

Politecnico di Milano
I School of Architecture
Master of Science degree in Architecture
AEe Concentration - Landscape Architecture

ROVING PRISON

A floating island along Po river

Thesis supervisor: Prof. Arch. Giovanni La Varra
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Thesis co-supervisor: Prof. Ing. Stefano Invernizzi
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Student: Sara Lora
student ID number 735113

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0 Preface

0.1 Content

| Page | Chapter | Title |
|------|---------|---|
| 6 | 0 | Preface |
| 8 | 0.1 | Content |
| 10 | 0.2 | Pictures list |
| 14 | 0.3 | Abstract |
| 15 | 0.3.1 | Abstract (italian language) |
| 16 | 1 | Out-of-date space |
| 22 | 1.1 | On-date observations |
| 22 | 1.1.1 | Not legal prisons |
| 24 | 1.1.2 | Jobs |
| 26 | 1.1.3 | “No places” |
| 26 | 1.1.4 | The two cities |
| 27 | 1.1.5 | Visions |
| 30 | 1.2 | Numbers |
| 34 | 1.3 | Trends |
| 34 | 1.3.1 | Italian prisons |
| 42 | 1.3.2 | Prisoners and Prison Guards |
| 44 | 1.3.3 | Foreigners |
| 45 | 1.3.4 | Drugs and alcohol |
| 48 | 1.3.5 | Violence |
| 56 | 2 | Roving Prison |
| 62 | 2.1 | An highwaterway |
| 62 | 2.1.1 | Transportation tendencies |
| 63 | 2.1.2 | The Italian case |
| 63 | 2.1.3 | The waterway potential |
| 65 | 2.1.4 | The Padano-Veneto Water System |
| 66 | 2.1.5 | Waterways classification |
| 66 | 2.1.6 | Va class CEMT |
| 74 | 2.2 | Jobs |
| 74 | 2.2.1 | Agriculture |
| 75 | 2.2.2 | Quarrying |
| 82 | 2.3 | Architecture |
| 86 | 2.4 | Multiple localization on the territory |
| 90 | 3 | Diary |
| 100 | 4 | Images |
| 132 | 5 | Bibliography |
| 134 | 5.1 | Discipline |
| 135 | 5.2 | The record |
| 136 | 5.3 | Visions |

0.2 Pictures list

| Page | Title |
|------|--|
| | Chapter 1 |
| 19 | 1.1 The pigs barnyard |
| 21 | 1.2 The prisoners courtyard |
| 34 | 1.3 204 Italian Penal Institutions divided by region |
| 35 | 1.4 Map of the 204 Italian Penal Institutions |
| 36 | 1.5 44.055 Prisoners / Regular capability of Italian Penal Institutions |
| 38 | 1.6 Prisoners: new access to the prison from 1990 to 2008 |
| 38 | 1.7 Prisoners present in the prison the 31 December from 1990 to 2008 |
| 38 | 1.8 Inflicted sentences from 1976 to 2004 |
| 39 | 1.9 Crimes imputed to prisoners from 2002 to 2007 |
| 40 | 1.10 Alternative measures to the imprisonment from 1976 to 2009 |
| 40 | 1.11 Alternative measures to the imprisonment: retractions from 2001 to 2008 |
| 41 | 1.12 Semi-liberty from the prison (person that works at a half-way house for addicts during the day and returns to jail in the evening): allowed measures between the one asked, divided by geographical area. |
| 42 | 1.13 Prisoners |
| 42 | 1.14 Prison Guards |
| 43 | 1.15 Prisoners and prison guards comparison |
| 44 | 1.16 Access to the prison of foreign citizens from 1991 to 2007 |
| 44 | 1.17 Presence in the prison of foreign citizens from 1991 to 2007 |
| 44 | 1.18 Presence in the prison of foreign citizens for crimes linked to the immigration law and deportations from 2002 until 2006 |
| 45 | 1.19 Crimes of foreign prisoners from 2002 to 2007 |
| 45 | 1.20 Access to the prison because of crimes linked to the drugs from 2004 to 2008 |
| 46 | 1.21 Prisoners dead because of drugs from 1973 until 2007 |
| 46 | 1.22 Signals of drugs issues from the Justice Authority between 1973 and 2008 |
| 47 | 1.23 Drug addict prisoners from 1991 until 2008 |
| 47 | 1.24 Drug addicts dependent on the Drug addict Social Service (Servizio per le Tossicodipendenze - Ser.T.) from 1991 until 2007 |
| 47 | 1.25 Drug addicts dependent on Social Rehabilitation Services from 1991 until 2007 |
| 48 | 1.26 Prisoners that killed themselves from 1990 to 2009 |
| 48 | 1.27 Rate of suicide between prisoners from 1990 to 2009 every 10.000 prisoners |
| 48 | 1.28 Self-harm episodes between prisoners from 1990 to 2008 |
| 50 | 1.29 Milano Bollate prison in 2006: prisoners' room. Picture by Uliano Lucas |
| 51 | 1.30 Milano Bollate prison in 2006: prisoners' toilette. Picture by Uliano Lucas |
| 52 | 1.31 Milano Bollate prison in 2006: laundry. Picture by Uliano Lucas |
| 53 | 1.32 Milano Bollate prison in 2006: wall. Picture by Uliano Lucas |

| | |
|----|--|
| 54 | 1.33 Milano Bollate prison in 2006: women. Picture by Uliano Lucas |
| 55 | 1.34 Milano Bollate prison in 2006: video library. Picture by Uliano Lucas |

Chapter 2

| | |
|----|--|
| 60 | 2.1 Po river and its feeders |
| 62 | 2.2 Freight traffic in the European Union |
| 62 | 2.3 Division of the traffic in Europe |
| 63 | 2.4 Freight traffic in Italy |
| 63 | 2.5 Division of the traffic in Italy |
| 64 | 2.6 External cost of the different means of transportation |
| 65 | 2.7 Freight traffic energy consumption |
| 68 | 2.8 Sailing on the Padano-Veneto Water System |
| 70 | 2.9 Po highwaterway |
| 72 | 2.10 Boats classification: dimensions |
| 76 | 2.11 Jobs: farming |
| 76 | 2.12 Jobs: farming timeline |
| 78 | 2.13 Jobs: quarrying |
| 80 | 2.14 Jobs along the highwaterway |
| 82 | 2.15 Roving Prison plan |
| 82 | 2.16 AA Section |
| 84 | 2.17 BB Section |

| | |
|----|--|
| 86 | 2.18 Multiple localization on the territory |
| 88 | 2.19 44.847 Prisoners / NEW Regular capability of Italian Penal Institutions |

Chapter 4

| | |
|-----|---|
| 102 | 4.1 Po river |
| 104 | 4.2 Po river feeders: Secchia river detention basin |
| 107 | 4.3 Po river feeders: Mincio river floodgate |
| 108 | 4.4 Po river and pedestrian, car and railway bridges in Ostiglia, Mantova |
| 111 | 4.5 Lauro Zampoli Tourist River Port, Bagnolo San Vito, Mantova |
| 112 | 4.6 Quarry in Luzzara, Reggio nell'Emilia |
| 114 | 4.7 Young poplars (Populus alba), via Argine Po, Revere |
| 116 | 4.8 Workmen cutting the poplars in the Sustinente countryside, Mantova |
| 118 | 4.9 Wood carving industry, Villarotta (Luzzara), Reggio nell'Emilia |
| 121 | 4.10 Irrigation system, via Argine Po, Revere, Mantova |
| 122 | 4.11 Corn field, Correggio Micheli, Mantova |
| 124 | 4.12 Lambrusco grapevine field, Sustinente, Mantova |
| 126 | 4.13 Wheat field and poplars, Sustinente, Mantova |
| 128 | 4.14 Agriculture fields along San Benedetto Po waterfront, Mantova |

0.3 Abstract

“Di respirare la stessa aria dei secondini non mi va, perciò ho deciso di rinunciare alla mia ora di libertà, se c'è qualcosa da spartire tra un prigioniero e il suo piantone, che non sia l'aria di quel cortile voglio soltanto che sia prigionere”¹

The thesis aims to analyze the present situation of the Italian prisons and to propose a valuable vision for the future, in order to vouch for the rehabilitation and for the resocializing of the inmates.

Through the investigation of the current Italian prisons I came up with the understanding that they held steady for more than two thousand years, since the invention of the Panopticon of Jeremy Bentham in 1785. Nowadays the jail is facing a series of problems that make its own function depleted and unendurable.

After a brainstorming on conceivable visions for the future for praising the quality of the punishment, I propose as possible solution the job. The Roving Prison is moving along the Padano-Veneto water system according to the seasons, in order to allow internees to work all over the year. It represents an experimental penal institution, in which the deviants have freedom and responsibilities, rights and duties.

The Roving Prison is floating along Po river highwaterway, answering to the constant agriculture work demand, assuring a large number of workers for the renaturalization of the shut quarries and for the caring of the emergency protection hydraulic structures in case of river flooding. The possibility of working while staying in the prison will grow up inside the deviant the perception of the mandatory, a sense of responsibility and duty and will give to the people the opportunity of new and autonomous insertion in tomorrow society.

¹ De Andrè, Fabrizio “Nella mia ora di libertà. Storia di un impiegato”, 1973.

0.3.1 Abstract (italian language)

“Di respirare la stessa aria dei secondini non mi va, perciò ho deciso di rinunciare alla mia ora di libertà, se c'è qualcosa da spartire tra un prigioniero e il suo piantone, che non sia l'aria di quel cortile voglio soltanto che sia prigionere”¹

La tesi mira ad analizzare l'attuale situazione delle carceri italiane e a proporre una strada per migliorare le cose, al fine di garantire la riabilitazione e la risocializzazione degli internati.

Le prigioni italiane hanno subito variazioni limitate sin dai tempi dell'invenzione del Panopticon di Jeremy Bentham nel 1785, causando una serie di problematiche che mettono in discussione la loro stessa funzione e che le rendono intollerabili.

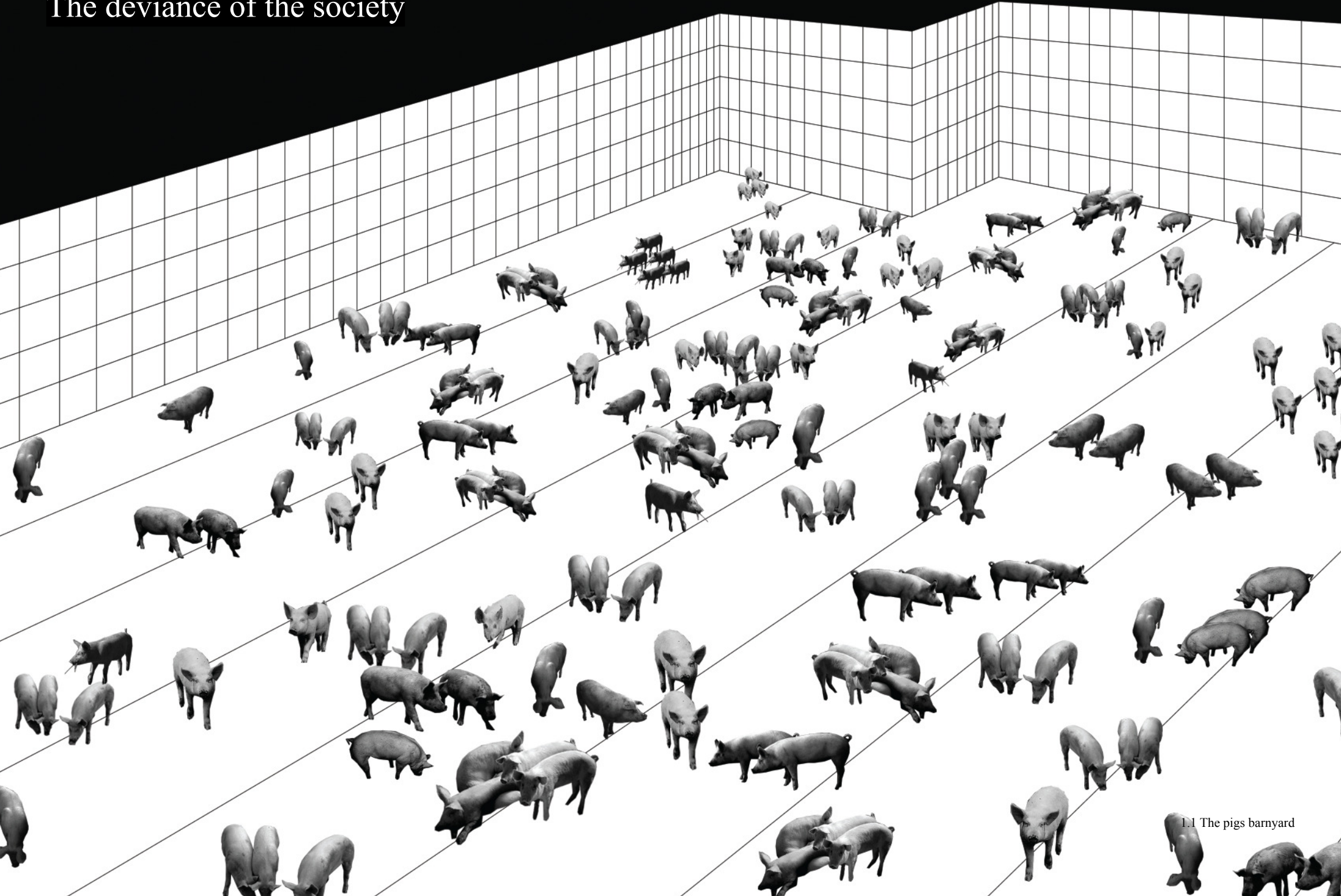
Dopo aver pensato a una serie di alternative al fine di garantire la qualità della pena, propongo attraverso il mio progetto la possibilità di lavorare. Il progetto rappresenta un Istituto Penitenziario sperimentale, dove i devianti hanno libertà e responsabilità, diritti e doveri. La Prigione Itinerante si muove lungo il sistema idroviario Padano-Veneto secondo le stagioni, al fine di permettere ai prigionieri di lavorare durante tutto l'arco dell'anno.

La Prigione Itinerante galleggia lungo il sistema autostradale del fiume Po, rispondendo alla domanda costante di lavoratori per l'agricoltura e assicurando un numero di personale adeguato per la rinaturalizzazione delle cave dimesse presenti lungo il Po e per la costruzione di opere di difesa idraulica di emergenza nel caso di piena del fiume. La possibilità di lavorare stando in prigione farà crescere nel carcerato la percezione dell'obbligatorio, un senso di responsabilità e di dovere, dando alle persone l'opportunità di avere un nuovo e autonomo reinserimento nella società del domani.

¹ De Andrè, Fabrizio “Nella mia ora di libertà. Storia di un impiegato”, 1973.

1 Out-of-date space

The deviance of the society



1.1 The pigs barnyard



are we hiding them?

1.1 On-date observations

1.1.1 Not legal prisons

204 are the prisons¹ present in Italy built to accommodate 44.135 people, 67.178 people are confined in these buildings in 2010. Poggioreale, located in Naples, is the biggest one and encloses 2.803 people while the regular capability is 1.385 captives². In Italy, the overcrowding rate is 157%, the highest in Europe³.

Majority of the buildings were built in the last century and previously when general notions about punishment and hygiene were very different⁴. Cells supposed to guest one prisoner are usually stuffed with three or four people. When in a corrective unit supposed to contain 400-500 people thousand are confined, it is no longer reasonable to argue about reeducation and rehabilitation.

All is stopped and, the only way still available is containment so, currently, jails are not legal places.

The amount of prison staff employees is decreasing while prisoners are increasing⁵. Considering the rate of captives per jailer and educating staff it is difficult to take care of each singularity and deviance embedded in prisons and to aim for the reeducation.

In Italian primary school a supporting teacher is provided per 1,7 disabled student.

1 Data updated on 18 February 2010. Source: DAP, data processing of the Association Pianeta Carcere (see figure 1, chapter 1.3).

2 Data updated on 22 March 2010. Source: DAP, data processing of the Association Pianeta Carcere in collaboration with con Sappe, Sindacato Autonomo Polizia Penitenziaria.

3 Data updated on 28 May 2010. Source: ANSA, Agenzia Nazionale Stampa Associata.

4 De Vito, Christian G. "Camosci e girachiavi. Storia del carcere in Italia", Bari: Editori Laterza, 2009.

5 Data updated on 3 May 2010. Source: DAP, data processing of the Association Pianeta Carcere in collaboration with con Sappe, Sindacato Autonomo Polizia Penitenziaria.

Exactly a supporting teacher is assigned to each severely disabled student and, half to each medium or slight disabled student.

A deviant captivated in maximum-security prison or, in an agricultural colony or, in a workhouse can lean on one social worker per 48 people and, on one educator per 107 prisoners. These are the figures in accordance with the statute but actuality is different: 25% of social workers and the 60% of the educators are missing.

Supporting teacher in the primary school as well as social workers, educators, chaplains in prison are working on the same project: to guarantee to the people assisted the opportunity of new and autonomous insertion in tomorrow society.

Considering what above it is easy to understand how difficult the development of a reeducational plan focused on each prisoner is. The antisocial behaviors and the barbarization in the Italian jails reflect the lack of personnel intended to support captives. Violence, instead of dialogue and listening, is the instrument used to control people. To neutralize a prisoner is the trend obtained by spreading fear⁶. Even Lucia Castellano, Bollate pilot prison director, assert the elimination of individual identity as an instrument to facilitate the management of deviants. She believes this is the real aim of a prison but, in order to change, it is necessary to unhinge the system starting from the roots.⁷

Even if the prison today is punishing the soul, temporarily removing freedom to prisoners, it is still linked to the physical punishment: food-rationing, sex deprivation, blows, solitary confinement⁸. The pattern appears not bearable considering the amount

6 Orwell, George "1984", Mondatori, 2010.

7 Castellano, Lucia "La teoria dei vasi comunicanti. Carcere e territorio" in *Comunitas* n. 7 febbraio 2006 "La rappresentazione della pena. Carcere invisibile e corpi segregati", Arti Grafiche Fiorin, 2005, p. 69-76.

8 Foucault, Michel "Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison", Vintage, 1995.

of episode of self-punishment or suicides occurred in Italian prisons in 2009⁹: 63 suicide, 638 attempted suicide. In 2008, the self-punishment actions recorded were 4.928¹⁰.

In his volume “A doppia mandata” Adriano Sofri states how the prison system intend to veil the identity of captives through a pitiless method. Each single step of day life become awful and confined, followed by ridiculous and humiliating ceremonies, set by rules considered silly even in a nursery school¹¹.

A system so shaped leads to loss of individuality and increase troubles, issues in reeducation of deviants and finally, difficulties during the re-insertion in the civil society.

1.1.2 Jobs

According to Michel Foucault, the possibility of working while staying in the prison would grow up inside the deviant the perception of the mandatory, a sense of responsibility and duty¹².

Agricultural colonies and working house employ a few parts of captives: only 20,5% of prisoners has a job and a great slice of these is employed in prison administration offices (86%). In 2009, just 1.798 people had an external job¹³

The low rate of external job is due to troubles in moving captives toward working

9 Data updated on 15 November 2009. Source: DAP, data processing of the Association Pianeta Carcere on the data of the Justice Department.

10 Data on 31 December 2008. Source: DAP, data processing of the Association Pianeta Carcere on the data of the Justice Department.

11 Sofri, Adriano “A doppia mandata. Riflessioni sul carcere, la pena, la giustizia”, Millelire, 1997.

12 Foucault, Michel “Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison”, Vintage, 1995.

13 Data updated on 30 June 2009. Source: DAP, data processing of the Association Pianeta Carcere on the data of the Justice Department.

place and in creating new work sites near the existing prisons. During last decades, some laws were established to sort an issue raised in the first half of 20th century: some companies’ owners protested against the job of he inmates for external companies, which caused an unfair competition on the market, due to the lower payment given to prisoners¹⁴.

Even if the prisoners’ jobs were not well paid, almost all the deviants would like to work: they write “petitions” claiming, they ask for a hearing in order to work¹⁵. Many prisons’ directors don not aloud audiences with prisoners asking for a job, because they have no way to satisfy their request¹⁶.

The article 20 of the Prison law “Work” (Law n°354 of July 26, 1975) states that the Penal Institutions should promote the work for prisoners and for working internees and their participation to professional courses. In order to achieve this aim, working associations can be organized and managed by public or private companies and professional courses can be created and carried out by private institutions or private companies controlled by the regions. The law specifies that the inmates work has not a punishment character and that it has to be paid. Moreover, the job is mandatory for the prisoners and for the inmates of the secure detention prisons, workhouses and agricultural colonies. For therapeutic reasons, also the internees in custody hospitals and in the penal psychiatric wards can be assigned to the work. The organization and the working methods of the penal institutions jobs have to reflect the one of the job in the outside society, in order to supply the internees with a professional experience similar to the standard working conditions for facilitating the reintegration within the society.

14 Giulianelli, Roberto “L’industria carceraria in Italia. Lavoro e produzione nelle prigioni da Giolitti a Mussolini”, Milano: Franco Angeli, 2008.

15 Polizzi, Donatella “Sotto uno stesso cielo. Storie e immagini dal carcere”, Roma: Bonanno Editore, 2009.

16 Colmegna, Virginio “Convincere o Costringere. La giustizia, i diritti e la democrazia” in *Communitas* n. 7 febbraio 2006 “La rappresentazione della pena. Carcere invisibile e corpi segregati”, Arti Grafiche Fiorin, 2005, p. 85-96.

During the working allocation process, it is needed to consider only the old age of the unemployment inmates during the period of imprisonment, the family commitment, the skills, the previous and documented activities and the one connected to their possible future job.

The job can help to achieve the aim laid down by the article 1 of the Prison law “Cure and reeducation” (Law n°354 of July 26, 1975), which states the necessity of a reeducational cure for the internees, even through contacts with the external society, leaning toward the social reintegration of the prisoners. The job, together with professional courses, allows the prisoner to learn a job and to become specialized, supporting the future reintegration into the society.

1.1.3 “No places”

According to many citizens, the prison is one of the places of the disappearance¹⁷. We want to move it outside the society and we do not want to know what happens inside, who lives there. We want to hide a reality that creates inconveniences.

Many penal institutions can be defined as “no places”¹⁸ also from a geographical point of view. They are hidden as the people locked inside. Prisons look embarrassed by their own existence and they would like to disappear, as well as the law makes men and women to vanish, through the deprivation of the basic human rights, in conditions of overcrowding, promiscuity, chaos, dirt and fear.

1.1.4 The two cities

The jail can be seen as social dump, bodies’ storage, social wounds container of the justice administration. The sick prison needs a broad project that has to deal with the

17 Bonomi, Aldo e Natoli, Salvatore “Del dolore e della pena” in *Communitas* n. 7 febbraio 2006 “La rappresentazione della pena. Carcere invisibile e corpi segregati”, Arti Grafiche Fiorin, 2005, p. 11-29.

18 Foucault, Michel “Utopie. Eterotopie”, Napoli: Cronopio, 2006.

tendencies, the values, the fears and the wishes of the society that shows nowadays a desire of revenge and answers oriented to the zero tolerance. The increased number of internees does not correspond to the increasing of the crimes. We can notice a behavior that aims to define the border between two cities: the one of the healthy and the one of the sick, the one of the just and normal man from the one of the criminals and of the deviants. This can be the reason why we have 67 thousand prisoners in the Italian penal institutions. Drug-addicts and immigrants are the majority in the prisons. We can even estimate that half of the inmates are connected with crimes directly or indirectly linked to the drug law.

Zulma Paggi in the writing “Una Città” says: “Actually, the prison works well if we overturn its aim, because in this situation the jail is a crime. If we say that the prison role is to redeem people and not to crash them, so, the penal institution today is perfect”. Norberto Bobbio in the book “L’età dei diritti” remembers that Kant selected between the innate rights only one: the freedom. So, how can we speak about rights for people which freedom has been deprived?¹⁹

For these reasons, we have firstly to affirm the classic rights: the vote, the expression, the religion, and we have to assure the social rights: give the possibility to prisoners of working, to take care of the health.

1.1.5 Visions

A large number of proposals have been developed in order to update the Italian prison system. The Magistrate Alessandro Margara thinks that a possible solution can be to weigh on the penalty, doing what people do not like, but it is needed in this moment: to reduce the punishment, giving more possibilities and resources to the welfare. He proposes to modify the legislation on the drugs and on the immigration.

Today we are continuing to increase the penalty for people that should not be internees.

19 Bobbio, Norberto “L’età dei diritti”, Einaudi tascabili. Saggi, 2005.

We should reduce the penalty and focus on alternative measures. We could even have benefits from an economical point of view; in fact, the state pays half price to maintain a deviant living in alternative structures than to maintain a prisoner. Today 20.000 people are involved with alternative measures. This number halved in comparison with four years ago. The state pays 162,51 Euro every day for each prisoner, but the real cost of maintenance of the inmates (two meals and breakfast) is only 3,15 Euro for each person.

Moreover, we need to remember that instead of having prisons lived by robbers, drug dealers or mafia people, we find in the jails short periods inmates with punishments of less than two years²⁰. All the technicians agree on saying that the cell should be the last place, the *l'estrema ratio*. This principle is also written in the Prison law. In fact, the imprisonment implies a high grade of social exclusion; it blocks every possibility of reaction and causes an incapability of understanding its meaning. The internees think to be victim of the society, even if they committed an offence. In fact, the punishment produces innocence and the prisoner does not recognize the necessity of a reintegration path²¹.

Virginio Colmegna, President of the Foundation "Casa della Carità", proposes the development of activities that promote the job inside and outside the jail, in order to connect with other social and volunteer associations to increase the housing opportunities, the reintegration care, support the families, experiment alternative solutions to the prison and aim for the punishment reduction²².

20 Ruggiero, Vincenzo "Clemenza selettiva e welfare coatto" in *Communitas* n. 7 febbraio 2006 "La rappresentazione della pena. Carcere invisibile e corpi segregati", Arti Grafiche Fiorin, 2005, p. 113-126.

21 Margara, Alessandro "Migranti e tossicodipendenti, la carcerizzazione del margine" in *Communitas* n. 7 febbraio 2006 "La rappresentazione della pena. Carcere invisibile e corpi segregati", Arti Grafiche Fiorin, 2005, p. 39-44.

22 Colmegna, Virginio "Convincere o Costringere. La giustizia, i diritti e la democrazia" in *Communitas* n. 7 febbraio 2006 "La rappresentazione della pena. Carcere invisibile e corpi segregati", Arti Grafiche Fiorin, 2005, p. 85-96.

1.2 Numbers

In Italy, the penal institutions on March 22, 2010 are **204** and the inmates on February 28, 2010 are **67.178**. Between the prisoners, **35.171** have a definitive sentence, **29.998** have been accused, **1.822** are the internees and **187** the people waiting to be arranged. At June 30, 2009 the men represent the largest part of the prisoners (**95,6%**), but **2.779** women inmates live in the prison with **50-60** children of less than three years old.

At March 22, 2010 the condemned with a definitive sentence are the **52,3% (35.171)** of the total number of prisoners and most of them have been sentenced to custody for three to six years. At June 30, 2009 the **36,9%** have a punishment of less than three years long, so the **52,3%** of the prisoners are detainee for less than six years. We should reflect on these data.

Looking at the crimes list at June 30, 2009, **46%** are the offences against the estate, **41%** are linked to the drug law, **33,1%** against the person. The offences against the drug law represent the **14%** of the total number of definitive sentences, and the one linked to mafia (416bis article) represent the **8,4%**. In 2008, the number of accesses to the prison is of **92.900** persons, and **46%** of them are foreigners.

In Italy, considering the detentions, the alternative measures and the waiting sentences list, the criminal area involves more than **190.000** people. In 1990, they were **36.300**. We can think the multiplication of people involved as the transformation of a “social state” into a “criminal state”.

At June 30, 2009 the semi-liberty from the prison involves **1.216** persons, **4.932** people have the house arrest, and **8.191** are subject to custody test.

The people between twenty-five and thirty-nine old years comprehend the **50,1%** of the prisoners. The foreigners are increasing (at May 14, 2010, the Africans represent the **51,9%**). **33%** are the drug addicted and if we consider all the people present in the

prison because of crimes linked to the drugs (detention or dealing), the percentage of prisoners is higher than **50 %**.

3 prisoners out of 4 have low or no education. 1 out of 4 had a job before entering in the prison. 1 out of 4 does not have a house where to leave after the imprisonment.

At May 14, 2010 the majority of the foreigners is of Islamic religion (**39,4%**), **16,1%** are Catholics and **10,6%** the Orthodoxies.

At March 31, 2010 the Prison guards, that are the other side of the coin living inside the jail, are decreasing: **38.408**, equal to the **84%** of the scheduled people.

This is the situation of the non-judicial staff at December 31, 2005; **1.223** are the social workers, and the scheduled one are **1.630** that correspond to 1 social worker every 48 internees. The educators are **551** (1 every 107 prisoners) instead of **1.376**. The psychologists are **400** and they can dedicate only two hours for each penal institution: 1 psychologist every 148 inmates. These data explain why is difficult to achieve the rehabilitation and the reeducation in the Italian penal institutions.

The total capacity of the **204** Italian penal institutions is of **44.135** prisoners. Nowadays the overcrowding exceeds **23.000** units. Italy has an overcrowding rate of **157%**, the highest in Europe, where the average crowding rate is **96%**.

According to an up-to-date statistic, 1 internee over 3 (**37,33%**) affirms to live in an intolerable overcrowding situation, the **52,08%** in not regular conditions. Only the **10,59%** says to live in regular conditions.

The **69,31%** of the prisoners does not have hot water in the cell, the **60%** sleeps next to the bidet or the water and **55,6%** lives without having the opportunity of talking in the open air.

At June 30, 2009, the prisoners with a job are **13.408**, the **20,5%** of the internees: most of them work for the penal institution administration (**86%**) and only **1.798** are working for external companies. In Italy, only **400** prisoners have an “outdoor work” (article 21). In 1991, the working prisoners were the **34%** of the jail population. This means that in 19 years the situation got worst.

In 2005, the **57,5%** of the prisons presented cases of TB and the **66%** of scabies.

In 2005, the **38%** of the prisoners resulted positive to the hepatitis C test the **50%** to the hepatitis B test, while the **7%** presents the infection and the **18%** is positive to the TB test.

In 2009, the people that killed themselves were **63** (data uploaded on November 15, 2009).

In 2008, the attempted suicides were **683**.

In 2008, the self-harm actions were **4.928**.

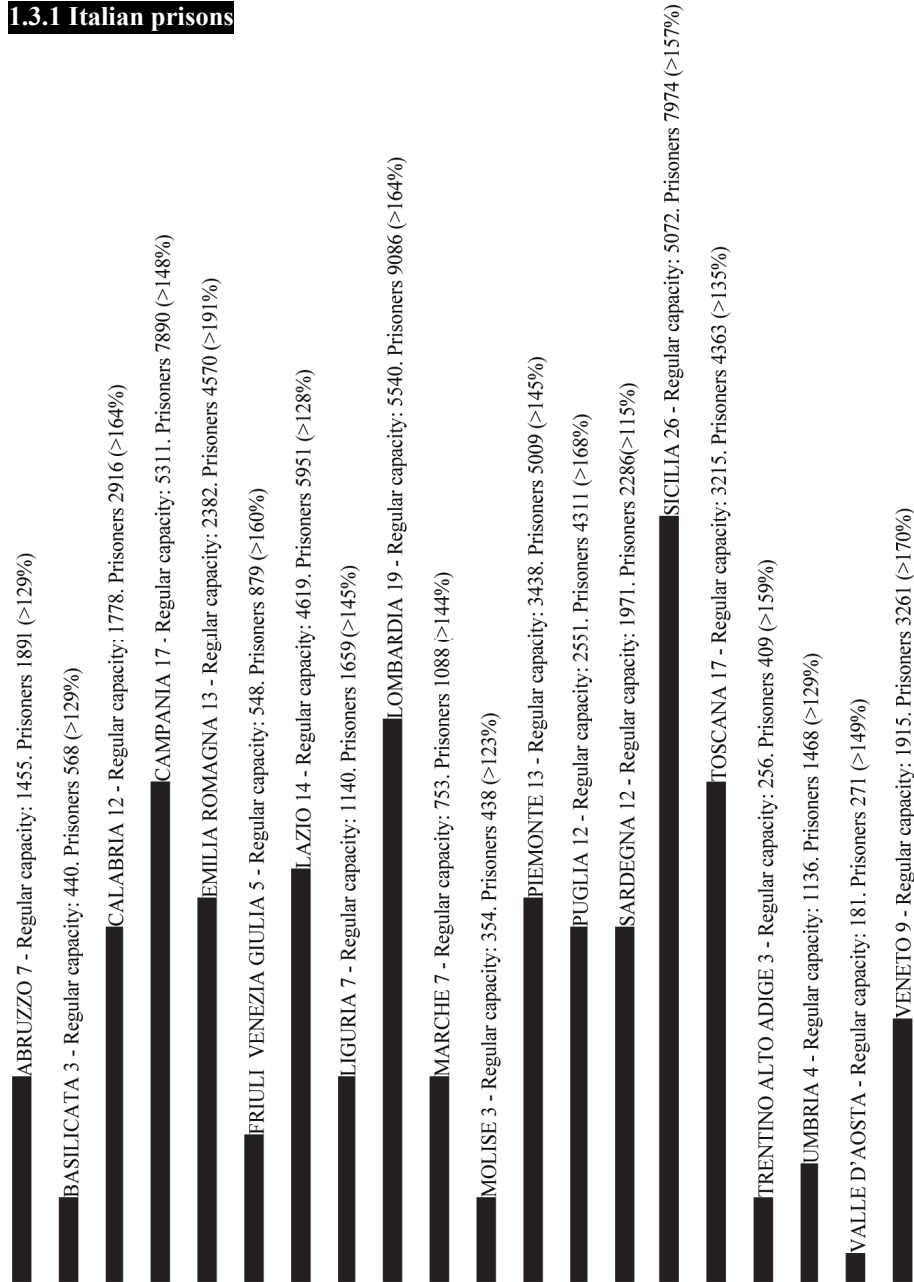
From 2000 until 2009, **1.537** passed away inside the jail and **547** of them killed themselves.

Why? Between 2007 and 2009 to an increased jail population rate of the **20%** corresponded an increased suicide rate near to the **30%**.

Why? For every prisoner the state spends daily **162,51€**, but the real cost of maintenance of a deviant is only of **3,15€**.

1.3 Trends

1.3.1 Italian prisons



1.3 204 Italian Penal Institutions divided by region

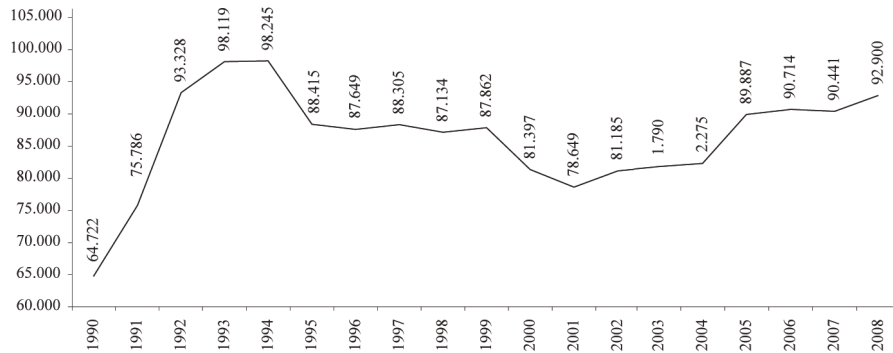
Data updated on 18 February 2010. Source: DAP, data processing of the Association Pianeta Carcere.



1.4 Map of the 204 Italian Penal Institutions

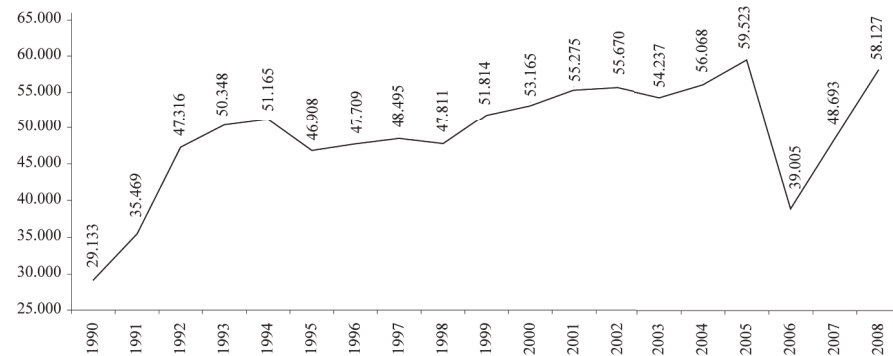
1.6 Prisoners: new access to the prison from 1990 to 2008

(in number) Source: DAP, data processing of Centro Studi Ristretti Orizzonti on the data of the Justice Department.



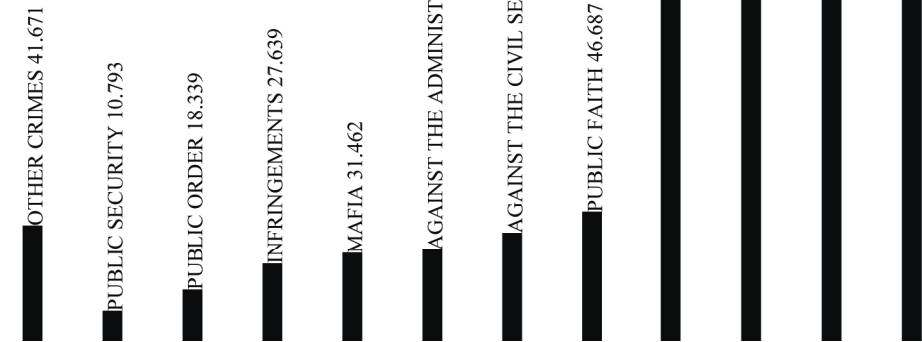
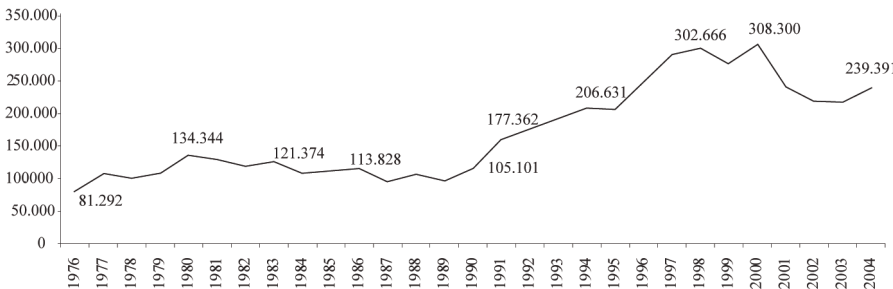
1.7 Prisoners present in the prison the 31 December from 1990 to 2008

(in number) Source: DAP, data processing of Centro Studi Ristretti Orizzonti on the data of the Justice Department.



1.8 Inflicted sentences from 1976 to 2004

(in number) Source: DAP, data processing of Centro Studi Ristretti Orizzonti on the data of the Justice Department.

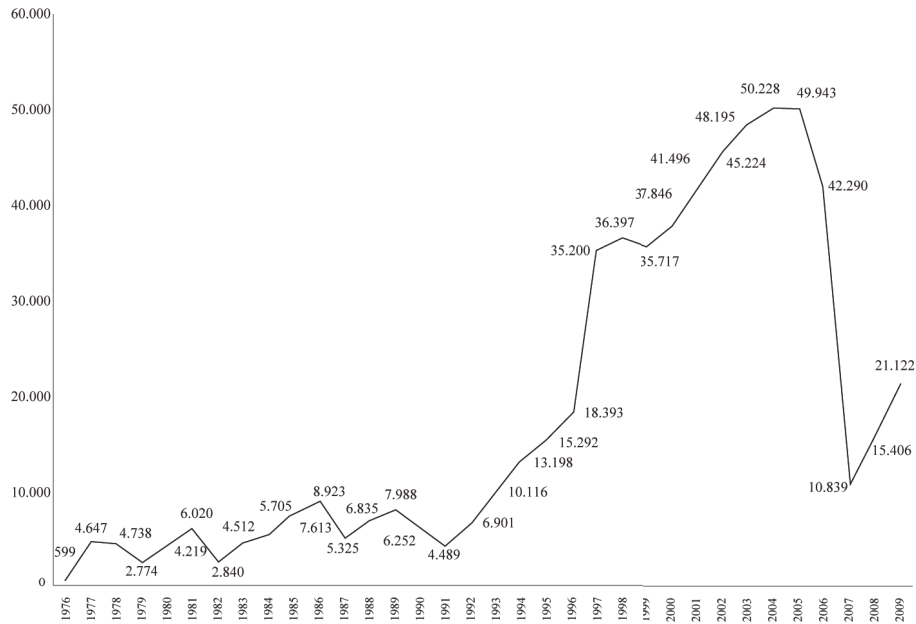


1.9 Crimes imputed to prisoners from 2002 to 2007

(groups by crime type) Source: DAP, data processing of Centro Studi Ristretti Orizzonti on the data of the Justice Department.

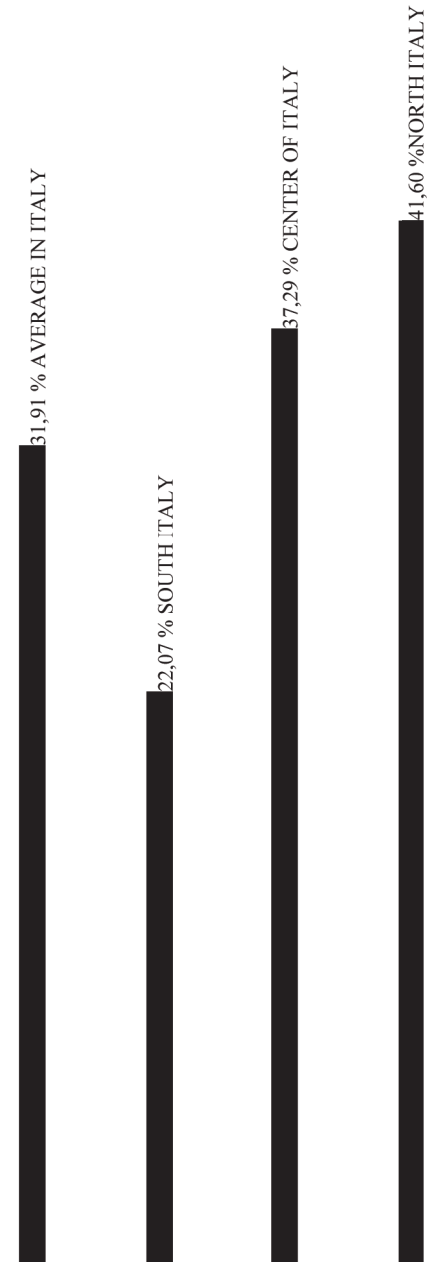
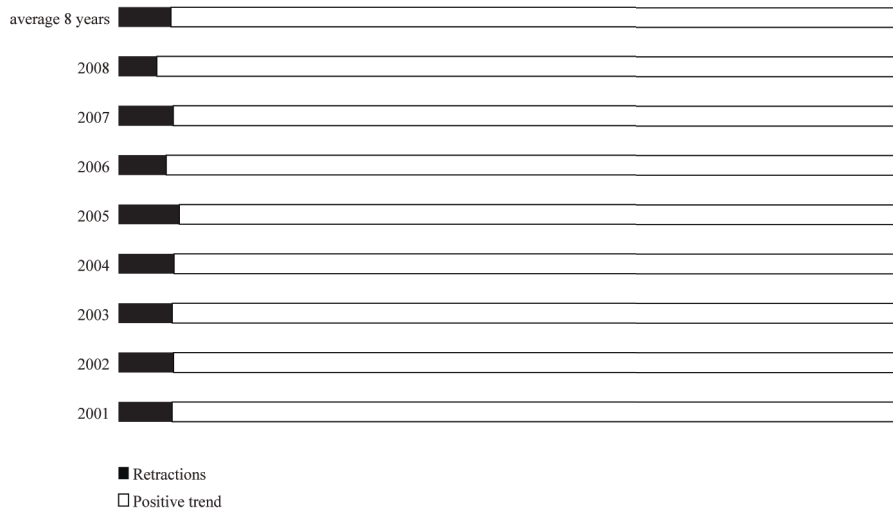
1.10 Alternative measures to the imprisonment from 1976 to 2009

(in number) Source: DAP, data processing of Centro Studi Ristretti Orizzonti on the data of the Justice Department.



1.11 Alternative measures to the imprisonment: retractions from 2001 to 2008

(in percentage) Source: DAP, data processing of Centro Studi Ristretti Orizzonti on the data of the Justice Department.

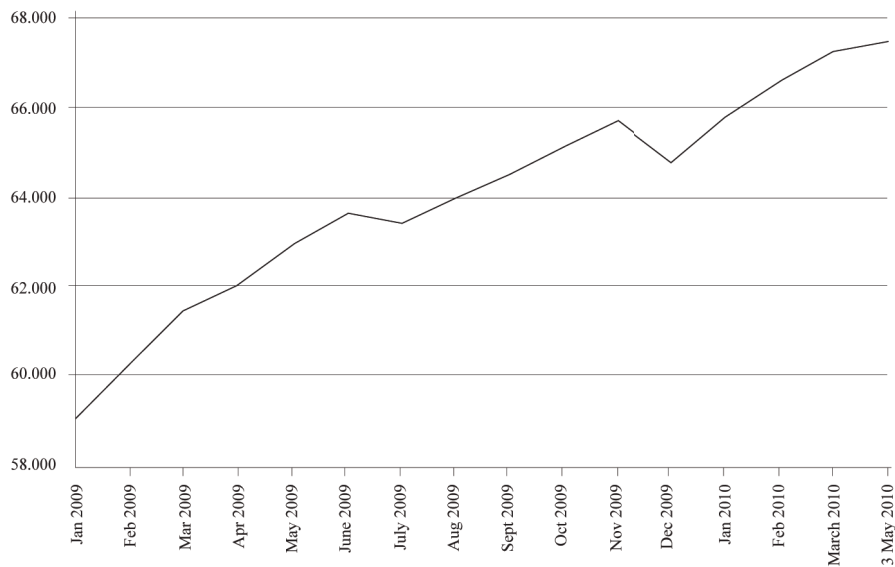


1.12 Semi-liberty from the prison (person that works at a half-way house for addicts during the day and returns to jail in the evening): allowed measures between the one asked, divided by geographical area.

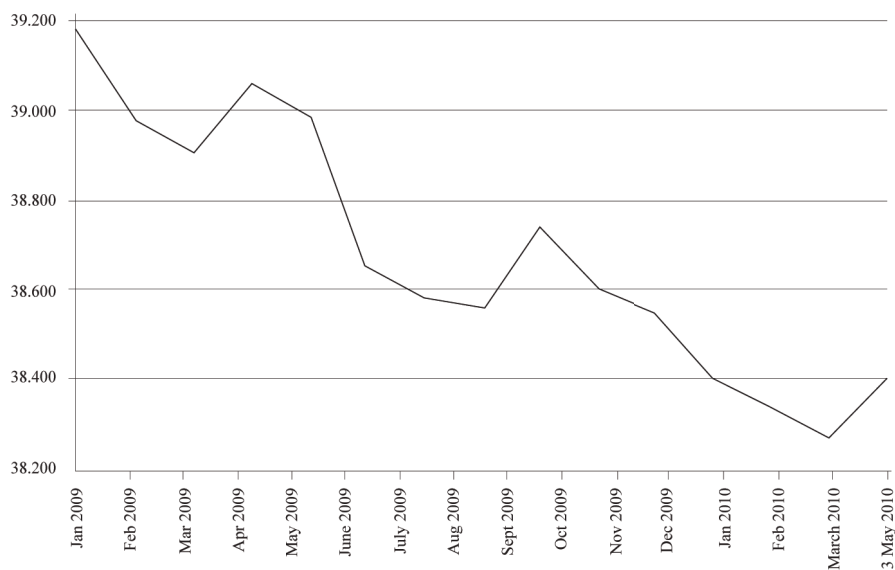
Source: DAP, data processing of Centro Studi Ristretti Orizzonti on the data of the Justice Department.

1.3.2 Prisoners and Prison Guards Presence of prisoners and prison guards in the Italian Penal Institutions. (in number) Data updated on 3 May 2010. Source: DAP, data processing of the Association Pianeta Carcere in collaboration with con Sappe, Sindacato Autonomo Polizia Penitenziaria.

1.13 Prisoners



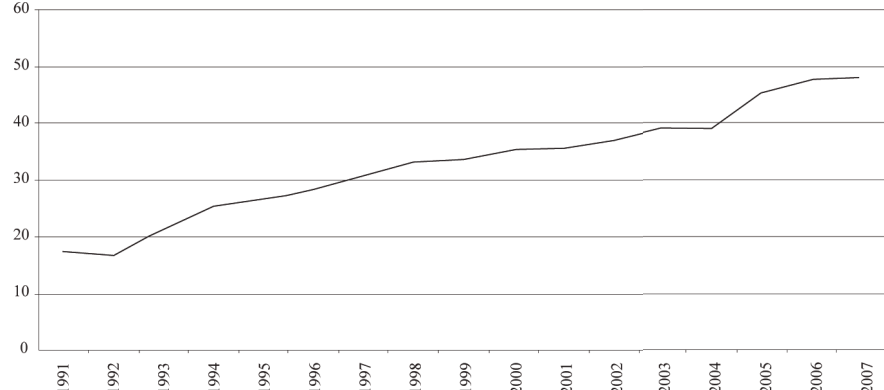
1.14 Prison Guards



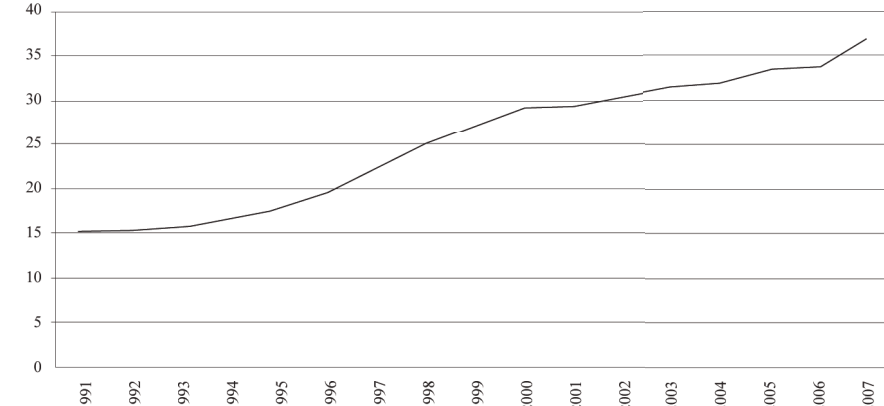
1.15 Prisoners and prison guards comparison

| 2009 | Prison Guards | Prisoners |
|-----------|---------------|-----------|
| January | 39.156 | 59.060 |
| February | 38.956 ↓ | 60.350 ↑ |
| March | 38.892 ↓ | 61.445 ↑ |
| April | 39.029 ↑ | 61.956 ↑ |
| May | 38.967 ↓ | 62.961 ↑ |
| June | 38.643 ↓ | 63.630 ↑ |
| July | 38.578 ↓ | 63.472 ↓ |
| August | 38.549 ↓ | 63.981 ↑ |
| September | 38.719 ↑ | 64.595 ↑ |
| October | 38.604 ↓ | 65.108 ↑ |
| November | 38.537 ↓ | 65.688 ↑ |
| December | 38.410 ↓ | 64.791 ↓ |
| 2010 | Prison Guards | Prisoners |
| January | 38.337 ↓ | 65.737 ↑ |
| February | 38.271 ↓ | 66.692 ↑ |
| March | 38.408 ↑ | 67.206 ↑ |
| April | - | - |
| 3 May | - | 67.542 ↑ |

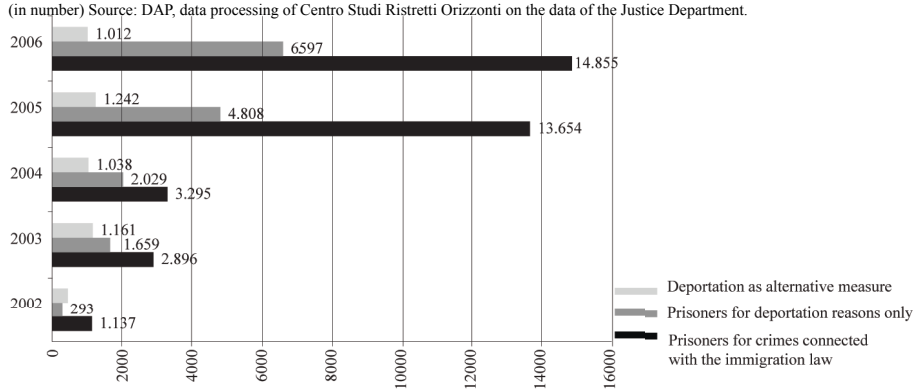
1.3.3 Foreigners 1.16 Access to the prison of foreign citizens from 1991 to 2007
(in percentage compared to the total number of accesses) Source: DAP, data processing of Centro Studi Ristretti Orizzonti on the data of the Justice Department.



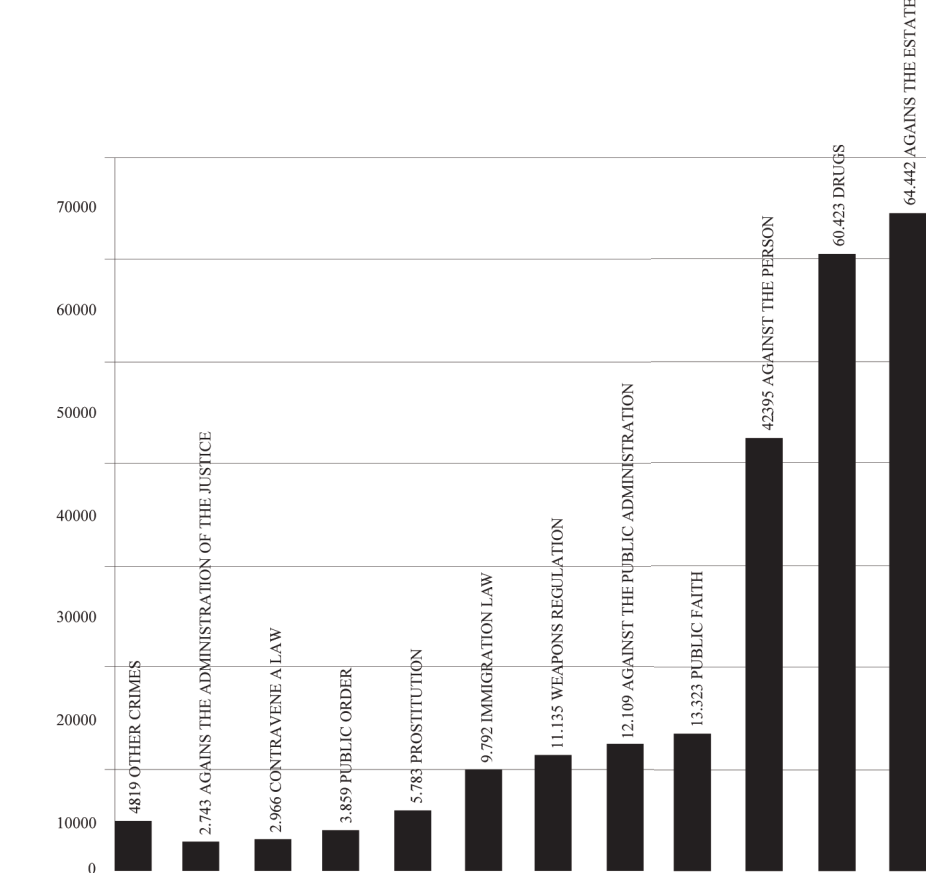
1.17 Presence in the prison of foreign citizens from 1991 to 2007
(in percentage compared to the total number of presences) Source: DAP, data processing of Centro Studi Ristretti Orizzonti on the data of the Justice Department.



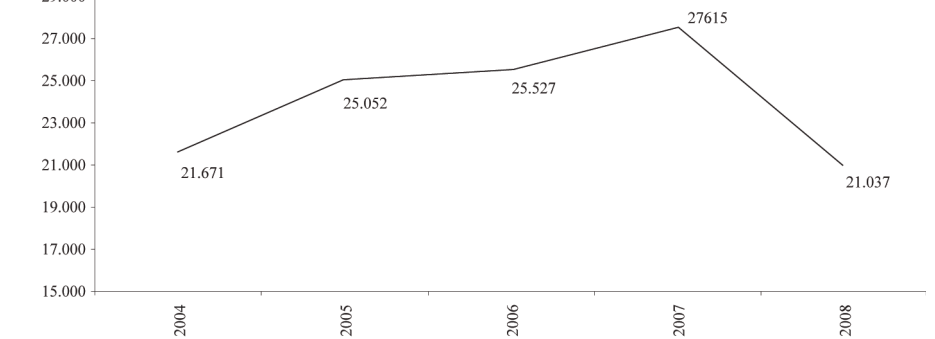
1.18 Presence in the prison of foreign citizens for crimes linked to the immigration law and deportations from 2002 until 2006
(in number) Source: DAP, data processing of Centro Studi Ristretti Orizzonti on the data of the Justice Department.



1.19 Crimes of foreign prisoners from 2002 to 2007
(in numbers) Source: DAP, data processing of Centro Studi Ristretti Orizzonti on the data of the Justice Department.

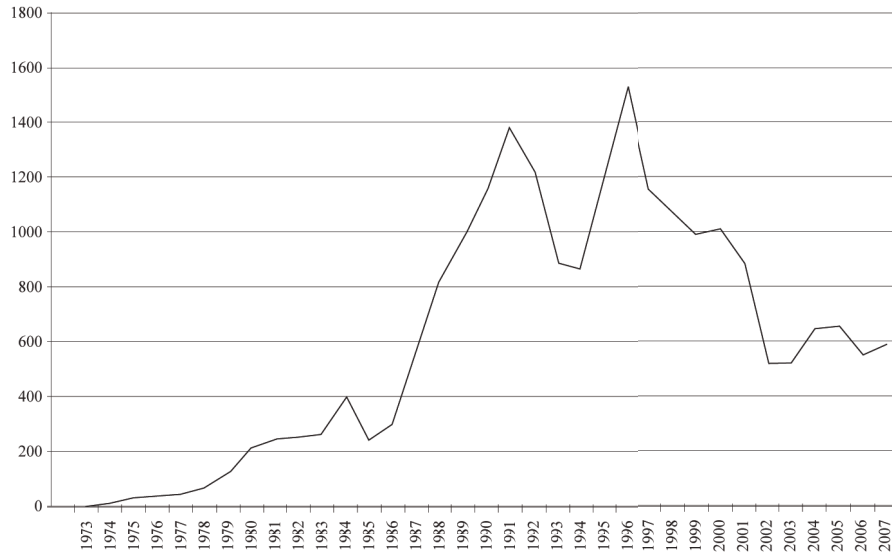


1.3.4 Drugs and alcohol 1.20 Access to the prison because of crimes linked to the drugs from 2004 to 2008
(in number) Source: data processing of Centro Studi Ristretti Orizzonti on the data of the Ministry of the Interior.



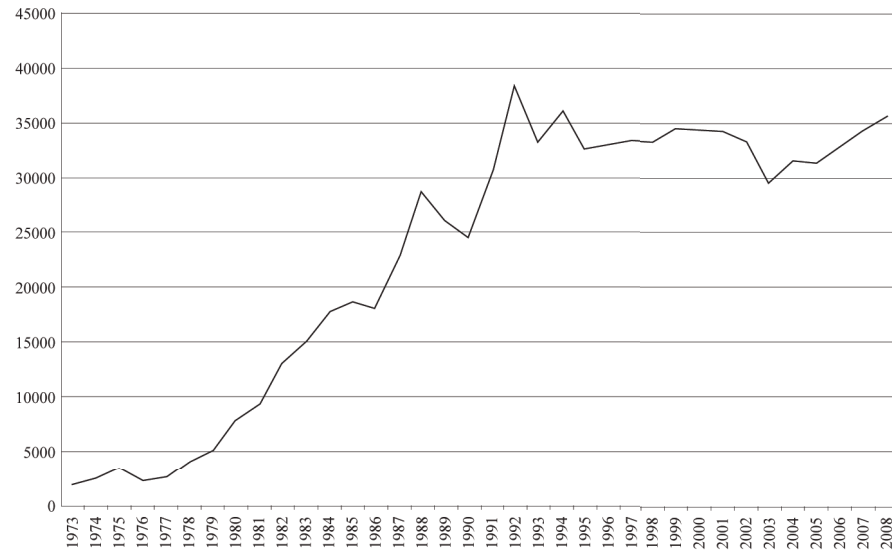
1.21 Prisoners dead because of drugs from 1973 until 2007

(in number) Source: data processing of Centro Studi Ristretti Orizzonti on the data of the Ministry of the Interior.



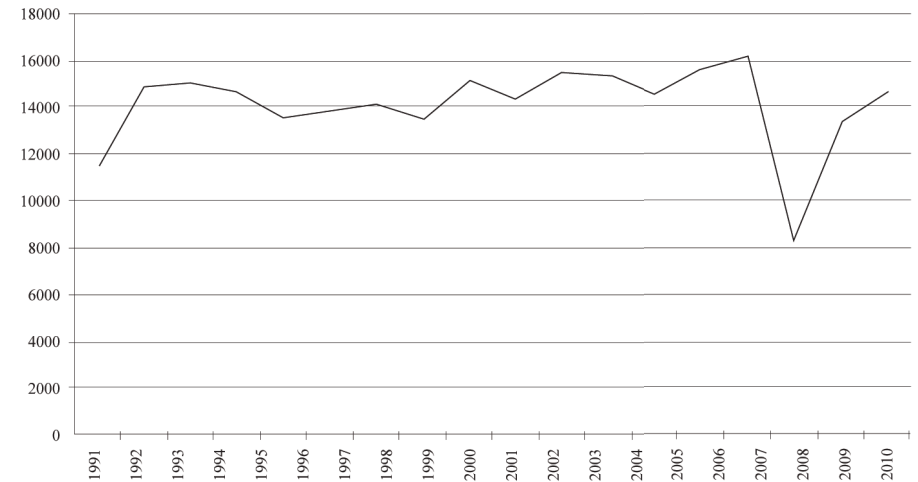
1.22 Signals of drugs issues from the Justice Authority between 1973 and 2008

(in number) Source: data processing of Centro Studi Ristretti Orizzonti on the data of the Ministry of the Interior.



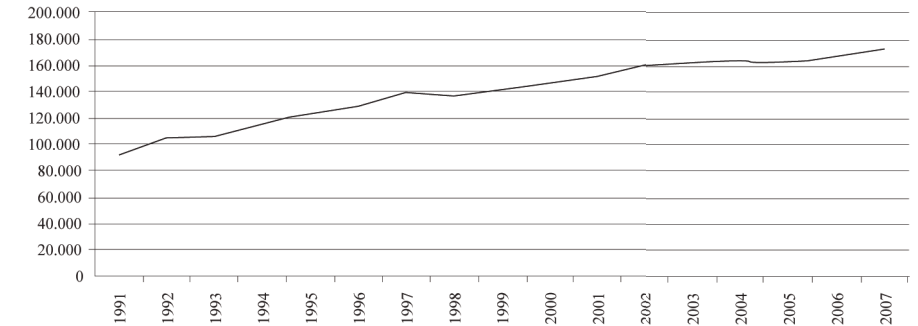
1.23 Drug addict prisoners from 1991 until 2008

(in number) Source: data processing of Centro Studi Ristretti Orizzonti on the data of the Ministry of the Interior.



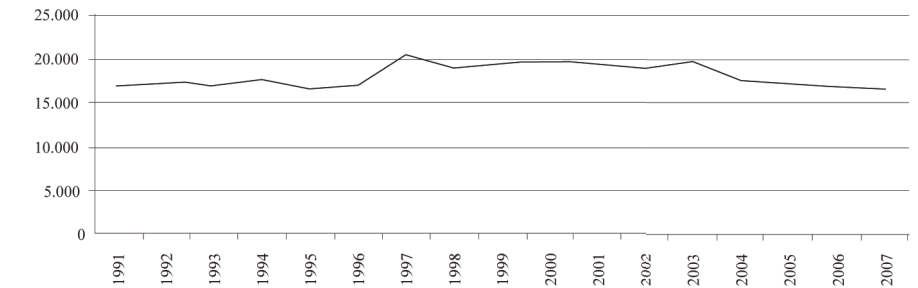
1.24 Drug addicts dependent on the Drug addict Social Service (Servizio per le Toscodipendenze - Ser.T.) from 1991 until 2007

(in number) Source: data processing of Centro Studi Ristretti Orizzonti on the data of the Ministry of the Interior.



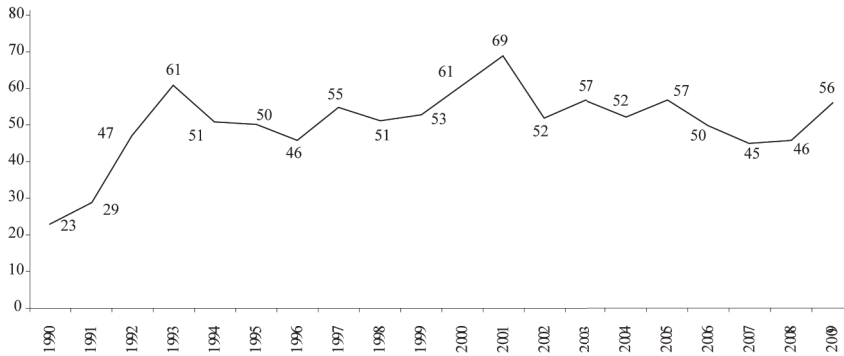
1.25 Drug addicts dependent on Social Rehabilitation Services from 1991 until 2007

(in number) Source: data processing of Centro Studi Ristretti Orizzonti on the data of the Ministry of the Interior.



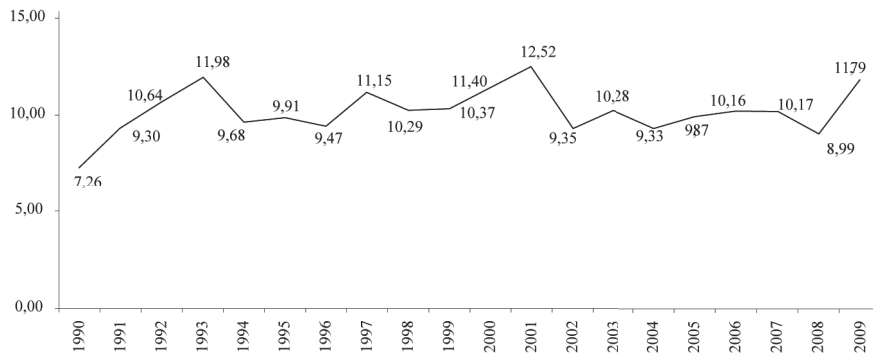
1.3.5 Violence 1.26 Prisoners that killed themselves from 1990 to 2009

(in number) Source: DAP, data processing of Centro Studi Ristretti Orizzonti on the data of the Justice Department.



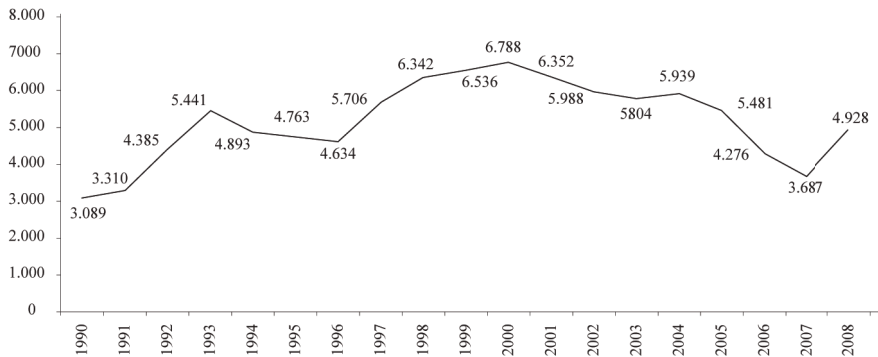
1.27 Rate of suicide between prisoners from 1990 to 2009 every 10.000 prisoners

(in %) Source: DAP, data processing of Centro Studi Ristretti Orizzonti on the data of the Justice Department.



1.28 Self-harm episodes between prisoners from 1990 to 2008

(in number) Source: DAP, data processing of Centro Studi Ristretti Orizzonti on the data of the Justice Department.





1.29 Milano Bollate prison in 2006: prisoners' room. Picture by Uliano Lucas



1.30 Milano Bollate prison in 2006: prisoners' toilette. Picture by Uliano Lucas



1.31 Milano Bollate prison in 2006: laundry. Picture by Uliano Lucas



1.32 Milano Bollate prison in 2006: wall. Picture by Uliano Lucas



1.33 Milano Bollate prison in 2006: women. Picture by Uliano Lucas

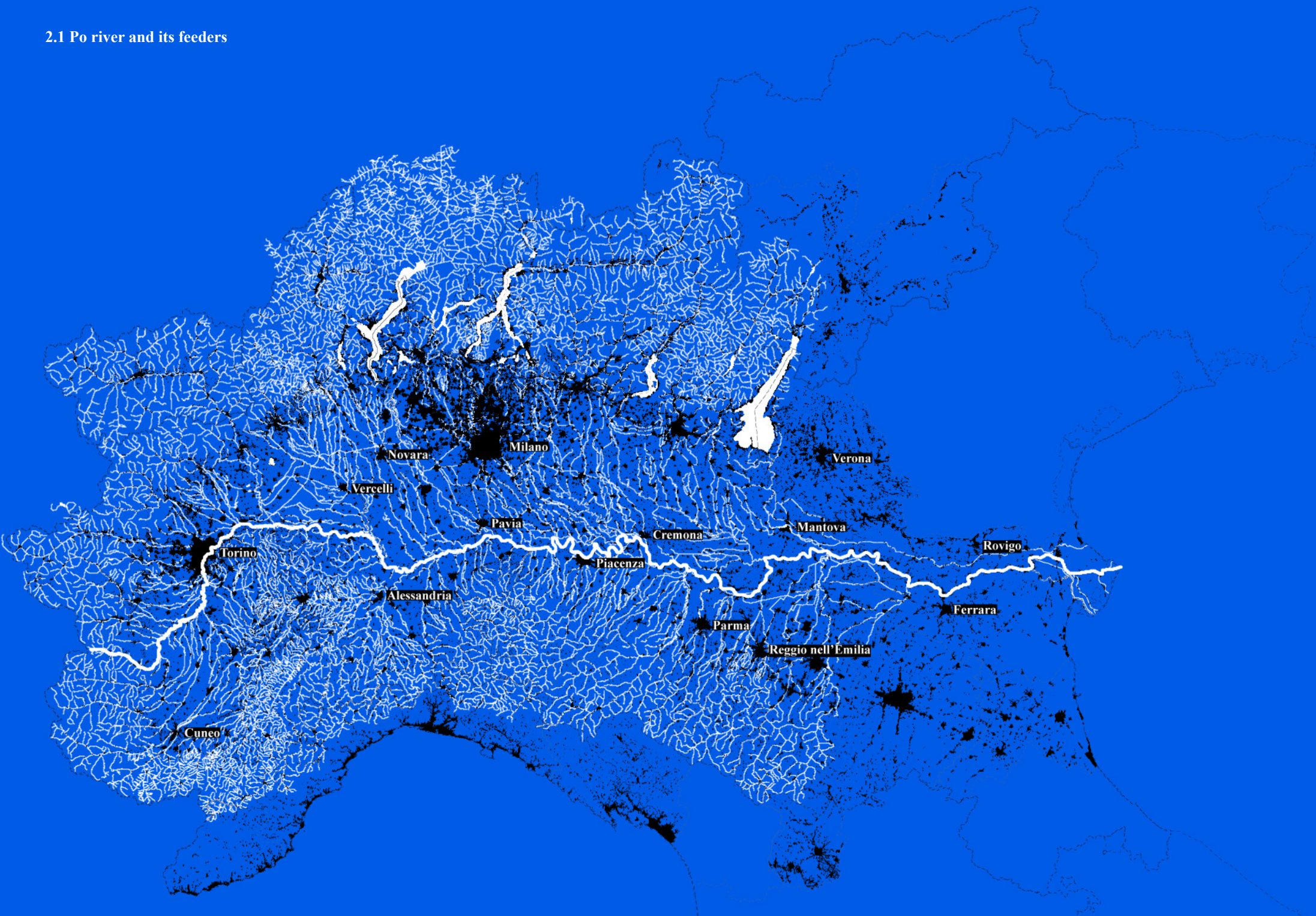


1.34 Milano Bollate prison in 2006: video library. Picture by Uliano Lucas

2 Roving Prison

*Let's give to prisoners the possibility of working,
let's praise the quality of the punishment,
let's vouch for the rehabilitation and for the resocializing.*

2.1 Po river and its feeders



2.1 An highwaterway

2.1.1 Transportation tendencies

The demand of transport services in the industrialized countries has increased without interruption until 1990 and after having stopped due to the economics slum in the early years 90s, it has recovered starting from 1994 and going up.

Actually the transport's development depends on that of the economy on its complex and the rise rate of the firsts and that of the second – expressed as PIL (GDP Gross Domestic Product) fluctuation – are mainly the same. While the transportation demand was increasing, the investment for the transport facilities was decreasing. In Europe, towards the half of years 70s these investments were representing the 15% of the PIL, while for the whole years 80s were the 1%.

Moreover the transport increase has not been evenly distributed in the various ways but it has been mainly oriented on roads.

| Freight traffic in the European Union - starting index 1970 = 100 | | | | | |
|---|---------|--------|----------|--------------|-------|
| | railway | street | waterway | oil pipeline | total |
| 1970 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 |
| 1980 | 93,7 | 154,1 | 103,0 | 133,3 | 128,7 |
| 1990 | 85,0 | 211,4 | 104,0 | 105,0 | 153,2 |

2.2 Freight traffic in the European Union

Source: White paper - "European transport policy for 2010: time to decide"

| Division of the traffic in Europe | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------|---------|-----------|----------------------|
| | street | railway | waterways | natural gas pipeline |
| 1970 | 52,1% | 30,1% | 10,9% | 6,8% |
| 2002 | 75,5% | 12,9% | 6,9% | 4,6% |

2.3 Division of the traffic in Europe

Source: Eurostat, statistical office of the European Union

The transport development dimension, its procedures and the facilities inadequacy have brought negative achievements causing traffic congestion on some ways and the inefficiency of the transport system itself has aggravated the transport and the environment conflict like energetic consumption, water, air, ground and acoustic pollution, territory occupation, security fall.

2.1.2 The Italian case

In Italy the transport situation shows those negative characteristics further worsen.

The transports development has been more impetuous as elsewhere and the road weight was high, while the infrastructure investments decreased. In Italy, the above negative consequences are worse.

| Freight traffic in Italy - starting index 1970 = 100 | | | | | |
|--|---------|--------|----------|--------------|-------|
| | railway | street | waterway | oil pipeline | total |
| 1970 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 |
| 1980 | 110,7 | 191,0 | 58,0 | 128,9 | 158,7 |
| 1990 | 115,6 | 249,0 | 33,4 | 126,4 | 197,3 |

2.4 Freight traffic in Italy

Source: Conto Nazionale delle Infrastrutture e dei Trasporti

| Division of the traffic in Italy | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------|---------|-----------|----------------------|
| | street | railway | waterways | natural gas pipeline |
| 2002 | 86,3% | 9,1% | 0,1% | 4,5% |

2.5 Division of the traffic in Italy

Source: Eurostat, statistical office of the European Union

2.1.3 The waterway potential

There are two possible options to improve this situation. For sure it is not possible

to move towards the transport demand reduction: it would reduce the economic development. In fact, it is known that a GDP (gross domestic product) increase rate of 3% per year is the minimum for preserving the employed levels. Moreover it is difficult to build new facilities, mainly new roads, mostly because of a justified social rejection.

The transport plan, both at an European level (Libro Bianco dei Trasporti – Transport white book) and at a national level (Piano Generale dei Trasporti - Transport General Plan), sees the essential moments of an action that can guarantee at a time the efficiency of goods and people mobility and the environment and security respect in the traffic capacity reserve exploitation and in the traffic rationalization.

Actually the waterways offer considerable capacity reserve that can be utilized with limited interventions, under the condition of the integration with a combined transport system.

The waterways have high advantages also from a security and environmental point of view: it is estimated that the external costs related to the internal navigation (that incorporate the costs for water, air, ground and acoustic pollution, soil consumption and accidents), are per tons of carried goods 1/18 of those on roads.

| External cost of the different means of transportation - street index = 100 | | | |
|---|--------|---------|----------|
| | street | railway | waterway |
| accidents | 100 | 6,3 | 86,3% |
| noise pollution | 100 | 173,0 | 0,0 |
| air pollution | 100 | 12,3 | 14,4 |
| water and ground pollution | 100 | 0,0 | 0,0 |
| barrier effect | 100 | 0,0 | 0,0 |
| soil consumption | 100 | 32,8 | 0,0 |
| total | 100 | 22,5 | 5,4 |

2.6 External cost of the different means of transportation
Source: Aufschwung Binnenschifffahrt

To the advantages of external costs we should add the profits related to the energy conservation: the waterways offer an energy conservation per tons of carried goods which is lower than that of the railway and it is about the third of that on the road.

| Freight traffic energy consumption: litres of diesel oil for kilometre ton transported | | |
|--|---------|----------|
| street | railway | waterway |
| 4,1 | 1,7 | 1,3 |

2.7 Freight traffic energy consumption
Source: Aufschwung Binnenschifffahrt

These are the main internal navigation benefits for the public interest. Thinking about the private profiles, the transport costs on the waterway are, per ton of moved goods, sensibly lower of those on the railway and much smaller of the one on the street (in Italy it is the 20% to 30% lower). This comparison is naturally referred to goods suitable to be sent by waterway and per transport net alike integrated and connected with the production system.

2.1.4 The Padano-Veneto Water System

The implementation of the Transport General Plan (Piano Generale dei Trasporti) the law n° 380, 1990 foresaw the realization of the Padano-Veneto water system. The same law defines the national relevance of the Padano-Veneto water system. The article 1 ascribes to the Transport Ministry the responsibility for its realization. The article 2 defines the special procedures for making its executive plan, specifying that also the regions are in charged. The decree requiring the approval of Parliament n° 112, March 31, 1998 assigned to the following regions the water system management: Emilia Romagna, Lombardia, Piemonte and Veneto.

The laws n° 194 and the n° 413, 1998, the law n° 388, 2000 (finance bill 2001) and the law n° 350, 2003 (finance bill 2004) allocated about 600 billion Euro for the

development and the adaptation of the existing water system to the Va class CEMT (European Conference of Ministers of Transport).








2.1.5 Waterways classification

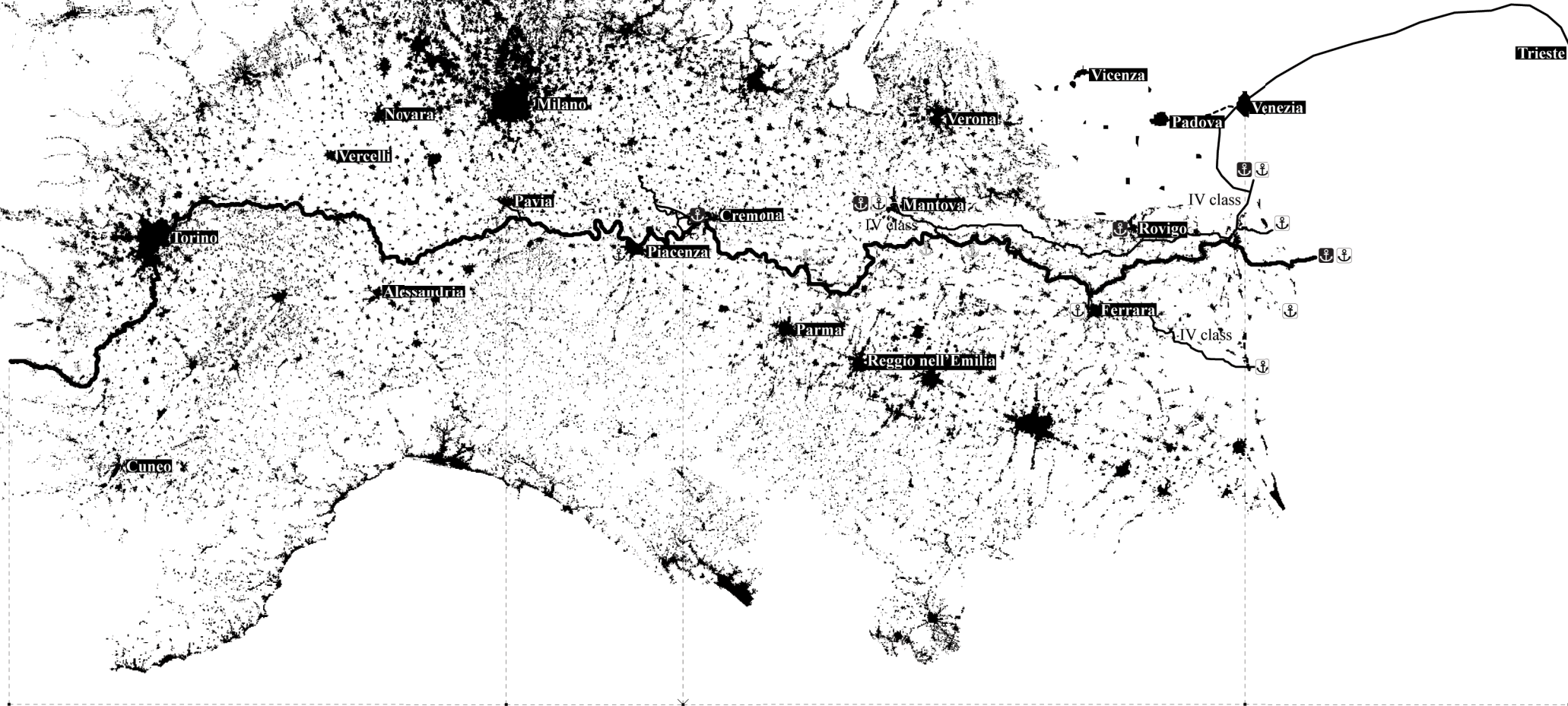
Inland shipping in Europe is divided into CEMT classes in order to harmonize waterway dimensions in Western-Europe. The term ‘CEMT class’ refers to the Conférence Européenne des Ministres de Transport (European Conference of Ministers of Transport), which established the classes. According to the system, each class has maximum sizes for vessels and push-tug combinations. The classification helps to determine where particular vessels are allowed to travel based on bridge heights and structural works, draught, waterway width and so forth.

2.1.6 Va class CEMT

In Pavia the Mincio river flows together with the Po, allowing the Va class CEMT to sail from Pavia until the Adriatic sea, but the Isola Serafini basin blocks the passage between Piacenza and Cremona. From Cremona until the Adriatic Sea there can be an intense activity, increased by the connection with other channels of the Padano-Veneto water system. Today some channels can be afforded only by the IV class CEMT, but in few years it will be possible to sail with the Va class boats along a 750 Km highwaterway, from Pavia until Venice.

2.8 Sailing on the Padano-Veneto Water System

-  commercial harbour
-  tourist harbour
-  quay
-  planned harbour
-  Po river
-  water channel
-  planned water channel



0 class CEMT
pleasure boats
tourist character

V class CEMT
large Rhine vessels
tourist character

Isola Serafini basin

V class CEMT
large Rhine vessels
commercial and tourist character

II class CEMT
campine-barge
tourist character

2.9 Po highwaterway

Po from Pavia until Adriatic Sea 389 Km

Mincio river from Mantova until Po river 21 Km

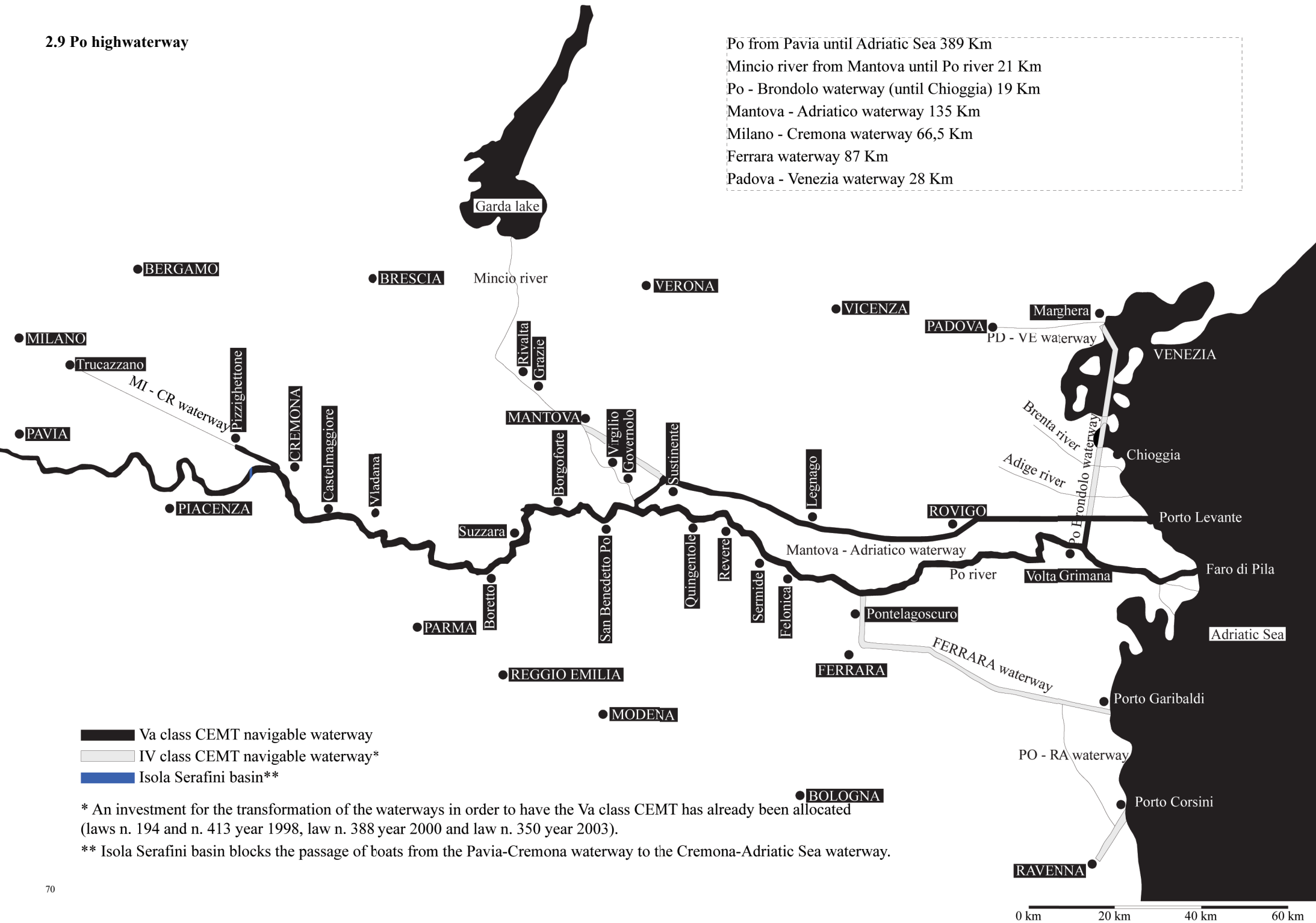
Po - Brondolo waterway (until Chioggia) 19 Km

Mantova - Adriatico waterway 135 Km

Milano - Cremona waterway 66,5 Km

Ferrara waterway 87 Km

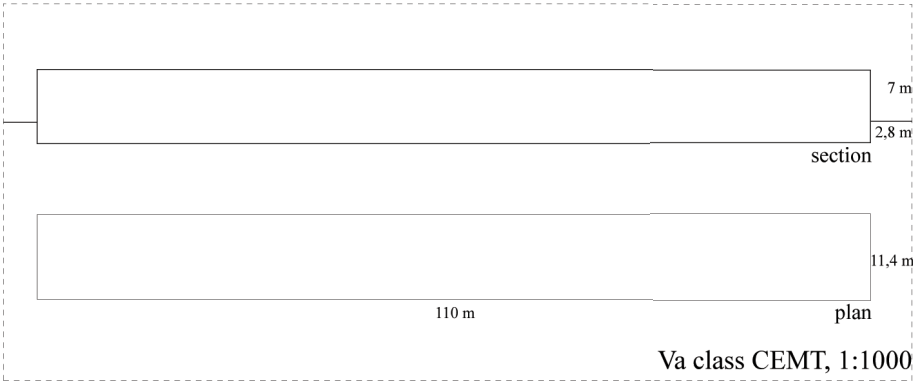
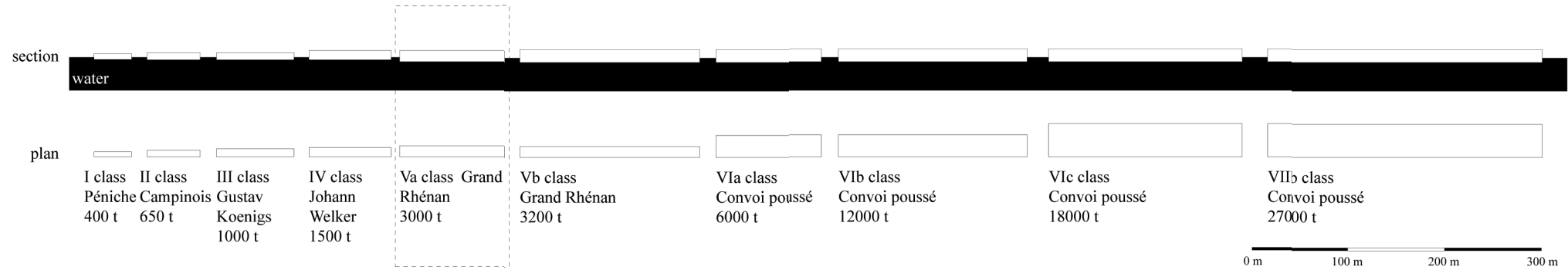
Padova - Venezia waterway 28 Km



* An investment for the transformation of the waterways in order to have the Va class CEMT has already been allocated (laws n. 194 and n. 413 year 1998, law n. 388 year 2000 and law n. 350 year 2003).

** Isola Serafini basin blocks the passage of boats from the Pavia-Cremona waterway to the Cremona-Adriatic Sea waterway.

2.10 Boats classification: dimensions








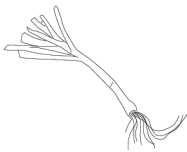

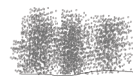
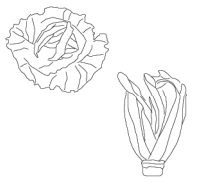


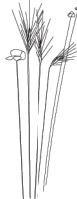
classes CEMT

2.2 Jobs

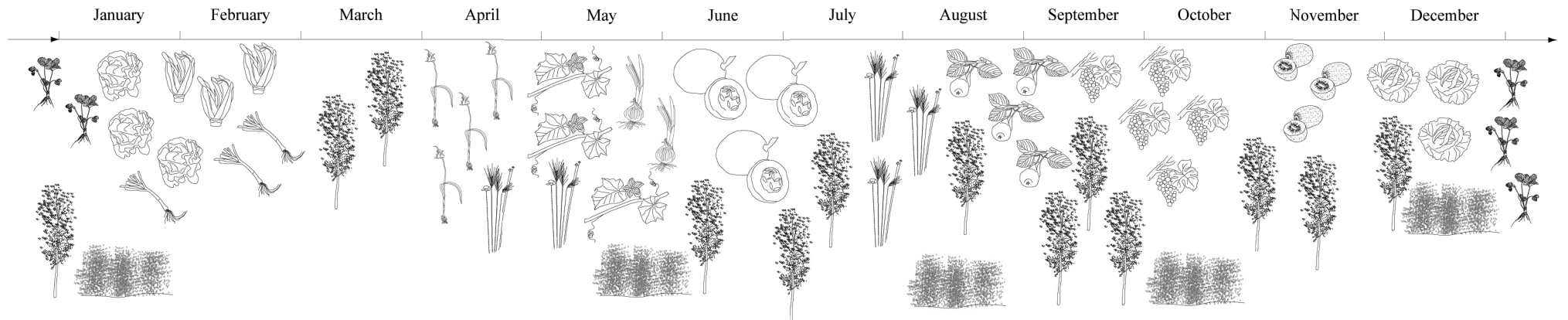
2.2.1 Agriculture. Po Valley (Pianura Padana in Italian) runs from the Western Alps to the Adriatic Sea. Considering the area around the Po river, we can broadly divide the plain into two parts. In the left part, that includes Lombardia and Veneto regions, the ground is made of sand and gravel of the Alps and it is permeable to the water. The right part, which consists in Emilia Romagna regions, is very fertile thanks to the waterproof ground made of clay. In this two areas there is an intense agriculture activity, which needs a large amount of workers through the year, according to the different kind of crop. Currently there is a large amount of workmen working in agriculture coming from foreign countries. It is difficult for the farmers to find trained workers. Because of this the possibility of having prisoners working constantly in the area can be valuable.

2.2.2 Quarrying. The Po river waterfront is rich of sand and gravel quarries. In the area from Pavia until the Adriatic Sea there are twenty-eight quarry yards located at not more than one kilometer from the river. They can be an opportunity to employ prisoners.

2.11 Jobs: agriculture

| | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
|  <p>GRAPE harvest Reggio Emilia, Modena, Mantova, Pavia, Piacenza 20 workers per team 15th Sept. - 15th Oct.</p> |  <p>SALAD transplant and harvest Verona, Polesine 15 workers per team 15th Nov. - 31st March</p> |  <p>GARLIC and ONION harvest Piacenza, Ferrara 8-10 workers per team April - May - June</p> |  <p>POPLAR pruning along Po river waterfront 10 workers per team all the year</p> |
|  <p>KIWI harvest Verona, Ferrara 5-6 workers per team 1st Nov. - 15th Nov.</p> |  <p>LEEK harvest Verona, Polesine 15 workers per team 15th Nov. - 31st March</p> |  <p>MELON harvest and transplant Mantova 20 workers per team April - May</p> <p>harvest 1st June - 30th Sept.</p> |  <p>HEDGE and RIVER AREA MAINTENANCE cut and clean along Po river waterfront 10 workers per team all the year</p> |
|  <p>CABBAGE and RADICCHIO harvest Verona, Polesine 15 workers per team 15th Nov. - 31st March</p> |  <p>STRAWBERRY culture and transplant Verona, Polesine 70 workers per team 15th Nov. - 31st March</p> |  <p>PEAR harvest Reggio Emilia, Mantova, Modena, Ferrara 5-6 workers per team 15th Aug. - 15th Sept.</p> |  <p>MEADOW cut along Po river waterfront 5 workers per km² end of May - August</p> |

2.12 Jobs: farming timeline

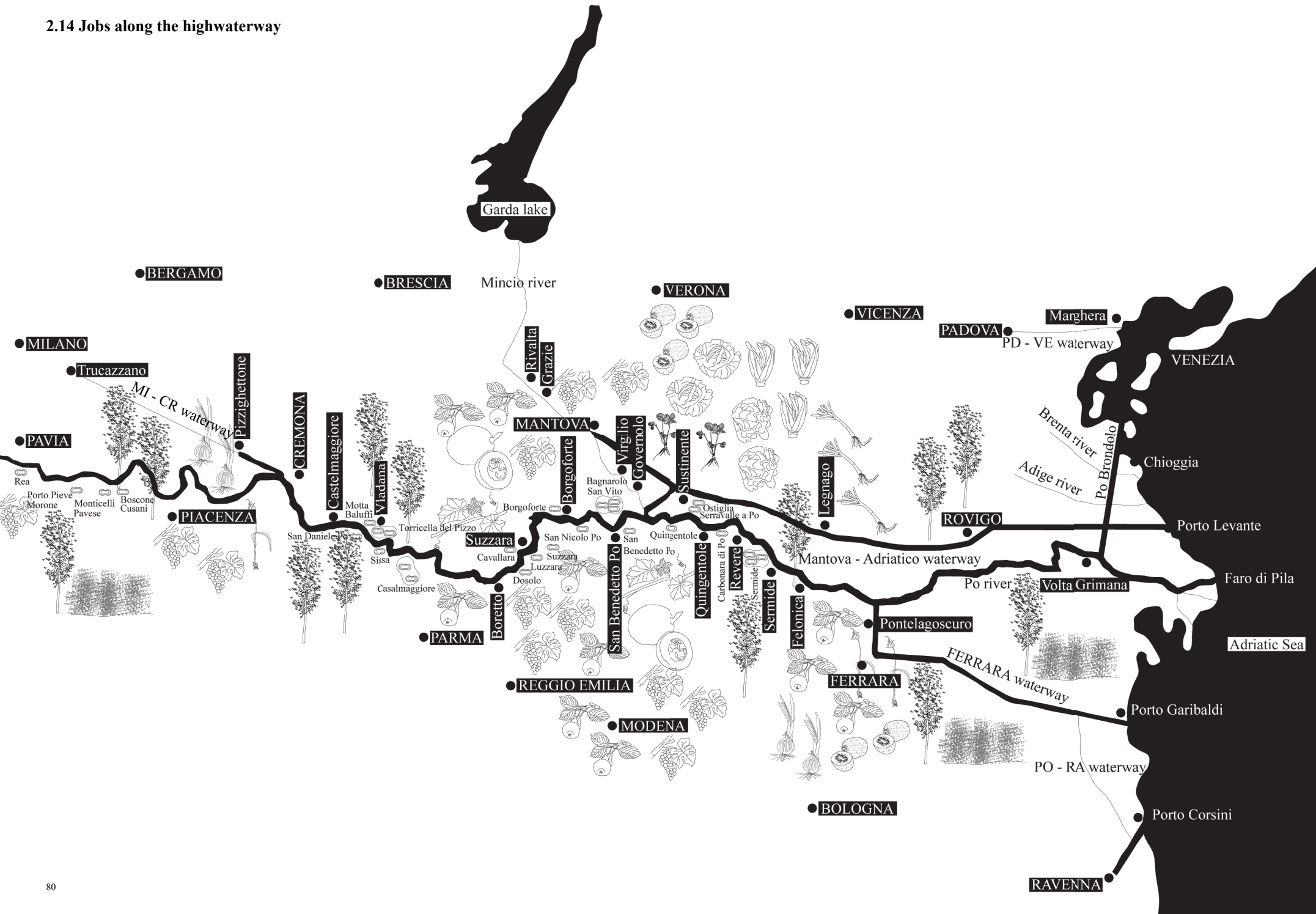


2.13 Jobs: quarrying

| | | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|---|---|
| <p>Quarries in Lombardia region</p> | <p>REA dimensions: 1,6 ha solid material: 100% water: 0% distance from Po river: 115 m distance from the city: 855 m</p> | <p>PORTO PIEVE MORONE dimensions: 6,8 ha solid material: 100% water: 0% distance from Po river: 800 m distance from the city: 490 m</p> | <p>CAVALLARA dimensions: 13,3 ha solid material: 100% water: 0% distance from Po river: on the waterfront distance from the city: 1800 m</p> | <p>QUINGENTOLE dimensions: 2,5 ha solid material: 0% water: 100% distance from Po river: 200 m distance from the city: 560 m</p> | <p>SUZZARA dimensions: 2,85 ha solid material: 80% water: 20% distance from Po river: 250 m distance from the city: 3600 m</p> |
| <p>MONTICELLI PAVESE dimensions: 2,4 ha solid material: 100% water: 0% distance from Po river: on the waterfront distance from the city: > 4000 m</p> | <p>TORRICELLA DEL PIZZO/1 dimensions: 4,4 ha solid material: 81% water: 19% distance from Po river: 450 m distance from the city: 730 m</p> | <p>TORRICELLA DEL PIZZO/2 dimensions: 30,6 ha solid material: 31% water: 69% distance from Po river: 1200 m distance from the city: 600 m</p> | <p>SERRAVALLE PO dimensions: 7,4 ha solid material: 34% water: 66% distance from Po river: 440 m distance from the city: 860 m</p> | <p>BORGOFORTE dimensions: 5,3 ha solid material: 100% water: 0% distance from Po river: on the waterfront distance from the city: 120 m</p> | <p>OSTIGLIA dimensions: 1,2 ha solid material: 0% water: 100% distance from Po river: 500 m distance from the city: inside the city</p> |
| <p>SAN DANIELE PO dimensions: 19,5 ha solid material: 82% water: 18% distance from Po river: 1200 m distance from the city: 2000 m</p> | <p>MOTTA BALUFFI dimensions: 6 ha solid material: 33% water: 67% distance from Po river: 470 m distance from the city: 3000 m</p> | <p>DOSOLO dimensions: 1,5 ha solid material: 100% water: 0% distance from Po river: 170 m distance from the city: 100 m</p> | <p>SAN NICOLO' PO dimensions: 40,3 ha solid material: 100% water: 0% distance from Po river: on the waterfront distance from the city: 540 m</p> | <p>SERMIDE/1 dimensions: 0,6 ha solid material: 0% water: 100% distance from Po river: 670 m distance from the city: inside the city</p> | <p>SERMIDE/2 dimensions: 1,3 ha solid material: 0% water: 100% distance from po river: on the waterfront distance from the city: 330 m</p> |
| <p>CASALMAGGIORE/1 dimensions: 1,7 ha solid material: 100% water: 0% distance from Po river: on the waterfront distance from the city: 1700 m</p> | <p>CASALMAGGIORE/2 dimensions: 1,9 ha solid material: 100% water: 0% distance from Po river: 1100 m distance from the city: 280 m</p> | <p>BAGNOLO SAN VITO/1 dimensions: 6,3 ha solid material: 100% water: 0% distance from Po river: on the waterfront distance from the city: 188 m</p> | <p>SERMIDE/3 dimensions: 0,6 ha solid material: 100% water: 0% distance from Po river: 200 m distance from the city: 1600 m</p> | <p>CARBONARA DI PO dimensions: 0,8 ha solid material: 100% water: 0% distance from Po river: 990 m distance from the city: inside the city</p> | <p>BAGNOLO SAN VITO dimensions: 21,3 ha solid material: 100% water: 0% distance from Po river: on the waterfrnt distance from the city: 1600 m</p> |
| <p>BAGNOLO SAN VITO/2 dimensions: 4,5 ha solid material: 100% water: 0% distance from Po river: on the waterfront distance from the city: 2200 m</p> | <p>LUZZARA dimensions: 45,5 ha solid material: 68% water: 32% distance from Po river: 910 m distance from the city: 910 m</p> | <p>SAN BENEDETTO PO dimensions: 2,9 ha solid material: 57% water: 43% distance from Po river: 400 m distance from the city: 550 m</p> | <p>Quarries in Emilia Romagna region</p> | | |
| | | | <p>SISSA dimensions: 1,5 ha solid material: 100% water: 0% distance from Po river: 930 m distance from the city: inside the city</p> | <p>BOSCONE CUSANI dimensions: 3,4 ha solid material: 100% water: 0% distance from Po river: 410 m distance from the city: 670 m</p> | |



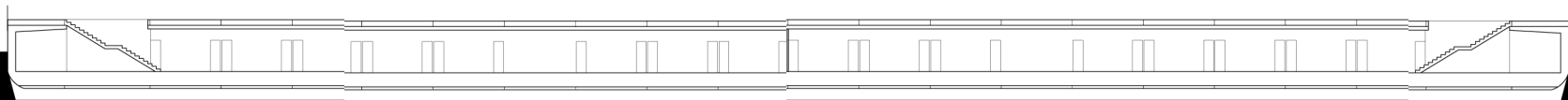
2.14 Jobs along the highwaterway



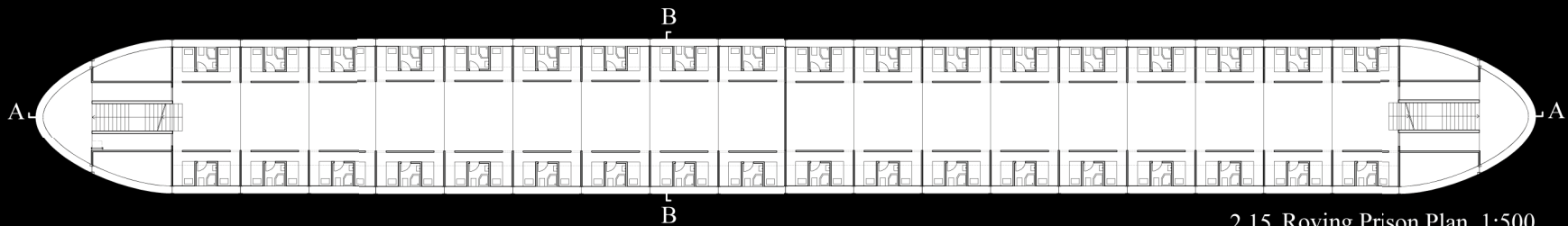
2.3 Architecture

The prison is a platform designed to float along Po river. It is a meaningful pause in a chaotic world, aimed to assure rehabilitation and resocializing.

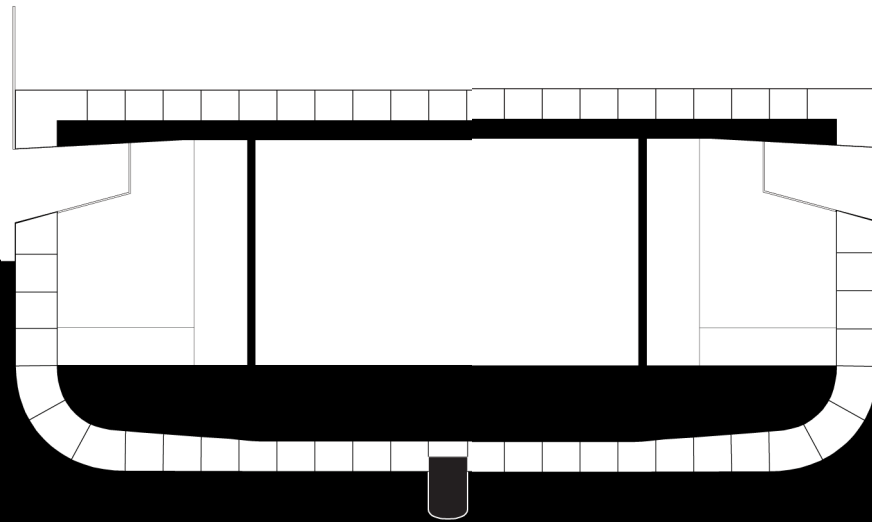
The prison is moving along the Padano-Veneto highwaterways according to the seasons, in order to allow internees to work all over the year. It represents an experimental penal institution, in which the deviants have freedom and responsibilities, rights and duties.



2.16 AA Section, 1:500



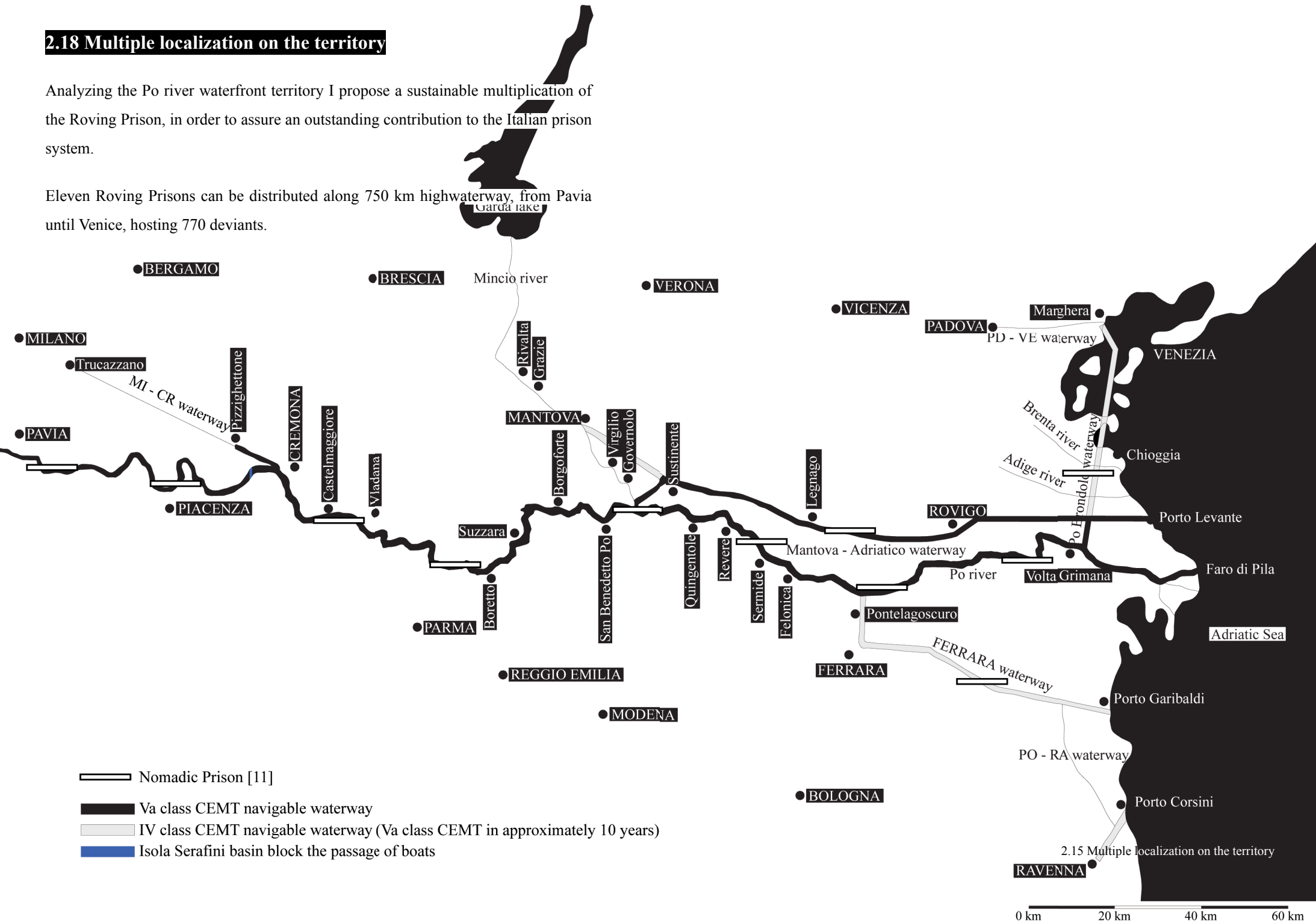
2.15 Roving Prison Plan, 1:500



2.18 Multiple localization on the territory

Analyzing the Po river waterfront territory I propose a sustainable multiplication of the Roving Prison, in order to assure an outstanding contribution to the Italian prison system.

Eleven Roving Prisons can be distributed along 750 km highwaterway, from Pavia until Venice, hosting 770 deviants.



3 Diary

I entered the Roving Prison on September, 26th. A few days before I had been sentenced to custody¹, and I was to serve my term in an agricultural colony or a workhouse. The leaden island, as they call it in jail², had moored in the vicinities of a vineyard not far from Mantua, to take part in the vintage of Lambrusco raisins³.

On Monday 26th, at 10 am, I reached San Benedetto Po, escorted by four Prison guards: two were charged with moving the prisoners around⁴, the others worked inside the island. Our car, a Fiat Grande Punto, cut through the centre of the town, continued to a small industrial area and finally plunged into the countryside. It came to a stop some three kilometres from the centre, on the northern bank of the river Po, along a street that followed its course. In front of me, the “slate” (another sample of prison slang).

A cube entirely made of lead, a geometrical body, regular and grey, insensitive and hard, was floating on the quiet, mellow waters of the river Po. A foreign element that jarred with the context: you sort of wanted it not to be there. A long, thin metal slate rising at an angle would lead me to the topmost part of the island, and then fall down again to its lowest point⁵.

1 According to art. 59 of the Prison law, “Institutes for adults” (law n° 354, July 26, 1975), institutes for adults are divided into institutes for pre-trial custody, institutes for the purging of a sentence, institutes for secure detention and observation centres. Institutes for secure detention are defined by art. 62 of the Prison Law and can be: agricultural colonies, workhouses, custody hospitals and penal psychiatric wards. Security measures as indicated in commas 1, 2, 3 of the first paragraph of art. 215 of the Penal code are carried out in these facilities.

2 Gramsci, Antonio, *Lettere dal carcere*, Turin, Editrice l’Unità, 1988.

3 Giovanni, Dal masso; Eynard, Italo, *Viticoltura Moderna. Manuale pratico*, Milan, Hoepli, 1990.

4 Art. 42-bis of the Prison law, “Transported” (law n° 354 of July 26, 1975) defines the way in which prisoners can be moved around.

5 Bonomi, Aldo; Natoli, Salvatore, *Del dolore e della pena*, in “Communitas”, n. 7, February

I got out of the car and heard the door slamming shut. Then a second, a third, a fourth. Escorted by the four agents I made for the slate, which started banging like a metal drum under the vigorous steps of the policemen. The angle was brisk, the ascent was fast, the slate was shiny, neat, razor-sharp. It was the only connection between the Roving Prison and the mainland. A booth on its top was the first of many stops: papers were checked and signed. I also got my virtual fence, a rather mundane bracelet. I was standing on the top of the leaden island.

Two of the agents who had walked me there turned around and went away, the other two took me to one of the corners of the prison. It was 10:30 am. I looked above. The sky was grey, the air was damp and chilly. What happened to the warm and delicate breeze that accompanied me on my way from Milan on the Autostrada del Sole? Gone. We walked down a huge staircase. I had plunged into the heart of the Roving Prison. There began my period of custody.

I was assigned bedspreads, a sheet, some towels and a pouch with daily care materials⁶. They took away the money I had on me, and after a while they gave back to me a bankbook with the sum at my disposal, to be updated after every purchase or deposit of money from a family member (they could either send it through the postal service or take it to the porter’s lodge)⁷. I walked slowly, flanked by an agent on either side. Left and right, two opposite rows of cells. In the space between, some volumes of different shapes and positions, tables and chairs, were breaking the impeccable geometry of the two blocks. We walked along the aisle to reach the opposite sector. “Here, this is your cell, lunch is at 12:30”, said one of the agents pointing at cell 23 and then gesturing towards some tables on the left, close to the main stairway. They went away, leaving the door unlocked.

2006, *La rappresentazione della pena. Carcere invisibile e corpi segregati*, p. 19.

6 Art. 7 of the Prison law, “Clothing and equipment” (Law n° 354 of July 26, 1975) defines the characteristics of the supplies that are to be distributed to the prisoners.

7 Polizzi, Donatella, *Sotto uno stesso cielo. Storie e immagini dal carcere*, Rome, Bonanno Editore, 2009, p. 24.

I looked around. Not a face, not a sound. I walked into the cell, dropped my luggage and sat on the bed, my elbows resting on my knees, holding my head in my hands. I was thinking of that silent journey, and how a few minutes ago the prison had appeared to my eyes. The floor of the cell was covered by a layer of dust. Random stains blackened the sandstone tiles. I was probably expected to clean up the cell on my own. I looked up. I lay down on the bed. A horizontal window above me was casting light on half of my body. I would have to find a way to cover it up during the night.

Suddenly my train of thoughts was interrupted by a sequence of faint, faraway sounds. I got up and moved towards the door. I glanced at my watch. It was lunchtime. A buzz of voiced filled the air. Dozens of men swarmed into the aisle. They were the prisoners coming back from work. Some made towards the dining room at once, others went back to their cells. One of them noticed my presence and came towards me. "You're the new guy, aren't you?", he asked, but he seemed to know already. I nodded. "We were waiting for you this morning at work". Another prisoner, a middle-aged man, greeted and welcomed me. "Let's have lunch, I'll introduce you to the boss", he said, and he meant the leader of the island. I was soon to be familiar with the mobbing that went on inside the prison, it reminded me of certain episodes dating to twenty years back, to the time of my military service⁸. I sat down at a table with other prisoners. They took a close look at me and began the ritual of questions: "do you smoke? What have you done to be here? Are you married? Have you got kids?"

We were about seventy folks in the prison, 40% were foreigners⁹. They explained that the food was cooked and served by a group of fellow prisoners. Expenses were managed through a mutual fund to which all inmates of the Roving Prison contributed with a share of their wages¹⁰. Another group handled the cleaning and maintenance

8 Film: Monzón Daniel, *Celda 211* (2010).

9 Estimate of the research centre of Ristretti Orizzonti, drawing on data published by the Ministry of Justice, Dipartimento della Amministrazione Penitenziaria, referring to the I semester of 2007.

10 Art. 2 of the Penal law "Costs of a sentence and safety measures" (law n° 354, July 26, 1975) defines ways in which convicts may contribute to their living. In the Roving Prison the expenses faced by the State are not refunded, but anticipated, so that daily expenditures may be monitored. Art. 22 of the

of common areas; one was in charge of the library¹¹, another of arts and crafts facilities. On the island, besides the prisoners, lived Prison guards, a ship captain and a technician looking after the engines and the technical appliances, with the help of external resources in case of need. Teachers, psychologists and clergymen came and went everyday. We were about to get up from the table to have a coffee, when a man behind me attracted my attention. Tall, lean, with closely trimmed dark hair and black, lively eyes: his job was supervising work activities¹². He asked me to follow him onto the roof. The slate was the place for physical and mental training¹³. The damp air seemed to crawl into my bones. We talked about me, about my past. He wanted to know what kind of work I was better suited to carry out, judging from my skills¹⁴. "Let me work outdoors"¹⁵, I said.

We woke up at 7:00 am, had breakfast at 7:30. At 8:00 we headed for the fields. I was following my fellow prisoners. A man in his sixties was walking besides me. "I got to know quite a bunch of jails over the last twenty years", he said. "Work was never enough for everybody. Here, in the Roving Prison, except for rainy days and when it hails, you're expected to work. Agricultural labours are tough. In the summer the air is hot and stuffy, in winter it's chilly: either way we have a hard time, but at least when you are working you don't waste away in sloth, you know, that kind of dehumanizing apathy that creeps into you when your freedom is taken away, so everything becomes

Prison law, "Definition of wages" (law n° 354, July 26, 1975) defines the ways in which prisoners are to be paid for the work they carry out.

11 Art. 12 of the Prison law, "Equipment for work, instruction and recreation" (law n° 354, July 26, 1975) stipulates that penal institutes must be equipped with a library, administered by representatives of the prisoners.

12 Art. 16 of the Prison law, "Regulations" (law n° 354, July 26, 1975) institutes a supervisor for working activities.

13 Art. 10 of the Prison law, "Outdoor permanence" (law n° 354, July 26, 1975) allows every prisoner a minimum of two daily hours of permanence outdoors.

14 Art. 15 of the Prison law, "Treatment" (law n° 354, July 26, 1975) qualifies work as one of the key elements of re-education and stipulates that, where possible, every convict and prisoner will be granted a job. Art. 20 of the Prison law, "Work" (law n° 354, July 26, 1975) defines the basic outlines of work in a penal institute.

15 Art. 21 of the Prison law, "Outdoor work" (law n° 354, July 26, 1975) defines the characteristics of outdoor work.

tedious and time never seems to pass”¹⁶, he said. I looked around. The landscape around the river Po was embellished by powerful masses of green foliage towering on a grid of lean, white tree trunks: poplar coppices. It was the time of the year when hay is harvested. In a field nearby they were turning alfalfa grass¹⁷ around with a hay machine¹⁸.

I saw the first corn and barley fields being ploughed, the grapes of some vineyards had already been harvested. Here and there, pear-trees with no fruits on them and farms. According to the supervisor, the first day on the job was to be devoted to professional training¹⁹. Other prisoners had already attended a course on September 15th, when the vintage had begun.

We reached a farmyard. A man came out on his doorstep and talked to some of the prisoners. I saw them pointing at me. I came closer. He was the proprietor. He welcomed me and told me I could begin immediately. I would learn by doing, and if I had questions I was to consult a co-worker. There were twenty prisoners in my group.

The grass was still wet in the shadow of a plastic tent when the chief stopped his tractor and trailer close to one of the rows. Each of us was given a bucket called “cavagno” and a pair of scissors. It was a pretty easy job: picking the grapes and putting them into the bucket, paying attention not to shatter them, and then emptying the bucket into the trailer with equal care. Our team was working on three rows, and when a trailer was full it was replaced with an empty one. At about 11 am we began to feel the heat, and while looking for shelter I realized how regular those spur-pruned plants were, each branch shooting out like a ray²⁰, and I noticed that my left hand was

16 Imperato, Tobia, *Le scarpe dei suicidi. Sole Silvano Baleno e gli altri. Un grupito di bastardos quella notte entrò a casa*, Turin, Autoproduzioni Fenix!, 2003, p. 162.

17 *Medicago sativa*.

18 AA. VV. *Manuale di Agricoltura*, Milan, Hoepli, 1997², p. E-136.

19 Art. 20 of the Prison law, “Work” (law n° 354, July 26, 1975) allows prisoners to attend courses of professional training.

20 Giovanni, Dal Masso; Eynard, Italo, *Viticoltura Moderna. Manuale pratico*, Milan, Hoepli,

reddish, almost blue, stained by the juice.

At 12:30 we left for lunch, and came back by 14:30. At sunset the master asked if any of us was available for overtimes. We had a right to refuse, but accepting meant getting good notes from the man, whose job was to “supervise the workers, checking all activities, informing the committee of any relevant accident”²¹. The supervision of the workers was “an internal component of the production apparatus and a specific gear of disciplinary power”²². Fellow prisoners explained me that once a week the master filled in a report with detailed information on each worker and submitted it to the local council for order and safety. On the grounds of that report and those of other professional figures working on the island, the magistrate or the tribunal chose to grant or deny certain benefits²³. That’s why we all agreed to work overtime.

On Sundays the prison was open to friends and relatives, and early in the morning a priest from the local parish of San Benedetto Po celebrated the Holy Mass, open to prisoners as well as locals. I spent my free time on the rooftop, writing or playing soccer with fellow prisoners, or in the laboratories located inside the prison. Lovers wrapped themselves up in a protective cocoon of love, the melancholic sought isolation and solitude.

The vintage lasted until half October. When I thought of the prisoners who were extracting gravel or tending to the poplar coppices I felt lucky. No dust on my clothes and in my hair. No sawdust in my shoes. Sure, their workplace was closer: ten minutes on foot along the northern bank were enough to reach the pyramids of gravel and sand of the quarry of San Benedetto Po. The three quarries on the opposite bank, in Bagnolo San Vito, could be reached in fifteen minutes.

1990.

21 Cournot, George, *Considérations d’intérêt public sur le droit d’exploiter les mines*, in “Archives nationales”, 1790, p. AXIII.

22 Focault, Michel, *Sorvegliare e punire. Nascita della prigione*, Turin, Einaudi, 1975, p. 192.

23 Art. 4-bis of the Prison Law, “Denial of benefits and evaluation of the social danger represented by prisoners accused of specific crimes” (law n° 354, July 26, 1975).

On October the 4th I woke up thinking that it was St. Francis day. I was still meditating on this at lunch when I met Ierri, a Pakistani. He was working at the poplar coppices, and explained his job in a language made of verbs at the infinitive, Italian words and vernacular curses. "Cut little low branch, 'cause straight trunk ok, but when crooked or got many branches it's like cancer, goddamnit". I don't think I would have paid the same kind of attention to a fellow national describing the technique for obtaining wood that matched the specifications and requirements of the industry.

At half October our contracts expired, so we moved from the countryside of Mantua to the plains of Verona, where we were going to work until the end of winter. We all contributed to fixing the boat to get there.

On October 18th, at 9 am, we sailed to Ostiglia, 10 maritime miles from San Benedetto Po. The boat was rocking gently. The riverside landscape was livened by poplars planted at equal distances.

We moored on the left hand bank after sailing for a couple of hours. The place was easily recognizable from the thermal power station with four soaring towers, striped white and red, contrasting with the peaceful river landscape around. Two truss bridges were connecting Ostiglia to Revere, a village on the right bank of the river Po, with a church built in red bricks. One of the bridges was for cars and pedestrians, the other for trains.

The morning after we were notified the jobs to which we had been assigned, and the workgroups into which we were to split. Although we were technically moored in Lombardy, most of the new jobs were actually in Veneto, in the plains of Verona. Once more, many were employed gathering fruits and vegetables, while specialized workers would go on with their dusty jobs in the quarries of Ostiglia and Serravalle a Po.

For a few days we picked up the last underground strawberries. I had never seen a

strawberry hothouse before, I had no idea they were growing in sandboxes one metre from the ground. Later we were employed by a producer of cabbage, leek and red lettuce. Each day we switched between cultures, but work was pretty much the same. A knife to sever the leek, the red lettuce or the cabbage from their stumps. A wood crate to store them, a cart to take the crates to a storehouse.

Every now and again locals came to visit us. They wanted to talk to us, get to know us. Once a boy wanted to interview me for the school journal. Later I was invited to hold a speech at the Galilei high school in Ostiglia, I wonder what those kids were expecting to hear from a convict. Perhaps some grim, different story. They looked disappointed as I described my daily routine.

4 Images





4.2 Po river feeders: Secchia river detention basin



4.3 Po river feeders: Mincio river floodgate



4.4 Po river and pedestrian, car and railway bridges in Ostiglia, Mantova



4.5 Lauro Zampoli Tourist River Port, Bagnolo San Vito, Mantova



SCAVI
SEMPRE TAMENTE PRO
VICINARSI



4.7 Young poplars (*Populus alba*), via Argine Po, Revere, Mantova



4.8 Workmen cutting the poplars in the Sustinente countryside, Mantova





4-10 Irrigation system, via Argine Po, Revere, Mantova



4.11 Corn field, Correggio Micheli, Mantova



4.12 Lambrusco grapevine field, Sustinente, Mantova



4.13 Wheat field and poplars. Sustinente, Mantova

strada
Argine Po Nord

strada
Argine Vecchio

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