

Lombroso and the bandit



SALERNO EDITRICE

Lombroso e il brigante

STORIA DI UN CRANIO CONTESO



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Milicia

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In a gray December morning in 1870 Cesare Lombroso examined the skull of Joseph Villella, a native of Motta Santa Lucia, a small town of Southern Italy, and died in Pavia, where he was detained.

The young scientist was convinced that he had made a sensational discovery. The criminal anthropology was born and this science was destined to get a huge and controversial international success. Thief or robber, for a century and a half Villella was just a scientific finding, the totem of criminal anthropology. In 2009, the inauguration of the new Cesare Lombroso Museum caused the surprising media resurrection of the robber. Today he is a mythical figure, the totem of the fight against the anti-southern racism, a symbol of redemption of the native peoples of Kingdom of the Two Sicilies.

The native anthropologist Maria Theresa Milicia reconstructs the bare existence of the “bandit” on a solid documentation and proposes an original analysis of racism usually ascribed to Lombroso.

Maria Teresa Milicia is Professor of Cultural Anthropology at the University of Padua. She has conducted ethnographic researches on the Marian apparitions in Calabria and Campania and has deepened the relationships between anthropology and the scientific racism.

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