

A painting depicting a man in a brown jacket and blue trousers, carrying a large Italian tricolor flag (green, white, and red) on a pole. He is walking towards the right, with a large, multi-story stone building in the background. The scene is set in a field with some trees and a clear sky.

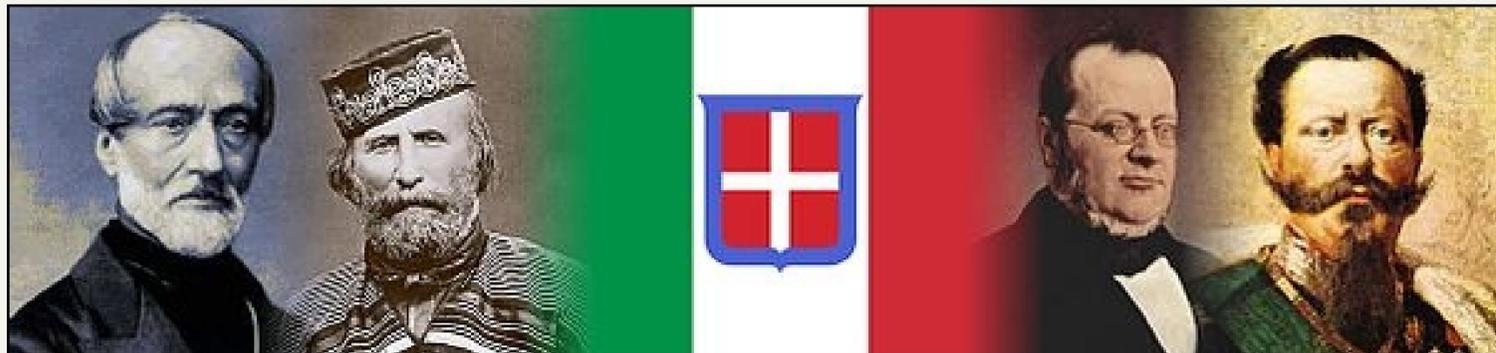
HISTORY OF THE UNIFICATION OF ITALY

1821-1871

IL RISORGIMENTO

THE STEPS OF UNIFICATION

1. Introduction
2. The House of Savoy
3. Napoleon and Italy
4. The Congress of Vienna and the Restoration
5. The Revolutions of 1820 and 1830 and Secret Societies
6. The Wars of Independence
7. The Expedition of the Thousand
8. Lazio and the Breach of Porta Pia
9. Heroes of the Risorgimento:
 - a. Giuseppe Mazzini
 - b. Carlo Alberto
 - c. Giuseppe Garibaldi
 - d. Camillo Benso Conte di Cavour
 - e. Vittorio Emanuele II
 - f. Giuseppe Verdi
10. The Song of the Italians and the Tricolor Flag
11. Cafés: Gathering and Discussion Places
12. Women and the Risorgimento
13. Challenges of Young Italy



OUR HISTORY

Every nation carries with it its captivating history, which should always be remembered to comprehend the present and guide actions towards a better future. With this spirit of understanding the present, we focus on the more recent history that led to the Unification of Italy.

In 2023, a united Italy, formed into a single nation, is taken for granted. However, 200 years ago, it was a visionary project of a small group of men who, with tenacity and determination, managed to bring it to fruition.

After the fall of the Western Roman Empire, Italy had to face the arrival of various populations from the Northeast, which shattered the political and cultural unity established by the Romans. The process of integration would be long and arduous but would lead to the birth of a new reality – the medieval era – characterized by extreme particularism.

Although Italy would find its cultural unity as early as the 1200s, the political journey would be tumultuous. The fragmentation into small regional states without a common development plan would result in the peninsula remaining divided and becoming territorial prey to European 'super-powers.' Thus, the regional states would be influenced by France, Spain, and the Empire (especially Austria) at different times.

INTRODUCTION

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 1800S, ITALY WAS DIVIDED AS FOLLOWS:

At the beginning of the 19th century, Italy was divided into many small states, with the largest being the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, a monarchy led by the Bourbon dynasty, connected by lineage to the Spanish crown. The Papal States functioned as an elective monarchy, boasting a millennia-long history and the protection of certain European monarchs. The Lombardo-Venetian Kingdom was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which indirectly governed the Grand Duchy of Tuscany as well. Completing the puzzle were some smaller city-states, and the Kingdom of Sardinia ruled by the House of Savoy (or the Savoy dynasty).





1

ISAVOIA



Italy found its unity under the auspices of the House of Savoy, through the annexation to the Kingdom of Sardinia. In history manuals, prior to the 19th century, there is talk of the initiatives of the Maritime Republics (Amalfi, Pisa, Genoa, and Venice), the City-States (primarily Florence), the splendor of the Lordships (Florence, Milan, Mantua, etc.), the shrewd Papal policies, the independence of the Republic of Venice, the reforms implemented in the Grand Duchy of Tuscany and Lombardo-Venetia by enlightened rulers, and so on. The Savoyard Kingdom always remains in the shadows, and this is why the endeavor it champions catches everyone off guard: why did Italy not arrive at unity under the guidance of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany or the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies?

I SAVOIA

THE BIRTH OF A DYNASTY



The House of Savoy is the European dynasty that holds the record for longevity: born in the 10th century, it survives through direct lineage until the 20th century. The Savoyard dynasty is traced back to Berthold, Duke of Saxony, a mysterious and mythical figure who was the grandson of Emperor Otto III of the Holy Roman Empire. Thanks to his military valor and vassal relationship, Berthold received the counties of Savoy and Maurienne as benefices from Otto III and later from Rudolph III of Burgundy. These territories formed the initial territorial nucleus of the dynasty. While there is uncertainty about Berthold of Saxony, many sources recount the deeds of his son, Umberto Biancamano (depicted in the above painting), to whom Emperor Conrad II entrusted many other lands. With him, the Savoyard dynasty was officially established.

CONNECTION TO THE TERRITORY

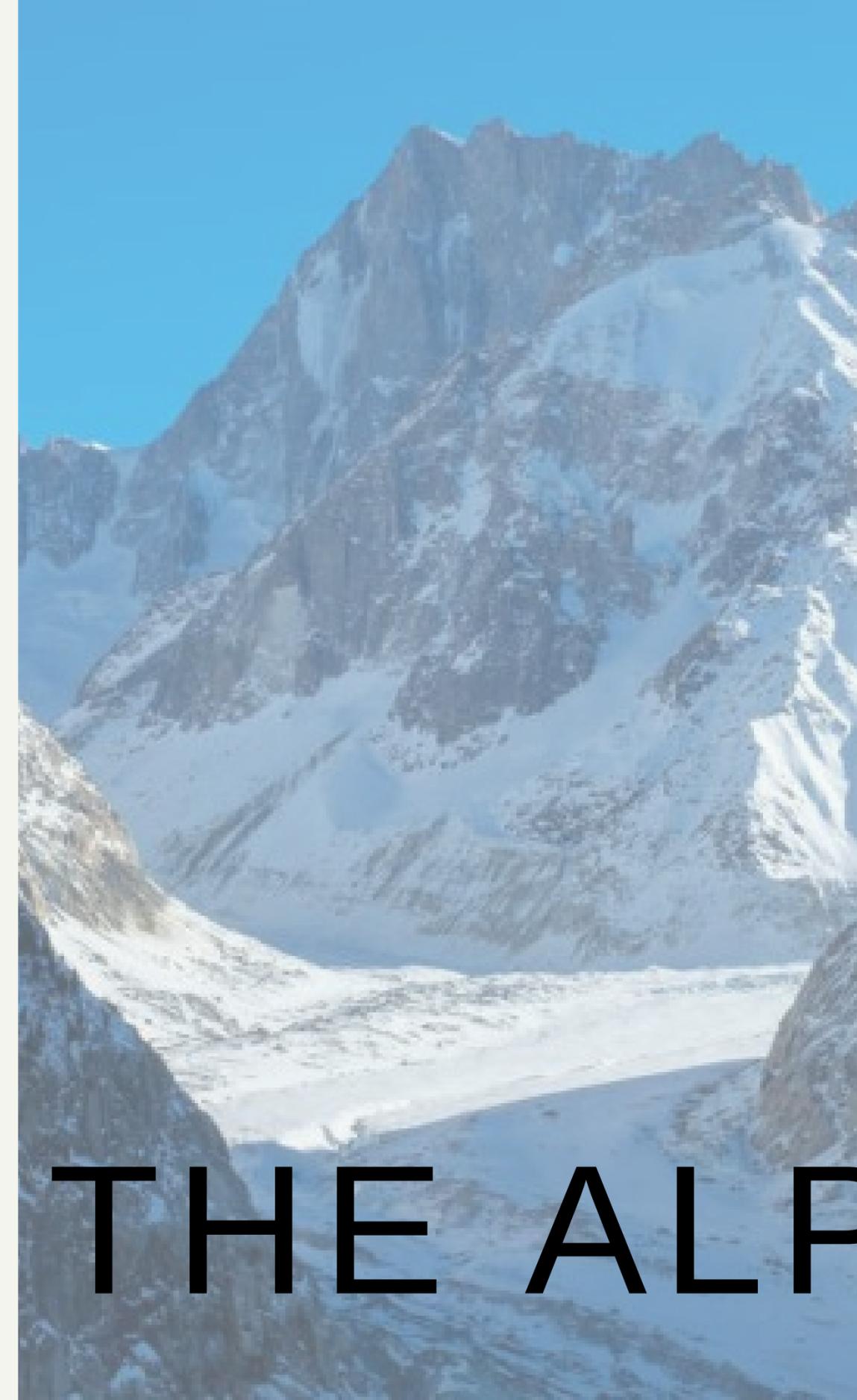
THE ALPS: GEOGRAPHICAL BORDER

First a county and then a duchy, Savoy has been characterized from the very beginning by being a borderland, a space of political separation on one side, but of intense passage of people and goods on the other.

The House of Savoy knew how to exploit to their advantage a harsh, rugged, and scarcely cultivable territory, precisely by capitalizing on its role as an obligatory passage for all those who wanted to cross the border, deriving wealth and prestige from it.

Their strategic importance is attested by the fact that the scions of the House of Savoy were given in marriage to daughters and sisters of the most influential monarchs in Europe. Among the Alpine passes, heading towards France or into Italy, were led monarchs, popes, merchants, armies, and pilgrims.





THE ALPS



WAR...

In the Middle Ages and in the Modern Age, being a borderland meant coexisting with the passage of armies, leading to consequent devastations and plundering.

ITALIAN WAR OF 1521-1526

BATTLE OF PAVIA, FLEMISH ANONYMOUS ARTIST

click
here!



VIA FRANCIGENA



... but it also means being a land of passage for pilgrimages. In particular, the Susa Valley was traversed by the road axis that connected Rome to Santiago de Compostela. A lengthy journey that led through physical hardships to the expiation of one's own sins. Alongside the religious perspective, there was also a tremendous economic opportunity: pilgrims needed places to sleep and eat.

Thus, a support network developed that can be considered a form of tourism before the term was coined. Even today, one can travel along the paths of the ancient pilgrims, discovering the Via Francigena.

... AND PEACE

THE SAVOYARDS WHO LEFT A MARK.



Bertoldo of Saxony and Humbert Whitehand
THE FOUNDERS OF THE HOUSE



Amadeus VIII
(1383-1451)
Nicknamed "the Peaceful" for his composure, he attained the ducal title and, in line with European history, endeavored to increase his power at the expense of local factions, vassals, and collateral branches of the dynasty. Amadeus VIII wrested Ossola from the Visconti and defended it against the Swiss Confederation.



Emanuel Philibert I
(1528 - 1580)
Nicknamed "Ironhead," he successfully navigated the extremely challenging period of war fought in Italy between France and Spain to claim hegemony. He relocated the kingdom's capital from Chambery to Turin.



Charles Emmanuel II
(1634 - 1675)
Nicknamed "the Hadrian of Piedmont," he is remembered for his reforms, particularly as the first to establish a public school system. A cultured man with a penchant for architecture, he had a special fondness for it. He promoted the expansion and Baroque reconstruction of Turin. Taking inspiration from Louis XIV, he had the Royal Palace of Venaria built to move his entire Court there.



Victor Amadeus II (1666 - 1731)
He ruled during a period of wars, but thanks to his diplomatic skills, he not only managed to keep the duchy alive but also, by repelling the French invasion, became one of the signatories of the Treaty of Utrecht at the end of the War of the Spanish Succession. This treaty granted the Dukes of Savoy the kingdom of Sicily, which he exchanged in 1718 for Sardinia and the royal title. His successors could therefore claim the title of Kings of Sardinia.



THE IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN IN THE HOUSE OF SAVOY

The House of Savoy, for the survival of their kingdom, consistently pursued a highly strategic marital policy, ensuring that their heirs married daughters/sisters of the most influential European courts. This was done to secure neutrality and support when needed. Frequently, the kingdom's policies were carried out by these consorts as regents for underage monarchs. Some of these women have become notable in history for their strength and determination.

THE WOMEN OF THE HOUSE OF SAVOY



Adelaide of Susa
(1016 - 1091)

Her marriage to Otto of Savoy allowed the Savoyards to establish a presence in Piedmont. An energetic and determined woman, she is reminiscent of her contemporary Matilda of Canossa. It was Adelaide who interceded with Gregory VII to persuade him to revoke the excommunication of Henry IV



Blanche of Montferrat
(1472 - 1519)

Wife of Charles I of Savoy, she was appointed regent upon his premature death. Assisted by a council of notables, she had to confront the expansionist ambitions of the King of France on one side and those of Ludovico il Moro on the other. Her abilities ensured the survival of the Savoyard Kingdom.



Christina of Bourbon
(1606 - 1663)

As the wife of Victor Amadeus I and sister of Louis XIII, she was nicknamed "Madama Reale." Criticized for introducing Parisian extravagance to the Savoyard court, she nevertheless managed to maintain a strong government. During her regency, she faced attacks from her brothers-in-law Thomas and Maurice, who attempted, through an actual civil war, to usurp the throne from the direct line of succession.



Maria Giovanna Battista of Savoy-Nemours
(1644 - 1724)

Wife of Charles Emmanuel II, she was nicknamed the Second Madama Reale. Like the first Madama Reale, she managed to keep a firm grip on power and continued to lead the Savoyard Kingdom well beyond the expiration of her regency, to the point that her son had to remove her from the scene. Left aside from politics, Maria Giovanna Battista decided to dedicate herself to the arts: upon her explicit order, many streets in Turin were expanded, churches were built, and palaces were renovated.



THE TURIN OF THE SAVOYARDS

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ROYAL PALACE

 [CLICK HERE 4 MORE](#)



PALAZZO MADAMA

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VENARIA REALE

 [CLICK HERE 4 MORE](#)



VALENTINO CASTLE

 [CLICK HERE 4 MORE](#)



CARIGNANO PALACE

 [CLICK HERE 4 MORE](#)

A (POSSIBLE) RESPONSE TO THE INITIAL QUESTION

WHY WAS THE UNIFICATION OF ITALY CARRIED OUT UNDER THE HOUSE OF SAVOY?

There were several factors that led the House of Savoy to take the lead in the Risorgimento movement. Among these, we can identify some:

1. Having a millennial Kingdom behind them that maintained its autonomy over the centuries through astute marital policies and careful diplomatic efforts.
2. Pursuing a moderate domestic policy, staying away from extremes such as absolutist or revolutionary experiences, despite the historical events in the Kingdom following the overall European historical trends.
3. Promoting reforms and granting a Constitution (the Albertine Statute, which we will discuss later) without revoking it.
4. Having the right people in the right place at the right time.
5. Benefiting from luck, as Machiavelli said, "fortune controls half of our actions."

2

NAPOLEON AND ITALY



REVOLUTIONARY GENERAL 1796 - 1797

Austria, being one of the states strongly opposing the French Revolution, prompted the Directory to weaken it militarily through a direct war and attrition strategy. To achieve this, they dispatched a ragtag army led by General Napoleon Bonaparte to Italy.

The results achieved by the Army of Italy were astounding, allowing Napoleon to swiftly approach the gates of Vienna. Considering his military objectives fulfilled and needing to depart for the anti-British campaign in Egypt, Napoleon entered into the Treaty of Campoformio with Austria. Under this treaty, Austria would cede Lombardy to France but would be granted the Venetian territory.

150th ANNIVERSARY-DEATH NAPOLEON BONAPARTE



AIRMAIL
3
RIYALS

المنامة
ملحقته إمارة عجمان
MANAMA
DEPENDENCY OF AJMAN

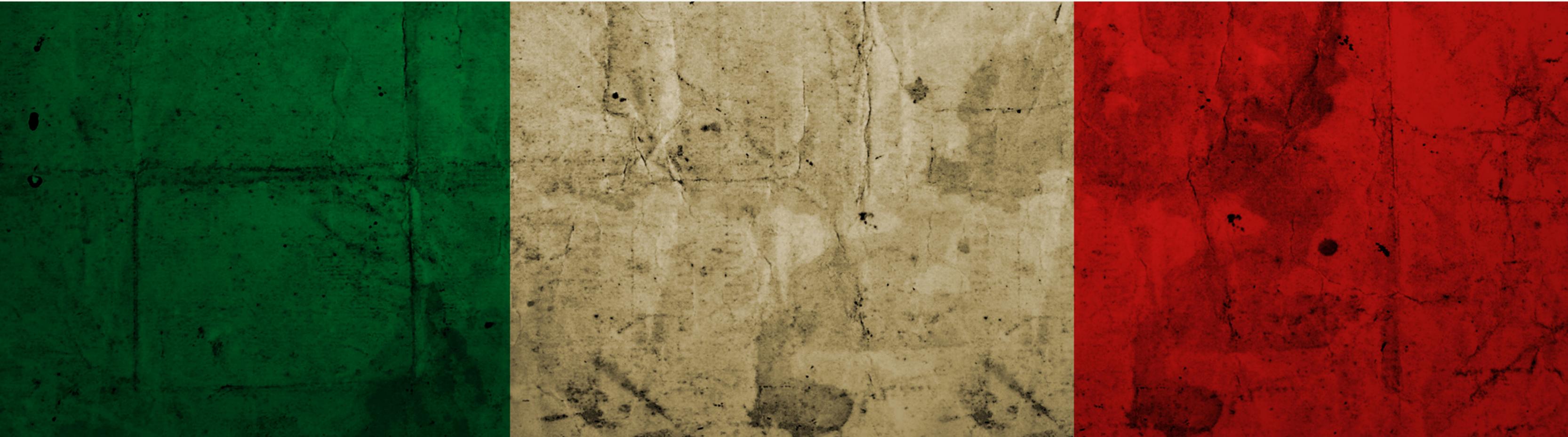
بيريديجوي
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ريالات

THE NAPOLEONIC RULE IN ITALY FOLLOWS TWO MAIN PHASES:

1. THE REVOLUTIONARY
GENERAL'S ERA OF
REVOLUTION (1796-
1797)
2. THE ERA OF EMPEROR
NAPOLEON (1800 -
1814)

A PARADOXICAL EXPERIENCE

Following the defeat, all the Italian states directly or indirectly subjected to Austrian rule rose in rebellion, creating the "Sister Republics." Among these, the Cispadane Republic (largely comprising Lombardy and Emilia Romagna) established a Constitution and formed a unified army. They adopted the TRICOLOR as their political symbol for the first time.





Napoleon aimed to bring the ideals of the Revolution to Italy. Paradoxically, through warfare, the seeds of freedom and national identity began to sprout, aligning with the notion that a people should correspond to a state. Due to these reasons, Napoleon was seen as a "liberator." However, this perception was dampened by both the signing of the Treaty of Campoformio and the confiscation of Italian artworks, which led to profound disappointment. Ugo Foscolo, in his "Last Letters of Jacopo Ortis," would become the voice of this bitter sentiment.



THE TREATY OF CAMPOFORMIO

THE EUROPEAN STATES TOOK ADVANTAGE OF NAPOLEON'S DEFEAT IN THE EGYPTIAN CAMPAIGN TO RECLAIM ITALY. AFTER EXECUTING A COUP, NAPOLEON BECAME THE FIRST CONSUL AND LATER EMPEROR. HE RETURNED TO ITALY AND ESTABLISHED THE KINGDOM OF ITALY, ASSIGNING GOVERNANCE OF VARIOUS STATES TO HIS RELATIVES AND DECLARING HIMSELF THE RULER OF THE ENTIRE ITALY.



Not everyone welcomed the new situation:

1. New taxes were introduced to fund military expenses.
2. The Continental Blockade hindered Italian exports to England.
3. Mandatory conscription separated young men from families and work.
4. Imperial censorship led to intellectual conformity.

However:

1. Reforms eradicated feudal privileges and advanced civil rights.
2. Religious freedom, equal inheritance for children, and communal property in marriages were promoted.
3. A new bourgeoisie emerged.
4. An efficient bureaucracy was established.

NAPOLEON AS EMPEROR 1800 - 1814

NAPOLEON'S FORESIGHT

Napoleon, in organizing Italy, displayed an exceptionally modern vision. He knew how to both appreciate and respect the regional differences by establishing departments, ensuring homogeneity within the kingdom through the implementation of Codes (civil and penal), Courts of Cassation, and administrative structures.



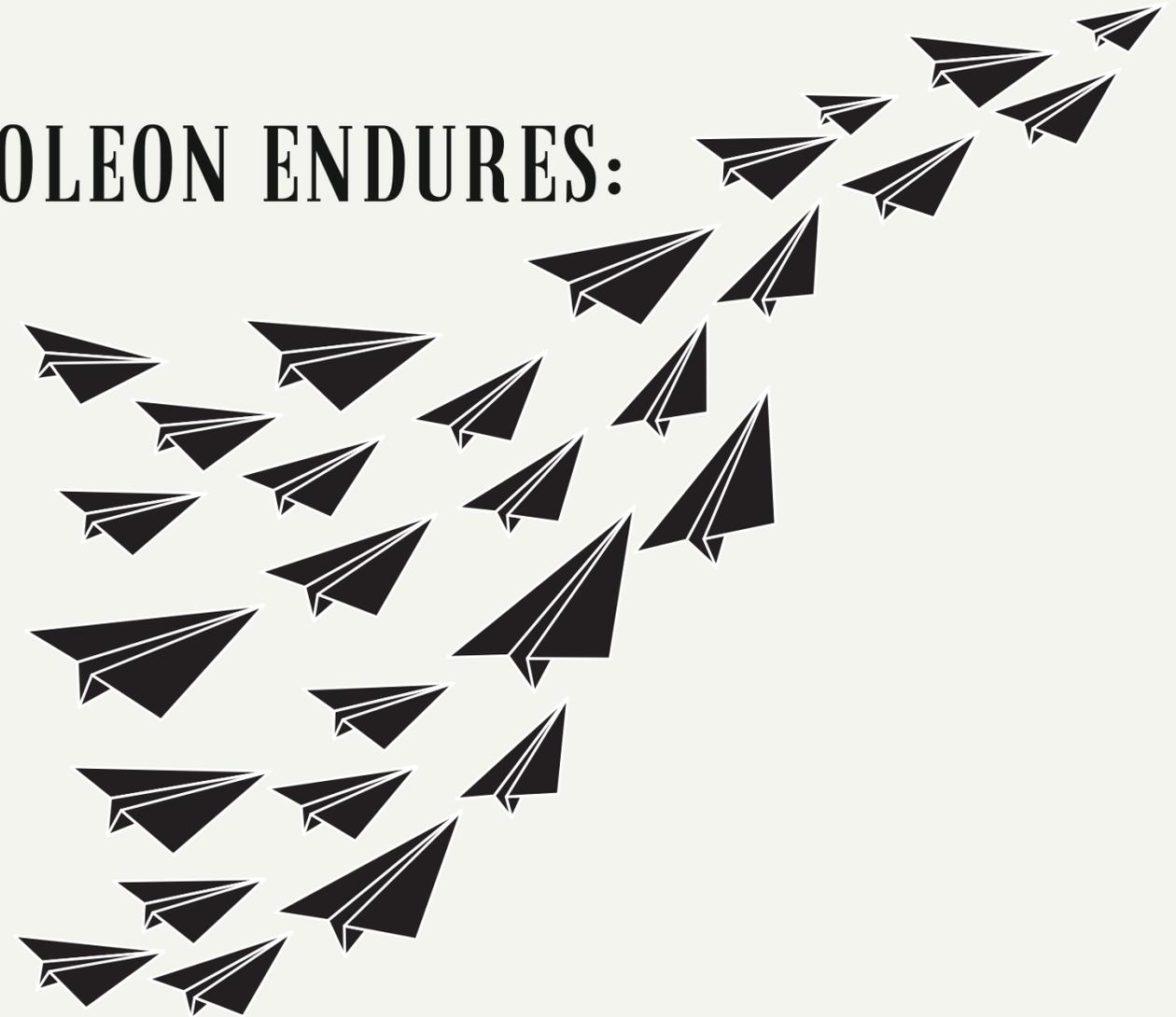
NAPOLEON'S CORONATION AS EMPEROR - NOTRE DAME - PARIS 1804

THE NAPOLEONIC EMPIRE COLLAPSES, AND THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA RESTORES THE OLD DYNASTIES TO THEIR THRONES. REFORMS, LIBERAL LAWS, AND CONSTITUTIONS ARE ABOLISHED.



INDEED, THE INFRASTRUCTURE BUILT BY NAPOLEON ENDURES:

- 1. PREFECTURES,**
- 2. SOCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS,**
- 3. HOSPITALS,**
- 4. ORPHANAGES,**
- 5. SHELTERS,**
- 6. PUBLIC AND SECULAR EDUCATION.**

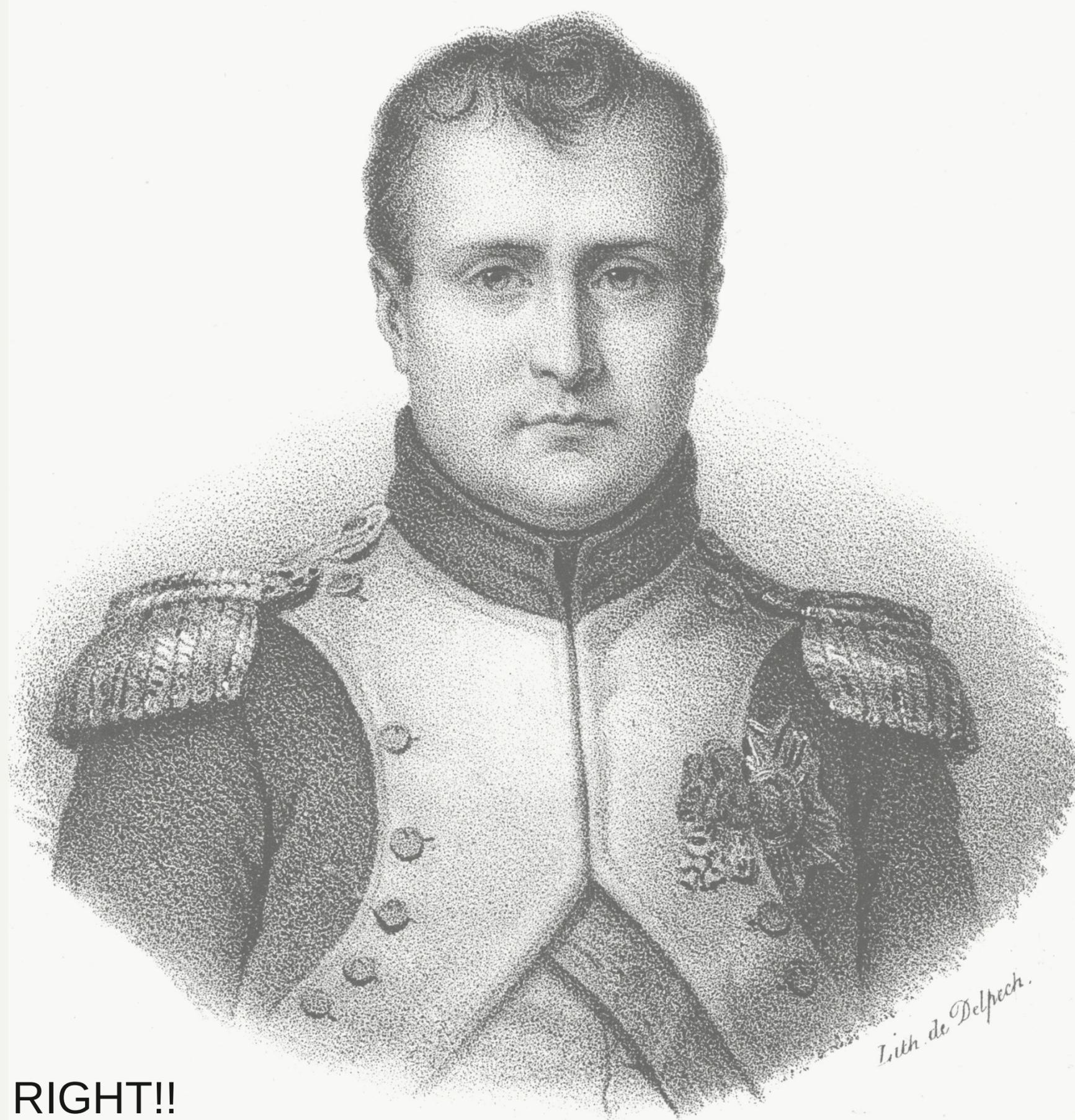


**WITH IMPROVED ROADS, PEOPLE AND IDEAS OF FREEDOM AND
INDEPENDENCE BROUGHT BY NAPOLEON CIRCULATED MORE SWIFTLY.**

IN THE SAINT HELENA
MEMORIAL, NAPOLEON
WROTE: "AS FOR THE
ITALIANS, I HAVE
IMPLANTED PRINCIPLES IN
THEM WHICH WILL NEVER
BE UPROOTED, THEY WILL
ALWAYS FERMENT..."

 [CLICK HERE 4 MORE](#)

...INDEED, HE WAS RIGHT!!



3



**THE MOVEMENTS OF
1820-1830 AND
SECRET SOCIETIES**

JUST AS ANTICIPATED BY NAPOLEON, BOURGEOIS IDEAS (ENLIGHTENMENT, LIBERAL, CONSTITUTIONAL) CONTINUED TO CIRCULATE, ALBEIT IN CLANDESTINE FORM, AND FUELED REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS THROUGHOUT EUROPE – PARTICULARLY IN ITALY – DURING THE 1820 AND 1830 UPRISINGS. THE DEMANDS WERE:

1. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CONSTITUTION ENSURING CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS.
2. THE LIBERATION FROM INTERFERENCE BY FOREIGN NATIONS.

WHILE THE INITIAL REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS DID NOT SUCCEED, THEY CREATED THE CONDITIONS THAT EVENTUALLY LED TO THE EVENTS OF 1848...

SECRET SOCIETIES

Bourgeois ideas could only find expression in secrecy, leading to the proliferation of secret societies bearing various names. In Italy, the conspiratorial network comprised the Carbonari, the Sublime Perfect Masters (led by Filippo Buonarroti), and the Italian Federation (led by Federico Confalonieri), which included intellectuals fostering "Il Conciliatore," the most significant periodical of Italian Romanticism.

The Carbonari, originating in the southern part of the country during the French domination, were a strictly conspiratorial secret organization. During the restoration years, they established sections not only in the Kingdom of Naples but also in the Papal States, Piedmont, Tuscany, Parma, Modena, and Lombardy-Venetia. Members of this organization were largely drawn from the bourgeoisie, liberal nobility, and progressive intellectuals. The weak points of the Carbonari lay in their insular organization, lack of strong ties with the wider populace, and limited understanding of agrarian issues.



SILVIO PELLICO



Silvio Pellico was an Italian patriot who collaborated with the political-literary magazine "Il Conciliatore." In this publication, he stated his intention to "shake Italy from its worst danger: the habit of not thinking! We aim to reconcile, and we do reconcile, not the loyal with the false, but all sincere lovers of truth!" In 1820, he joined a Carbonari lodge in Milan thanks to Pietro Maroncelli. Amidst the context of the 1820 uprisings, their conspiracy was uncovered, leading to a trial. Pellico, along with Maroncelli, was initially sentenced to death, which was later commuted to fifteen years of imprisonment in the Spielberg fortress.

His imprisonment lasted until 1830, with the remission of the final years of his sentence. Upon returning to Turin, Pellico published "Le mie prigioni" (My Prisons) in 1832. This book, one of the most renowned texts of the Italian Risorgimento, achieved widespread success across Europe. The author's depiction of his legal predicaments and his prolonged, harsh incarceration swiftly turned into an uncompromising indictment against Austria and its repressive system.



4



**THE WARS OF
INDEPENDENCE**

The First War of Independence



- 1. France
- 2. Germany
- 3. Prussia
- 4. Austria
- 5. Italy

The main ones were:

1848 was a year of uprisings and revolutions that swept across all of Europe.

In Italy, the first cities were

Austria managed to reconquer the insurgent Lombard cities.

Charles Albert requested an ARMISTICE (of SALASCO), and after another unsuccessful attempt (defeat at Novara), he signed the PEACE OF MILAN and ABDICATED in favor of VICTOR EMMANUEL II.



The Austrians, led by General Radetzky, managed to defeat Charles Albert at Custoza.

Soon after, Pope Pius IX recalled his troops, and other monarchs followed suit, leaving only Charles Albert.

Initial victories of the Piedmontese.



On March 23, 1848, Charles Albert intervened with his troops, crossed the Ticino River, giving rise to the FIRST ITALIAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE.

Initially, other states supported the war by aligning themselves with Charles Albert.

Meanwhile, patriot troops were arriving from all over Italy.



VENICE: which proclaimed itself a republic MILAN: in the "Five Days" drove out Austrian troops, establishing a PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT



After initial hesitation, Charles Albert intervened alongside Lombardy-Venetia in the war against Austria.

 [CLICK HERE 4 MORE](#)





REFLECTIONS

L

The First War of Independence ended in defeat, but it created the necessary conditions for the path towards Unification. It became clear to all that only the House of Savoy could realize the nation's dream because:

1. Charles Albert was the first monarch to declare war against the Austrians and had his troops carry the tricolor flag.
2. Other states, which initially sent troops to support the initiative, withdrew their support soon after. Despite this, Charles Albert continued the war, igniting the passion of patriots.
3. His successor, Victor Emmanuel II, unlike other monarchs, did not abolish the Albertine Statute. The Kingdom of Sardinia remained the only liberal state on the peninsula.

Camillo Benso, Count of Cavour, was the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Sardinia.

 [CLICK HERE 4 MORE](#)

Who was he?

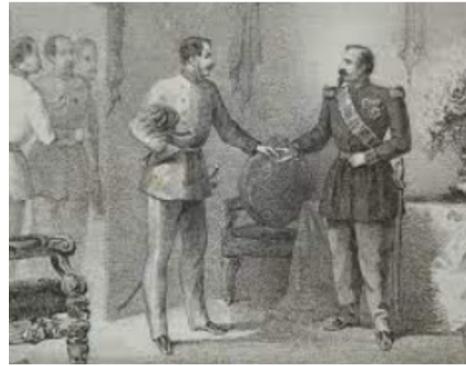
He implemented many reforms to modernize the Kingdom of Piedmont.

The Second War of Independence

Under the leadership of Cavour



Napoleon III, fearing that Piedmont would become too strong, decides to abandon the war and sign the ARMISTICE OF VILLAGRANCA



Some Italian kingdoms (Parma, Modena, Romagna) request annexation to the Kingdom of Sardinia

When the CRIMEAN WAR (between Russia and Turkey) erupted, he intervened militarily to participate in the peace conference (Congress of Paris) and present the Italian situation to other nations.

Thanks to the alliance with France, the Piedmontese win at Magenta, Solferino, and San Martino

The war ends and: Lombardy comes under Piedmontese control, while Veneto remains under Austria. Cavour has to cede Nice and Savoy

Plombières Agreement

Cavour rejects Austria's ultimatum demanding the disbandment of the amassed army at the border, and the SECOND WAR OF INDEPENDENCE erupts

Through plebiscites, Tuscany, Emilia, and Romagna request annexation to Piedmont

In 1858, Cavour secretly met with Napoleon III and formed an agreement: if Austria were to initiate an attack against Piedmont, France would intervene on the side of the Piedmontese.

Cavour provokes Austria by deploying the Hunters of the Alps along the border.





EXPEDITION OF THE THOUSAND



With the Second War of Independence and the annexations confirmed by plebiscites, Northern Italy had achieved unity, leaving only the southern regions under the rule of the Pope and the Bourbons.

Garibaldi would attempt to complete the unification: he gathered 1,000 volunteers and set sail from Liguria to Sicily. He was warmly received by the southern population, who embraced the cause and expelled the Bourbon rulers.

The Garibaldian expedition received informal support from the Kingdom of Sardinia, but they were prepared to intervene if Garibaldi aimed to march further into the Papal State. The intervention of France to protect the Pope could have jeopardized the emerging Italy.

On October 26, 1860, Garibaldi met Vittorio Emanuele II in Teano and handed over the conquered territories.

THIRD WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

 [CLICK HERE 4 MORE](#)

The Veneto, Trentino, and Lazio were still missing

to complete the unification of Italy

11 1870

The Kingdom of Italy found an ally in Prussia

June 1866

The Roman Question arises

The Franco-Prussian War breaks out

Prussia attacks Austria, and Italy aligns itself alongside it

Rome was considered the natural capital of the Kingdom of Italy, but the Pope was not willing to cede it

Without the pressure from France, the Garibaldi manage to take Rome

In 1866, Italy and Prussia signed a treaty that established their alliance in the war against Austria

THE THIRD WAR OF INDEPENDENCE BEGINS

Italy signs a treaty with France renouncing all claims on Rome: Florence is established as the capital

In 1871, ROME was proclaimed the CAPITAL OF ITALY

In case of victory, Italy would obtain Veneto

The Italian army was defeated at Custoza and later lost the naval battle of Lissa

The Garibaldi attempt to forcefully seize Rome, but they were defeated at Aspromonte and Mentana

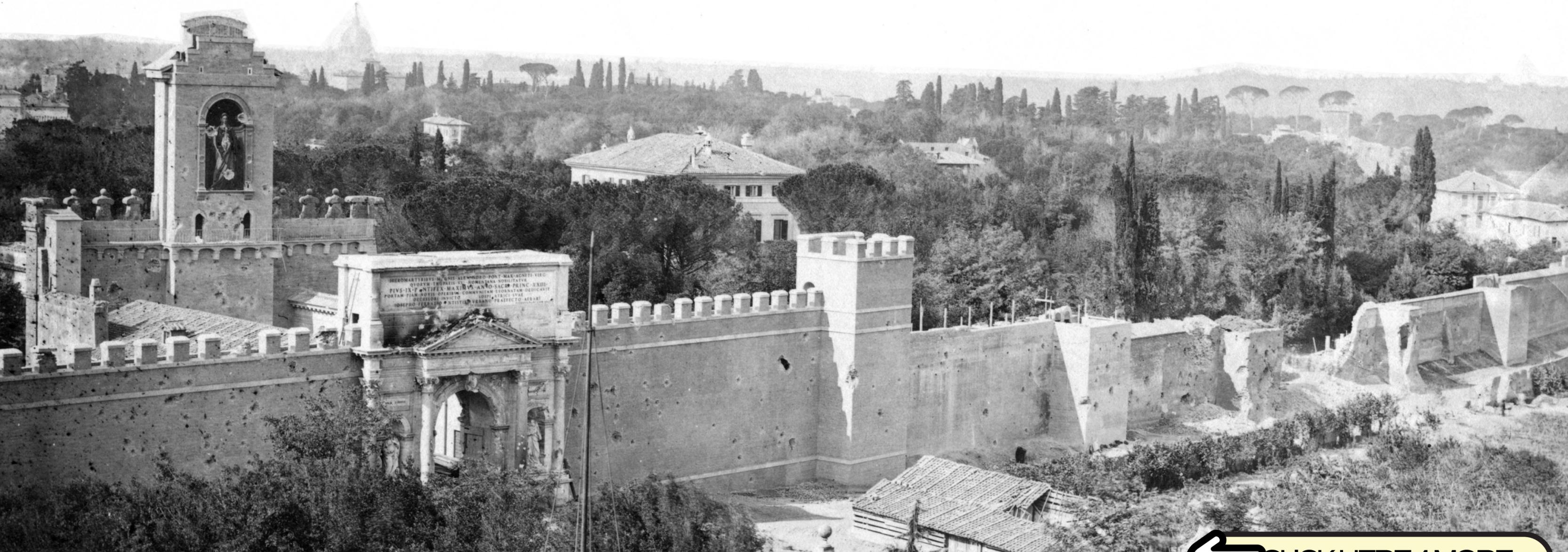


I obey...

The only Italian victory was at Bezzecca with Garibaldi, who received the order to withdraw

Prussia succeeded in winning at Sadowa and ceded Veneto to Italy





THE BREACH OF PORTA PIA

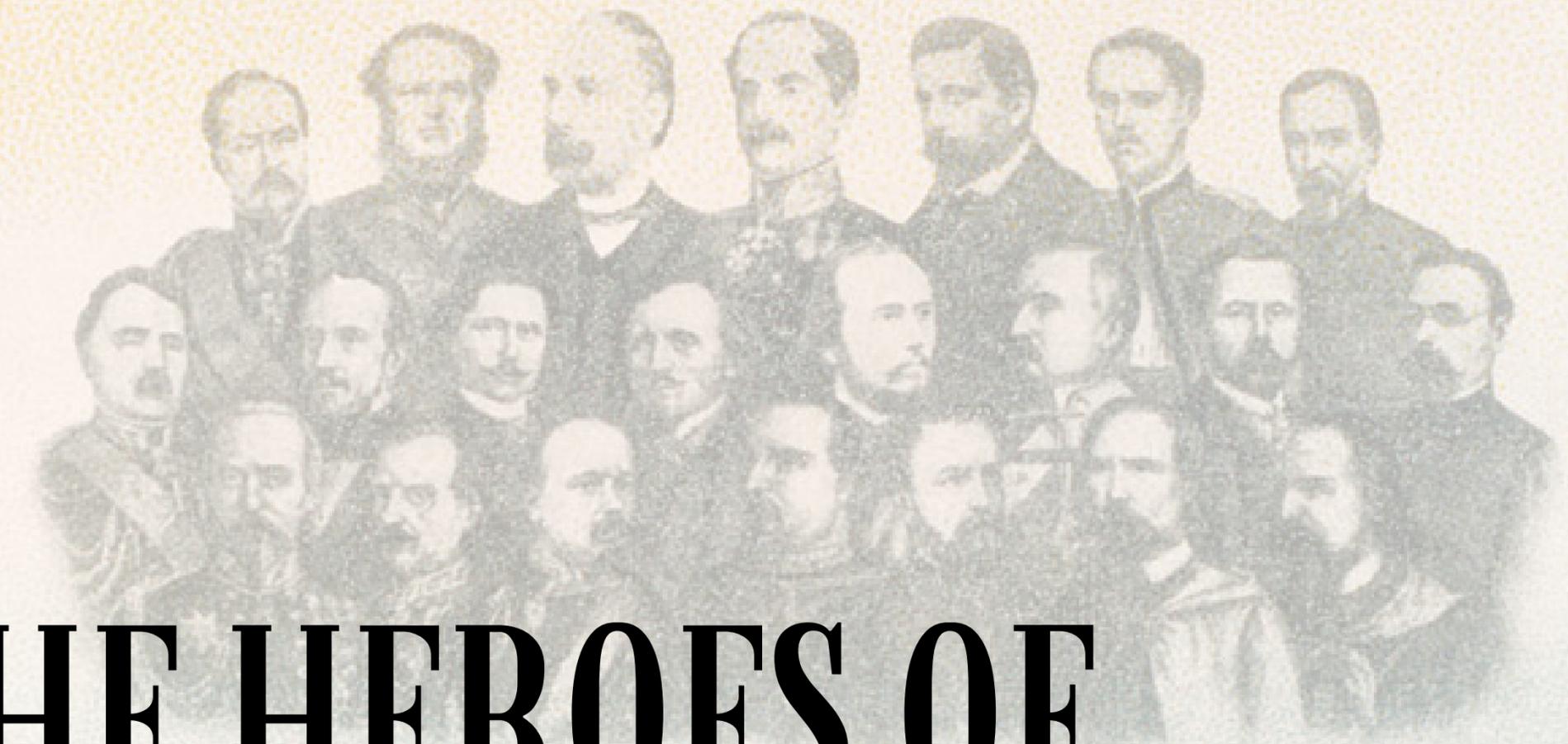


With the breach of Porta Pia, the Bersaglieri took Lazio and entered Rome: Italy was complete. To reach its present territorial extension, the Trentino-Alto Adige and Friuli Venezia Giulia were still missing... but that's another story!

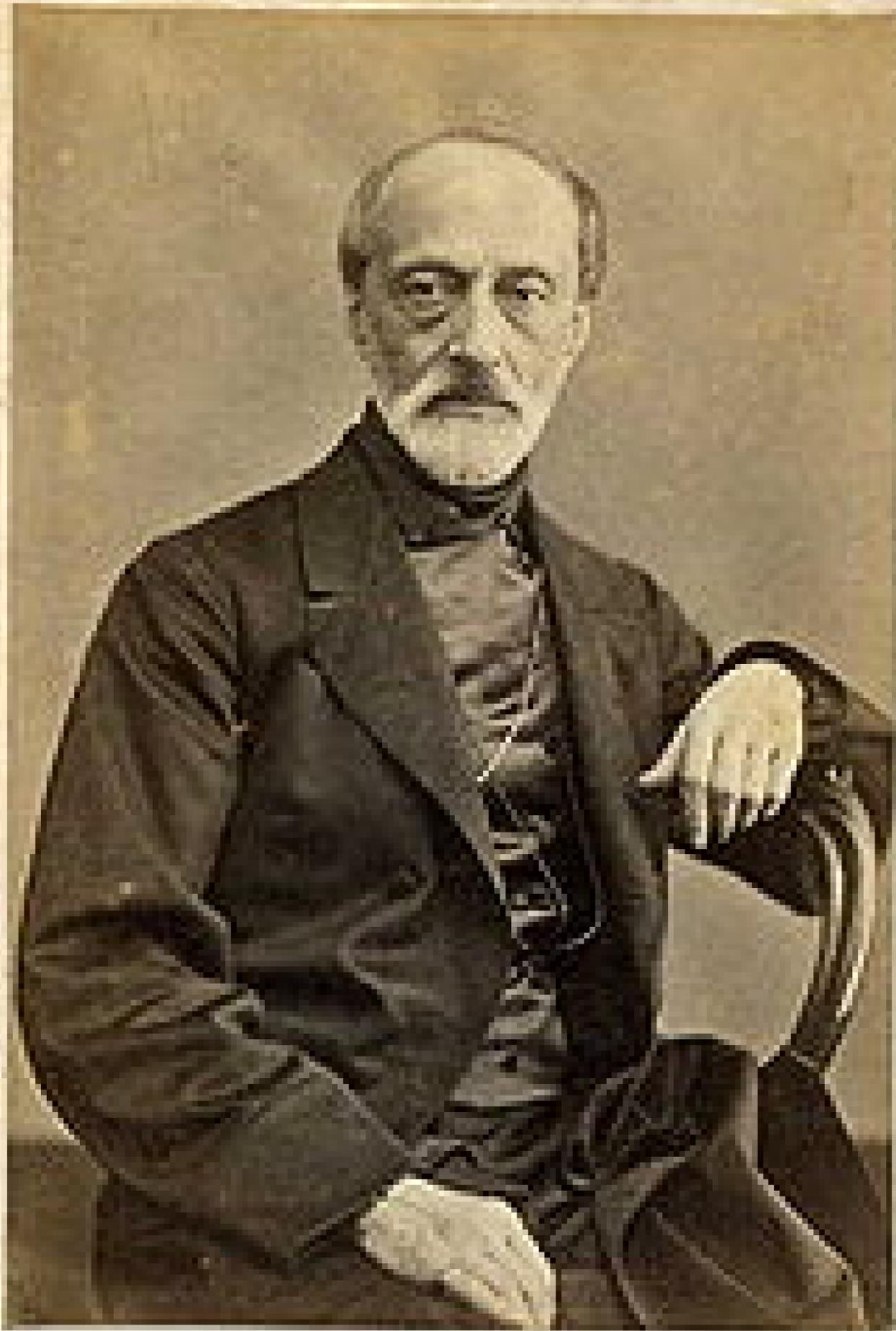
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THE HEROES OF THE RISORGIMENTO



GIUSEPPE MAZZINI



Giuseppe Mazzini was one of the symbols of the Italian Risorgimento and dedicated his entire life to fighting for a united and republican Italy. With his ideas and political actions, he embodied the need for freedom and justice of his time. As a member of the Carbonari, his conspiratorial activities forced him into exile in Marseille, where he organized the Young Italy movement in 1831, with the aim of uniting the Italian states into a single republic. After the failure of the 1848-49 uprisings, he spent most of his life in exile between France and Switzerland, distancing himself from Italian nationalists who now saw the King of Sardinia and Cavour as the leaders of the unification movement. Often considered a major figure of defeat in the Risorgimento, he was actually its most influential theorist. His legacy and propaganda efforts managed to ignite and keep alive the enthusiasm for a united Italy more than anyone else.

CARLO ALBERTO



Carlo Alberto of Savoy-Carignano, nicknamed "King Hesitate" due to his apparent indecision, ascended the throne in 1831 after the death of Carlo Felice (the last direct descendant of the House of Savoy). The liberal ideas that had inspired his youth led, in 1848, to both the granting of a Constitution (the Albertine Statute) and the Kingdom of Sardinia's entry into the war against Austria in support of the uprisings in Milan and Venice.

Carlo Alberto's indecision can be understood considering the explosiveness of the period in question: it's not for nothing that "1848 happened," and phrases like "fare un 48" (to do a '48) are still common and frequent idioms that highlight the exceptional nature of the events, the extreme chaos, and disorder that characterized the years from 1820 to 1848. Beyond criticisms, Carlo Alberto deserves recognition for the courage he showed in initiating the process of Italian unification.

GARIBALDI



Giuseppe Garibaldi was undoubtedly one of the central figures of Italian unification. His life is truly remarkable: a staunch defender of freedom, he supported all peoples striving for it, leveraging his remarkable military leadership skills. During his "downtime," he earned a living as a tutor (fluent in French, Italian, English, Spanish, and Portuguese), a commander of long-haul sailing vessels, an importer of spaghetti to Brazil, and a factory worker making candles.

He was known and admired worldwide.

His trip to England in 1864 is exemplary: an English shipowner provided a steamship, a huge crowd welcomed him in Southampton, a special train with the Italian flag took him to London, where 500,000 people were there to greet him!

While Garibaldi is celebrated as a hero abroad, the Savoy kings viewed him with extreme apprehension, considering him a dangerous "scoundrel," a revolutionary who could truly threaten the stability of various monarchs, not just rhetorically.

This apprehension was the reason why, during the First War of Independence in 1848, Carlo Alberto rejected his assistance. However, King Vittorio Emanuele II and Cavour had a more forward-looking perspective; they appointed Garibaldi as a general in the army but maintained a watchful eye on him, ready to intervene drastically if the situation demanded it.

Contrarily, Garibaldi, a man of action and practical sensibility, understood that the only way to achieve Italian unification was to support the House of Savoy.

For this reason, he pledged full loyalty to the king, setting aside his utopian ideals for a concrete achievable goal.

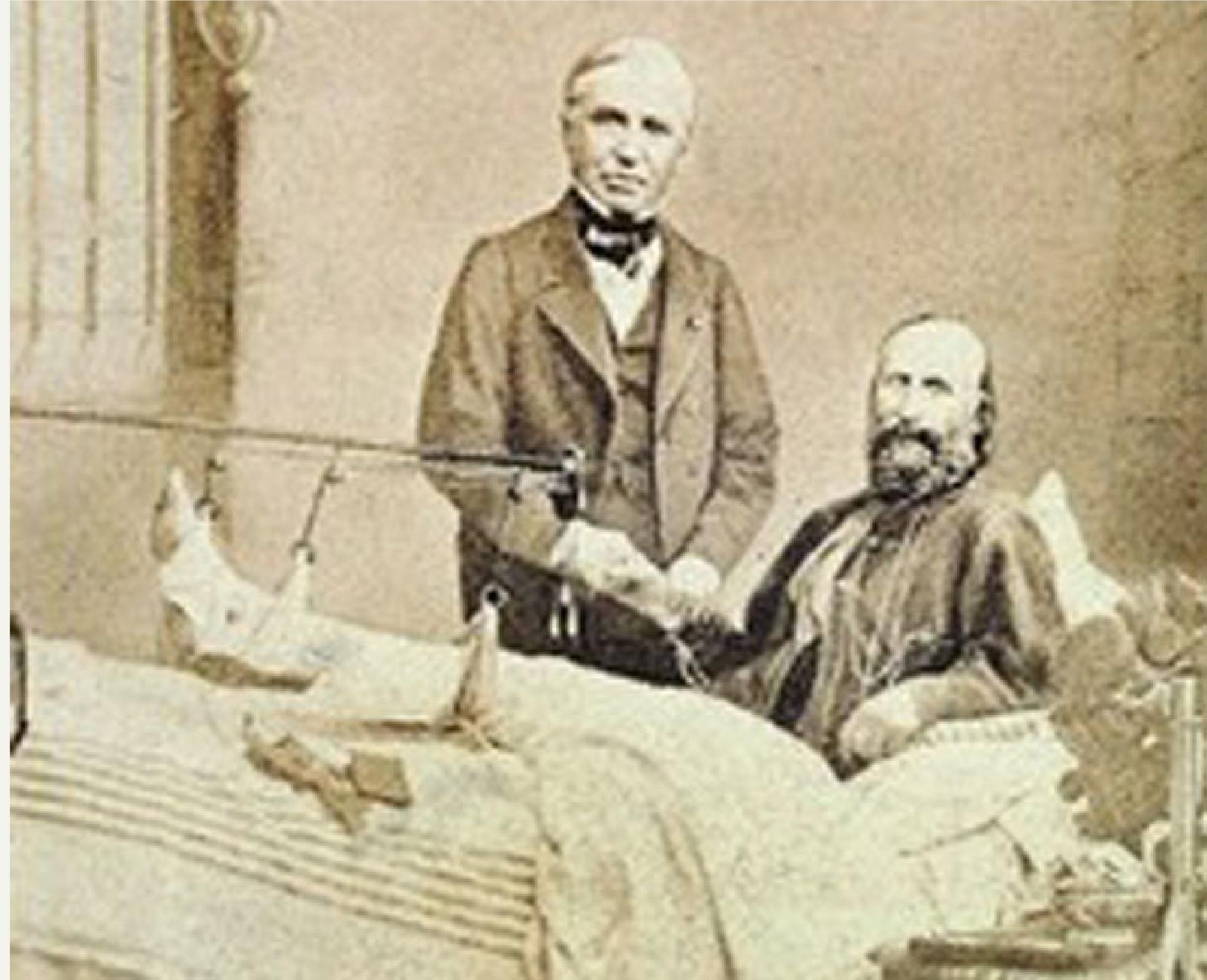


He demonstrated his loyalty by delivering the liberated Southern Italy from the Bourbon dynasty to King Vittorio Emanuele II on October 26, 1860, in Teano, in what became known as the "Expedition of the Thousand."



On March 17, 1861, the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy was made, but to complete its unification, some territories were still missing, particularly the Lazio region, which was historically linked to the temporal possessions of the Pope and protected by the French Emperor.

Disregarding the European political dynamics, Garibaldi attempted to include Lazio in Italy and was stopped by the Piedmontese army at Aspromonte in 1862 and by the French army at Mentana in 1867. Garibaldi himself was wounded in the Aspromonte clash. Despite these setbacks, he once again aligned with the House of Savoy in the Third War of Independence in 1866.



CAVOUR



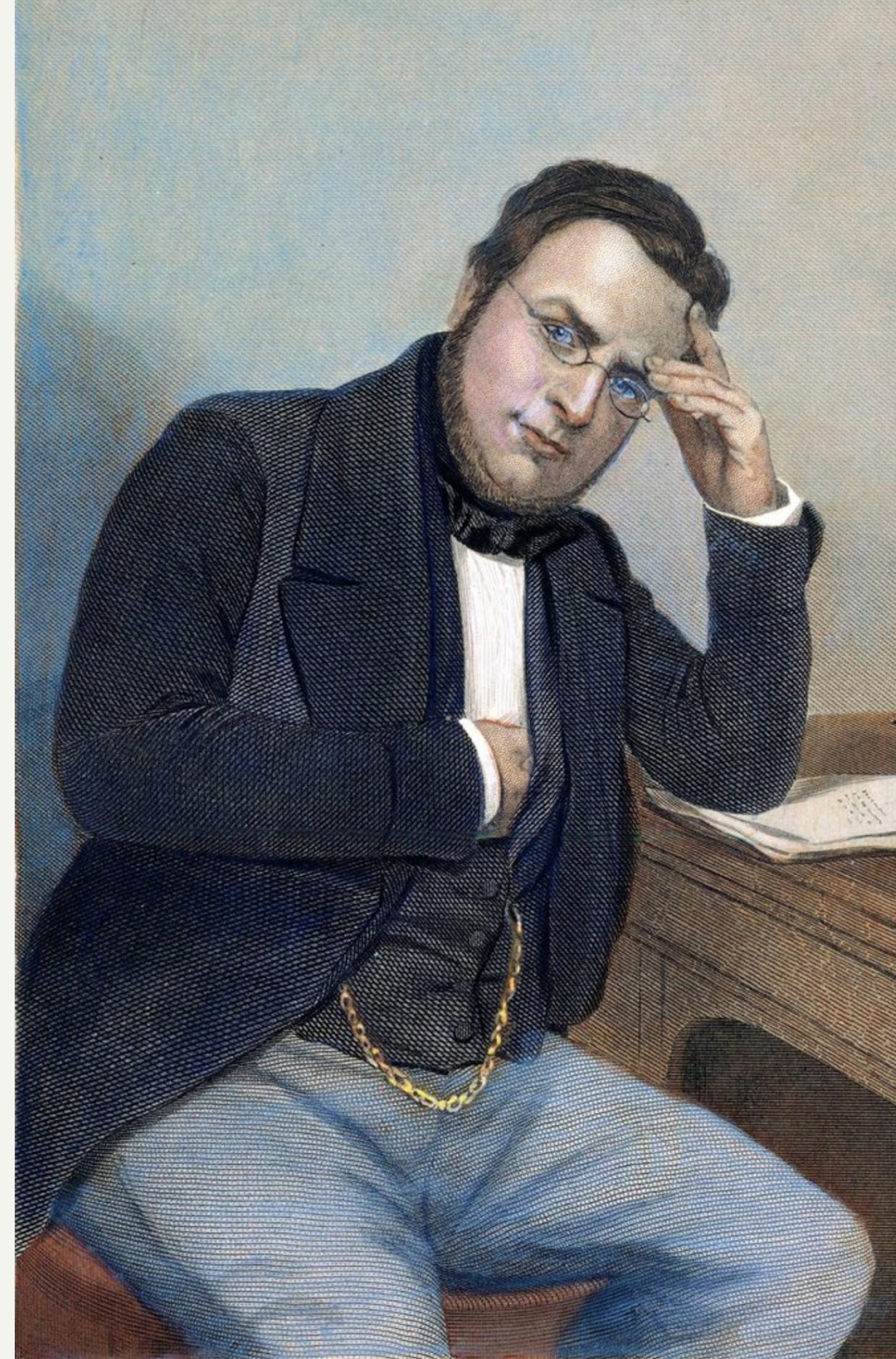
Machiavelli would have likely admired the shrewdness of the actions taken by Camillo Benso, Count of Cavour, who is considered by all as the "architect" behind the strategies that led to the unification of Italy. Cavour pursued his ideas with determination and without compromise. The Italy he envisioned and sought was to be a liberal monarchy, with a king alongside a Parliament legitimized by a Constitution that ensured equal liberties for all individuals. He aimed for a secular and modern Italy at the forefront of economic and agricultural policies, supported by advanced infrastructure.

The second son of the Marquess of Cavour, he became fascinated by the economic policies of England and sought to bring that experience to the Kingdom of Sardinia, initially as Minister of Agriculture and Economy, and later as Prime Minister. Between the late 1830s and the mid-1840s, he invested in the construction of railways, canals, theorized the introduction of steamships, and promoted the use of chemical fertilizers in agriculture.

Advocating the principle of "laissez-faire," Cavour was nevertheless willing to justify state intervention whenever private initiative was unable to adequately address what he deemed necessary for rapid economic development. By 1860, Piedmont had established 800 kilometers of railways and a fleet that saw the strengthening of the port base in La Spezia.

The reduction of customs duties was accompanied by the signing of bilateral trade treaties with major European powers.

The secularization of the state was pursued through the Saccardi Laws, approved by the Azeglio government in 1850 and encouraged by Cavour. These laws aimed to abolish ecclesiastical courts, the right of asylum in churches for criminals, and the reduction of religious holidays to promote increased productivity.





It was indeed Cavour who, in 1855, sought and obtained the dispatch of approximately 18,000 soldiers to Crimea to support France and England in their conflict against Russia. This move allowed him to participate in the final stages of the war and represent the Kingdom of Sardinia at the Congress of Paris in 1856. Cavour used this opportunity to bring the Italian situation to the attention of the international community.



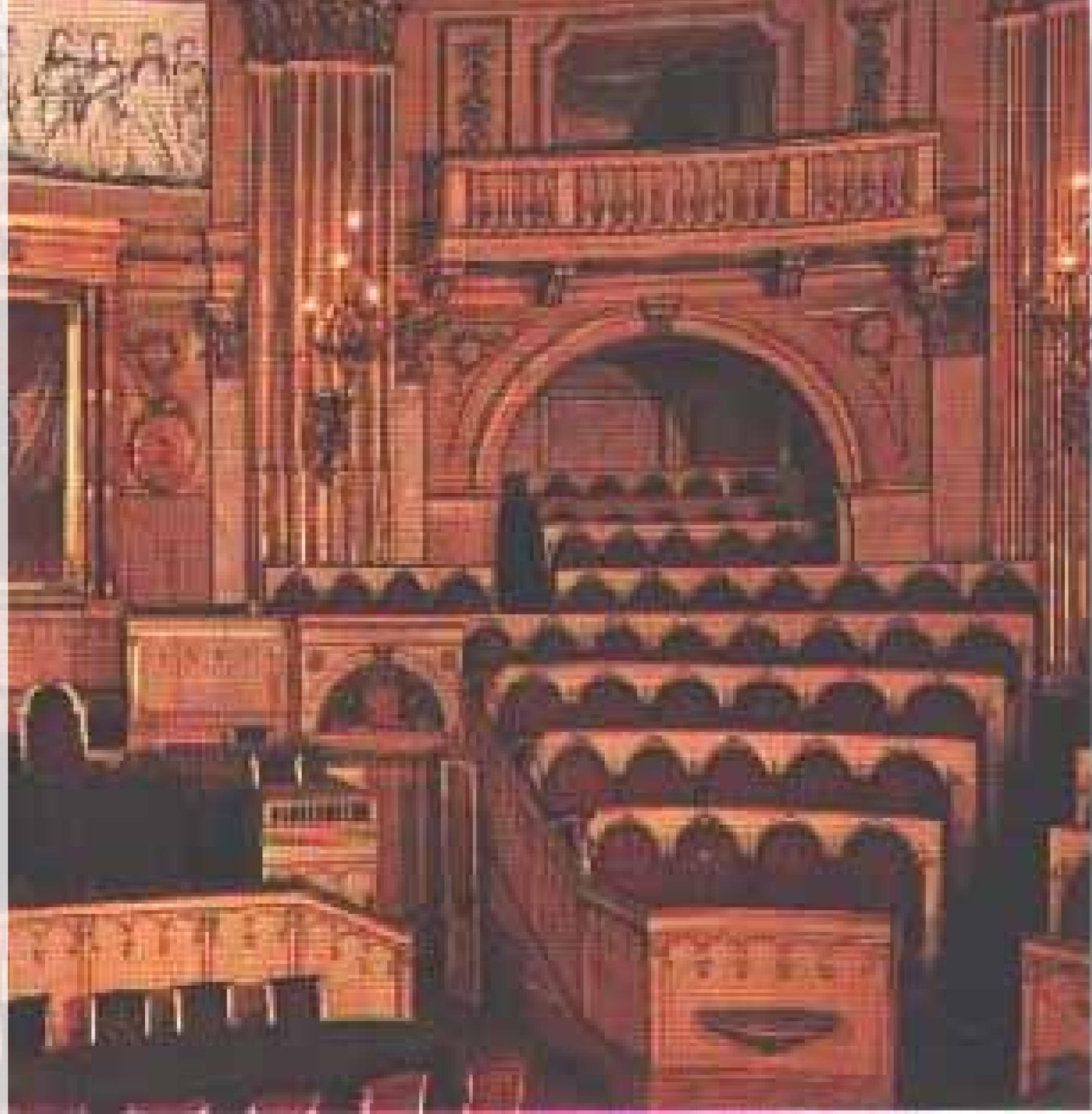
In July 1858, at the Plombières meeting, Cavour (assisted by Countess di Castiglione) managed to persuade Napoleon III to sign an anti-Austrian alliance, laying the foundation for the future territorial arrangement of Italy. According to this alliance, if Austria were to attack the Kingdom of Sardinia, France would intervene in its defense. Upon returning to Turin, Cavour provoked the Habsburg Empire, which took the bait and declared war. This marked the beginning of the Second War of Independence, the decisive phase in Italy's struggle for unification.



Cavour did not hinder the mission of Garibaldi's Thousand in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies; he was prepared to intervene in case of any issues.

He facilitated the mission by providing supplies of arms, men, and financial support all the way to Naples. After the plebiscites and the annexation of the Kingdom of Sardinia, the Marche, and Umbria, Cavour worked to legally transform the Kingdom of Sardinia into the Kingdom of Italy, culminating in the coronation of Vittorio Emanuele II on March 17, 1861.

In his speech on March 25 as the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Italy, Cavour highlighted the need to make Rome the capital of the new kingdom, but "without endangering the fate of Italy": "I have said, and I affirm once again, that Rome, Rome alone must be the capital of Italy [...] We must go to Rome, but under two conditions. We must go there in agreement with France; furthermore, without the union of this city with the rest of Italy being interpreted by the vast majority of Catholics in Italy and outside of Italy as a signal of the Church's servitude. We must, that is, go to Rome without true independence of the Pontiff being diminished. We must go to Rome without the civil authority extending its power to the spiritual realm." Cavour, whose health was already fragile, the diplomatic architect of the "miracle" of Italian unification, passed away just three months later, at the age of 51, on June 6, 1861.



VITTORIO EMANUELE II



Vittorio Emanuele II earned the nickname "Re Galantuomo" (Honest King) for maintaining the Statuto Albertino after the First War of Independence. He did not shy away from contributing to the cause of freedom and the nation's independence, fighting on the battlefield and making the right choices whenever circumstances demanded. His relationship with Cavour was tumultuous: the Prime Minister pressured the king and offered him "advice," expecting Vittorio Emanuele II to obediently follow. Despite their clashes, the monarch managed to handle the impulsiveness of his Prime Minister and the exuberance of Garibaldi to achieve a common goal: the unification of Italy.

GIUSEPPE VERDI

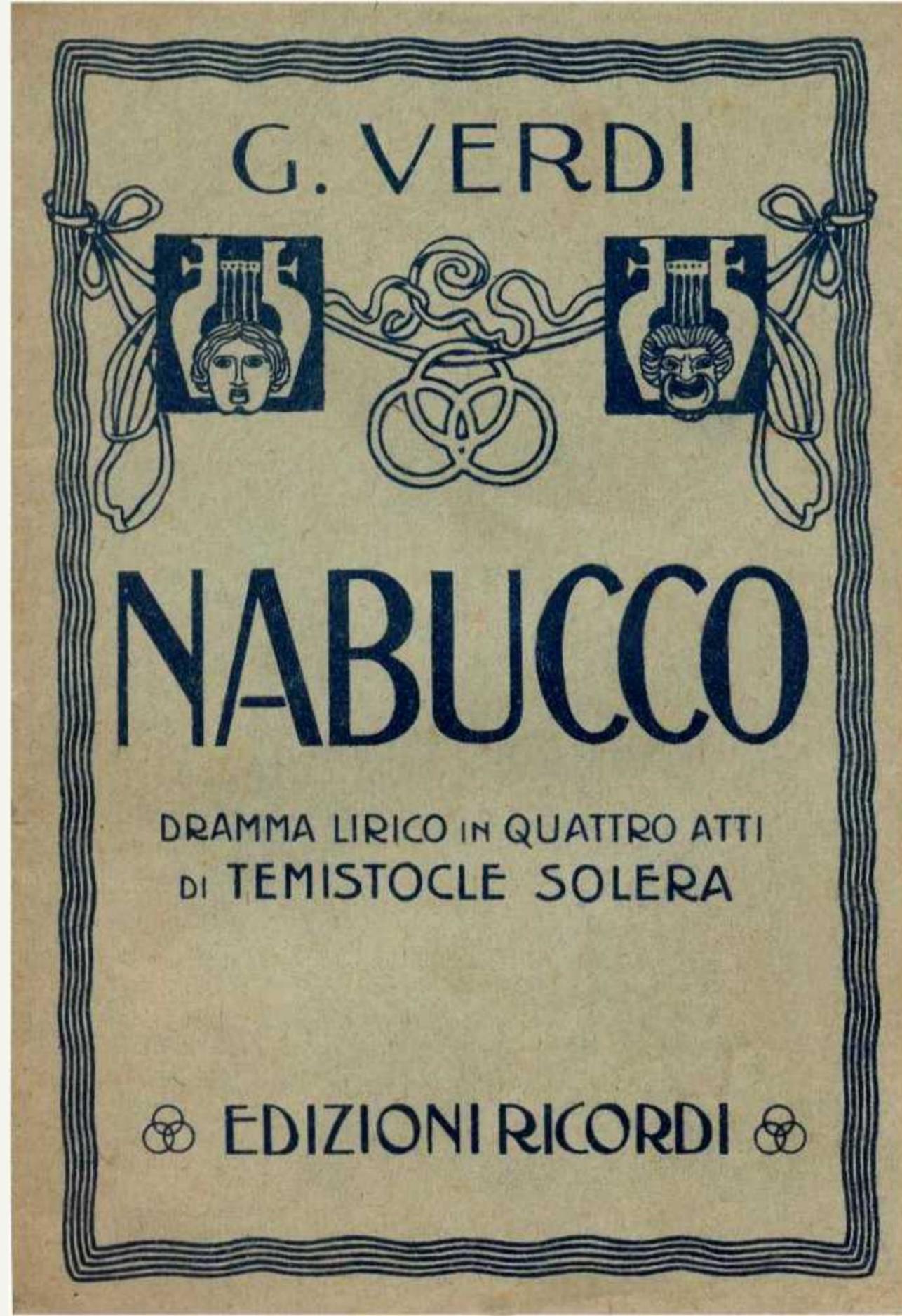


Giuseppe Verdi is not only the father of Italian opera but also a direct protagonist of the Risorgimento. His historical melodramas that tell the stories of oppressed people inspired our patriots in the struggle for the unification of Italy. Verdi put into practice the ideas of Mazzini, who saw melodrama as a tool for propaganda to liberate nations and spread libertarian ideals. In 1842, he staged "Nabucco," and the chorus "Va pensiero," which invoked the liberation of the Jews from the Babylonians, was interpreted as a metaphor for the condition of Italians oppressed by the Austrians. "O mia patria sì bella e perduta" ("O my country, so beautiful and lost") became a slogan, and people sang it as a protest anthem against foreign domination.

ORCHESTRA DIRETTA DA RICCARDO MUTI



PAVAROTTI & ZUCCHERO



MOTI 1848

LA BATTAGLIA DI LEGNANO

Tragedia lirica

IN QUATTRO ATTI

DI

SALVATORE GAMMARANO

Posta in Musica

DA GIUSEPPE VERDI

RAPPRESENTATA PER LA PRIMA VOLTA

NEL TEATRO ARGENTINA

IL CARNEVALE 1848 AL 1849.

- PARTE I. EGLI VIVE!
II. BARBAROSSA.
III. L'INFAMIA.
IV. MORIRE PER LA PATRIA.



ROMA 1849.

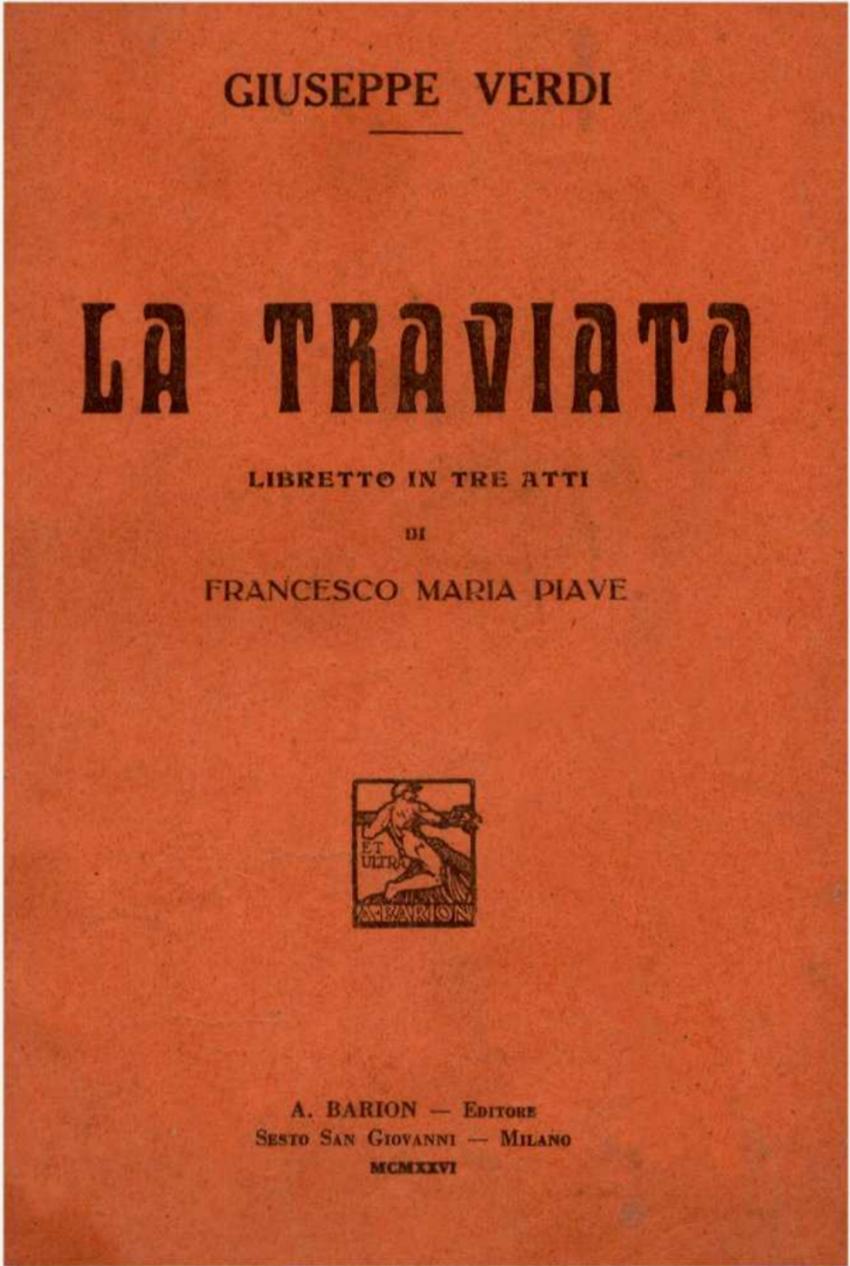
TIPOGRAFIA DI CLEMENTE PUCCINELLI
Via Lata al Collegio Romano N. 211.

IN JANUARY 1849, AMIDST THE REVOLUTIONARY UPHEAVALS IN ROME, VERDI STAGED "LA BATTAGLIA DI LEGNANO."

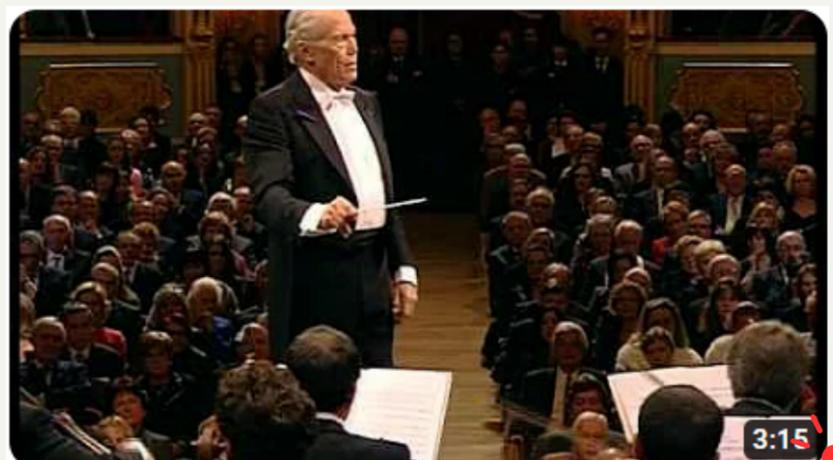
The story of Milan in 1176, threatened by the troops of Frederick Barbarossa, echoes the contemporary reality, and everyone hopes for a new defeat of the foreign oppressor.



In the following years, Verdi stages the trilogy: **Rigoletto** **Il Trovatore** **(The Troubadour)** **La Traviata**



LA DONNA E MOBILE



CHI DEL GITANO I GIORNI ABBELLA



LIBIAMO NE' LIETI CALICI

Edizioni  Ricordi

I

Vespri Siciliani

OPERA IN CINQUE ATTI DI G. SCRIBE E C. DUVYHIER

MUSICA DI

Giuseppe Verdi

Representata per la prima volta al Teatro Imperiale dell'Opera a Parigi il 27 Giugno 1855



OPERA COMPLETA PER CANTO E PIANOFORTE

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N. STABILIMENTO TITO DI GIO. RICORDI E FRANCESCO LUCCA

G. RICORDI & C.

EDITORI-PIANOFORTE

MILANO — ROMA — NAPOLI — PALERMO

(PRINTED IN ITALY)

In the trilogy Rigoletto - Il Trovatore - La Traviata, the theme of love was explored. With I vespri siciliani (The Sicilian Vespers) in 1855, Verdi returns to a historical theme. The opera tells the story of the Sicilian uprising in 1282 against the French rulers, once again portraying the tale of an oppressed people that resonates with the contemporary history of Italy oppressed under Austrian rule.



... and the Italians wrote on the walls of their houses: W V.E.R.D.I. This was not just an expression of appreciation for Verdi's works, but also an acronym: W Vittorio Emanuele Re D'Italia (Vittorio Emanuele King of Italy).

Giuseppe Verdi was invited by Cavour to become a deputy in the first Italian Parliament, and later he became a Senator.

Although he didn't directly participate in political debates, his music certainly managed to touch and ignite the hearts of many Italians.



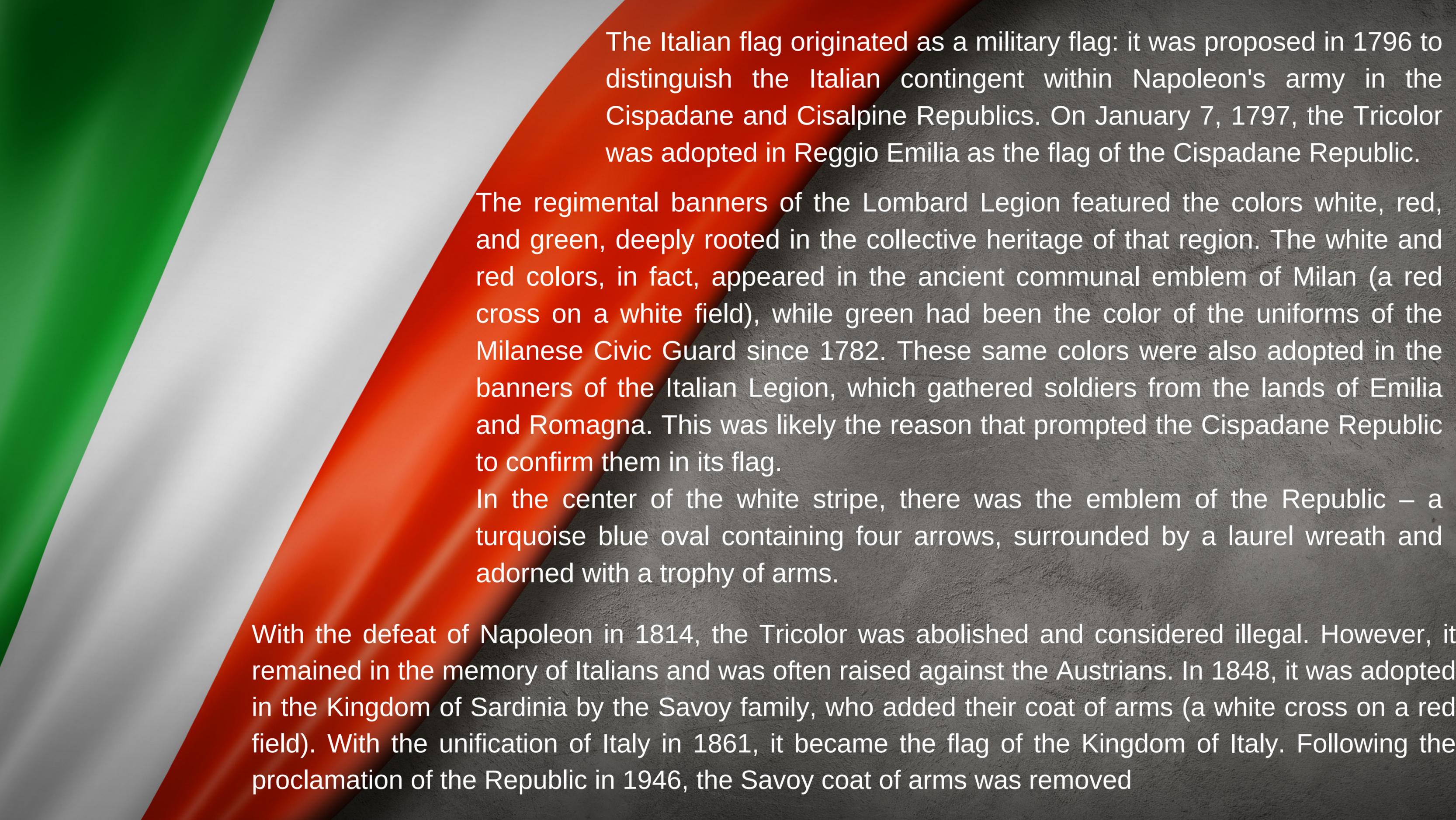
6

*Dell'elmo di Scipio
S'è cinta la testa.
Dov'è la Vittoria?
Le porga la chioma,
Ché schiava di Roma
Iddio la creò.
Stringiamci a coorte
Siam pronti alla morte
L'Italia chiamò.*

THE SONG OF THE ITALIANS AND TRICOLOR

Goffredo Mameli (testi)
Michele Novaro (musica)





The Italian flag originated as a military flag: it was proposed in 1796 to distinguish the Italian contingent within Napoleon's army in the Cispadane and Cisalpine Republics. On January 7, 1797, the Tricolor was adopted in Reggio Emilia as the flag of the Cispadane Republic.

The regimental banners of the Lombard Legion featured the colors white, red, and green, deeply rooted in the collective heritage of that region. The white and red colors, in fact, appeared in the ancient communal emblem of Milan (a red cross on a white field), while green had been the color of the uniforms of the Milanese Civic Guard since 1782. These same colors were also adopted in the banners of the Italian Legion, which gathered soldiers from the lands of Emilia and Romagna. This was likely the reason that prompted the Cispadane Republic to confirm them in its flag.

In the center of the white stripe, there was the emblem of the Republic – a turquoise blue oval containing four arrows, surrounded by a laurel wreath and adorned with a trophy of arms.

With the defeat of Napoleon in 1814, the Tricolor was abolished and considered illegal. However, it remained in the memory of Italians and was often raised against the Austrians. In 1848, it was adopted in the Kingdom of Sardinia by the Savoy family, who added their coat of arms (a white cross on a red field). With the unification of Italy in 1861, it became the flag of the Kingdom of Italy. Following the proclamation of the Republic in 1946, the Savoy coat of arms was removed



The Song of the Italians

"The Song of the Italians" is the national anthem composed by Goffredo Mameli in 1847 and set to music by Michele Novaro. In his work, Mameli was inspired by "La Marseillaise" (Chant de guerre pour l'Armée du Rhin), the French anthem born in 1792 in a revolutionary context.

A Genoese patriot, Mameli died at the age of 21 while fighting in defense of the Roman Republic, which emerged after the revolutionary uprisings of 1848. However, after the Unification of Italy, the chosen anthem was the "Royal March" of the House of Savoy, which remained in place until after World War II when, on June 2, 1946, through a referendum, Italy became a Republic.

In that context, "Fratelli d'Italia" ("Brothers of Italy") was chosen as the provisional national anthem, a role it has retained up to the present day. The Quirinale website (the official residence of the President of the Republic) provides the meanings of the main passages of our anthem

Brothers of Italy Italy has awakened, With Scipio's helmet Crowning her head. Where is Victory? Let her bow down, For Rome, enslaved, Created her. --> "Scipio's helmet" With a classical culture, Mameli recalls Scipio Africanus, the Roman general who in 202 BC defeated the Carthaginian Hannibal at Zama (present-day Algeria). --> "Let her bow down" Victory will belong to Rome, which means to Italy. In ancient Rome, slaves had their hair cut, so Victory ("slave") will have to bow down for her hair to be cut.

(CHORUS) Let us join in a cohort, We are ready to die, Italy has called us. --> "Cohort" This is a call to arms, to be ready to die for an ideal (as Mameli did): the cohort was the tenth part of a Roman legion. For centuries, we've been Trampled, mocked, Because we are not a people, Because we are divided. Gather us together Under one banner, one hope: To blend together The hour has struck. (CHORUS) --> "Gather us together" In Mameli's 19th-century language, it means "keep us united." --> "One banner, one hope" A single flag, a hope for Italy, still divided into seven states at the time. --> "Blend together" This is also a call for national unity. Let us unite, let us love one another, Union and love Reveal to the peoples The ways of the Lord. Let us swear to set free Our native soil: United under God, Who can overcome us?"

Who can overcome us? (CHORUS) --> "By God" A French expression, not a curse, which means "through God."

From the Alps to Sicily, Legnano is everywhere, Every man of Ferruccio Has the heart, has the hand, The children of Italy Are called Balilla, The sound of every bell Rang out the Vespers. (CHORUS) -->

"Legnano" Every Italian city is like Legnano, where in 1176 the Lombard communes defeated Emperor Frederick Barbarossa. --> "Ferruccio" Another reference to foreign domination: the mentioned man is Francesco Ferrucci, who defended Florence against Emperor Charles V in 1530. --

> "Balilla" A figure representing the symbol of the popular revolt in Genoa against the Austro-Piedmontese coalition. --> "Every bell" Every bell, which called the Sicilians to revolt (see below). -->

"The Vespers" In 1282, the Sicilians rebelled against the invading French: a revolt known as the Sicilian Vespers.

They are reeds that bend Under the swords sold: Austria's eagle Has lost its feathers. The blood of Italy, The blood of Poland, It drank, with the Cossack, But its heart was burning. (CHORUS) -->

"Austria's eagle" Austria was in decline (the "swords sold" refer to the weak mercenary troops, like "reeds") and Mameli emphasizes this by saying that the eagle, the Austrian symbol, loses "its feathers." --> "The blood of Poland" Another reference to Austria, which, allied with Russia (the

"Cossack"), divided and dismembered Poland, but the blood it drank will poison their hearts.

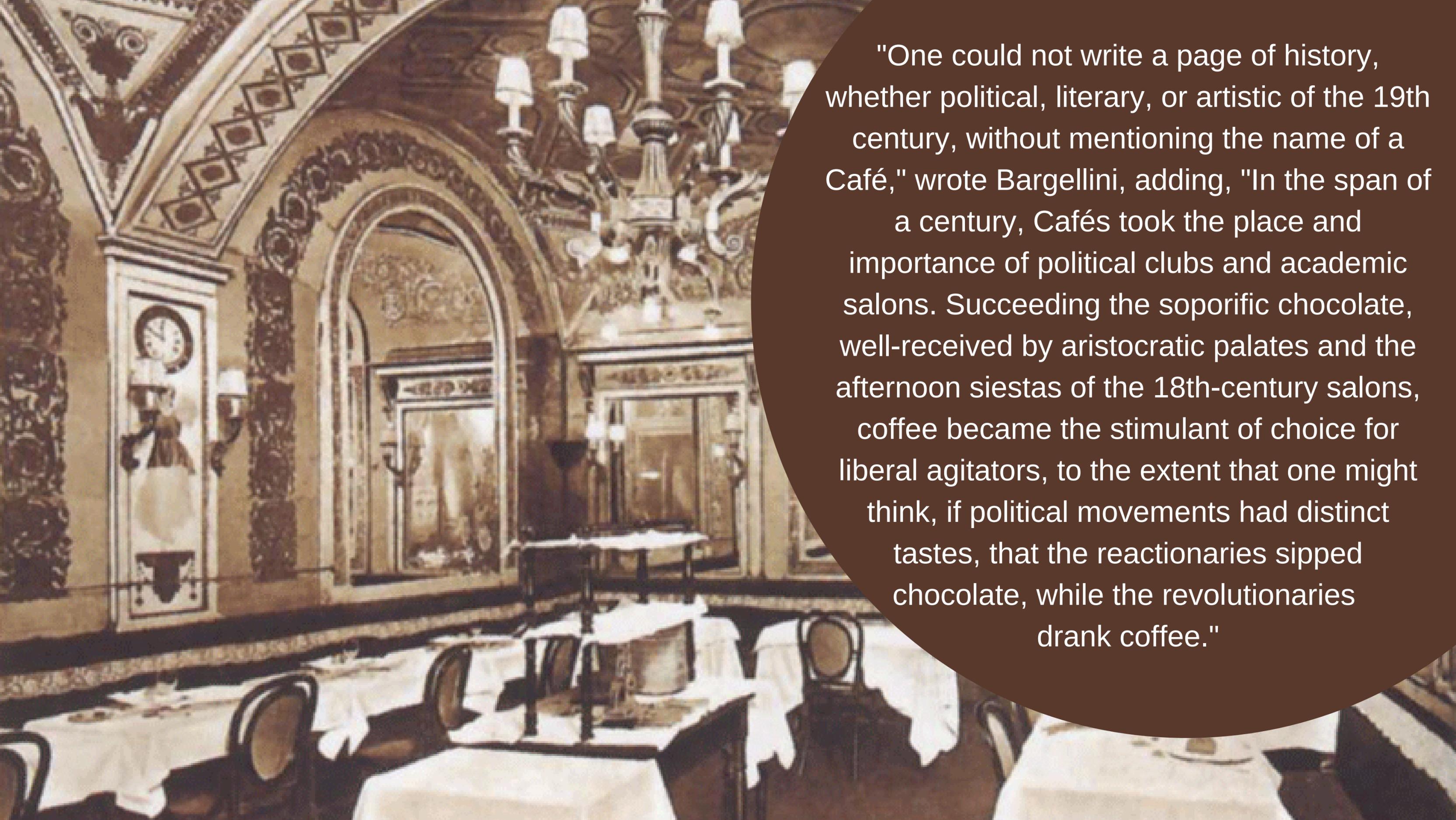
[CLICK HERE](#)

Noi fummo da secoli
Calpesti, derisi,
Perché non siam popolo,
Perché siam divisi.
Raccogliaci un'unica
Bandiera, una speme;

4:01

7

**NEW CENTERS OF
CULTURE: CAFFÉ**



"One could not write a page of history, whether political, literary, or artistic of the 19th century, without mentioning the name of a Café," wrote Bargellini, adding, "In the span of a century, Cafés took the place and importance of political clubs and academic salons. Succeeding the soporific chocolate, well-received by aristocratic palates and the afternoon siestas of the 18th-century salons, coffee became the stimulant of choice for liberal agitators, to the extent that one might think, if political movements had distinct tastes, that the reactionaries sipped chocolate, while the revolutionaries drank coffee."



TORINO

[CLICK HERE](#)

The image shows the interior of Caffè Fiorio in Torino, Italy. The room is elegantly furnished with dark wood paneling on the walls and ceiling. A large, ornate chandelier hangs from the ceiling, casting a warm glow. The room is divided into sections by dark wood pillars. In the foreground, there are several round tables with white tablecloths and dark chairs. The overall atmosphere is classic and sophisticated.

TORINO CAFFÈ' FIORIO

During the period of the Italian Risorgimento, historic and literary cafés in Italy played an incredibly important role. In the 19th century, particularly between 1849 and 1859, Turin was the home of political cafés. One of the most significant cafés was Fiorio, located at number 8 on Via Po. Nicknamed the 'Café of the top hats and Machiavelli,' it was preferred by diplomats and aristocrats. The café consisted of a long room called 'il vagone' (the carriage) and hosted famous political figures and writers, such as Cavour, Cesare Balbo, and Massimo d'Azeglio – three men bound by strong ties of friendship and patriotism.

As a meeting place for nationalists and exiles from all parts of Italy, the Fiorio café held such importance and credibility in its discussions that Cavour would always ask his informants: 'What is being said at Fiorio?'

Another historic café was the Nazionale, where Massimo d'Azeglio read aloud for the first time, fresh from the press, the proclamation of Carlo Alberto that finally granted the Constitution. From that moment on, Turin, with its cafés, became the center of national history – a place where the hopes of all Italy converged.



MILANO

[CLICK HERE](#)



Milanese cafés also played an incredibly important role between 1848 and 1860. Political discussions were particularly lively: there were the Mazzinians, who gathered at Café della Peppina, and the supporters of Cavour, who met at Café della Cecchina.

These were places of vibrant debates, but also incidents due to the presence of Austrian police, who were intolerant of gatherings and citizen assemblies. As they had silenced newspapers, like they did with *Conciliatore*, they sought to do the same with cafés. Among Milan's cafés, Café del Teatro alla Scala was essential, given that cultural and social life revolved around the theater. Other important cafés included Cova and Savini. Around 1910, Savini became the headquarters of the Futurists, led by Marinetti. He fiercely battled, even physically, to promote his ideology among those who mocked him.



VENEZIA

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Venice was a city that boasted many cafés in the 18th century: cafés were, in fact, the second home for Venetians. The oldest, not only in Venice but in all of Italy, was Florian, located in Piazza San Marco under the Procuratie. It was frequented by Manzoni and Tommaseo, fervent patriots with federalist and republican ideas. Tommaseo participated in the 1848-1849 insurrection in Venice alongside Daniele Manin. During the days of struggle in the uprisings of 1848, Florian even transformed into a makeshift infirmary.



GENOVA

[CLICK HERE](#)



Genoa might not have had grand and famous historic and literary cafés, but it's impossible not to mention at least Caffè dell'Unione in Piazza Nuova. On December 16, 1847, the notes of Goffredo Mameli's famous anthem resounded there. Mameli had stayed in Genoa several times and, after the First War of Independence, on August 9, 1848, he vehemently protested against the Salasco Armistice at Caffè dell'Unione. He urged young people to enlist in Garibaldi's ranks.

8



**WOMEN AND THE
RISORGIMENTO**



For the Unification of Italy, it wasn't only men who got involved, but women also actively participated. They organized intellectual gatherings in their salons and took part in the frontline by taking up arms and courageously assisting the wounded with great passion and courage.

Cristina Trivulzio di Belgioioso, born in Milan on June 28, 1808, into a prominent aristocratic family, was a patriot, journalist, traveler, and writer. Rejecting aristocratic norms, she traveled across Europe and engaged with the Roman Carbonari movement. Her movements raised suspicions among Austrian authorities, leading to the confiscation of her Milanese properties. Rather than yielding to blackmail, she embraced the Italian cause even more passionately.

Opting for exile in Paris over Austrian control, she faced financial challenges. Teaching and writing for the *Constitutionnel*, she regained stability with her mother's help. Her Paris salon became a refuge for Italian patriots seeking assistance. Returning to Italy in 1840, she sought a quiet life in Lombardy, focusing on improving the lives of peasants while remaining politically active.

In 1847, she established connections with key figures of the Risorgimento, including Cavour and King Carlo Alberto. During the uprisings of 1848, she led volunteers to temporarily liberate Milan. Despite later setbacks, her spirit remained unbroken, and she continued her fight for a united Italy. In 1849, she defended the Roman Republic and organized hospitals, inspiring volunteers, including women from different backgrounds, to assist the wounded.

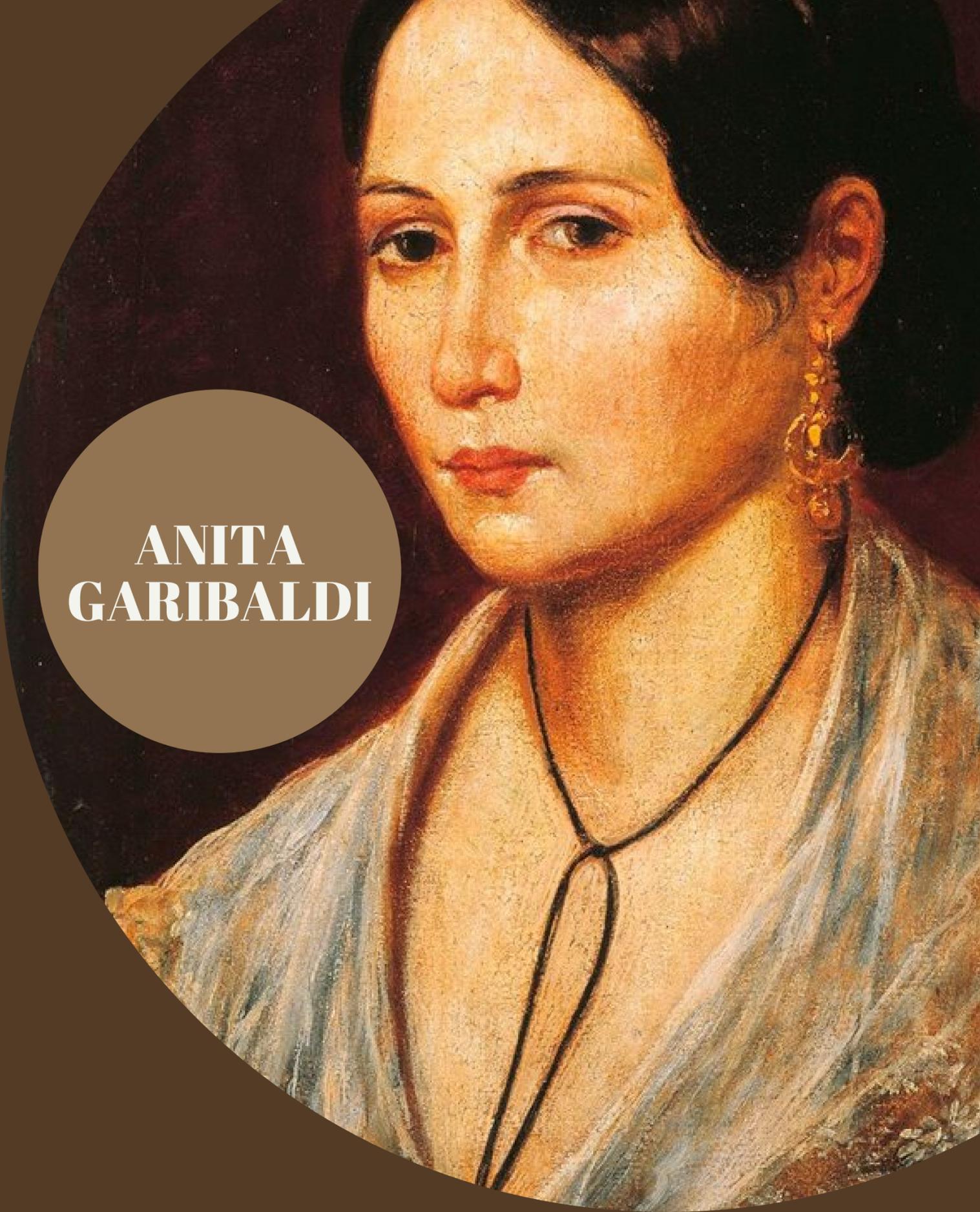


**CRISTINA
TRIVULZIO**

Ana Maria de Jesus Ribeiro da Silva, known as Anita Garibaldi, was born on August 30, 1821, in Morrinhos, Brazil. Despite facing economic hardships, she was married at 14 to Manuel Duarte, a much older shoemaker. In a Brazil marked by turmoil and aspirations for independence, Anita's uncle Antonio introduced her to political ideals. Her adventurous spirit led her to admire the rebels who sparked revolution in Laguna in 1835.

Her life took a momentous turn when she met Giuseppe Garibaldi in 1839. Their mutual love was immediate, and Anita joined him in battles after boarding the ship Rio Pardo. She displayed remarkable courage in combat, notably in Laguna, where she braved enemy fire to transport ammunition.

News of European revolutions prompted Garibaldi's return to Italy in 1848. During the Roman Republic's proclamation in 1849, Anita, pregnant, joined her husband's side in Rome. Amidst desperate circumstances, she remained by his side. However, Anita's health deteriorated due to malaria and hardships. On August 4, 1849, she passed away at the Guiccioli farm in Mandriole, Ravenna, at just twenty-eight years old. Her life and sacrifice remain a poignant reminder of the dedication shown by individuals and families in the pursuit of Italian unification during the tumultuous times of the Risorgimento.



**ANITA
GARIBALDI**

Certainly, there were many remarkable women who participated in the Risorgimento battles alongside Cristina Trivulzio and Anita Garibaldi. Some others worth mentioning include:



Anna Grasseti Zanardi (1815-1896) was a notable figure in the Risorgimento, particularly in the Bologna region. Her husband, Carlo Zanardi, was involved in the 1843 Mazzinian insurrection attempt in Savigno. He took part in the First War of Independence, defended Rome, and engaged in subsequent Mazzinian conspiracies, enduring arrests and imprisonment. Anna shared her husband's dedication to Giuseppe Mazzini's ideals and was actively engaged. She worked as a nurse during the 1848 campaign and in Rome in 1849. After the restoration of papal rule, Mazzini tasked her with establishing committees in the city and nearby areas. Despite being closely monitored and subjected to searches, she was arrested in 1851 and imprisoned in Ferrara. In the late 1800s, Anna, now widowed, was often seen leading groups of Garibaldian veterans in patriotic processions. Her commitment to Italian unification and active participation in the Risorgimento exemplify the significant role women played in shaping the nation's destiny.

Giuditta Tavani Arquati (1830-1867) played a significant role in the Risorgimento movement, especially in the bid to free Rome from papal rule. Born in Rome, she was the daughter of a defender of the Roman Republic. In 1867, she participated in a covert movement aiming to liberate Rome from papal dominion. Over three days in October, Rome saw three insurrectional uprisings. Despite being pregnant, Giuditta joined her husband and other conspirators in planning the revolt as they awaited Garibaldi's arrival. Their plans were discovered, and the papal guards brutally attacked them, resulting in Giuditta and her family's tragic deaths. Her story serves as a poignant reminder of the sacrifices made for Italian unification during the tumultuous Risorgimento era.



Giorgina Craufurd Saffi (1827-1911) was a prominent figure in the Risorgimento movement, born in Florence to an English family. Her family's support for Italy's cause ignited her affection for the country. She married Aurelio Saffi, an Italian exile and a key figure in the Roman Republic of 1849. Inspired by Mazzinian ideals, Giorgina championed women's education and active youth involvement. She emphasized respect for rights and responsibilities, believing true citizenship stemmed from emancipation and engagement in civil life. She saw women's rights and roles as vital to shaping future citizens. Giorgina prioritized women's education due to their role as primary educators of children. Her efforts aligned with her vision of an inclusive and emancipated society, supporting global emancipation movements. Her dedication influenced social and political change, making a lasting impact on women's rights and education in Italy and beyond.

9



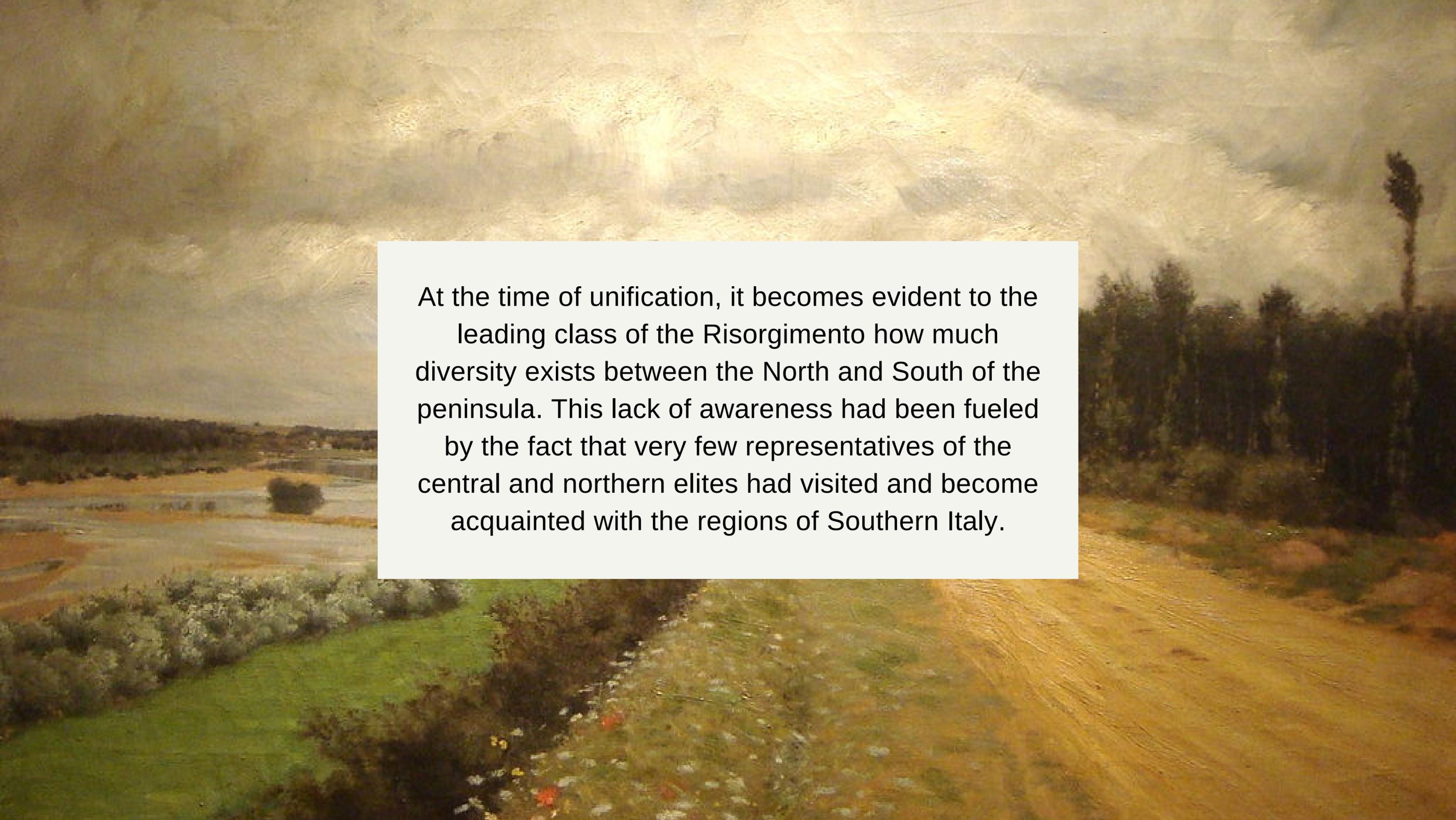
**THE POST-UNIFICATION ISSUES
THE BRIGANDAGE PHENOMENON**

Italy has been unified, but the geography and the 1400 years of preceding history have shaped the territory, making it highly heterogeneous. Granting it a new unity was a challenging task, and it was believed that this could be achieved by extending the laws of the House of Savoy throughout the entire nation and using force to enforce them.

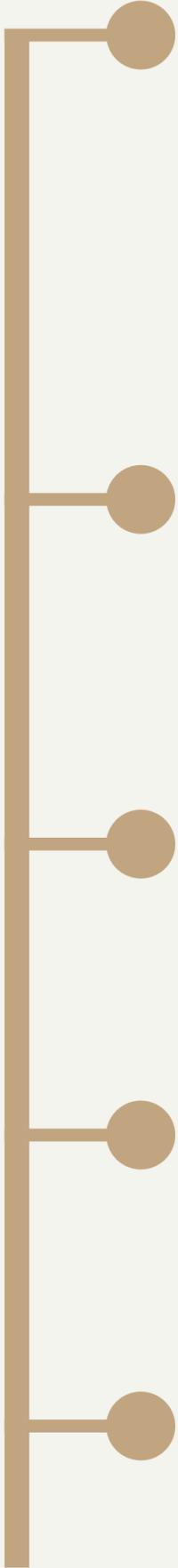


NORTH
IN STEP WITH THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION
MODERN STATE

SOUTH-CENTER
ECONOMY TIED TO AGRICULTURE
UNDERDEVELOPED SYSTEM OLD REGIME
PRIVILEGES PERSIST POOR AND ILLITERATE
POPULATION

A painting of a landscape. In the foreground, a dirt road with visible tire tracks curves from the bottom right towards the center. To the left of the road is a green field with some dark, scrubby bushes. In the middle ground, there's a body of water, possibly a river or a lake, with a small, dark, rounded object in the water. The background shows a hazy, mountainous landscape under a sky with soft, textured clouds. The overall color palette is dominated by earthy tones like browns, greens, and greys, with a warm, golden light filtering through the clouds.

At the time of unification, it becomes evident to the leading class of the Risorgimento how much diversity exists between the North and South of the peninsula. This lack of awareness had been fueled by the fact that very few representatives of the central and northern elites had visited and become acquainted with the regions of Southern Italy.



The South, completely absorbed in the Mediterranean area, particularly in the southeastern Mediterranean, had been politically unified since the 13th century. However, this unification had always been carried out by foreign conquerors and dynasties rather than Italian entities, starting with the Normans. The unification resulted in a Kingdom with its central authority in Naples, devoid of any counterbalance from local traditions or significant urban centers, but rather dominated by a class of powerful feudal lords that persisted until the 19th century. This starkly contrasted with the North, which had easy communication with central Europe, was rich in cities with strong traditions of autonomy, and was home to high levels of internal and inter-city political conflict. This conflict was often destructive but also acted as a catalyst for remarkable socio-cultural growth.

Geophysically, the South is characterized by a prevalence of mountainous and hilly terrain with frequent landslides, limited plains often located along the malaria-infested coasts, and irregular watercourses, accompanied by a frequently dry-arid climate. This stands in stark contrast to the North, which boasts a vast irrigated plain traversed by numerous waterways. These structural characteristics sufficiently explain the origins of the existing disparity at the time of Unification.

A stark disparity is already evident in the illiteracy rate, which in 1871 stood at 54.2% in the North and a staggering 81% in the South. In Sicily, a striking 93 out of every 100 individuals were illiterate. Particularly among women, literacy was mostly limited to the aristocracy and higher classes. Primary school attendance, reaching 90% in Lombardy and Piedmont, was merely 18% in the South.

Another highly significant disparity was in terms of roads: according to 1863 data, Lombardy alone had a road network totaling 28,000 kilometers compared to the 14,000 kilometers of the entire Kingdom of Naples, including Sicily.

In terms of economic development in general, at the time of Unification, it's estimated that the GDP of the North was about two and a half times that of the South. Similarly, the value of agricultural production was 400 lire per hectare in Northern Italy, while it barely exceeded 80 lire in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. This substantial disparity also extended to the major industrial activities of the time.



In the South, commercial houses and financial institutions were virtually absent, with only Naples and Palermo hosting the two issuing banks. This had significant consequences. While the predominantly cereal and olive-wine based agriculture in the South contributed substantial export shares (olive oil, used for illumination, represented half the export value), these exports were managed entirely by foreign trading and transportation firms at the shipping ports. These foreign firms thus claimed the added value of the exported products.

The same applied to the export trade of Sicilian wine and the sole industrial raw material, sulfur, also exclusively from Sicily, both of which were controlled by English companies. In essence, the Southern economy at the time of Unification shared many characteristics of a colonial economy: local products, cultivated inland, reached the shipping ports through foreign traders and were then transported by foreign ships to European markets.

THE ANTI- UNITY REVOLT

THE BRIGANDAGE



Le brigantesse Filomena Pennacchio, Giuseppina Vitale e Maria Giovanna Tito - 1865 - fotografia - Istituto per la Storia del Risorgimento - Roma

In the mainland regions of Italy, south of Tronto and Garigliano, between the fall of 1860 and 1863, the recently achieved unity faced its most challenging test. This trial wasn't imposed by the resistance of the old pre-unification states, but rather by a large-scale social uprising led by a significant portion of the rural populations in those regions.

These uprisings were labeled by Italian authorities as "brigantaggio" (brigandage), and its perpetrators were referred to as "briganti" (brigands): derogatory terms reflecting the harshness of the conflict and the profound cultural divide between the opposing sides, which prevented the more advanced and conceptually equipped faction from understanding the motives of the other.

"Brigantaggio" - involving groups of former peasants forming bands and taking to the hills to commit various crimes - was an ancient phenomenon in the Kingdom of Naples (and not just there; it was also prevalent in other economically depressed areas of central and northern Italy, such as the lower Po area). However, only in the South did this blend of social unrest and criminality become intertwined with politics.

The roots of this phenomenon trace back to 1799 when, under the orders of the exiled King of Naples, who had fled to Sicily due to a pro-French revolution in Naples, Cardinal Fabrizio Ruffo incited the southern peasant masses to an anti-Jacobin revolt.

During the reign of Joachim Murat, when the French regained control, political "brigantaggio" continued to have a presence, albeit in a diminished form.

Subsequently, it returned to being simple highway banditry.

The anti-Italian revolt of 1861-65 thus combined various elements, starting with the established tradition of rebellious banditry mentioned earlier.

The first peasant uprisings occurred in October 1860 as Piedmontese troops led by Cialdini entered the Kingdom of Naples. A significant Garibaldian force, led by Francesco Nullo, was engaged in suppressing these revolts and suffered a bloody defeat. Following these incidents, Cialdini issued a harsh proclamation, threatening summary execution for civilians who dared to take up arms against his forces.

The initial uprisings were fueled by loyalty to the old dynasty, and two crucial factors further ignited the unrest in the following weeks. First, the dissolution of the Bourbon army led to many disbanded soldiers returning to the countryside. Second, and more impactful, was the disappointment and protest of the peasant masses. They had hoped that the Italian "revolution" would improve their conditions but witnessed local elites engaging in significant political shifts instead.



Il generale [Cialdini](#) - Museo Centrale del Risorgimento - Roma

Local leaders swiftly switched allegiance to the new regime, often persecuting those who were slower to do so to legitimize themselves. In many cases, these southern "gentlemen" seized the opportunity to acquire a vast amount of confiscated assets, especially land, which the new government put up for sale. This further solidified and intensified their social and economic dominance over the numerous landless individuals.

The uprising quickly spread along the Apennine mountain range, from Abruzzo to Sila (Sicily remained largely unaffected by the phenomenon), primarily in the poorest and most inaccessible regions of the peninsula. It took on the characteristics of guerrilla warfare. The urban centers were defended by the Italian-Piedmontese forces, aided by numerous formations of civilian volunteers from the National Guard and contingents of carabinieri stationed in their various posts. Around 120,000 individuals, nearly half of the entire Italian army, comprised this force. They were opposed by approximately 10,000 to 12,000 "brigands," organized into groups of around a hundred individuals, often mounted on horseback, and sometimes including women.





Ritratto di José Borjes

Equipped with high mobility and an intimate knowledge of the terrain, unlike the often inadequately equipped army without proper geographical maps, these bands, led by clever yet often rugged and fierce commoners, primarily engaged in ambushes, raids on properties and farms with theft of various goods, attacking and occupying medium and small inhabited centers. They adopted a ruthless form of warfare beyond conventional rules, with fighters lacking uniforms, allowing for deceptive tactics and a lack of prisoners.

For a time, these bands received funding from the exiled Bourbon government in Rome, which initially attempted, albeit unsuccessfully, to coordinate the insurgents, hoping for the intervention of the legitimist Spanish general José Borjes, who had landed in Calabria. However, the formations remained isolated from one another. Even so, they managed to control large portions of territory, assaulting trains, kidnapping and extorting many landowners, extorting money, and effectively blocking any land communication for extended periods, for instance, between Naples and Apulia. This essentially kept any public authority in check.

The operations took a dramatic turn when in August 1862, the Rattazzi government, alarmed by news of Garibaldi's arrival in Sicily, which would soon lead to the clash at Aspromonte, declared a state of siege in all southern provinces under the authority of General La Marmora.

The state of siege, not foreseen by any article of the Albertine Statute, officially lasted until November 1862. It effectively suspended constitutional guarantees and essentially paralyzed the civil courts. The justification for this action also stemmed from the judiciary's protective stance, as in more than one case, suspects of brigandage had been acquitted and investigations had been initiated even against military figures.

The state of siege led to a rise in the arbitrary nature of military repression: reprisals and acts of violence, including massacres and destruction of entire towns, increased in number and intensity against often innocent civilian populations.

These events in the southern provinces triggered a strong political and parliamentary protest from the Democratic Left. Their press and southern representatives had frequently been subjected to repressive measures under the pretext of the state of siege. Initiated by the Left, the Parliament approved the establishment of a parliamentary investigative commission towards the end of 1862.



A. Duroni - Il generale [Alfonso La Marmora](#) - fotografia - Museo Centrale del Risorgimento - Roma



From an international standpoint as well, the military dictatorship in the South was becoming increasingly unsustainable. In an attempt to somehow legitimize the repression, which was failing to suppress the semi-insurrectional movement, the new Minghetti government succeeded Rattazzi and, in mid-1863, had the proposal of Abruzzo deputy Giuseppe Pica approved as a law.

This law and subsequent regulations aimed to establish a legal framework for the repression that couldn't quell the semi-insurrectional movement. They stipulated that in all provinces of mainland Southern Italy declared in a state of "brigandage," military courts would judge the "brigands" and their accomplices. Those found guilty of brigandage would face the penalty of execution, with the possibility of mitigating circumstances.

Empowered by these measures and the unscrupulous use of informants, in the years 1864-1865, the military authorities managed to increasingly contain the phenomenon of "brigandage," capturing or gradually eliminating the key bandit leaders. From then on, despite sporadic revivals, the insurrectional elements were destined to gradually diminish, albeit very slowly.



The heterogeneity of our territory still poses a challenge today, as the goal is to provide equal opportunities to all Italians, regardless of their place of residence (quality healthcare, education, job prospects, justice, assistance, etc.).

However, the challenge is to achieve these objectives while preserving and enhancing the significant differences of our territory.

Diversity should not be seen as a problem, but rather as an element of enrichment, a value to be respected and not erased.

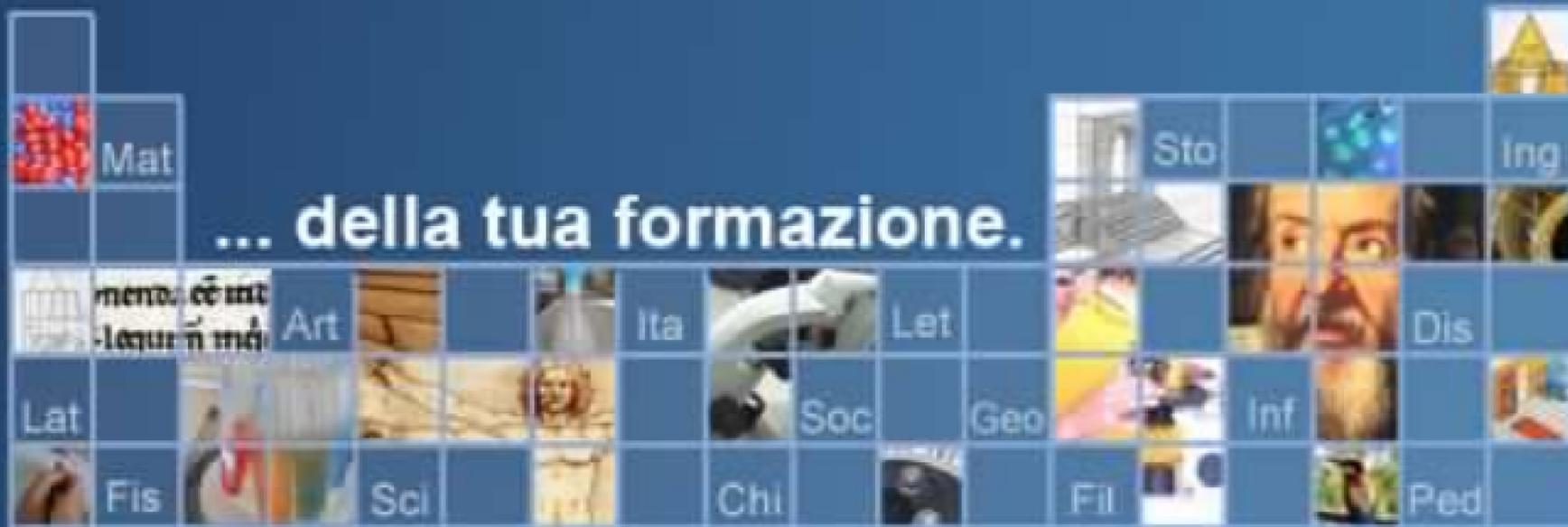
Understanding Italy cannot be achieved by simply visiting one of the major cities (Florence, Venice, Rome, Naples, etc.), as each of the 20 regions is a unique Italy unto itself!

Liceo Galileo Galilei



Tutti gli elementi ...

... della tua formazione.



DS Gabriella Cominazzini