chief rabbi of Verona, his Jewish community of origin—in a “polemic [...] against a deputy who scorns the Jewish politicians of Italy.”²¹ The liberal Francesco Pasqualigo, accused of intolerance by the progressive newspaper *Il Diritto*, had

²⁰ On the structure of Lombroso's works see Luisa Mangoni, “Eziologia di una nazione,” in Cesare Lombroso, *Delitto genio follia. Scritti scelti*, eds. Delia Frigessi, Ferruccio Giacanelli, and Luisa Mangoni (Milan: Boringhieri, 2000), 685-687.

²¹ Cesare Lombroso to Isacco Pardo, [post 31 August 1873], P20/9: 10, Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, Jerusalem.

just defended his opposition to the appointment of a Jew, Isacco Pesaro Maurogonato, as a minister in the third Minghetti cabinet.²² The exclusion of Jews from governmental roles, while conflicting with the principle of equality of Italian citizens of all faiths, was justified by Pasqualigo for reasons of political expediency. He viewed the Jewish minority as a foreign body within the national framework due to its (alleged) separatist religious culture, and claimed their interests might differ or even conflict with those of the Italian state. Outraged, as were many of his coreligionists, Lombroso sought to counter Pasqualigo by constructing—among other arguments—a Jewish-Risorgimento martyrology. He aimed to demonstrate that many Jews had been willing to sacrifice their lives for national unity, motivated by patriotic feelings equal to those of their Gentile peers, thereby proving to the public that they rightfully belonged to the Italian nation. However, for unknown reasons, his apologetic article remained unpublished and perhaps even unfinished.

Lombroso's response to the Jewish question, while inherently political—as evidenced by the Pasqualigo affair—was initially restricted to scientific debates. Following Italian unification, his tenure as a professor of Psychiatry at the University of Pavia, which he obtained in 1863 after earning his medical degree five years earlier, laid the first ideological cornerstone of his later critique of anti-Semitism by postulating the anthropological identity of European Jews and their Gentile compatriots. His early interest in the racial status of Jews stemmed from scientific and politico-cultural stimuli, which were potentially in tension with one other. Since the late 1850s, the young scholar conceived of humanity—in line with mainstream international anthropological thought—as divided into superior and inferior races, differentiated by psychophysical and moral traits shaped by heredity and environment, which in turn influenced behavior.²³ His racial and racist ideas evolved through his critical engagement of polygenist anthropology, which posited the plural origin and inequality of human groups, and through applying

²² On this episode, see Andrew M. Canepa, “Emancipazione, integrazione e antisemitismo liberale. Il caso Pasqualigo,” *Comunità* 174 (1975): 166–203.

²³ Cesare Lombroso, *Questioni sull'origine, l'ineguaglianza, e l'incrocio delle razze umane. Dissertazione inaugurale [presentata] per ottenere la laurea dottorale in medicina* (Pavia: Bizzoni, 1858). On the initial Italian response to scientific racism, see Edoardo M. Barsotti, *At the Roots of Italian Identity: 'Race' and 'Nation' in the Italian Risorgimento 1796–1870* (London-New York: Routledge, 2021), 199–222.

Darwinian theories—particularly evolution and the struggle for life—to the historical world.²⁴ Race science became, for him, a tool for speculating on the anthropological history of humankind and for investigating health, socio-cultural, and eventually even political issues.²⁵

By the 1860s, Lombroso, while enthusiastically embracing race science, was already concerned about the prevailing image of his coreligionists, which was shaped by transnational scientific networks and viewed through the lens of racial culture.²⁶ The widespread emphasis on the Indo-Iranian origins of European peoples had negatively impacted Jewish minorities, who at the time were obtaining legal emancipation in most European states. The Aryan discourse, which transferred the linguistic dichotomy between Indo-European and Semitic languages into historical and anthropological contexts, became a pivotal criterion for classifying human groups.²⁷ Proponents of this discourse defined Jews—due to the affiliation of Hebrew with Semitic languages—as a Semitic population racially distinct in origin from Aryan Europeans. The cultural construct of the “Semites of Europe,” while conveying complex images (including some positive ones in Jewish self-representations),²⁸ more frequently provided scientific legitimacy to old and new stereotypes about Jewish diversity. Several anthropologists argued that Jews possessed physical traits inherited from their Biblical ancestors, many of which were similar to those attributed to Middle Eastern or “Oriental” populations. According to many statisticians, the distinctive characteristics of Jews were influenced by racial immunities and predispositions to specific pathologies.²⁹ At the same time, historical criticism based on the Aryan myth often downplayed

²⁴ Silvano Montaldo, “Le début de la pensée raciste de Lombroso,” in *La pensée de la race en Italie. Du romantisme au fascisme*, eds. Aurélien Aramini and Elena Bovo (Besançon: Presses Universitaires de Franche-Comté, 2018), 89.

²⁵ Michele Nani, “Lombroso e le razze,” in *Cesare Lombroso cento anni dopo*, 165–174.

²⁶ Emanuele D’Antonio, “Razzismo, mito ariano e risposte ebraiche fra Italia e Francia, 1867–1873,” *Beccaria* 6 (2020–2021): 317–343.

²⁷ Maurice Olender, *Les langues du Paradis. Aryens et Sémites: une couple providentiel* (Paris: Seuil, 1989). On the Italian case, see Alexander Lenz, *Genie und Blut. Rassendenken in der italienischen Philologie des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Paderborn: Fink, 2014).

²⁸ See, for example, Alessandro Grazi, *Prophet of Renewal: David Levi: a Jewish Freemason and Saint-Simonian in Nineteenth-Century Italy* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2022), 128–129 and 137–138.

²⁹ Jean-Christian M. Boudin, *Traité de géographie et de statistique médicales et des maladies endémiques [...]* (Paris: Baillière 1857), Vol. 2, 128–142; Giustiniano Nicolucci, *Delle razze umane. Studio etnologico* (Naples: Fibreno, 1857), Vol. 1, 264–265 and Vol. 2, 329–330.

Jewish contributions to the process of civilization. For example, the renowned Orientalist Ernest Renan argued—though not specifically referring to contemporary Jews—that Semitic peoples were incapable of complex intellectual endeavors, their efforts hindered by the primitive theological worldview of their religious cultures.³⁰

Although he shared Aryan-rooted stereotypes about Semitism, Lombroso defended European Jews against scientific portrayals of racial difference and inferiority. His refutation was developed fully in an 1871 book, *L'uomo bianco e l'uomo di colore* (*The White Man and the Colored Man*), a popular treatise on the difference and inequality of human races.³¹ In this work, which was elaborated over a long period, Lombroso affirmed the monogenetic origins of humanity, tracing them back to an extinct ape, and described humanity's subsequent division into races, which were hierarchically classified based on (pre)judgments of value concerning non-European civilizations. He used the case of European Jews as an example of a transformation in racial status, preventing history from collapsing into mere biological heredity through a Lamarckian-based evolutionism already influenced by Darwinian theory. Lombroso argued that this “strong remnant of the ancient Semitic stock,” after immigrating from Palestine, had enhanced its psychophysical, intellectual, and moral characteristics, rising from a “humble primordial stage” to the heights of civilization.³² This evolution was shaped by a successful, though very painful, adaptation to a harsh, life-threatening new environment compared to the Middle-Eastern one. The Jews had responded positively to the difficulties of cold climates and “continuous, secular persecution,” which acted as a Darwinian “selector of the species” by eliminating weaker individuals and strengthening survivors of the massacres.³³ The process, he claimed, fostered traits useful for survival and eliminated others detrimental to it.

³⁰ Ernest Renan, *De la part des peuples sémitiques dans l'histoire de la civilisation [...]* (Paris: Levy, 1862). On Renan's controversial views on Semitism, see Regina Pozzi, “Alle origini del razzismo contemporaneo. Il caso di Ernest Renan,” *Rivista di storia contemporanea* 195, no. 4 (1985): 497-520.

³¹ Cesare Lombroso, *L'uomo bianco e l'uomo di colore. Letture sull'origine e la varietà delle razze umane* (Padua: Sacchetto, 1871).

³² Lombroso, *L'uomo bianco e l'uomo di colore*, 106-117.

³³ On the social-Darwinist understanding of Jewish history, see Hart, *Social Science and the Politics*, 122-123 and 207.

Consequently Lombroso claimed that European Jews were neither physically nor culturally “Oriental”; their biological characteristics resembled those of their “Aryan” compatriots, and throughout history, they had produced numerous “geniuses”—from Isaac Abrabanel to Baruch Spinoza to Heinrich Heine—who had significantly contributed to the progress of civilization.

Thus, Lombroso re-established the anthropological equality between the Semites and the Aryans of Europe by postulating that they were bound in a relationship of racial identity shaped by the historical process. This did not imply absolute homology in their biosocial characteristics, as social statistics compiled by administrative agencies, private institutions, and academic scholars quantitatively demonstrated. Lombroso interpreted those differences—as he explained in a demographic study on the Jews of Verona³⁴—as a non-essentialist legacy of the distinct histories of Jews and Gentiles. For example, the mortality rates of his coreligionists were slightly worse than those of Veronese “Catholics,” primarily due to the long-term harmful effects of political oppression on Jewish health. While Lombroso did not entirely exclude racial influences, he limited them to the forms of mortal pathologies affecting Jews. Jewish lunatics, for instance, “often” (as stated in a previous essay) exhibited an abnormous religiosity, unconsciously reproducing the attitudes and behaviors of their “Biblical,” Semitic forefathers.³⁵ Nevertheless, contrary to the mainstream international psychiatric culture of his time, Lombroso did not attribute the alleged high frequency of mental illnesses among Jews—statistically higher than among Gentiles—to racial factors.³⁶ Instead, he ascribed it to their anxious disposition as one “of the oppressed races,” the mental strain imposed by trade professions (in which longstanding discriminatory laws had forced them to specialize), and the widespread practice of consanguineous marriage, which fostered the hereditary transmission of

³⁴ Cesare Lombroso, “Sulla mortalità degli Ebrei di Verona nel decennio 1855–1864,” in Lombroso, *Studi statistico-igienici sull’Italia* (Bologna: Fava e Garagnani, 1867), 33–49.

³⁵ Cesare Lombroso, “Frammenti medico-psicologici,” *Gazzetta medica italiana – Provincie Venete*, December 18, 1858, 206–207. For a similar understanding of Jewish criminality, see Cesare Lombroso, *L’uomo delinquente in rapporto alla antropologia, alla medicina legale ed alle discipline carcerarie* (Milan: Hoepli, 1876), 122–128.

³⁶ On the psychiatric debate, see Vinzia Fiorino, “Gli ebrei, un popolo di nevrastenici. Una costruzione culturale della psichiatria tra Otto e Novecento,” *Italia contemporanea* 286 (2018): 209–237.

pathologies within affected family groups.³⁷ Despite these ephemeral differences in Jewish biostatistics, Lombroso maintained the “truth” sanctioned by anthropology: Jews and Gentiles were equal not only before the law, but also in life and “death.”

An Atavistic Hatred

In 1881, Lombroso published an excerpt from his forthcoming book, *Genio e follia* (*Genius and Madness*), in Italy’s most popular Jewish journal, concluding with a condemnation of German anti-Semitism.³⁸ His critique did not stem from an analysis of a phenomenon already prominent in the politics and public life of Bismarck’s Reich.³⁹ Instead, the criminologist sought to support with positive “facts” his scientific theory that individuals engaged in creative activities shared a psychopathological status with those suffering from mental illness. Drawing on historical and anecdotal sources and health statistics, he argued that European Jews produced a proportionally greater number of “radically creative” geniuses and lunatics than their Gentile counterparts. This assertion paved the way for his outraged moral denunciation of anti-Semitism. Its “coryphaeus,” Lombroso declared, were “a [shame] of contemporary Germany,” which was promoting an unjust hatred toward a “poor race” despite its “past tragedies” and present “misfortunes.” These remarks represent the earliest evidence of Lombroso’s concern about the rise of European anti-Semitism.

In the 1880s, Lombroso—who had been a professor of Forensic Medicine at the University of Turin since 1876, where he established an influential school for the scientific study of deviance—had developed the second ideological pillar of his analysis: the assertion that anti-Jewish hatred was atavistic. Alongside disciples such as Salvatore Ottolenghi, a fellow Piedmontese Jew and later the “father” of Italian scientific policing, Lombroso continued to carry out anthropological

³⁷ Lombroso, “Sulla mortalità,” 44-45.

³⁸ Cesare Lombroso, “Influenza della razza sul genio e la pazzia,” *Il Vessillo Israelitico*, October 1881, 301-302; Lombroso, *Genio e follia in rapporto alla medicina legale, alla critica ed alla storia* (Turin: Bocca, 1882), 48-50.

³⁹ Peter Pulzer, *The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany & Austria*, Revised ed. (London: Halban, 1988), 247-248.

studies of the Jewish people.⁴⁰ While the thesis of Jewish racial identity with Gentiles remained useful for asserting equality on a scientific basis, it began to feel outdated in the new political climate. Attacks on Jewish diversity had moved beyond scientific and cultural discourse into the political sphere, becoming tools for mass mobilization in Central and Eastern Europe. Anti-Semitism—influenced by events such as the Russian pogroms of 1881-82 and the rise of anti-Semitic political organizations in Germany and Austria-Hungary—became a major issue of concern on international political and Jewish agendas. Against this alarming backdrop, Lombroso turned to a scientific question: the origins of this seemingly eternal anti-Jewish hatred.

Observing shocking episodes of anti-Semitism, Lombroso and several of his disciples developed an increasingly pessimistic view on modern civilization's ability to address the Jewish question. The Tisza-Eszlár affair of 1882-1883, which marked the return of the blood libel myth in the courts of Central and Eastern Europe and in related anti-Semitic propaganda, exemplified this.⁴¹ While Lombroso was concerned,⁴² he avoided overtly criticizing the ancient accusation that Jews killed Christian children to feed on their blood in rituals.⁴³ Refuting this myth on an anthropological basis probably appeared futile or even counterproductive for the image of Jews, especially when dealing with noisy polemics from anti-Semitic proponents. As stated by Ottolenghi, who analyzed the Tisza-Eszlár affair from a medico-forensic perspective, the Gentiles who legitimized it offered disheartening proof not only of “human credulity [but also of] the power of suggestion,” which was exerted by “false accusations [repeated] over the centuries.” Despite numerous acquittals over the centuries, the “progress

⁴⁰ Salvatore Ottolenghi, *Il senso cromatico negli Israeliti* (Turin: Camilla e Bertolero, 1883); Ottolenghi, “Il senso cromatico degli Israeliti,” *Il Vessillo Israelitico*, September 1884, 295-300. On Ottolenghi, see Emanuele D'Antonio, “Lombroso, Ottolenghi e le origini della Polizia scientifica italiana,” in *Una cultura professionale per la polizia dell'Italia liberale e fascista. Antologia del “Bollettino della Scuola superiore di Polizia scientifica”*, eds. Nicola Labanca and Michele Di Giorgio (Milan: Unicopli 2020), 23-46.

⁴¹ Hillel J. Kieval, *Blood Inscriptions: Science, Modernity, and Ritual Murder at Europe's Fin-de-Siècle* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2022).

⁴² See the 1892 document filed by Lombroso in Sistema Museale di Ateneo (henceforth SMAUT): Lombroso, 1118, Università di Torino.

⁴³ For several allusive remarks, see ASM, 21 and 107.

of civilization” had failed to dislodge these “absurd beliefs” about Jewish practices.⁴⁴

By the late 1880s, Lombroso began to develop his critical understanding of the “causes” of anti-Semitism. He addressed this topic for the first time in *Il delitto politico e le rivoluzioni* (*The Political Crime and the Revolutions*), a book co-authored in 1890 with a young disciple and coreligionist, the Veronese lawyer Rodolfo Laschi.⁴⁵ This analyzed political upheavals in relation to the progress of human societies in several somewhat self-contradictory pages, which downplayed the influence of racial factors in the emergence of conflicts between ethnonational groups within the same political community.⁴⁶ So-called racial struggles, Lombroso argued, were often rooted in historical grievances rather than ethnic antagonism. Anti-Semitism, described as “that sad shame of [European] civilization,” was a case in point. It was not the inevitable clash of racially different peoples but rather the product of historical hatreds.

As a regular contributor and attentive reader, Lombroso was probably aware of the heated polemic that gripped the popular Paris-based *Revue Scientifique* in 1888.⁴⁷ The journal’s editor the physiologist Charles Richet, Lombroso’s personal friend and a future Nobel Prize winner for Medicine, was forced to refute a virulent attack against emancipation by one of the journal’s most brilliant and celebrated writers,⁴⁸ the French ethno-psychologist Gustave Le Bon. Le Bon used the Aryan myth to end an argument with the physicist Félix Hémet on the Jewish

⁴⁴ Salvatore Ottolenghi, *La suggestione e le facoltà psichiche occulte in rapporto alla pratica legale e medico-forense* (Turin: Bocca, 1900), 268. For his first intervention see Ottolenghi and Lombroso, *Nuovi studi sull’ipnotismo e la credulità* (Turin: Unione Tipografico-Editrice, 1889), 51-52.

⁴⁵ Augusto Caperle, “Rodolfo Laschi,” *L’Adige*, August 26, 1905.

⁴⁶ Cesare Lombroso and Rodolfo Laschi, *Il delitto politico e le rivoluzioni in rapporto al diritto, all’antropologia criminale ed alla scienza di governo* (Turin: Bocca, 1890), 115 and 210-212. On the ambivalences of Lombroso’s political raciology, see Elena Bovo, “La voie italienne de la psychologie des fouls,” in *Beccaria* 6 (2020-2021), 222-223.

⁴⁷ Since 1884, the journal had deliberately offered Lombroso the opportunity to gather sources from its readership for his research on political crime, Lombroso Ferrero, *Cesare Lombroso*, 247.

⁴⁸ Charles Richet, “Le rôle des Juifs dans la civilisation,” *Revue Scientifique*, November 10, 1888, 600-603.

contribution to civilization, declaring this to be “null”⁴⁹ and explaining and legitimizing the anti-Jewish hatred of the “European nations” on naturalistic grounds. For Le Bon, the Jews were racially “foreigners” who possessed psychological tendencies inherited from their Semitic ancestors’ that were opposed to those of their Gentile counterparts.⁵⁰ The long-lasting persecution of the Jews, he also argued, had made them a dangerous race endowed with economic power derived from financial skills they had been forced to acquire. Le Bon portrayed the Jews as enclosed within an impermeable social exclusivism and consumed by a merciless hatred of Christianity. In his view, anti-Semitism was a sentiment of self-defense spontaneously felt by “Aryan peoples” in front of a racial alien who, once freed from legal discrimination, threatened to conquer their “native” national societies.

In 1890, Lombroso rejected racial and racist interpretations of anti-Semitism in the style of Le Bon, presenting a two-fold counterargument. First, he argued that anti-Semitism was not a racial struggle because it involved two anthropologically equal populations. Second, he contended that it deviated from Europe’s political tradition, which historically promoted the blending and merging of “very diverse races” into ethnically heterogeneous nations through their “mutual [physical] attraction” and “[shared] interests.”⁵¹

Lombroso conceptualized anti-Semitism as stemming from a pre-rational hatred of Jews, widespread among European Gentiles and originating in ancient atavistic roots that persisted hereditarily into the present. He traced its genesis to two primary sentiments: the disdain of ancient “[Aryans ruling over] slave peoples,” later absorbed by modern nationalism, and the animosity of imperial Rome toward the Jews, which the medieval Church transformed into a Christian “religious duty and [...] rite.” These feelings, Lombroso argued, became hereditarily entrenched through the material and moral gratification that early anti-Jewish persecutors derived from their acts. Contemporary anti-Semites, he

⁴⁹ Gustave Le Bon, “Du rôle des juifs dans l’histoire de la civilisation. Les dieux d’Israël,” *Revue Scientifique*, September 29, 1888, 386-393; Félix Hémet, “Quelques observations à propos du rôle des Juifs dans l’histoire de la civilisation,” *Revue Scientifique*, October 20, 1888, 490-492.

⁵⁰ Gustave Le Bon, “Réponse à Félix Hémet,” *Revue Scientifique*, October 20, 1888, 492-494. On his anti-Jewish racism, see Benoit Marpeau, *Gustave Le Bon. Parcours d’un intellectuel 1841-1935* (Paris: CNRS, 2000), 149-152.

⁵¹ Lombroso and Laschi, *Il delitto politico*, 109-115 and 210-211.

suggested, were unconsciously driven by the same persecutory instincts as their ancestors, deriving similar satisfaction in the “debasement” (*avvilimento*) of the Jews. Lombroso not only rejected the notion of anti-Semitism as an Aryan defensive reaction to Jewish racial diversity, but he also, and more importantly, shifted the primary responsibility for its emergence onto the non-Jewish world. For him, hatred of the Jews was structurally, if not an innate psychopathology, an ingrained psychological trait in many Gentiles. His analysis, which had already begun addressing the political prophylaxis of the phenomenon,⁵² would expand three years later.

At the Origins of an Instant Book

In the preface of *L'antisemitismo*, Lombroso claimed that the initial impetus for his work stemmed from an invitation he received in 1893 from two prominent European journals, the Viennese *Neue Freie Presse* and the Parisian *Revue des revues*, “to express [his] opinion” on anti-Semitism.⁵³ This assertion, aimed at presenting himself to the Italian public as an internationally recognized authority, was not entirely truthful. While Lombroso did approach the French magazine an excerpt from his book on the eve of its publication, it was rejected on the grounds that, as it could be published only after the book’s release in Italy, it failed to meet the journal’s requirement for originality.⁵⁴ In reality, his research was primarily prompted by a request from the *Neue Freie Presse*, Austria’s most important newspaper, which sought contributions reflecting the perspectives of “Italian scientists” on anti-Semitism. The initiative, led by the translator Otto Eisenschitz—a mediator between Italian culture and the German-speaking publishing industry—invited the selected scholars to discuss the “origin,” legitimacy, and “fate” of anti-Semitism “from a psychological, ethical, and [...] pathological perspective.”⁵⁵ The liberal Viennese newspaper aimed to publish

⁵² Ibid., 442 and 506.

⁵³ ASM, 5.

⁵⁴ George Lefevre to Cesare Lombroso, 4 and 8 December 1893, SMAUT, IT: Carrara/CL, Lefevre 2 and 3, Università di Torino.

⁵⁵ For his invitation to another contributor, see Otto Eisenschitz to Paolo Mantegazza, 17 April 1893, Fondo Mantegazza: 6-7, 2097 (ex 2090), Museo Nazionale di Antropologia, Florence.

their “impartial” judgments, allegedly free from extra-scientific biases, to stimulate public debate amid the rising anti-Semitic movements in the Empire’s capital.⁵⁶ Lombroso’s article opened the *Neue Freie Presse*’s inquiry, presenting an analysis that established the framework of his later book.⁵⁷ The criminologist defended the Jewish emancipation challenged by “political pseudo-anthropologists,” reaffirming the racial equality between Jews and European populations. He argued that anti-Semitism emerged from a pre-rational, anti-Jewish hatred with ancient, atavistic roots, hereditarily ingrained in the psyche of the Gentiles. However, Lombroso also suggested that Jews had contributed to Gentile aversion through (alleged) historical deficiencies linked to their economic roles and religiosity. He claimed that the process of civilization, while improving the rationality of individuals, would not eliminate anti-Semitism because it would leave their instinctive feelings untouched. Furthermore, anti-Semitism would continue to spread, propagated by cynical or deranged (*mattoidi*) politicians seeking mass political support.

Lombroso linked the extinction of anti-Semitism to a transformation of the relationship between Jews and Christians. He called on both groups to free themselves from their (supposedly) anachronistic religious identities in order to merge into a new solidarity. This outcome might be fostered only by a socialist religion of humanity, which could shape a mutual brotherhood. However, he concluded pessimistically that this was merely a “utopia.”

For the first time, Lombroso rationalized an assimilationist solution to the Jewish question. His call for the disappearance of traditional identities did not stem from a rejection of Jewishness, which he affirmed very occasionally in visits to the Turin synagogue and charitable acts in favor of poor coreligionists.⁵⁸ Instead, it was rooted in his evolutionary critique of religion, which he described in *Delitto politico* as institutions “completely based on misoneism” that naturally hindered social progress.⁵⁹ Religious practice, he argued, reinforced psychological resistance to the modernization of beliefs, customs, and lifestyles.

⁵⁶ Pulzer, *The Rise of Political Antisemitism*, 171-183.

⁵⁷ Cesare Lombroso, “Der Antisemitismus,” *Neue Freie Presse*, June 11, 1893, 1-3.

⁵⁸ “Funerali civili,” *Il Piccolo della Sera*, October 21, 1909.

⁵⁹ Lombroso and Laschi, *Il delitto politico*, 13. On misoneism, see Luisa Mangoni, *Una crisi fine secolo. La cultura italiana e la Francia fra Otto e Novecento* (Turin: Einaudi, 1985), 119-121.

Lombroso acknowledged that the scientific “truth” of racial equality between Semites and European Aryans faced opposition from “hatreds” and “superstitions” perpetuated by Christianity.⁶⁰ At the same time, he claimed the Jews were the target of unjust but understandable mistrust as the protective guardians of an archaic religiosity. Their “conservatism” was evident from their (supposedly) “primitive” rituals, including the bloody practice of circumcision, bizarre customs like the Passover *matzoth*, and magical-superstitious acts like inscribing formulas on devotional objects. Shockingly, he wrote that Jewish rites invited ridicule or suspicion of “strange mysteries,” making the Jews appear incompatible with modern civilization. The socialist religion of humanity that Lombroso proposed sought to eradicate the (alleged) sources of Christian and Jewish “conservatism”—the “Vatican” and “Judaic” religions—which he saw as barriers to greater familiarity between their followers.

Lombroso’s article sparked a noisy reaction in Vienna. An anti-Semitic newspaper issued a vehement response, describing him as a “pseudo-scholar” and insisting that “a pure-blooded Italian Jew” could not be an authoritative and honest judge of anti-Semitism.⁶¹ Liberal opinion appreciated his scientific defense of emancipation but was uneasy with the idea that anti-Semitism was a permanent political disturbance impervious to civil progress.⁶² Liberal Jews were irritated by his pessimistic views, in particular his criticisms of Jewish religious identity.⁶³ A prominent rabbi, Adolf Jellinek, declared himself “disappointed,” arguing that the struggle against anti-Semitism did not require any “utopia” but merely a firm response from non-Jewish authorities. The state, he said, had to defend Jewish citizens from anti-Semitic attacks, while the church needed to imbue all Christians with the evangelical principle of universal love.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ ASM, 108. For his critique of Catholic “conservatism,” see Cesare Lombroso, “Il Vaticano e il suo fato futuro,” *La Nuova Rassegna*, November 5, 1893, 581–582.

⁶¹ “Der Antisemitismus und der Jude Cesare Lombroso,” *Deutsches Volksblatt*, June 13, 1893, 1.

⁶² “Cesare Lombroso über den Antisemitismus,” *Freies Blatt*, June 18, 1893, 5–6; “Fragmente von der Woche. Lombroso, das ‘Deutsches Volksblatt’ und der Antisemitismus,” *Wiener Sonn- und Montags Zeitung*, June 26, 1893, 2–3.

⁶³ On their understanding of anti-Semitism, see Stanislawski, *Zionism and the Fin-de-Siècle*, 11–12.

⁶⁴ J. [Adolf Jellinek], “Cesare Lombroso und der Antisemitismus,” *Die Neuzeit*, June 23, 1893, 243–244; J. Zerkowitz, “Kleine Chronik. Triest,” *Die Neuzeit*, June 16, 1893, 237.

Conversely, the Zionist association *Kadimah* showed unexpected but sincere interest in Lombroso's analysis. His representation of European society as inherently hostile to Jews due to the Gentiles' innate psychology echoed pre-Herzlian Zionist ideology.⁶⁵ The Russian physician Léon Pinsker, for example, had called on his coreligionists to return to the land of their ancestors to escape annihilation at the hands of a hostile Europe, which he diagnosed as suffering from an innate anti-Jewish psychopathology (*Judäophobie*).⁶⁶ Nathan Birnbaum, *Kadimah's* leader, sent Lombroso the association's journal and Pinsker's pamphlet, in an attempt to gain his support for the Jewish colonization of Palestine. He responded by declaring Zionism to be an anti-modern utopia, arguing that the few "fanatics" willing to leave civilization for an inhospitable "desert" would lack resources to cultivate it and inevitably regress to "primitive barbarism."⁶⁷

The resonance of Lombroso's article in Vienna likely encouraged him to plan his book on anti-Semitism. Despite the largely negative critiques, he considered the article a success, as it had drawn attention to his ideas: he had deliberately expressed his views in a provocative manner, as he typically did while launching his *fin-de-siècle* treatises,⁶⁸ seeing this as the most effective way to test and attract public attention. The noisy debate that ensued likely confirmed to him the relevance of his ideas and convinced him that there was an opportunity to extend his analysis further. Lombroso was indeed satisfied by the public response and attempted—unsuccessfully—to maintain readers' interest with "a special article" aimed at countering "all the objections and [...] polemics."⁶⁹ The debate was in fact revived by one of Lombroso's closest disciples and associates, the jurist Enrico Ferri, who published an analysis of anti-Semitic "psychopathology" in the *Neue Freie Presse*.⁷⁰ Ferri's article complemented Lombroso's, and the "sociologist," as the

⁶⁵ "Notizien. Cesare Lombroso," *Selbst-Emancipation*, July 1, 1893, 5; "Lombroso über den Antisemitismus," *Selbst-Emancipation*, July 15, 1893, 1-4.

⁶⁶ [Léon Pinsker,] "*Auto-Emancipation!*" *Mahnruf an seine Stammgenossen, von einem russischen Jude* (Berlin: Commissions-Verlag, 1882).

⁶⁷ "Lombroso über den Zionismus," *Selbst-Emancipation*, August 15, 1893, 1-2.

⁶⁸ Montaldo, *Donne delinquenti*, 200-204.

⁶⁹ Cesare Lombroso to Otto Eisenschitz, 14 June 1893, [1893, post June 16], Aut. 469/27-4, 175/60-1, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna.

⁷⁰ Enrico Ferri, "Der Antisemitismus," *Neue Freie Presse*, August 13, 1893, 2-3 and August 15, 1893, 2-3.

newspaper presented him, strengthened his mentor's interpretation by adding a historical dimension that had previously been largely absent.

This first significant criticism of Lombroso's views came from the historian Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu in an authoritative book, *Israël chez les nations*, published in France presumably at around the same time as the Viennese controversies. Leroy-Beaulieu was an avowedly liberal and Catholic interpreter of the Jewish question, who tried to defend emancipation on a scientific basis.⁷¹ He was not hostile to Lombroso, but, while appreciating his racial anthropology of the Jews,⁷² he rejected his conceptualization of anti-Semitism. Citing the French translation of *Delitto politico*,⁷³ Leroy-Beaulieu argued that anti-Semitism might reflect a "natural repugnance" of Gentiles toward Jews but was not merely "a phenomenon of regression, [or] a fact of atavism."⁷⁴ Instead, anti-Semitic discourse appealed to the masses because of its apparent modernity, building on ancient prejudices an effective—yet totally misleading—response to the problems of modern society, which it blamed on the Jews. In any case, for the French scholar a scientific understanding of anti-Semitism did not necessarily involve dematerializing it into a mere psychological attitude detached from the political history of contemporary Europe in which it was generated.

Ferri, apparently unaware of Leroy-Beaulieu's book, shared similar criticisms of Lombroso's analysis. He sought to place anti-Semitism within a plausible historical-political framework and questioned why the hereditary anti-Jewish animosity of Gentiles—widespread but, as he emphatically pointed out, usually latent—had transformed into an active political phenomenon in Central and Eastern Europe. His explanation was influenced, on the eve of his joining the Socialist Party, by the Second International's theses on anti-Semitism, which had

⁷¹ Facchini, "Le metamorfosi di un'ostilità antica," 215-21; Francine Goujon, "Le nom de Leroy-Beaulieu dans le salon Villeparisis. De l'alliance franco-russe à l'affaire Dreyfus," *Bulletin d'informations proustiennes* 45 (2015): 49-60.

⁷² Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, *Israël chez les nations. Les Juifs et l'antisémitisme* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1893), 132, 134, 182, 197, and 279.

⁷³ Cesare Lombroso and Rodolfo Laschi, *Le Crime politique et les révolutions, par rapports au droit, à l'anthropologie criminelle et à la science du gouvernement*, Vol. 1 (Paris: Alcan, 1892), 281-283.

⁷⁴ Leroy-Beaulieu, *Israël chez les nations*, 13-14.

resonated within the Italian labor movement.⁷⁵ Ferri argued that anti-Semitism was a tool used by the ruling classes to consolidate power over societies undergoing structural change. The political leaderships of Russia, Germany and Austria-Hungary had encouraged its spread to revive “the religious sentiment of Christian peoples” and, above all, to divert public attention from socialism. However, the spread of anti-Jewish hatred throughout society, contrary to the expectations of its “reckless promoters,” had created a new threat to political order. The “vast blaze” that had erupted could not be extinguished through repressive political measures but was expected to subside over time as part of a broader “social renewal.”

Ferri’s article garnered mixed responses, with some approval but significant criticism from Viennese liberal Jews, who were dissatisfied with the lack of concrete proposals to counteract anti-Semitic movements.⁷⁶ Nonetheless, the new controversies provided Lombroso with additional public exposure. By that point, he had already begun work on his “extended study on anti-Semitism, especially from the anthropological perspective.”⁷⁷ He quickly expanded his initial article by conducting additional research, critically analyzing Leroy-Beaulieu’s arguments, and undertaking anthropometric measurements—the first time he did so systematically on his coreligionists, to the best of my knowledge. These efforts supported his thesis on racial identity shared by European Jews and Gentiles.⁷⁸

Lombroso’s book was soon to be published by the liberal publisher Roux, who was already attuned to the fight against anti-Semitism.⁷⁹ Before its release, several excerpts appeared in three Italian journals, each reflecting different interests in the topic.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ Alessandra Tarquini, *La sinistra italiana e gli ebrei. Socialismo, sionismo e antisemitismo dal 1892 al 1992* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2019), 32.

⁷⁶ “Enrico Ferri über den Antisemitismus,” *Freies Blatt*, August 20, 1893, 4; E.B., “Correspondenzen. Wien (Fehlten den Juden der persönliche Muth?),” *Oesterreichische Wochenschrift*, August 18, 1893, 620-621; J. [Adolf Jellinek], “Enrico Ferri über den Antisemitismus,” *Die Neuzeit*, August 25, 1893, 335-336.

⁷⁷ Enrico Ferri to Luigi Lodi, August 23, 1893, in Ferdinando Cordova, “*Caro Olgogigi*.” *Lettere ad Olga e Luigi Lodi. Dalla Roma bizantina all’Italia fascista (1881-1933)* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 1999), 240-241.

⁷⁸ ASM, 113-120 and 141-148.

⁷⁹ Corrado Guidetti (pseud.), *Pro Judaeis. Scritti e documenti* (Turin: Roux, 1884).

⁸⁰ Cesare Lombroso, “Genii e novatori ebrei,” *Il Corriere Israelitico* 32, no. 8 (1893-1894): 175-178; Lombroso, “Gli Ebrei nell’evoluzione economica,” *Critica Sociale*, January 1, 1894, 5-9; Lombroso, “Le cause dell’antisemitismo e i difetti degli Ebrei,” *Gazzetta Letteraria*, January 6, 1894, 5-6. For

The Judgement of Science

Lombroso's book was perceived by some Italian critics as chaotic, yet its seemingly disconnected chapters were organized into three relatively coherent parts, each addressing the broad aspects of the phenomenon under investigation: the "causes" of anti-Semitism, its potential utility for European society, and its scientific remedies. In the first section, the criminologist, while discussing the "aetiology" of anti-Semitism, moved beyond his earlier assertion that it stemmed from a millennia-old anti-Jewish hatred deeply rooted in the psyche of Gentiles and reignited by Jewish "defects." Influenced by scholarly critiques and the Viennese debate, Lombroso was able to redefine anti-Semitism as a political pathology of modern society with atavistic origins.⁸¹ While hereditary aversion among non-Jews provided a structural foundation, it was not the catalyst for the intense and violent mass upheaval against Jews in Central and Eastern Europe at this time.

The "epidemic" of anti-Semitism that began in the 1880s, Lombroso argued, following Ferri's analysis, was political in origin and nature, having been introduced into the social body through anti-Semitic propaganda disseminated by a diverse array of political actors. Russian and German "governments," along with various European "sects" and parties—predominantly but not exclusively nationalist—employed anti-Jewish hatred as a tool to outmaneuver political opponents and consolidate their grip on power or increase their appeal over the masses amid a severe socio-economic crisis. This propaganda, moreover, thrived in a turn-of-the-century political climate (*andazzo*) in which radical nationalist rule within and beyond Europe intensified hostility towards "strangers" and groups like the Jews, perceived as distinct from the majority populations of European states. The advance of anti-Jewish hatred, however, was not merely the product of the calculated actions of its political promoters.

Lombroso now described anti-Semitism as a political form of deviance. European liberal press depicted extremist propagandists such as the Marquis de Morès,

the Italian translation of the Viennese articles, see Enrico Ferri, "L'antisemitismo," *La Nuova Rassegna*, September 3, 1893, 289-293; Cesare Lombroso, "Ancora sull'antisemitismo," *La Nuova Rassegna*, September 10, 1893, 321-324.

⁸¹ ASM, 21-31.

Hermann Ahlwardt or Carl Paasch as afflicted by severe mental illnesses.⁸² These “lunatics” or “crazies” (*mattoidi*), he commented—drawing on his earlier interpretation of the genesis of “revolts” outlined in *Delitto politico*⁸³—were able to rally naive crowds to their political agendas through suggestive propaganda imbued with the “energetic impulsiveness of madness” and “fanaticism.” Building on this assumption, Lombroso referenced a “statistic” shared privately by a physician in Bucharest, which allegedly revealed high mortality rates from degenerative syphilis among Romanian anti-Semites.⁸⁴ Based on this information—and despite the admittedly uncertain reliability of his source—Lombroso hypothesized that individual militancy within anti-Semitic parties reflected a form of latent psychopathology.

The purported abnormality of these “passionate anti-Semites” (*antisemiti per passione*), as described by the Romanian physician, found its way into Lombroso’s criminological notes on two Franco-Algerian anti-Semitic leaders,⁸⁵ though it remained underdeveloped as a significant theory. Nevertheless, Lombroso and his disciples employed this idea as a polemical weapon during the public debates surrounding the Dreyfus Affair. By analyzing press reports and iconographic sources, they inferred psychophysical and behavioral anomalies among anti-Semitic propagandists and army officers that seemingly proved their innate criminality or degeneration.⁸⁶

After addressing the “causes” of anti-Semitism, Lombroso’s book turned to question the supposed benefits of anti-Jewish discrimination for European nations, as claimed by the “anti-Semitic party.” In the second section, he dismissed such policies as both anti-scientific and regressive. He offered a particularly pointed refutation of a racist thesis put forward in *Synthèse de l’antisémitisme*

⁸² For Paasch’s case, quoted by Lombroso and Ferri, see “Berlin, 20. Juni,” *Neue Freie Presse*, June 21, 1893, 7.

⁸³ Montaldo, *Donne delinquenti*, 179.

⁸⁴ ASM, 27-29.

⁸⁵ Cesare Lombroso, *Tipi di criminali moderni*, in Lombroso, *Delitti vecchi e delitti nuovi* (Turin: Bocca, 1902), 260-261.

⁸⁶ Cesare Lombroso, “La molla segreta dell’affaire Dreyfus,” *Gazzetta del Popolo*, July 6, 1899; Angelo Zuccarelli, *L’antropologia nell’avvenimento Zola-Dreyfus. Conferenza detta in Napoli, il giorno 6 marzo ’98, nel locale universitario della Sapienza* (Naples: n.p., 1898), 133-134. See also Enrico Serventi Longhi, *Il dramma di un’epoca. L’affaire Dreyfus e il giornalismo italiano di fine Ottocento* (Rome: Viella, 2022), 200-203.

(1892), a pamphlet he regarded as typical of “scientists living among the peoples most infected with anti-Semitism.”⁸⁷ The publication’s author, the Belgian jurist and socialist politician Edmond Picard, constructed his anti-Jewish discourse on a view of history as an eternal struggle between Aryan and Semitic races.⁸⁸ Picard was influenced by the ideas of Renan and Le Bon and argued that the Jews, as a Semitic people, were inherently incapable of contributing to civil progress due to their hereditary psychic deficiencies. He portrayed Jewish emancipation as a mortal threat to European society,⁸⁹ claiming that Aryans needed to defend themselves not only from Jewish actions naturally harmful to their own prosperity, but also from racial “bastardisation” through intermarriage, which would lead to decadence in the European nations.

Lombroso countered Picard’s assertion using race science to challenge the anti-Jewish charges of racial diversity, inferiority, and pollution. He began by reaffirming the ethnic kinship between European Jews and fellow Gentiles, now framing it as a quasi-primordial biological connection.⁹⁰ His defense drew on a new racial classification of Jews by prominent international physical anthropologists, who increasingly identified them as a mixed-blood group.⁹¹ This conceptualization was based on observed physical traits that differed significantly from those attributed to Semitic populations. For instance, Austrian anthropologist Felix von Luschan argued that Jews with brachycephalic skulls and light complexions provided living evidence of the ancient Israelite’s hybrid origins, which arose from repeated interbreeding with Indo-European groups in the pre-Biblical Middle East.⁹²

Lombroso adopted this depiction of a mixed-origin group that had for a long time been “more Aryan than Semitic” primarily to disprove on an anthropological basis Picard’s claims of “ethnic antagonism.” This perspective also paved the way for his

⁸⁷ ASM, 34.

⁸⁸ Francesco Germinario, *Costruire la razza nemica. La formazione dell’immaginario antisemita tra la fine dell’Ottocento e gli inizi del Novecento* (Turin: Utet, 2010), 206-208.

⁸⁹ Edmond Picard, *Synthèse de l’antisémitisme [...]* (Brussels-Paris: Larcier-Savine, 1892), 57-68.

⁹⁰ ASM, 35-41.

⁹¹ On the debate, see Dan Stone, “‘Not a Race but only a People after all’: the Racial Origins of the Jews in *Fin-de-Siècle* Anthropology” *Patterns of Prejudice* 42, no. 2 (2008): 133-149.

⁹² Felix von Luschan, “Die antropologische Stellung der Juden,” *Correspondenz-Blatt der deutschen Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte* 23 (1892): 94-100.

scientific celebration of Jewish “assimilation” within European societies. According to Lombroso, the Aryo-Semitic kinship had indeed facilitated this process, which began soon after ancient Jewish migrations to Europe and quickly achieved success. The historical reality of this assimilation, he argued, was demonstrated by the substantial homology in biosocial and cultural characteristics shared by Jews and Gentile across every European nation.⁹³

Jews were hardly racially inferior to Aryans or—as Picard wrote—anthropologically unfit for progress. To counter this charge, Lombroso highlighted a multitude of Jewish “geniuses” from various countries and eras, whose cultural contributions had played a pivotal role in shaping European civilization.⁹⁴ Their “revolutionary” character, he argued in apologetic tones, was the product of an average Jewish intelligence at least equal to that of other populations in Europe. Supporting this claim, Lombroso cited Jewish race scientist Joseph Jacobs, an Anglo-Australian scholar associated with the renowned polymath and Charles Darwin’s cousin Sir Francis Galton, who had statistically demonstrated that European Jews produced a proportionally higher number of intellectually gifted individuals than their Gentile counterparts.⁹⁵

Starting from this data, Lombroso explored the causes of this “excess of genius,” attributing its origin to the intense brain activity required for survival in a hostile, Darwinian world shaped by medieval persecutions. This environment fostered the development of a Jewish mind that remained fertile due to a combination of historical and socio-cultural factors, several of which he surprisingly ascribed to Jewish religious culture. Additionally, Lombroso’s theory of genius, which framed creativity as a positive manifestation of brain dysfunction, provided another explanation for the genius of the Jews. Overturning the prevailing anti-Jewish psychiatric stereotypes, he connected it to the spread of mental illness among his coreligionists, arguing that the distress experienced by many, far from diminishing their intelligence, refined and enhanced their innovative and progressive qualities. In the third place, Lombroso dismissed anti-Semitic fears of Aryan-Semitic racial mixing as scientifically baseless. Responding to Picard’s call to defend the racial

⁹³ ASM, 43-52.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 69-83.

⁹⁵ Joseph Jacobs, “The Comparative Distribution of Jewish Ability” (1886), in Jacobs, *Jewish Statistics: Social, Vital and Anthropometric* (London: Nutt, 1891), xli-lxix.

purity of Aryan nations, he stated that such a goal was anti-historical, as Europe had been ethnically stratified since antiquity. It was also regressive for the character of its populations,⁹⁶ since interracial “grafting” (Lombroso used the analogy of the cross-breeding of plants and animals studied by evolutionary naturalists) was a progressive force. This blending of human groups, regardless of their initial levels of civilization, advanced their development. Lombroso contended that various historical examples showed that racially homogenous populations demonstrated less intellectual advancement than those shaped by intense *métissage*. The Semitic “blood” that mixed with Aryan blood in Jewish populations was in any case not anthropologically degenerative for European nations. Spain, for example, had systematically prevented Aryo-Semitic mixtures since the late Middle Ages by eliminating Jews and Moors through “persecution and massacres,” but the result was a “much purer [but] at the same time [intellectually] more sterile” population compared to other European nations that had historically embraced racial mixing. This articulate refutation of racist anti-Jewish accusations—which was intimately built on race science—laid the groundwork for Lombroso’s ultimate critique of political anti-Semitism, condemning it as detrimental to the prosperity of European nations. In concluding his discussion of racially based accusations against Jews, particularly regarding their economic behaviors, Lombroso sought to re-legitimize Jewish emancipation, which was under attack.⁹⁷

Challenging the depiction of Jews as a “parasitic race” that instinctively undermined Aryan wealth,⁹⁸ Lombroso argued that the Jewish *homo oeconomicus* was the result of a historical process shaped mainly by political oppression. He posited that Jewish vices, as well as their substantial virtues, were not inherent but rather the legacy of centuries of confinement to mercantile professions enforced by discriminatory medieval laws. Contemporary Jewish businessmen engaged in immoral or illicit trades, Lombroso asserted, were unrepresentative of the group’s overall morality, and bore the marks of customs acquired through centuries of oppression from the Gentile world. Their regeneration from those residual attitudes—which certainly did not affect the multitude of Jewish socialists striving to liberate modern society from the “brutal

⁹⁶ ASM, 53-57.

⁹⁷ ASM, 86-98.

⁹⁸ Picard, *Synthèse*, 119-120.

domination” of capitalistic classes—was tied to the process of emancipation: Jews in Western Europe, now equal in rights to their non-Jewish fellow citizens and free to determine their own professional paths, frequently engaged in occupations unrelated to finance, and made invaluable contributions to their countries. Anti-Semitic demands for the reintroduction of discriminatory laws starkly highlighted the political irrationality and folly of anti-Semitism: forcing Jews back into traditional economic roles would inevitably reinforce the antisocial, usurious, and fraudulent tendencies from which equality would protect them.

Having delegitimized anti-Semitism on utilitarian grounds, Lombroso’s book concluded by outlining prophylactic “measures” against its resurgence. In the final section, he reaffirmed—with only minor revisions—the solution to the Jewish question that he had earlier proposed to the Viennese public.⁹⁹ Zionism, as he had argued in his reply to Nathan Birnbaum, was an anti-modern response to anti-Semitism. For persecuted Jews in the Tsarist Empire and Romania, life in the “pseudo-idyllic colonies” of Palestine would not offer better conditions than migration to modern countries like Australia and America. Instead, Lombroso was a fervid supporter of universal, unconditional emancipation as a precursor to the eventual “fusion” of Jewish and Christian citizens in societies freed from the ancient disease of anti-Jewish hatred. While his outlook on the eradication of anti-Semitism and the emergence of new social solidarities remained pessimistic, he no longer dismissed the prospect of unity. The fraternization of the two groups within a new socialist religion of humanity no longer seemed to him a utopia but a hopeful, if remote, possibility.

Italian Echoes

Gina Lombroso Ferrero, the criminologist’s daughter and first biographer (or perhaps hagiographer) claimed retrospectively that *L’antisemitismo* did not have had “much relevance [and] repercussion.”¹⁰⁰ This assertion, however, appears not entirely accurate. The book was translated into four foreign languages between

⁹⁹ ASM, 103–110.

¹⁰⁰ Lombroso-Ferrero, *Cesare Lombroso*, 324–325.

1894 and 1906, indicating a significant but historically underexplored global circulation.¹⁰¹ Nevertheless, her assessment likely reflects how Lombroso himself viewed the reception of his work, particularly in *fin-de-siècle* Italy. As one of his closest scientific collaborators, Gina likely transmitted his father's disappointment at the generally negative reception his study received from Italian public opinion. While *L'antisemitismo* sparked relatively broad public and private debate, it drew far more criticism—often severe—than it garnered appreciation. These controversies illuminate the anxieties of Italian-Jewish institutions grappling with widespread assimilationist tendencies among their members and, less well-known, the persistent ambiguity of Gentile perspectives on anti-Semitism.

In *fin-de-siècle* Italy, Lombroso's book garnered far more interest from journalists than from social scientists. The academic community paid little attention to an enquiry which, while pioneering in its focus of study, was widely perceived as lacking the rigorous scholarly foundations Lombroso claimed. One reviewer, puzzled by his methods and arguments, remarked that the criminologist condemned "anti-Semitism a priori" without explaining it as a "true sociologist" might.¹⁰² All the critics regarded the book as firmly opposed to anti-Semitism, and many dismissed it as overtly pro-Jewish. This label posed no issue for figures like Claudio Treves, a young Turinese Jewish socialist who admired Lombroso, shared his political beliefs, and even had some personal connections to him. Writing in the Socialist Party's theoretical journal, Treves expressed enthusiasm for the book, albeit with some measured reservations. He framed Jews as part of an oppressed humanity striving for liberation from the yoke of capitalism.¹⁰³

While not unanimous in its praise—one hostile reviewer sneeringly referred to the work as a "philo-Semitic pamphlet"¹⁰⁴—Italian socialism offered the most receptive cultural ground for Lombroso's ideas. However, such positive assessments were the exception in a public debate that notably appeared to bypass

¹⁰¹ Emanuele D'Antonio, "Social Science, Jewish Public Opinion and the Jewish Race in the United States of the Progressive Era: Echoes of Cesare Lombroso's *L'antisemitismo*, 1893–1911," in *Lombroso in the Americas*, eds. Silvano Montaldo and Franco Orlandi, in press.

¹⁰² "Bollettino Bibliografico," *Nuova Antologia di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti* 135 (1894): 373–374. For a more positive assessment, Gino Macchioro, "L'antisemitismo e le scienze moderne," *La Nuova Rassegna*, February 4, 1894, 149–150.

¹⁰³ Claudio Treves, "L'Antisemitismo," *Critica Sociale*, March 1, 1894, 72–74.

¹⁰⁴ Pompeo Bettini, "Gli ebrei e la civiltà," *Vita Moderna*, March 25, 1894, 89–90.

the Catholic movement, even though it was the principal driver of Italian anti-Semitism at the time.

Lombroso's critique of anti-Semitism faced rejection from Gentile reviewers across liberal and post-liberal circles. A Turinese musical critic and prominent promoter of Wagner's music in Italy maliciously attributed Lombroso's alleged bias to "unconscious Semitism," accusing him of exaggerating Jewish virtues and downplaying their flaws.¹⁰⁵ According to this prejudiced view, the Jews were psychologically incapable of impartially analyzing anti-Semitism or acknowledging their own supposedly major responsibility for its emergence. Since the 1880s, several progressive Gentile intellectuals, while morally condemning European anti-Semitism, had interpreted it as a reaction to the Jews' alleged refusal to assimilate. Their perceived separatism—whether emancipated or not—was seen as rooted not in racial differences but in the particularism of their religious culture.¹⁰⁶ This culturalist, anti-Jewish interpretation of anti-Semitism, championed by the renowned anthropologist Paolo Mantegazza, re-emerged in the 1890s as a basis for harsh critiques of Lombroso's arguments. Its most prominent supporter was Giuseppe Sergi, a fellow progressive intellectual and champion of positivist science, including of the Lombrosian school. In the only scholarly review of the work,¹⁰⁷ the anthropologist agreed that the Jews belonged to European races but rejected, on historical and ethnographic grounds, Lombroso's assertion that anti-Semitism was psychological ingrained in Gentiles. Instead, Sergi argued that its "primary and primitive" cause was the supposed proud intolerance of Jews, who, he claimed, derived from their religious culture the impulse to live in perpetual "spontaneous segregation [from] other peoples." For Sergi, anti-Jewish hatred was a natural defensive response to unrepentant Jewish separatism.

Lombroso's work did not—if it ever could—undermine the stereotype of Jewish separatism that was widespread in Gentile perceptions, but provoked negative

¹⁰⁵ Giuseppe Depanis, "L'antisemitismo e le scienze moderne," *Gazzetta Piemontese*, January 23-24 and 24-25, 1894. For a similar, openly anti-Semitic assessment see Eugenio Righini, *Antisemitismo e semitismo nell'Italia politica moderna* (Milan-Palermo: Sandron, 1901), 344.

¹⁰⁶ Ilaria Pavan, "L'impossibile rigenerazione. Ostilità antiebraiche nell'Italia liberale," *Storia e problemi contemporanei* 22, no. 50 (2009): 35-63.

¹⁰⁷ Giuseppe Sergi, "L'Antisemitismo e le Scienze Moderne," *Educazione e Istruzione*, 1 (1894): 109-112.

responses even from Italian Jews. His harsh critique of Jewish religious tradition upset many of his coreligionists, including long-time friends like the renowned linguist Graziadio Ascoli, preventing them from engaging with or appreciating his critique of anti-Semitism.¹⁰⁸ Italian-Jewish institutions predictably rejected the book's assimilationist argument, which advocated for the erasure of distinct identities—including the Jewish one—in favor of a utopian vision of human brotherhood. A Jewish monthly based in Trieste vehemently attacked Lombroso's criticism of Judaic religiosity, going so far as to question his honesty, mental acuity, and even his and his forefathers' Jewishness.¹⁰⁹ Meanwhile, the most popular Italian-Jewish magazine expressed its disappointment more diplomatically, and granted Lombroso a crucial concession. Its reviewer, Rabbi Flaminio Servi, regarded the book as generally unsatisfactory but conceded that it served to "enlighten Christians" about the inconsistency of "many [anti-Jewish] prejudices."¹¹⁰

The perception of Lombroso as a scientific apologist—whether he was or not a good Jew—appears to have been a minority view, albeit one not entirely absent among his coreligionists. Several young Piedmontese Jewish socialists, like the aforementioned Treves, were personally linked to him and admired him as a rare epitome of a "scientific apostle" (*scienziato apostolo*) of social reform.¹¹¹ Felice Momigliano, a philosopher who conceived Judaism as a universal ethical tradition and sought to reconcile its values with those of modern positivism and socialism, wrote about the book on several occasions, describing it as "small in size [but] dense of thought."¹¹² Although Momigliano felt that Lombroso underestimated religious anti-Semitism, which remained dangerous in barely secularized countries like Italy, he believed the criminologist had produced a scientific "truth" useful for

¹⁰⁸ Emanuele D'Antonio, "Graziadio Isaia Ascoli e l'*Antisemitismo* di Cesare Lombroso. Una critica epistolare," in *Non solo verso Oriente. Studi sull'Ebraismo in onore di Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini*, eds. Maddalena Del Bianco Cotrozzi, Riccardo Disegni and Marcello Massenzio, Vol. 2 (Florence: Olschki, 2014), 503-517.

¹⁰⁹ "Dagli amici mi guardi Iddio," *Il Corriere Israelitico* 32, no. 9 (1893-94), 200-202.

¹¹⁰ F[laminio] S[ervi], "Buletino Bibliografico," *Il Vessillo Israelitico*, February 1894, 63.

¹¹¹ Alberto Cavaglion, *Felice Momigliano (1866-1924). Una biografia* (Bologna-Naples: il Mulino, 1988), 74-77.

¹¹² Felice Momigliano, "La stampa cattolica e l'antisemitismo. Lettera aperta al professore Cesare Lombroso," *La Stampa-Gazzetta piemontese*, January 28-29, 1895; Momigliano, "Le attualità della scienza. La Musica e gli Ebrei," *Gazzetta letteraria*, March 3, 1894, 104.

the progressive cause of social justice. Lombroso's portrayal of Jews as an ancient people racially transformed by history and adapted to a hostile world outflanked, in Momigliano's view, the anti-Jewish racism propagated by anti-Semitism. To be sure, his judgement reflected the perspective of an intellectual who regarded Lombroso as a cultural hero and, as their relationship deepened, came to consider himself as both a disciple and a friend.¹¹³ However, the same perception of Lombroso as a "defender of the race," was also shared by Jews who had no personal connection to him. This was evident, for instance, in the case of a Genoese medical student who, between 1894 and 1895, faced repeated instances of anti-Jewish hostility. In that critical context, the criminologist seemed to him the most fitting figure to turn to for "advice" on how to structure his strategy of self-defense.¹¹⁴

Conclusions

Lombroso's *L'antisemitismo* has been the subject of some pioneering and relevant researches in the last three decades. Unlike his major works, especially those on criminality, however, the book has remained relatively less-known in the historical and historiographical field. Moreover, its negative attitude toward the Jewish religion and—more importantly—its foundation in race science led several scholars to view it as scientifically legitimizing anti-Jewish prejudice, and thus unintentionally contributing to the construction of a cultural climate conducive to the dramatic development of anti-Semitism in twentieth century Europe. I have challenged these teleological interpretations not only by framing Lombrosian enquiry within the context—in the aforementioned John Efron's words—of the "scientific apologia" built by European Jewish race scientists to counter anti-Semitic images of Jewish diversity. The anachronism of these interpretation is also quite clearly evident in the previously unexplored, wide rejection of Lombroso's scientific thesis on anti-Semitism by *fin-de-siècle* non-Jewish Italian criticism; the contemporary observers were intimately unable—as the criminologist had done—

¹¹³ Felice Momigliano to Cesare Lombroso 7 September 1897, SMAUT: Carrara/CL, Momigliano 2, Università di Torino.

¹¹⁴ Gustavo Lusena to Cesare Lombroso, 17 February 1895, SMAUT: Carrara/CL, Lusena 1, Università di Torino.

to root the origins of anti-Jewish hatred mainly in the Gentile world and, more specifically, in ancestral tendencies of the Gentiles' mind.

Today, this does not obviously mean re-evaluating Lombroso's conceptualization of anti-Semitism, which would be an anachronistic exercise akin to its criticism. My essay aimed simply to provide a historical understanding of it by contextualizing it within the criminologist's decades-long engagement with the Jewish question through an intellectual-biographical approach. However, I would suggest as a matter of future research the hypothesis that its more subtle, long-lasting legacy might be located in a specific field of scientific scholarship. While attempting to defend the group he proudly regarded as his own race, Lombroso—as other *fin-de-siècle* European Jewish and Gentile intellectuals—may have crudely, even grossly pioneered the psychological approach to the study of anti-Semitic collective behaviors, which would have flourished in twentieth century international social sciences.

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Keywords: Cesare Lombroso, *Fin-de-siècle* European anti-Semitism, Emancipation, Social Sciences, Race Science

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