

The Unification of Italy 1789-1896 Pre-Course Preparation

Welcome to Italian History!

In preparation for September we would like you to begin to get a feel for the key events that led to Italy changing from a series of separate and divided states, controlled by foreign powers, to one united country by 1870, and what the impact of this was in the years after. In order to do this we would like you to complete the series of activities below. We look forward to hearing your thoughts and ideas **IN THE FIRST LESSON BACK IN SEPTEMBER** when this work will be handed in to your Italy teacher.

Chronological Overview Task;

1. Read and highlight key points in the attached worksheet from Graham Darby, 'the Unification of Italy'.
2. Use the attached Living Graph worksheet to **plot how likely** unification was at each of the six stages. Make sure that you annotate and justify your decisions on the back of the living graph.
3. Based on your living graph and your reading, when did unification look **most** likely and why? And when did it look **least** likely and why? Explain your ideas, using evidence and examples to support your points.

What was Italy like at the start of our topic?

Read the short extract from the Pearce and Stiles and Collier books (included in the pack). Bullet point 5 things that strike you/stand out to you about life in Italy at this time.

You could also read the introduction from Clark which is more in-depth.

Finally, there are a few administrative tasks that we need you to have ready for September

1. Buy an **A4 LEVER ARCH** file, a set of **dividers** and a **SMALL A4 FOLDER/RINGBINDER** and bring this to the first lesson back in September
2. Bookmark <http://www.onedamnthings.org.uk/italy/> as we will use this website regularly

If you need any help or have any questions about this preparation work you can contact any of the teachers below by email:

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Chronological survey of the period

1 Restoration and repressed uprisings, 1815–31

In 1815 Italy was simply a geographical expression; it had not existed as a unified country since the early Middle Ages. As you can see from Figure 1, it consisted of a number of small, relatively weak states, and the people tended to owe their loyalty to their locality. There was little sense of nationalism (a sense of patriotism, of belonging to a common Italian nation) in the peninsula and only a few envisaged unification (the consolidation of all the states into a single state).

After Napoleon, many of the old states of Italy were restored and Austria was given either direct or indirect control over a number of them. Italy was thus fragmented and dominated by Austria.

Dissatisfaction with restored government among the educated few manifested itself in uprisings in Naples and Piedmont in 1820–1, and in Modena, Parma and the Romagna in 1831. However, in all these cases the repressive hand of Prince Metternich and the Austrian army ensured that native aspirations were soon extinguished.

2 The growth of Italian identity, 1831–47

The growth of Italian identity can be most easily summed up by the three 'p's – the people, the Pope and Piedmont – reflected in the writings of Mazzini, Gioberti and Balbo. All three writers envisaged some sort of unified Italy – Mazzini a republic brought about by a revolution of the people, Gioberti a confederation headed up by the Pope, and Balbo a federation created by Piedmont which would expel the Austrians. All three models for unification were drawn up in the 1830s and 1840s; all three were embraced by a very small educated minority; and all three were totally unrealistic. However, they did reflect a growing wish for Italian independence from Austrian domination which was to manifest itself in 1848–9.

3 The revolutions of 1848–9

The aim of the uprisings of 1848–9 was to expel the Austrians rather than to unify Italy, but in each case the Italians failed. The lesson was that the Italians were no match for the Austrian army; they would need outside help. Nevertheless, national consciousness was raised,

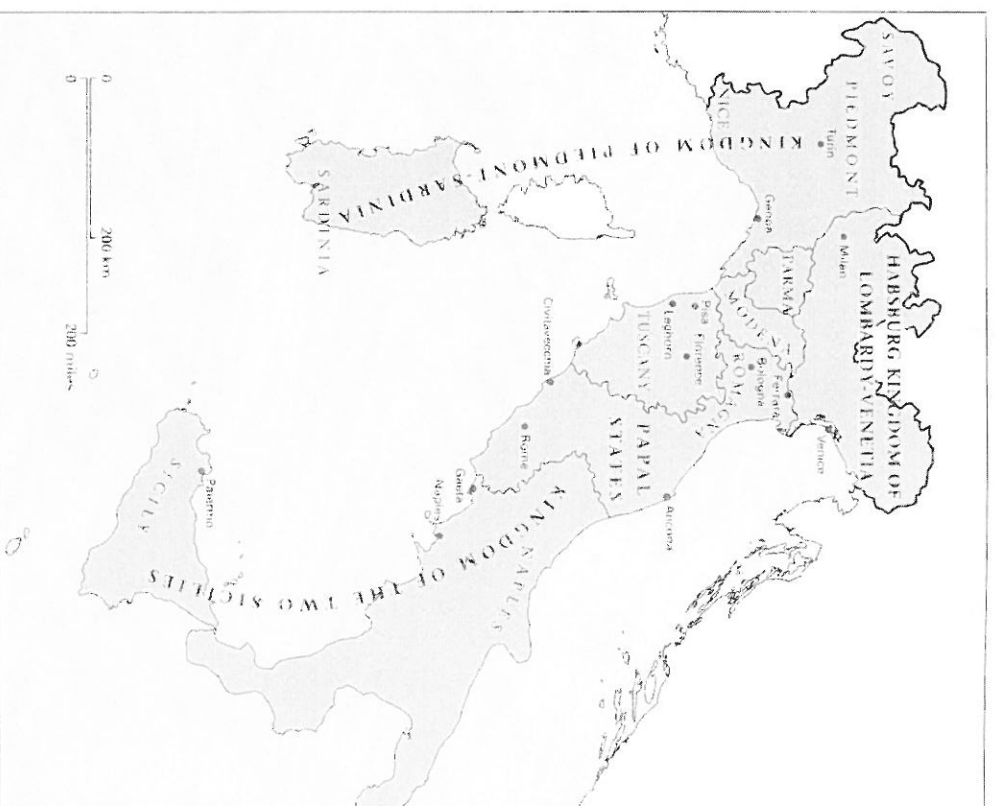


Figure 1 Italy in 1815

and Piedmont rather than the Pope became the focus for future aspirations as Pius IX had set himself against change.

4 Cavour and Napoleon III: the 1850s

Cavour was Prime Minister of Piedmont from 1852. He did not envisage Italian unification. His main aim was to expel the Austrians from Italy, extend Piedmont and create a north Italian kingdom. To

Graham Darby: The Unification of Italy

this end he courted Napoleon III for many years, but when Napoleon did finally respond in 1858, it was on the latter's terms and quite by chance. It is clear that despite his central role, Cavour was not in a position to dictate events – but he did take his opportunities.

5 The unification process, 1859–61

Napoleon's war against Austria did not go according to plan, but by exploiting instability in the central duchies (Tuscany, Parma and Modena, as well as the Romagna – see Figure 1) and by giving up Nice and Savoy to France, Cavour was able, by March 1860, to achieve an enlarged Piedmont, his original aim.

And then, out of the blue, Garibaldi, a disciple of Mazzini, forced Cavour to embrace unification. Garibaldi himself actually believed in unification and set out to achieve it. Taking advantage of an uprising in Sicily, he landed there, conquered the island and then went on to conquer the Kingdom of Naples on the mainland. It was an incredible achievement, a saga so far-fetched it resembles fiction! Garibaldi's threat to the Pope forced Cavour to march south, conquering much of the Papal States and linking up the northern Italian kingdom with Garibaldi's conquests. Garibaldi then generously handed over to King Victor Emmanuel of Piedmont. In 1861 the latter was proclaimed King of Italy.

6 Postscript – Venetia 1866 and Rome 1870

Venetia was still occupied by the Austrians and Rome by the French. Both of these territories came to Italy in somewhat inglorious episodes courtesy of the Prussian Minister, Bismarck. Successful Prussian wars against both Austria and France enabled Victor Emmanuel to complete the process of unification by 1870, though arguably Italy had been Piedmontised rather than unified. What had been hailed as a miracle and a marvel was soon viewed with disillusion and disappointment.

Giuseppe Mazzini, 1805–72

The foremost Italian nationalist, Mazzini was born in Genoa and trained to be a lawyer. He founded Young Italy in 1831, a movement dedicated to the unification of a republican Italy. However, it had little impact beyond publicity though an important convert was Garibaldi. Mazzini briefly took charge of the Roman Republic in 1849 but played no role in the actual unification from 1859. He spent most of his life in exile and was disillusioned with the Italy that eventually came into being. He was subsequently credited as 'father of the nation' and hailed as a prophet.



Giuseppe Garibaldi, 1807–82

Born in Nice, Garibaldi was a merchant seaman when he met Mazzini and became a committed nationalist. He spent some time in exile in South America before returning to Italy during the 1848 Revolutions, where in 1849 he commanded the garrison of the Roman Republic. After another spell of exile he returned and was actively involved in the war against Austria. It was his remarkable expedition to Sicily and then Naples in 1860 that really brought about unification. By now a



committed monarchist, he handed over his conquests to Victor Emmanuel but became disillusioned with the new Italy. He led two unsuccessful expeditions against the Pope in Rome in 1862 and 1867. A man of immense charisma, Garibaldi enjoyed superstar status in his day, and crowds filled Trafalgar Square when he came to London in 1864.

Victor Emmanuel II, 1820–78

The first King of Italy, Victor Emmanuel became King of Piedmont-Sardinia in 1849 after his father abdicated, and appointed Cavour as Prime Minister in 1852. He pushed for Piedmontese participation in the Crimean War and actively encouraged the unification process, which he saw as Piedmontese expansion. His coarse manners gave him the common touch, and Garibaldi's respect for him was a significant factor in creating the new state.



He was proclaimed King of Italy in 1861. He added Venetia in 1866 and Rome in 1870. Though devious and cunning, he lacked application and was prepared to tolerate the constitution.

How likely was Unification?

Likely

Not Likely

1789

1815

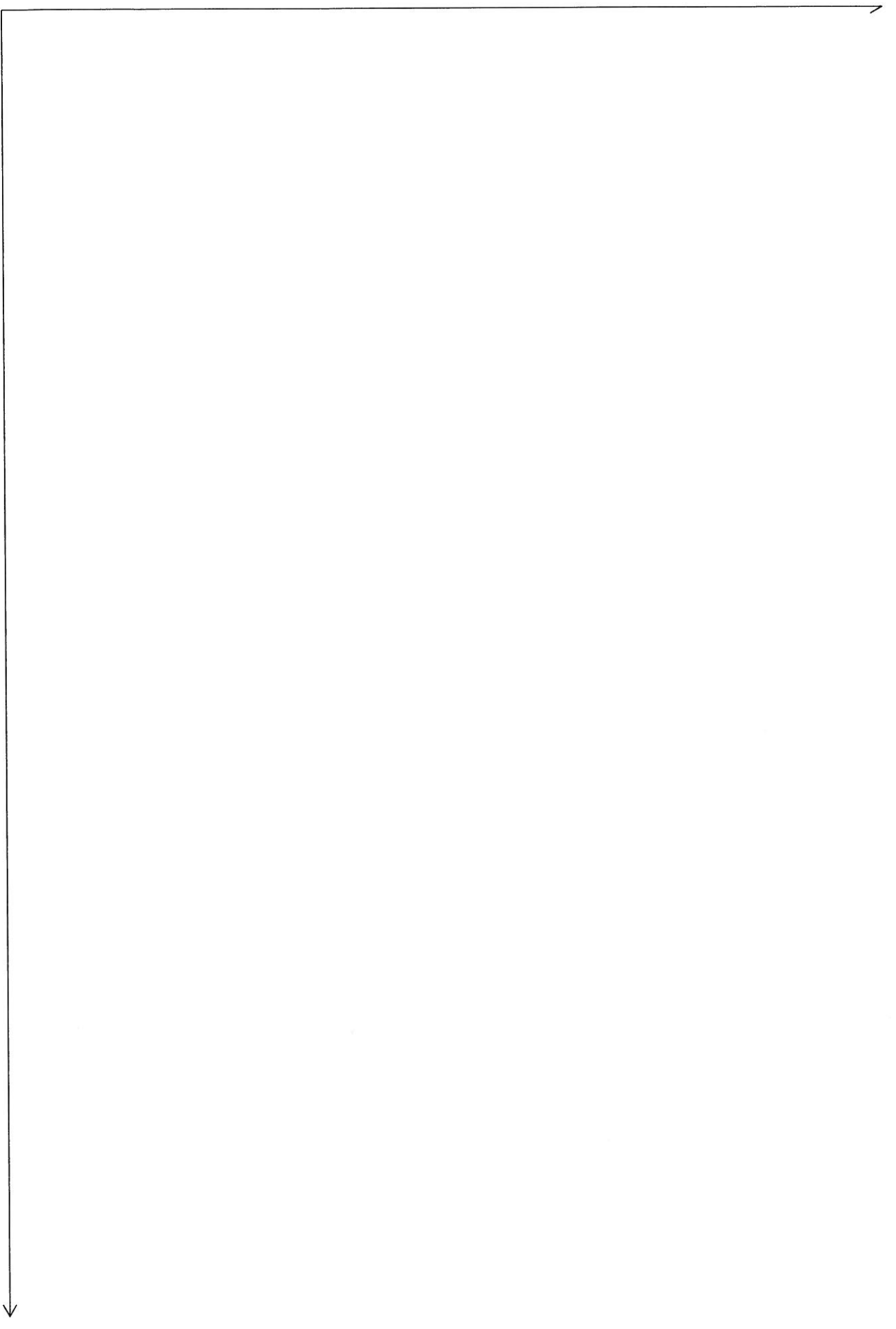
1831

1848

1850s

1859

1866



AS SECTION: NARRATIVE AND EXPLANATION

INTRODUCTION

In 1871, Italy was united as a nation state with Rome as its capital. To us this is no surprise. Italy is seen as one of the leading European states today with an unrivalled richness of history and culture. Yet the process of political unification was not inevitable. The roots of national consciousness in Italy go back beyond the years of Napoleonic rule in Italy.

However, awareness of national identity was never widespread. The Italian peninsula in the nineteenth century and beforehand was a patchwork of political states – from Lombardy, Venice and the Kingdom of Sardinia in the north, to the Kingdom of Naples in the South. It was also a patchwork of dialects and customs, ruled by Italian kings and dukes, and foreign powers. In central Italy, the Pope ruled over the Papal States.

From 1798 until 1814, the Italian peninsula was dominated by France and the rule, either direct or indirect, of Napoleon I (Napoleon Bonaparte). Although Napoleonic rule was ended in 1815, and the kings and dukes of the Italian states were restored to their thrones, French rule left its mark. While ruling Italy, the French had introduced administrative reforms, many of which lasted beyond 1815. They also introduced, among certain classes, ideas of individual freedom and liberty.

After 1815, the Italian peninsula was dominated by Austria, which intervened whenever necessary to prevent the spread of revolution – as in 1821 and 1831. Those pushing for political change were not necessarily nationally minded, but wished for reform at a local level.

However, most of the Italian peninsula was wracked by the revolutions of 1848, as was most of Europe.

The *Risorgimento* is the name given to the process that ended with the political unification of Italy in 1871. It was primarily a cultural movement, aimed at spreading awareness of Italian culture and identity. However, there were significant political thinkers of the *Risorgimento* – most noticeably Giuseppe Mazzini. His belief in an Italy united as a democratic state was revolutionary for his time. Others put forward suggestions for a more conservative settlement. Vincenzo Gioberti argued in the 1840s for the creation of an Italian Federation under the leadership of the Pope. Whatever the differences, all were agreed that the Austrians should be expelled from Lombardy and Venice, which they had controlled since 1815.

In 1848 and 1849, attempts were made to expel the Austrians from the Italian peninsula. But these attempts failed and the lesson was learned that foreign military support would be necessary if such an action was to be successful. The following decade saw the emergence of Piedmont as the only Italian state capable of engineering such support.

Under the capable leadership of its prime minister, Count Camillo Cavour, Piedmont became allied with France and, in 1859, fought a partially successful war of liberation. However, the result of an accidental series of events and the intervention of one of the great heroes of the *Risorgimento*, Giuseppe Garibaldi, resulted in the near complete unification of Italy by 1861. Only Venice and Rome remained in foreign or papal hands. Again, circumstance intervened and events outside Italy contrived to result in the full unification of Italy as a nation state by 1871.

This introduction has been highly simplistic, but hopefully it introduces to you some of the key themes of this period of Italian history.

Pearce and Stiles: The Unification of Italy 1815-70.

1

Introduction: The Unification of Italy

POINTS TO CONSIDER

In 1815, 'Italy' was merely a geographical expression, and very few people believed that one day the peninsula would become a nation state. Yet by 1861 almost all of Italy had been unified. This chapter should be regarded as a curtain-raiser to the drama of Italian unification, providing essential background knowledge. It looks at three different periods:

- Pre-Napoleonic rule, largely by Austrian rulers
- French rule under Napoleon
- The Restored Monarchies

Finally, the chapter sketches an outline of the process by which, after 1848, 'Italy' was formed as a political entity, and of the main interpretations that have been put forward by contemporaries and historians to explain what happened. This will allow you to form a 'mental map' of the key events and ideas, enabling you to follow the next, more detailed, chapters with greater ease.

Key dates

- 1796 Napoleon Bonaparte invaded Italy
- 1815 The Congress of Vienna: Austria to be dominant in Italy
- The 'Restored Monarchs' began to return to their Italian states

1 | Pre-Napoleonic Italy

Around the start of the nineteenth century, many Europeans considered that Italy was the heartland of world civilisation. Twice, during the Roman Empire and at the time of the Renaissance, it had dominated Europe. First politically and then culturally. Yet the times had sadly changed, and now Italy had declined and was languishing under foreign rule or petty dictators. Italy was now more an art gallery and a museum, some believed, than a modern state.

In 1796, when Napoleon's army had overrun Italy, the peninsula had comprised a complicated patchwork of states and

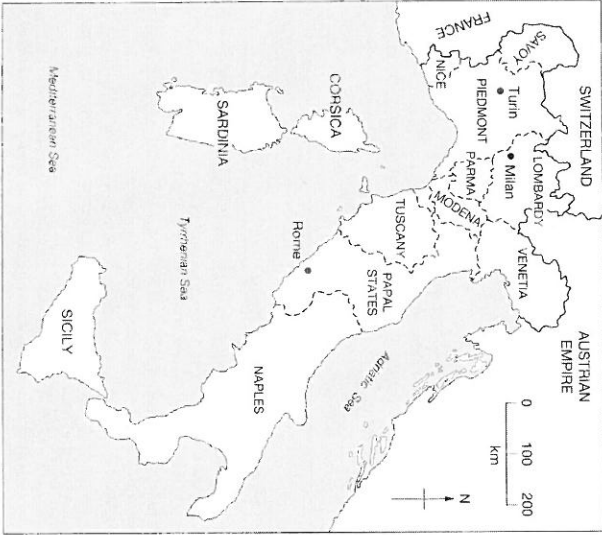
Key question
What were the main political divisions in Italy?

Napoleon Bonaparte invaded Italy: 1796

Key date

principalities (see the map below). The main bodies of this complex mosaic were:

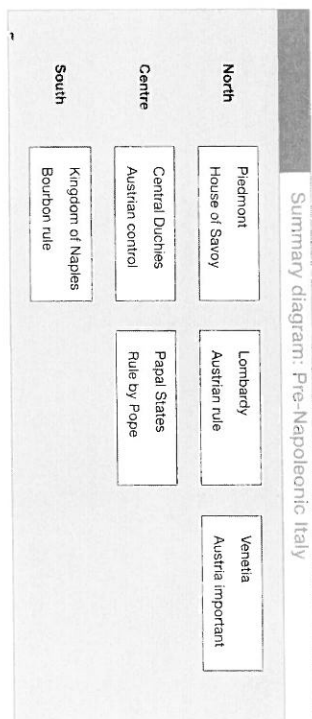
- The northern state of Piedmont, ruled by the House of Savoy from its capital in Turin. In 1790 the Duke of Savoy had acquired the island of Sardinia and the title of King. This joint state had originally been known as 'The Kingdom of Sardinia' or 'Sardinia-Piedmont', but in the nineteenth century was generally referred to simply as Piedmont.
- The northern state of Lombardy, which was ruled by local representatives of the Austrian Empire, supported by the Austrian army. It was one of the most advanced parts of Italy economically and its capital, Milan, had a population of around 130,000.
- Venetia, governed according to a constitution that had changed little since the Renaissance, was dominated by its local aristocracy. Austria had great influence in the area.
- The Central Duchies, of Tuscany, Modena and Parma. They were governed by their own dukes, but again Austria was very influential so much so that they have been called **satellites** of Austria. The ruling dynasty in Tuscany, for instance, the House of Lorraine, was part of the Habsburg family, which ruled in Austria.



Italy c1796, showing the main regions.

Key term
Satellites
Weak states dependent on or controlled by a more powerful country.

Key term
Viceroy
A ruler exercising authority on behalf of a king or queen.



- The Papal States, covering most of central Italy, were governed by the Pope. Economically the region was weak, and militarily it relied on support from other Catholic countries.
- The Kingdom of Naples, ruled by the Bourbon family, constituted the largest but also the poorest region in Italy. From Naples, the largest city in Italy, the king also ruled Sicily, via a **viceroy**, which was poorly run. The combined kingdom was often referred to as 'The Kingdom of the two Sicilies'.

2 | French Rule under Napoleon

Key question
What were the main effects of French rule in Italy?

Key figure
Napoleon Bonaparte
1769–1821

Painted the French army in 1785 and gave a name for himself as a brilliant commander in wars against the British and the Austrians. He instituted a military dictatorship in France in 1799 and crowned himself Emperor, as Napoleon I, in 1804. He was forced to abdicate after a series of military defeats in 1813.

- The French attacked the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia in 1792, acquiring Nice and Savoy. A few years later, in 1796, **Napoleon Bonaparte** gained control of the army in Italy and, after a war with the Austrians in Lombardy, soon took over the whole peninsula. In 1805 Napoleon crowned himself King of Italy. Napoleon made a series of changes which simplified political boundaries. In 1798 he did away with the old complicated pattern of states and divided most of the country into just four separate republics. In 1810 he divided the country again, but this time into just three parts (see the map on page 4):
- One third was annexed to France and treated as part of the French Empire. This comprised the north-west portion of Italy, including Piedmont, together with the Central Duchies and the Papal States.
 - Another third became known as the Kingdom of Italy. This comprised the regions of Lombardy, Modena, Bologna, Romagna and Ferrara. Napoleon was king but his stepson ruled as viceroy.
 - The remaining third was the Kingdom of Naples, but it did not include Sicily, which was now controlled by Britain, and the ruling dynasty was no longer the Bourbons. Instead Napoleon's brother, Joseph, became king.

1

Introduction

The Italian word *risorgimento* means 'revival', or 'resurrection' (of the dead). In the early and mid-nineteenth century, it also meant a broad cultural, social and economic 'revival', when Italy emerged from the (allegedly) stagnant provincialism of previous centuries. In addition, it meant the period when foreign rulers were expelled from the Italian peninsula, and when the various Italian states were 'unified' into a single Kingdom of Italy in 1861. It has often been argued that these two aspects, the cultural and the political, were connected via the demand for 'liberty'. Rapid cultural changes meant a better-educated people, demanding greater freedoms – not only to trade or to move abroad, but also to have free speech, a free press, free association, even the vote and a say in policy-making; but most Italian states would not or could not grant these concessions. Hence people came to demand a new political regime, one that would guarantee liberty.

Independence, unification and liberty – these were to be the three grand political themes of the Risorgimento. However, they were not necessarily connected. Independence from foreign rule might well have been achieved without unification, and indeed until at least the mid-1850s most patriotic Italians assumed that it would be. Similarly, there was no guarantee that the unified Italian state after 1861 would be more 'liberal' than at least some of its predecessors. Nonetheless, between 1859 and 1861 all three aspirations were, to all appearances, achieved quite suddenly, indeed miraculously, after an epic, heroic expedition to win Sicily, led by the greatest and noblest of Italian soldiers, **Giuseppe Garibaldi**. This new kingdom did guarantee liberty, at least until the Fascist takeover in the 1920s. It is not surprising, then, that later generations of Italians have looked back to the Risorgimento as a glorious period. Socially and ideologically, it embodied the triumph of economic modernity and of rational thought over traditional prejudice and clerical obscurantism; politically, it ensured constitutional liberty, national independence and even Great Power status.

Garibaldi, Giuseppe (1807–82): Born in Nice, became sea captain; involved in abortive rising in Genoa, 1834 and fled to Marseilles and thence to South America: fought for separatist movement in Rio Grande do Sul, against Brazil, and for Uruguay against Argentina; returned to Italy, 1848, fought for provisional government in Milan against Austrians and defended Roman Republic against French; in exile 1849–53; commanded Alpine Hunters against Austria, 1859; led famous expedition of the 'Thousand' to Sicily and Naples, 1860; sought to attack Rome, but was defeated and wounded by Italian troops at Aspromonte, 1862; defeated at Mentana, 1867; fought against Austrians in Trentino, 1866; fought for French against the Prussians, 1870; later prominent in radical politics.

Metternich, Klement von (1773–1859): Austrian diplomat and Chancellor, 1821–48; suppressed rising in Naples, 1820–21; warned in vain against Austria's sending ultimatum to Piedmont in 1859.

Pius IX, Pope 1846–78 (Giovanni Maria Mastai-Ferretti, 1792–1878): Ordained 1819, apostolic delegate in South America, later Archbishop of Spoleto and bishop of Imola; elected Pope, June 1846; granted constitution, March 1848; denounced anti-Austrian war, April 1848; fled to Gaeta, November 1848; restored as ruler of Rome by French victory over Roman Republic; lost most of Papal States to Piedmont, 1860, and lost Rome itself, 1870; denounced liberalism in 'Syllabus of Errors', 1864; called First Vatican Council, 1869–70 to proclaim Papal Infallibility on faith and morals.

This patriotic 'Whig' view, although still surprisingly entrenched, is not really tenable. To begin with, it is too 'teleological': it assumes the process was virtually inevitable. In fact, Italian unification was, like most historical events, the result of a complex series of unforeseeable 'accidents'. The eventual outcome had not been predicted even by the leading personalities involved, nor was it welcome to most of them. Moreover, the patriotic view assumes that Italian nationhood already existed, just waiting to be embodied in national institutions. But Italy, as **Metternich** famously remarked in 1847, was simply a 'geographical expression' (Klinkowstroem, 1883: vii, 415). Her inhabitants were mostly peasants who spoke only their local dialect. The language of Dante and Machiavelli, although written by the literate few, was spoken by about 2.5 per cent of the population, most of them in Tuscany or Rome. Even in the towns people's horizons were not 'national', nor even regional; they were municipal. The rivalry between nearby cities had deep historical roots and was still strongly felt. Only a tiny educated minority felt 'Italian' and celebrated Italy's glorious past; but they were too few to matter much. By the 1840s such men – for the most part professors, lawyers or journalists – were indeed proclaiming an intellectual and cultural programme of 'revival', and demanding civil liberties and constitutional government, but most members of the various municipal, political, landowning and commercial elites were still unimpressed. Moreover, most of these writers and intellectuals advocated 'independence' from foreign rule, but not 'unity': a single Italian state seemed, even to them, not only impossible but undesirable. Italy, they thought, should ideally become a confederation of independent states, all enjoying constitutional liberties, but all different and respectful of varying local conditions: 'unification' yes, but not 'unity'. Even **Pope Pius IX**, elected in 1846, could support this programme for a time, and many people wanted him to lead it. In short, the 'patriotic' interpretation is mistaken, if only because Italians were divided and not anxious for national unity. Few Italians thought about the matter at all, and those few wanted confederalism, or at most federalism. And the Catholic Church, far from being necessarily an obscurantist obstacle to the whole movement, very nearly led it.

The patriotic 'Whig' interpretation also assumes that the actual outcome in 1861 – a united Italy, under a constitutional monarchy and parliamentary government – was the best of all possible results. This view has, of course, been criticized over the years, from both Left and Right. On the Left, Giuseppe Mazzini and his republican supporters rejected a regime run by a monarchical, militarist clique in league with a corrupt parliament elected by a tiny minority: the national revolution had, they argued, been undermined by Piedmontese aristocrats – often French-speaking, at that – who ruled for their own benefit, not that of the people. This view has often been repeated by radical historians, particularly those writing after the Resistance

of 1943–5. Moreover, Communist historians have often echoed their mentor Antonio Gramsci in arguing that the Risorgimento was essentially a lost opportunity. There might have been a ‘real’ (social and economic) revolution in mid-nineteenth-century Italy, if only the republicans and ‘democrats’ had allied with the peasantry, instead of supinely joining the ‘moderate’ establishment. The Risorgimento was therefore a ‘passive revolution’, in which most Italians played no part, and in which governments and foreign powers played the key role. That was why the ‘liberal’ rulers of united Italy after 1861 had little popular support. Revolts and rioting became commonplace, and governments for decades ruled by force, not consent. The ‘liberal’ regime was not liberal at all, but just a small elite who were monopolizing power and using it to impose alien values on the masses (Gramsci, 1949).

On the Right, Catholic historians agreed with much of this. Analysing the impact of liberal government on the most observant Catholic regions like Venetia or Lombardy, they too stressed the peasants’ sullen hostility to the new ‘liberal’ regime, and to the liberal imposition of ‘lay’ practices like compulsory state education and civil marriage. Catholic historians argued that after 1848 the essence of the Risorgimento was secularization. The state was exalted, in order to despoil the Church. The Pope was robbed of his **Temporal Power**, the historic Papal States of central Italy; throughout Italy ecclesiastical lands and buildings were seized by the newly powerful. To attack the Church was to attack the people, especially the people’s common resources and welfare provision. More ‘lay’ conservative historians have repeated this theme, with some variations. During the Fascist regime Gioacchino Volpe, for example, argued that the Risorgimento created an Italian state, but not a ‘nation’; that great task still remained to be carried through, by the Fascists (Volpe, 1925). Contemporary patriotic historians, ‘revisionist’ despite themselves, also sometimes lament the *absence* of a glorious national uprising and of a worthy nation-state (Galli della Loggia, 1996).

More recently, criticism of the Risorgimento has become more fundamental. The various pre-unification regimes have found their apologists. Bourbon rule in the Kingdom of Naples, for example, was, if not popular or efficient, at least considerably less unpopular and inefficient than nineteenth-century liberals like Gladstone (who called it ‘the negation of God’) supposed; even its prisons, famously denounced by Gladstone, were better than those of northern, progressive Piedmont (Gladstone, 1851; Morley, 1908: i, 292–300). The Grand Duchy of Tuscany, with its virtual free trade, its relaxed censorship and its highly educated, tolerant duke, was certainly no tyranny; nor, for that matter, was Austrian-run Lombardy-Venetia, at least before 1848. The ‘black legend’ of Austrian misrule was a legend, no more. True, some of the ‘chattering classes’ and professional men like lawyers and doctors were unhappy, but that was because they had little status and could not find

‘Democrats’: Radical, often republican or revolutionary activists.

‘Moderates’: Advocates of constitutional liberalism, opposed to revolution and to secret societies.

Temporal Power: The Pope’s role as ruler of the various Papal States in central Italy (as opposed to his ecclesiastical power as head of the Church, and his spiritual authority on matters of faith and morals). The nineteenth-century Church regarded the Temporal Power as essential, for otherwise the Pope would become the subject of a secular sovereign.

THE ITALIAN RISORGIMENTO

jobs: the true weakness of the old regimes was not despotism or corruption, but failing to distribute enough patronage. Cynical historians, in short, tend to see the Risorgimento as an over-hyped media project, of no interest to most people but of great importance to those who thought they might benefit – journalists, lawyers and a few commercially-minded landowners, as well as the leading aristocrats and the royal dynasty of Piedmont. Unification itself, they argue, was mostly hype too. Italian society remained just as diverse and conflictual after 1861 as it had been before; and the new *state* was not really 'united' either. Parliamentary governments depended on local elites, who controlled the vote; these diverse elites therefore had to be allowed very considerable local power, and a large share in 'national' influence (Romanelli, 1988).

In recent years many historians have also become more 'regionalist' in outlook. They stress that each region had its own traditions, which often survived unification. Southern historians, for example, show that the pre-1861 south was not a stagnant society, and that some of its peculiar institutions, like the huge *latifondo* estates, may have been an appropriate (and sometimes quite recent) response to existing market forces and technology (Petrusewicz, 1996). They also reject patronizing northern concepts like 'backwardness' or 'modernization', and argue that it was unification, with its low tariffs and high taxes, that wrecked the southern economy. 'Unification', indeed, is in their view a misnomer. Italy was not 'unified'; northern Italy simply conquered the south. This provoked a bloody 'resistance' movement that lasted for years. Many contemporary northerners also regard annexing the south as a disastrous error. Gianfranco Miglio, for example, has argued that northern Italy would have been a far more prosperous and effective state on its own, without the economic burden of the south and the bureaucratic inertia of Rome; indeed, the Lombards would have been better off staying under the Austrians, rather than being controlled by the Piedmontese (Miglio, 1994: 93). More subtly, the northerners argue that the united Italian state, never a true reality in any case, has now been superseded by the European Union and by economic 'globalization'. 'Unification' may have seemed progressive in the mid-nineteenth century, but 'nation-states' are now outmoded. At most, 'Italy' should be a 'post-nationalist' term of reference. It may properly remain as one of many overlapping cultural identities, for those who choose to adopt it, but it should not necessarily have any political implications or institutions.

This brings me back to my original definition of the Risorgimento as a dual movement, both cultural and political. But how, if at all, were the 'cultural', ideological aspects linked to the political ones? Was it really via a demand for 'liberty', as I suggested earlier? The answer seems to be 'yes'; indeed, the people who mattered were more interested in 'liberty' than in

'unity' or even 'independence'. By the 1840s (not earlier) some, at least, of the pre-unification states did indeed have a 'legitimacy crisis': influential people stopped believing that their existing governments were entitled to rule them. Like the east European states of the 1980s, the Italian states of the 1840s and 1850s were undermined by an active dissident intelligentsia, aware of developments elsewhere and resentful of censorship and conformity at home. However, this was not true everywhere. It was much less true, if true at all, in Tuscany, Rome or the mainland south. And dissident intellectuals, however eminent or respected, could hardly have undermined established regimes on their own. For that, other factors were also necessary: unpopular changes in land tenure, grazing rights, guild structure and welfare; ineffective policing; administrative and judicial high-handedness. The old states duly obliged. People also needed greater awareness of the European world – easier travel, greater circulation of ideas and journals, heightened awareness of the economic possibilities opened up by the new age of steam and the railway. Above all, perhaps, there had to be foreign approval. The Risorgimento had to be part of a 'European' movement, seeking to achieve in Italy what was already taken for granted in France or Britain. Arguably it was not a 'national' movement at all. Culturally, it was mostly 'European' in its ideas; politically, it was mostly triggered by European rivalries and wars, helped along by dynastic ambitions and a host of small-town, municipal grievances.

However, from 1848 onwards one Italian state did serve as a model. In that year **King Charles Albert of Piedmont** granted a 'liberal' constitution, guaranteeing civil liberties and a representative government responsible to an elected parliament. Piedmont thus became a haven for cultural dissidents; they could publish their writings fairly freely there. States elsewhere became more oppressive after 1848, but there was no 'legitimacy crisis' in Piedmont. On the contrary, Piedmont became a political beacon, the shining light of 'liberalism in one country'. The kings of Piedmont had long hoped to expand their territories, at least into Lombardy and perhaps further. Parliamentary government gave the Piedmontese a plausible claim to national leadership and – eventually – the right to impose their enlightened institutions elsewhere. Federalism, the solution preferred by most patriots before 1848, was abandoned in favour of the Piedmontese constitution. The 'Whig' view may have been ludicrous earlier on, but it became rather more plausible in the 1850s.

Ultimately, of course, 'unification' was achieved not by propaganda nor by constitutions, but by war and by diplomatic alliances to make war. Piedmont had a respectable and disciplined army by Italian standards but it was no match for the Austrians, as was proved in 1848–9. The Piedmontese Prime Minister, **Camillo di Cavour**, therefore had to secure foreign support for his

Charles Albert, King of Sardinia (Piedmont) 1831–49 (b.1798, d.1849): Became Regent in Piedmont on abdication of King Victor Emanuel, 1821; granted constitution but was disowned by new king, Charles Felix, and virtually banished; as king after 1831 abolished feudalism in Sardinia; granted the *Statuto* (constitution), 1847–8; made war on Austrians in Lombardy but was defeated twice, then abdicated, 1848–9.

Cavour, Camillo Benso di (1810–61): Piedmontese aristocrat; Liberal; elected to Piedmontese parliament, 1848; Prime Minister, November 1852; made secret alliance with Napoleon III at Plombières, 1858, leading to joint war against Austria, 1859; manoeuvred brilliantly after Garibaldi's expedition to Sicily, 1860; first Prime Minister of united Italy, 1861.

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ambitions. Foreign armies did most of the actual fighting for Italian unity, not only in 1859 but also in 1866 and 1870. In this sense, too, the Risorgimento was a 'European' movement. However, in most of these campaigns Italian volunteers and guerrilla fighters also played a vital part. It was the 'moderate' landowners and professional men of the patriotic 'National Society' who organized the vital insurrections in central Italy in 1859; it was Garibaldi's improvised expedition that conquered the south in 1860. Both these groups fought for 'Italy'. They illustrate well just how deeply the ideological, cultural movement of the previous decades had penetrated, and how 'cultural identity' could and did inspire political and military struggle. So the Risorgimento was not a 'state-with-an-army' annexing the states that had none; it was the 'state-with-modern-sounding-ideas' overwhelming those with apparently out-moded ones, and also the 'state-with-foreign-backing' succeeding against those without it. The leaders of the Risorgimento may have been a small, unrepresentative minority of the Italian people, and the state they founded may have been 'liberal' largely in rhetoric and posture, but they did at least secure some degree of independence, and they did open up Italy to European trade and partnership. What they did not do was create an Italian 'nation'. If Italian identity is multiple now, it was even more multiple then.