The International Congresses of Criminal Anthropology
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International congresses took on particular importance at the end of the nineteenth century. Numerous, diverse, and varied, these forums for communication, legitimacy, and power became essential for ideas, movements, and individuals as places to exchange views and, especially, to make their existence known. What were these congresses about? Were they primarily about curiosity, necessity, legitimacy, gaining political advantage—or about research?

The advantages of international congresses are so numerous and varied that each involves its own set of motivations. Through this case study of the international congresses of criminal anthropology — an analysis requisite to an understanding of the internal and external life and evolution of an intellectual movement — I will identify the various facets of these congresses and the stakes involved in their content, form and attendance.

I will also demonstrate the structuring role that these forums played, both nationally and internationally, in the development of the discipline and even more so in the development of a certain notion of a juridical “Europe” and the foundations of a juridical “international.”
Before discussing these international congresses, a few words are in order on the science of criminology, its origins, doctrines, and debates. It was in the last quarter of the nineteenth century that a particular body of knowledge formed out of a hodgepodge of numerous other disciplines. Criminology, or rather criminal anthropology, attempted to analyze the phenomenon of crime scientifically in order to understand and reduce it. The first appearance of French judicial statistics in 1825 proved important in that they formed the basis of many criminological studies. The way also was paved by scholars such as [need first name] d’Angeville and Lambert Adolphe Quételet. The latter observed that criminal acts occur with a consistency and regularity that reflects certain laws and maintained that there exists a “penschant toward crime.” The fundamental contribution of these works was the idea that man can be studied scientifically, quantifiably, with calculation and precision. Statistics and anthropology were combined to develop a scientific discourse.

Cesare Lombroso was the first to formalize the orientation of this new approach, contributing the idea that the root cause of crime was to be found in physical or mental abnormalities. His book, L’uomo delinquente, published in 1876, met with great success. According to Lombroso, all hardened criminals were atavistic reincarnations of a primitive stage in the evolution of man. Their behavior was not due to the pressure of circumstances and the outside world but arose from a natural disposition. Such individuals were biologically stunted and thus deficient in the very mechanisms of adaptation to human society. In Lombroso’s words they were “human animals of a particular sort, born criminals who are destined to remain so.” The influence of Darwin is very clear, and Lombroso drew from it the linear idea of evolution that led him to affirm that criminals were evolutionarily backward individuals who had failed to reach the final evolutionary stage, that of man, of humankind. This view met with a flurry of criticisms
attacking its method, theses, principles, and the immense role attributed to biology in theories whose cornerstone was the assertion of a veritable structural determinism of criminal behavior, which was viewed as a fatal consequence of specific stigmata of criminality.

One of the main legacies of Lombroso’s theories was the belief that criminals constitute a separate race bearing the stigmata of a particular biological or psychological structure that forms a distinctive and indelible mark. Despite the ambiguity of these works, Lombroso remained a dominant figure. The ensuing debate gave new impetus to the young discipline. In fact, one very positive result of Lombroso’s writings was that they promoted the study of the criminal, which had been previously neglected. Whereas previously only the crime had been considered, now scholars shifted their attention to the criminal and his or her personality. This represented a radical change in the object of study, a shift in focus from the crime to the criminal, and a dramatic upheaval in the notions of crime and criminal justice. It was in this specific context and in this atmosphere of passionate debate that the “French school” of criminology became established and developed.²

The young Third Republic extolled the values of order, stability, and work, and was determined to use every means to ensure that these values be upheld. The technological and industrial revolution was accompanied by a rare flourishing of disciplines that was due not only to the quality of scientific, literary and artistic production but also to its variety, contrasts, and contradictions. During this century of working-class misery and major upheavals, passion, and burgeoning ideas, violence was perceived as negative; crime and criminality were subjects that reflected the worries and fears of a society in transition. Anxieties beyond the scope of crime itself – a feeling of economic and social “insecurity” – were displaced and gravitated to the visible pole of unrest and disorder.
In the French school we find a group of men united around a set of ideas about the phenomenon of crime who were initially drawn to each other by their shared opposition to Lombroso’s theories. Grouped in Lyon around a journal, Les Archives de l’anthropologie criminelle, and a leader, Alexandre Lacassagne, these men wrote for this journal and joined ranks at meetings from 1886 to 1914. The term criminal anthropology, while contested, came to cover all scientific aspects of the phenomenon of crime, even though such aspects sometimes departed significantly from Lombroso’s original theories, such as his notions of the born criminal, the genetic transmission of individual defects, and a humanity doomed to a gradually rising tide of criminality.

The French movement focused on the influence of the “social milieu,” which was regarded as a veritable hotbed of criminality. Its doctrines were eclectic. The criminal was seen as subject to many different influences, particularly sociological influences. Crime was viewed as a social phenomenon that was intimately correlated with the social milieu in which the criminal lived. The criminal was an individual who appeared normal but was predisposed to crime as a result of an unstable brain equilibrium that put him at the mercy of external triggers (pathological processes, atmospheric conditions), especially social ones (poverty, idleness, laziness, imitation). The French school countered the inevitable fatalism of the anthropological theory with social initiatives. Nevertheless, biological theories were not absent from their writings. While less dominant than among the Italians, they still occupied a respectable place in the corpus of the Archives, as did “anthropomorphic” articles. The French movement—that is, the group of people whose articles appeared in the Archives—included many foreigners and provincials, but consisted mainly of medical doctors, especially experts in forensic medicine, psychiatrists, and military doctors. Only very few of the authors were
jurists (such as René Garraud and Gabriel Tarde), mostly academics rather than practitioners of law; a few were government bureaucrats.

The criminological discourse was also very medically oriented: the criminal was approached in clinical terms, and the facts were presented in the form of a diagnosis. Society was often treated as a biological organism that must be protected from disease: mental defects, lunacy, criminality. These writings also promoted the very important notion of hygiene. Both moral and physical hygiene constituted a key element of the discourse and seemed to coincide with the desire for a wide-ranging cleansing of society. The criminological discourse particularly revolved around the criminal and criminality and everything having to do with the body. The Archives were full of reflections on criminals, who were often broken down into categories and subcategories (the female criminal, the child, the lunatic). They also included articles on tattoos, hypnotism, and “exoticism,” which showed a fascination with strange or exotic phenomena, among which crime was simply an exceptional element. On the whole, the Archives neglected criminal law as such and focused instead on “penality”, that is, criminals and their treatment.

Lasassagne thus led a movement that developed in parallel to that of Lombroso. From 1886 to 1914 he met with no real opposition in France and served as the movement’s official spokesperson at international meetings. With his large following, he embodies the birth of French criminology.

Knowledge-Building Institutions: Journals and Congresses

The terms school and movement are used without any tangible evidence of their existence; but these references are not artificial. A team, a spirit, a group crystallized around an academic department, a university: the medical school of the University of Lyon. Although initially unorganized, the group formed around a leader (Lacassagne) and around a journal (Les Archives de l’anthropologie criminelle), which
served as a driving force for organizing, exchanging ideas and developing a movement. At the International Congresses of Criminal Anthropology, the group stood united in their ideas and theories about crime. These two elements—the journal and the congresses—played a key role in shaping, establishing, and anchoring an emerging body of knowledge. In order to further a comparative perspective, I will focus on the International Congresses of Criminal Anthropology, highlighting the French perspective but taking into account other countries.

The Importance of International Congresses in the Field of Criminal Justice

The study of crime took the form of publications, reports and doctrine, and gradually became “disciplined” through “institutions for the discussion, evaluation and dissemination of the results of research.” Similarly, the twelve international prison congresses, supported in France by the Société générale des prisons, played an important role in developing and legitimizing the French movement. Through these meetings a European juridical space beyond national borders began to take shape that was characterized by shared ways of thinking. This formation of a scientific community (both national and international) also contributed to the formation of a body of knowledge. All of these elements contributed to the recognition of that body of knowledge, its definition, and a certain know-how. The result was a specialized body of knowledge, induced, constructed, and debated among specialists motivated by public debates aimed at a specific goal and practical outcomes.

It was through the congresses that the discipline originated and became firmly established. The regularity of these meetings stabilized the movement, giving it a history, a tradition, and “rites” that became institutionalized. The international dimension of these meetings also lent an air of “consensus” to the discussions, which took place under the banner of “science,” thereby transcending spiritual, political, and
national divisions: “Nebulous times are yet one more reason to gravitate
toward the serene domain of science ... For people of every stripe, it
provides a neutral ground where they can meet and work together to solve
the major problems that are so compelling for everyone.”

The International Congresses of Criminal Anthropology: The Context
These international congresses where quarrels between schools and
ideas were played out allow us to trace the political development of
French and European criminology. Eight congresses were planned from 1885
to 1914: Rome (1885), Paris (1889), Brussels (1892), Geneva (1896),
Amsterdam (1901), Turin (1906), Cologne (1911), and Budapest (1914). The
last one never took place. The lifespan of these congresses paralleled
the lifespan of the criminological movements, especially that of the
French movement, which came to a stop with World War I, but had in fact
lost its steam.

These international congresses became possible because, along with
Italy and France, other countries such as Spain, Holland (with G.A.
van Hamel) and Belgium (Adolphe Prins, Paul Héger, [first name?] Heuze,
Raymond de Ryckere, C. [full name?] Jaspar) were developing similar
criminological approaches. The Archives column written by A. Likhatcheff
shows a burgeoning movement in Russia, whereas no major works were being
produced in England or the United States other than articles on
forensic medicine (Journal of Mental Science and The Medico-Legal
Journal). In 1893, Paul Ladame, who wrote the German column in the
Archives noted that “the Germans have long been indifferent, if not
hostile to such research,” yet it was in Germany that Lombroso had
published his first piece on criminal anthropology. At first, only one
German journal regularly included articles on criminal anthropology,
namely the Centralblatt für Nervenheilkunde und Psychiatrie, mit
besonderer Berücksichtigung der Degenerationsanthropologie, edited by
Dr. Kueller until 1892, then by Dr. Sommer (from Würzburg). Then, in
1898, a specialized journal was created, the Archiv für Kriminalanthropologie und Kriminalistik, edited by Professor Hans Gross, a professor of criminal law at the German-speaking university of Prague. Thus, in several countries, a movement of ideas was forming that the international congresses would structure.

The congresses were places of exchange and dissemination, but also places of conflict and power, where adversaries who had either clashed or allied themselves in their writings confronted each other face to face. The programs and duration (often several days) of these congresses as well as the personalities present and the topics discussed made them rich and dense events. They provided a concentrated overview of the range of criminological notions of the era and of various countries around the world. They therefore merit systematic study. Here, we will examine only certain aspects of these congresses, with an emphasis on their “spirit” more than their content.

Structure and Organization of the Congresses

Several elements characterize the form, structure and “corpus” of these congresses. First, they were held at regular intervals (three, four, or at most five years apart). Each country with a vested interest in criminology served as host and organizing country, the Italians twice, which is understandable given the dynamic, founding role that this country played. It was always during the closing session of each congress that the venue for the next meeting was decided. At times this involved some discussion, but usually the choice seems to have been made by majority vote according to a tacit agreement.

The organizing countries invested a lot of energy into preparing each congress. It was a point of honor to ensure that everything went smoothly so that one would emerge from the “test” with an enhanced reputation. The organizing committee was generally composed of well-known scholars in the field from the host country, except in 1901 in
Holland, where the organizing committee consisted mostly of Dutch politicians. The honorary presidents elected by each organizing committee were well-known people from other countries. Here France, Italy, and Belgium were very well represented.

No information is available on the financing of these events. Were there national or international subsidies, or special grants? The only concrete information we have is the amount of the registration fees for the congresses (twenty French francs in 1889 and 1896), which included a free copy of the published conference proceedings.

The form of the congresses appears to have been relatively traditional. The congresses had their official sponsors, and the opening sessions were attended by a minister (usually the minister of justice) and other government officials. Ritual opening and closing speeches framed the meeting. The opening speech was always moderate, “neutral,” and welcoming in tone. As a welcoming address, it set the stage with reference to events and players, but without excessive passion or controversy. By contrast, the closing speech, was usually more significant: it took stock of and memorialized the congress. In the manner of a brilliant synthesis, it reaffirmed a victory, a knockout, the triumph of an idea, or brought closure to a lingering controversy. Always oriented toward science and progress – the stock beneficiaries of the genre – the closing speeches were often lyrical, glowing, and emphasized optimism and reconciliation after the heat of contentious congresses.

The sessions were organized into half-days, with reports, comments, and discussions, and sometimes included visits to exhibitions organized in association with the congresses. Over all these years, the program remained quite traditional, generally divided between criminal biology and criminal sociology.

In examining the organization and composition of these meetings, one must not neglect the aspect of sociability, which was an important
element: the visits, the banquets, the intermissions, and all the extras that made up the other side of the congresses. Each meeting offered a prime opportunity for the organizing country to showcase its talents, innovations, and model institutions. Each meeting was also enhanced by evening receptions and banquets. These excursions and moments outside the congress were important because meals and toasts were more conducive to meeting people, sharing ideas, exchanging words, and deepening connections than the academic sessions themselves.

Attendance at the congresses appears to have been truly international: France, Italy, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Hungary, Brazil, Mexico, Peru (1889), and China were represented. Medical and legal organizations sent representatives, but such affiliations were not noted until 1892. Such was the composition and organization of these major meetings. This general overview has primarily outlined their overarching structure and tenor, and in so doing, shown that the International Congresses of Criminal Anthropology were fairly traditional in form and conception. A comparison with other congresses would probably reveal similarities in this regard.

The functions of the Congresses
A second observation regarding these congresses relates to the role(s) they played and the various functions they served. As a place where a discipline was established and emerging scientific ideas legitimized, a place of intellectual exchange and dissemination, each international congress could either fulfill or dash expectations. The congresses were also involved implicit agendas, such as strengthening networks, providing opportunities for showcasing one’s achievements, and by symbolically boosting one nation or another.

1. Establishing a discipline.
The first congress took place in Rome in 1885 at the instigation of Cesare Lombroso. Organized by the Italian school at the Palace of Fine Arts, this congress was initially national in scope, which explains the predominance of Italians at most levels (organizing committee, speakers, program). It was at this meeting that Lacassagne, confronting the all-powerful Lombroso, politely attacked the determinist theories and advanced his hypothesis of the importance of the social environment, and proposed the following formula: “The criminal is a microbe that proliferates only in a certain environment. It is probably the environment that produces the criminal, but like a medium that has no microbes, it cannot make crime germinate on its own. Microbe and medium, the biological and the social, are hence the two fundamental aspects of criminality and constitute the essential data of criminal anthropology.” This first challenge started the Franco-Italian polemic, and, following this congress, in 1886, Lacassagne launched the Archives de l’anthropologie criminelle.

2. Constructing a discipline.

Criminology has been a discipline that consists of different schools and approaches. These congresses brought together protagonists who opposed each other in their writings between meetings. Thus the Italians secured supremacy in 1885, despite Lacassagne’s discreet challenges. The 1889 congress in Paris, on the other hand, brought victorious advances by the French and marked the beginning of the duel between Lombroso and Léonce Manouvrier, an epistemological and methodological debate that turned on the question of the existence of anatomical traits unique to criminals and on the term “criminal anthropology,” which Manouvrier, an anthropologist by training, could not accept in its Lombrosian usage. The anti-Lombrosian offensive continued at the 1892 congress and it seemed like the notion of the born criminal had been definitively laid to rest. But at the Geneva congress
in 1896 the Italians rallied their forces and fought back. Lombroso refused an honorary presidency so he would be free to speak. He vigorously argued his view, and a resolution proposed by Manouvrier against Lombroso was rejected to applause. The Italian school regained ground and momentum. In Amsterdam in 1901, the Italians had wind in their sails. Rebellion seemed to have been nipped in the bud; the opposition was silent. And Lombroso, author of the inaugural report, was rejoicing. In 1906 his jubilee was celebrated in Turin. Lombroso’s victory was beyond question, confirmed, ratified, enshrined. They had not been able to “kill” the founding father. Everyone celebrated both his person and his work, controversial as it was. Everyone bowed down, gave homage, caught in the trap of consecration. In a sense, the congress of 1906 put a definitive end to the passionate quarrels. The scientific jubilee in honor of Lombroso closed the circle. The 1911 conference in Cologne was lifeless and unenthusiastic, marking both the death and culmination of a discipline. While they lasted, the conferences had organized and structured a milieu.

3. Exchange and dissemination:

The congresses were also places of exchange and dissemination, where new technologies were introduced, such as Alphonse Bertillon’s anthropometric method of identification, which was gradually adopted by police forces throughout the world and become one of the standard elements of forensic science. The congresses’ headline themes were telling: child protection, crime prevention, and social defense. The three main figures of the International Union of Criminal Law founded in 1890 – Franz von Liszt, G.A. van Hamel, and Adolphe Prins – were all avid participants in the criminal anthropology congresses before founding their more juridically-oriented association.

4. A place rich in initiatives.
If one looks closely at the resolutions adopted from 1885 to 1911, it appears that most of them were implemented by the individual countries. France provides a compelling example when it comes to the teaching of forensic medicine and criminal anthropology, the need to have delinquents undergo a psychological and moral examination, the establishment of forensic police work, and so on. But were the conferences launching such initiatives or merely giving their stamp of approval to developments that were already underway?

5. A “Media Spotlight”

While French jurists were skeptical and scarce at national meetings, they flocked to the international meetings because they understood their attraction as a media spotlight. By their presence or absence, people could impact the atmosphere and direction of a congress. For example, in 1889, the presence of Pauline Pigeon and Clémence Royer [need to explain who they are] caused quite a stir. Of course, very few women attended these meetings of mainly male scientists. In 1901, Judge [first name] Magnaud — the “good judge” [need to explain who he was] — was the star of the congress. But absence made the biggest impression on a congress, especially when it was boycotted by a whole group. In 1889, the Italian socialist school, then represented by Napoleone Colajanni, did not attend, but the incident was quickly forgotten. In 1892, however, the entire Italian school boycotted the congress: Lombroso, Enrico Ferri, Raffaele Garofalo, and others. A joint letter bearing forty-nine signatures (including those of Lombroso and Ferri) explained that this non-attendance was due to the fact that an international commission responsible for producing data [need to explain task of commission further] failed to do so. This cordial but intransigent letter certainly appears to have been a pretext relieving Lombroso — unsettled or angered by attacks against him — from having to appear before his opponents. The
absence of the Italians had quite an effect and put a damper on the Brussels congress. In 1896, it was France that sent no official delegates\textsuperscript{25}, but no motive explains this gesture. In 1901, the absence of Paul Brouardel, Lônce Manouvrier, Gabriel Tarde (due to a death), Paul Garnier, and [first name] Magnan was noted. That same year, Belgium did not attend. The participation or absence of a group thus significantly shaped the congresses.

6. Place of Power: Doctors and Jurists

The international congress enabled a discipline to develop, individuals to make their voices heard, and nations to engage one another on a scientific and intellectual plane. But these congresses were also animated by less obvious agendas, and thus played a more powerful role than the simplest stated objectives might indicate. They highlighted the existence and importance of networks, be they spiritual, intellectual, or professional.

While the first criminal anthropology congresses were attended mainly by medical doctors and anthropologists, jurists started participating in 1896 and had a substantial presence in 1901. The French jurists who attended (mainly members of the Société Générale des Prisons – Riviere, Théophile Roussel, Voisin, Ferdinand-Dreyfus [need all first names]) were not very representative of the French criminological movement, which consisted primarily of doctors and forensic medical experts. But their participation was emblematic of the weight and power held by lawyers on the national level, who became active in areas where they could wield their talent. With their growing influence, legal issues started being raised at these meetings, where matters of criminal law had previously been all but absent. This impact is characteristic of what Y.-H. [need first name] Gaudemet has rightly called the “Lawyers’ Republic” because through their training, ethics, language, and
objectives jurists exercised an enormous influence on their environment and on the society as a whole. It is hardly surprising to see lawyers involved in issues of crime; but criminal anthropology was a different matter. Most jurists had developed a hostile attitude toward this discipline because of the unsettling impact its theories were having on the right to punish and the fact that lawyers now had to contend with medical experts in court. Faced with such vocal skepticism, medical doctors remained on the defensive. The two professions thus maintained a tacit separation between their respective territories. This latent socio-professional conflict was actually a power conflict and a struggle over political power. Thus the penetration of jurists into the criminal anthropology congresses is an example of a victorious advance into a symbolic space. It has to be understood in the context of professional jealousy and rivalry, curiosity, and the desire to have a presence. The significant involvement of jurists in 1901 may also have been a sign that they were relaxing and softening their skepticism — at a time when the quarrels among doctors, biologists and anthropologists were also dying down.

Doctors and lawyers may have been mutually jealous, but they also had a lot in common. They met with each other, and frequently collaborated. Doctors called on the judicial system to protect them against charlatanism and those who practiced medicine illegally. Out of a rivalry the two professions began to define a common body of ideas. Both lawyers and doctors saw themselves as bearers of order and progress, motivated by their respective sciences. Doctors focused on hygiene and maternal protection. Working toward similar goals of protection and effectiveness, lawyers advanced their own projects and perspectives through law and legislation.

Tactically, it appears that on a broader level, “legal” interests infiltrated these congresses and oriented them toward legal issues: treatments, crime prevention, and so forth. This occurred as a slow
transition of the congresses into areas of “technical” expertise (the only ground for consensus) in which lawyers were the experts. Remember that the International Union of Criminal Law (Union Internationale de Droit Pénal) was formed by early stalwarts of the criminal anthropology congresses: Adolphe Prins, Franz von Liszt, G. A. van Hamel. Perhaps, at a certain point, law became the necessary instrument and jurists the driving force for action and reform?

These jurists were not isolated scholars. Some members of the Société Générale des Prisons constructed a corpus of thought on punishment. In this sense, they contributed to the foundation of “criminology,” broaching the same issues but from a different angle. In fact, so great was their contribution that “criminology” became categorized as a legal science as became institutionalized.

7. A Place of Diplomacy

Lastly, no one can deny the diplomatic role these congresses played. The attending scholars were standard bearers for their respective countries. Through the talents and notoriety of these representatives, nations won points on the playing field of international relations. One example of cultural supremacy bestowed on a country through these congresses was the choice of the official language. For every congress up until 1906 that language was French. That year speeches were also delivered in German, English, and Italian. But the real blow to France came at the 1911 congress in Cologne, when German was selected as the official language. The report by Etienne Martin in Les Archives de l’Anthropologie Criminelle was very cool and to the point: “What future can the international congresses and their influence on the advancement of ideas have?”

8. A Place of “Politics”?
We have arrived at the end of the international congresses. Among the countless things the First World War destroyed, it dealt a fatal blow to this movement already in decline. The congresses offered a wealth of intellectual stimulation and encounters to those who participated in the convivial atmosphere of these multiple-day meetings, which combined work with pleasure. For us distant observers today, they are a goldmine of information.

I would like to emphasize one term: reform. It is difficult to qualify the movement connected to the congresses, just as it is difficult to assign a political orientation to these meetings. The individuals who attended them, however, are a good indicator. Since they were of different nationalities, it would be a delicate matter to define their spiritual or political affiliations in a general way. But there definitely was one common characteristic that connected most of these individuals and that characterized the congresses: the desire for reform, for advancement, for progress. More broadly, it was the faith in science — the new religion of rationalism thought capable of structuring and explaining any phenomenon, including criminality.

"International congresses," noted van Hamel in the opening speech of 1901, "are overnight camps, where hikers on an extended trip gather for the evening to exchange opinions, to share the results of their research, to offer each other encouragement and valuable information."

These congresses also provided a stage for a wide variety of performances: scientific, intellectual, dramatic, and comical. They were important venues because of their prestige, great presence, composition, and effects. More a time for taking stock than moving forward, they summarized exchanges that had occurred in articles and reviews since the last conference, galvanized authors, and promoted emerging work and ideas. They were a place of ideas and ideology, not practical achievements. Even though each conference closed with many resolutions,
those resolutions were only rarely or partially implemented, and disillusionment was not uncommon.

Nevertheless, these congresses were essential to the development of a “movement,” regardless of its origin, nature, form, or objectives. People had to make a good showing, for the congresses were indeed a show, where appearances, words, a speaker’s standing, the force of his convictions, his talent, made more of an impact than the most rigorously constructed scientific presentation.

The invention of criminology is indicative of transformations in the way people conceptualized the world and the social order in the early years of the Third Republic. The realization of policies in this area was characterized by two elements: First, efforts went into amassing a body of knowledge and applying rigorous methodologies in order to then, second, develop the instruments, techniques, projects, and laws needed to implement policy. Knowledge and power do not constitute two distinct realms that occasionally interact; they are organically connected. As Michel Foucault has observed: “No relationship of power exists except in correlation with the development of a field of knowledge; nor does any knowledge exist that does not suppose and simultaneously constitute relationships of power.” These practices and bodies of knowledge made crime into an object of scholarly discourse. They opened up a field of study, with its rivalries and competition. They formed and shaped interests in which scientific, professional, and political ways of thinking were inextricably linked.

In order to implement its policies, the Republican regime fostered the development of networks, laboratories for ideas, and associations where the conceptual tools for public action were hammered out. It also legitimized the role of experience, experimentation, knowledge, and expertise — for which the international congresses were a perfect medium.
This chapter was translated from French by Julie Johnson, San Francisco, California.


3 Léonce Manouvrier is one example: He criticized Lombroso in the name of anthropology and, considering Lombroso a “manipulator” of the discipline, argued his point of view in terms of three themes: definition of the object of study, the condition of scientific observation, and the relativity of the distinction between law and ethics. See Philippe Robert, Pierre Lascoumes, Martine Kaluszynski, “Une leçon de méthode: le mémoire de Manouvrier de 1892,” Déviance et Société 2, no. 3 (1986): 223-46.

4 That explains why the French school was given the name “social environment school” (“école du milieu social”) Over the course of the nineteenth century, the concept of environment was applied in two new areas: in biology under the impetus of Geoffroy Saint Hilaire, and in the moral sciences by Auguste Comte and Hippolyte Taine, both of whom had a significant impact on Lacassagne.

5 See, for example, Alexandre Lacassagne, Base et organization d’une société de médecine publique (Paris, 1877); A. Lacassagne and Paul Dubuisson, “Cremation,” Dictionnaire encyclopédique des sciences
médicales, vol. 23 (Paris, 1879); A. Lacassagne, Les Etablissements insalubres de l’arrondissement de Lyon: Compte rendu des travaux du Conseil d’hygiène publique et de salubrité du Département du Rhône (Lyon, 1891). Moreover, Lacassagne was a member of the Society of Public Medicine and Professional Hygiene as well as a member of the Consultative Committee for Public Hygiene in France.

6 Published from 1886 on as Archives d’anthropologie criminelle et des sciences pénales (Médecine légale, judiciaire, statistiques criminelles, législatives et droit); the title was altered in 1903 and 1907, but the words Archives d’anthropologie criminelle (hereafter ACC) remained unchanged. Publication was suspended in 1920. Lacassagne died in 1924 without having been able to resume publication of the journal that was commonly called the “Lacassagne Archives.”

7 Pierre Favre, Naissance de la science politique en France (Paris, 1989), 8-10. Favre even writes that “science doesn’t truly appear until these institutions exist” (8-10).

8 London (1872), Stockholm (1878), Rome (1885), Saint Petersburg (1890), Paris (1895), Brussels (1900), Budapest (1905), Washington, D.C. (1910), London (1925), Prague (1930), Berlin (1935), and The Hague (1950).

9 Favre, Naissance de la science politique, 10.


11 There were no national criminal anthropology congresses.

12 In 1888, the journal La Revista de anthropologia criminal y ciencias médica legales began publication under the leadership of Dr. Ángel Alvarez Talandriz and Raphaël Salillas.

13 See the news columns of Henri Coutagne, who was responsible for reporting on English and Anglo-American news in the AAC and who did not hide the awkwardness of the task; see AAC 3 (1886): 666.

The first mention of the famous occipital fossa appeared in an article in Rudolf Virchow’s Archiv in 1871. (See Paul Ladame, AAC 8 [1893], 526.) But German science took no immediate notice of the publication in 1876 of Lombroso’s L’uomo Delinquente.

By analyzing the contents and scope of all reports from each country, one would be able to identify the emergence of certain themes and their exact development at the congresses and in each country concerned. Biographical research on the major scholars present would also be useful and relevant. It would also be informative to examine the congresses against the sociopolitical context and development of the host countries. Lastly, it would be useful to systematically track, country by country, whether or not the resolutions adopted were implemented, when, how, and so on.

In 1892, three proposals were made: Amsterdam for 1894 (proposed by Sarraute), Geneva for 1896 (proposed by Dimitri Drill, Soeren Hansen, Etienne Magitot, Léonce Manouvrier, and Alphonse Struelens), and Chicago for 1896 (World Fair). The first two proposals were adopted; the second by unanimous consensus. In 1896, a large majority of congress attendees decided that the 1901 congress would be held in Amsterdam. Two petitions with signatures were circulated, one for Paris, one for Amsterdam. Upon discussion, Paris was rejected as being too wild, a “hub of iniquity for workers and conferences” (AAC 11 [1896]: 546).

The French minister of justice was present in 1889 at the Palais du Trocadéro in Paris, and the Belgian minister Jules Lejeune was present in 1892 at the Palais des Académies in Brussels.

In 1885 there was a criminal anthropology exhibit that showed craniums and tattoos. See Dr. A. Motet, “Rapport sur l’exposition d’anthropologie criminelle,” ACC 1 (1886): 88-96. In 1899 [correct?], there was a general anthropological exhibit, with a section on legal and criminal anthropology.
20 The 1889 congress included a presentation on anthropometry by A. Bertillon and a visit to the police prefecture. The 1892 congress offered a visit to the Sainte-Gille prison; the 1896 congress offered visits to the museum of archeology, the anthropometric service, and the psychiatric hospital. The 1901 congress proposed outings to the Verers de Meerenberg model asylum [correct?], and the 1911 congress visits to prisons and asylums.

21 In 1889 Paul Brouardel invited people to the lounge of the dean of the faculty and Emile Magitot threw a gala reception at the mansion of Prince Roland Bonaparte in the country outside Villeres. In 1892, there was a royal reception at the palace in Brussels and a reception by the minister of justice. In 1896 there were receptions, dinners, a gala evening at the Amsterdam opera; and in 1906 festivities in honor of Lombroso’s jubilee.

22 Gabriel Tarde noted: “Compared to the program dealing with biological issues, the program of the four sessions of the sociological section seems quite meager to me” (Tarde, “Actes du Congrès de Rome,” ACC 3 [1888]: 74).

23 France reluctantly adopted this system, and it was not until 1893 that a criminal identification department was established, but it was well received in the United States. A private company put the method into practice and provided public authorities with the personnel and equipment required to organize a department.

24 This did not prevent Ferri from believing that women would gravitate to criminal anthropology, since they were excluded from criminal law conferences, and because, he said, “despite or because of its determinist beginnings, women see and sense that in this moral, individual, and social discipline practically aimed at abating the scourge of criminality, their involvement, reflections, and sentiments can be useful” (AAC [1901]: 519-20).
25 E. Martin wrote, “Many remarks were made about all the non-participation, and particularly that of our government. It is inexplicable, in fact, that our ministers did not even respond to the official invitation sent to them by the Swiss government. Negligence or forgetfulness? I don’t know. But in any case our kind neighbors were vexed.” (ACC, [1896], 481-2).
