

Abstract

Romano Penna

Imprisonment is a well documented experience in the whole Bible, since patriarch Joseph up to the Johannine Apocalypse. A clear distinction between what is referred by each of the two Testaments is needed. In the Old one infact Israel, as a statehood, forsees imprisonment as just one of possible penances to law transgressors. In the New one, instead, Christians weren't organized in a state. This may be the reason why they were serving penalties both by Jews and by Greek cities. The best known example of such a history is Saint Paul's one. Above all, however, Jesus' teaching on visiting imprisoned people and those in need moves early Christians as they identified with Jesus himself.

Elena Zocca

In Roman legal system imprisonment was not considered as a proper punishment for it was used to lock up people awaiting for trial or execution. The terrible detention conditions, the social stigma as well as the anxiety about the outcome of the judgment exercised a strong emotional impact on prisoners. To all of them, it was a moment suspended in time. But Christians imprisoned for their "nomen" used to live that time with a special attitude. To them, as for their co-religionists, that time could be an occasion for conversion or apostasy, glorious victory or bitter failure. This situation required that prisoners were never left alone. Ecclesiasti-

cal hierarchies as well as communities took great care of their material and spiritual needs, but also kept a them under deep control in order to prevent dangerous drifts. Therefore, bonds between who was in and who was out became even stronger, and to all of them that time turned into a Kairos, “the appropriate time” to decide their fate.

Nicoletta Giovè Marchioli

From the Antiquity until today the graffiti (i. e. every kind of writing on a wall, either carved or painted) are an important witness of the need of the human being to express a inner world of sentiments and emotions, and also the different kind of relationships with God and with the Sacred in a wide sense.

Therefore may be useful to study a various range of graffiti found on the walls of the jails, from the late Middle Ages but also from the beginning of the 20th century, that can be read in Venice as well as in Rome and in Palermo, and that offer many interesting messages, even blasphemous.

Maria Clara Rossi

The essay examines the last wills of a number prisoners who were incarcerated and condemned to death during the age of Ezzelino III da Romano. Among the figures recurring with a certain frequency on the witness lists are several Churchmen whose presence inside the prison points to the religious dimension of wills in the late Middle Ages and the role that the Church played from the early centuries in assisting prisoners.

Silvia Carraro

The paper analyses the will of Zannino Vitale da Bergamo's son who made it while he was in a Cremona prison, in order to think about his

religious feelings shortly before his death. At the very starting point, it studies the context of Zannino's imprisonment: when he was captured, how much time he had been in prison and why he was in Cremona. Then, the paper considers recipients of his bequests especially the people who helped him after he was tortured and while he was in jail. Great attention is given to religious meaning of pro anima bequests and the people who could condition them (friars and priests who gave comfort to prisoners). Moreover, the will reveals some details about Zannino's daily life in prison such as his clothes, his food and his gambling activities. In conclusion, the essay studies his family records, especially his mother's will, that allows us to understand why Zannino's will is conserved in the Bergamo archive.

Eleonora Rava

Moving from wills containing provisions in favour of prisoners and testaments dictated by inmates, the author investigates whether and how far imprisonment was a pole of attraction for Pisans' piety in central and late Middle Ages. Lately, she questions whether and, conversely, how far we can speak of a 'religiosity' of prisoners. As it is true that for the period taken into consideration charity to prisoners does not appear among Pisans' common acts of mercy, it is still true that there are no special devotional attitudes related to the prisoner's condition. In the wills of the latter, in fact, what emerges is a focus on family affection and solidarity among cellmates.

Maria Pagnanelli

The *Liber ostensor quod adesse festinant tempora*, was written entirely in the Avignon prison in Soudan, by the Minor Friar Jean de Roquetaillade in 1356. It offers an interesting case for reflection about prophetic writing in special imprisonment condition.

Selection of topics, narrative style, genesis of the text and conclusions allows us to affirm that he wrote to the court of Avignon in person of the

Cardinal Protector of the Order. In doing so he reveals his strong interest for the Church Reform.

Jean's recalling to politics, his punctual references to the Bible and to evangelical poverty characterize his position as an original one. Moving from prophecy to politics, from orthodoxy to heterodoxy, from prison to listening, Jean's life is deeply marked by his experience in Avignonese prison.

Fausta Piccoli

The theme of artistic representation of prison and religiosity inside it in the Middle Ages is a new research topic, which has so far lacked adequate consideration in the study of the history of Italian art. This paper, based on analysis of more than fifty works painted and illuminated in Northern Italy in the fourteenth century, shows that, at the time, the image of the prison occupies well-defined areas of artistic representation. On the one hand, it is functional to the narrative of Biblical and hagiographic episodes connecting to martyrs' lives, which are intended for the glorification of God's saving power and heroism of the early Christian saints. On the other hand, the naturalism of painted and illuminated works suggests the material aspect of the buildings of the prisons, of the custodial staff, of the instruments of imprisonment. Prisoners' condition is hard, tiring, and, similarly to other social groups 'on the edges' (the poor, the pilgrim and the sick), characterized by a marginal condition, so in need of spiritual and material support. The society and the brotherhoods are therefore depicted as offering aid and comfort to the prisoners, in fulfillment of the Gospel precept of the Works of Mercy.

Marina Gazzini

The paper offers a depiction of life in late medieval Milanese prisons. The main sources of information are prisoners' petitions given to the Duke of Milan by mediators that also took care of prisoners' welfare. In

1466 a new confraternity, the Society of the Protectors of prisoners, was formed by upper-class Milanese citizens that had been giving physical, spiritual and even legal aid to prisoners of Malastalla, a charitable institution that was a peculiar hybrid between hospital and public prison.

Fabio Forner, Gian Maria Varanini

Giovanni Marsiglio Pio, a member the most important family of Carpi, was imprisoned for about eight years after being accused, along with his other relatives, to have conspired against Borso d'Este. In this period he was able not only to record in a sort of diary, inter alia, the received gifts and the people he met, but also to write verses then collected in a *Canzoniere*. In this article we underline the importance of these documents in order to enrich the dossier of evidences of the late medieval religiosity in prison, with a rather special case: that of a prisoner of high rank guarded in a special prison, which entailed a harsh restriction of freedom, but in a manner somewhat different from those of the municipal jails of late medieval Italian cities.

Jean-Louis Fournel

This paper aims at analyse the role of imprisonment in Tommaso Campanella's life. As he spent more than 27 years of his life – from 1599 to 1629 – in Neapolitan jails, he can be considered a true scrittore in carcere. During all this time he never stopped writing. The experience of imprisonment is important, although it is not enough to understand the works by the Calabrian dominican. The poet-prophet-philosopher's vision of the world actually moves from his perception of Nature and his conception of knowledge, which do not depend on life in jail (even if that life can occasionally have some influence on the works). On the one hand, the two main effects of jail are giving greater legitimacy to the discourse (the confrontation of torture and injustice produces a stronger truth). On the other, instead, they show a more important messianic

tension towards unification of the world: a world which is largely imagined, for Campanella having no direct contact with it.

Maurilio Guasco

During the second half of the 1980s, at the end of the period known as the “years of lead”, a number of important meetings took place – for example in Loreto and Alessandria – dealing with the broad theme of “reconciliation”. These encounters involved both people outside the prison and several prisoners (in particular, “former militants of subversive organizations”). The documents produced during these occasions for reflection highlight the role played by volunteers who opened up a dialogue with the inmates and especially several men and women of the Church – like Father Rodolfo Bachelet and suor Teresilla. These people, along with many others, explored new pathways, also religious ones and significant activities, so that prisons could help inmates resume life in the society that had temporarily segregated them.