

**FOR A CULTURAL READING OF THE ITALIAN RISORGIMENTO IN
SICILY
THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN ROUTES OF GIUSEPPE LA FARINA,
CARLO GEMELLI, AND SALVATORE CHINDEMI
1800-1860**



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UNIVERSITY OF MALTA
FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

PHD IN HISTORY

**FOR A CULTURAL READING OF THE ITALIAN RISORGIMENTO IN SICILY
THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN ROUTES OF GIUSEPPE LA FARINA, CARLO
GEMELLI, AND SALVATORE CHINDEMI, 1800-1860**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the Sicilian Risorgimento through the biographies of three southern intellectuals and patriots who lived in southern Italy during the Bourbon monarchy of Naples in the first half of the 19th century. The focus is on the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, situated within a Euro-Mediterranean context where major powers of the time, such as Russia, the Ottoman Empire, and above all France and England, contended for the protection of the Bourbon kingdom, particularly Sicily.

The study emphasizes the cultural education of three Sicilian patriots, their experiences during the cholera epidemic, the revolts of 1837, and their involvement in the Sicilian Revolution of 1848, as well as the subsequent Sicilian counterrevolution. Additionally, it explores their experiences of exile, with popular destinations including Tuscany, nearby Malta, France, Belgium, and Piedmont. Ultimately, Piedmont became the final destination for all three protagonists, where they embraced the unification efforts led by the Cavour faction and the House of Savoy, abandoning alternative solutions such as republicanism, separatism, and federalism.

In terms of methodology, I employed a combination of three approaches: Mediterranean studies (New Thalassology), transnational cultural history, and the history of emotions.

Keywords: Global microhistory, biography, transnational patriotism, 1820 Sicilian uprisings, 1837 cholera riots, 1848 Sicilian revolution, Romanticism, Byronism, Italian Risorgimento, Two Sicilies, exile, Mediterranean studies, history of emotions

To the memory of my father, Francesco

DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY

I, the undersigned, Maria Gabriella Tigani Sava, declare that this thesis is my original work, gathered and utilised primarily to fulfil the purpose and objectives of this study, and has not been previously submitted to any other university. I also declare that the publications and archival material cited in this work have been personally consulted.

MARIA GABRIELLA TIGANI SAVA

FIRMA

MARIA GABRIELLA TIGANI SAVA

MAGGIO 2025

PREFACE

This dissertation aims to provide a cultural interpretation of the Risorgimento in Sicily through the biographies of three intellectuals and patriots: Giuseppe La Farina (Messina, 1815 – Turin, 1863), Carlo Gemelli (Messina, 1811 – Bologna, 1886), and Salvatore Chindemi (Syracuse, 1808 – Palermo, 1874).

The three characters at the centre of the narrative have received little attention from historians so far, despite their significant contributions to the nation-building process. This effort aims to bridge that gap.

This research draws on insights from global microhistory by exploring the lives of three patriots alongside broader geopolitical environments and historical developments. The framework of these three biographies revolves around the Euro-Mediterranean region. It examines the cultural development of these intellectuals, their contributions to literature, politics, and journalism, as well as the networks of friendships and contacts they built. They established their presence both locally and internationally, with their personal and public experiences analysed to deepen our understanding of wider global (transnational) processes. These include the British involvement in the Euro-Mediterranean region, particularly in Sicily; the constitutional and political debates of the period; the fight against monarchical absolutism; the cholera riots of 1837; and the influence of Romanticism, which highlights the relationship between culture and nationalism — a point emphasised by contemporary historiography on the Risorgimento.

This study examines Sicily's distinctive features and complex history, distinguishing it from other pre-unification states. Sicily boasts a millennium-long history shaped by the influences of diverse peoples, including the Phoenicians, Greeks, Goths, Romans, Arabs, Normans, Swabians, Angevins, Aragonese, Spaniards, and English. These dominations have left enduring marks on the island's cultural, political, religious, and institutional structures. Beyond any mythical reinterpretation of the past, continuity with this history became evident during the constitutional debates of the first half of the nineteenth century. In fact, Sicilian rebels invoked the Norman laws that established the Parliament and secured the island's autonomy and independence. The War of the Vespers (1382) emerged as a symbol of Sicily's feudal autonomy, serving as a reference point in the struggle for freedom from the Neapolitan government and the restoration of the ancient rights of Parliament during the Risorgimento period.

This research consists of eight chapters presented in narrative form and structured following a chronological, thematic criterion.

Let me provide an overview of the content of each chapter.

Chapter 1 introduces the investigation fields, methodologies, and objectives.

Chapter 2 offers brief biographical notes on the three protagonists of this dissertation. It also examines the evolution of the Sicilian cultural landscape from the Ancien Régime to modernity, mainly through the activism of urban bourgeois classes via the Accademia Peloritana and the spread of Masonic circles, which promoted liberal values. A section is dedicated to the debate on Mediterranean constitutionalism and the influence of the British government, represented by Lord Bentick. In this context, the formation of the constitutional party and its different factions within the Sicilian Parliament, as well as the key figures involved, are also discussed. The final paragraph focuses on terms such as municipalism and Sicilianesimo/regionalismo, which embody concepts that played a significant role in the 1820 revolts and, more generally, in the dynamics of the Risorgimento in Sicily.

Chapter 3 first examines the perspectives of La Farina, Gemelli, and Chindemi on the 1820 uprisings, which laid the foundation for their later involvement in the 1837 uprisings and the 1848 revolution. It then emphasises the Sicilian cultural environment between the 1820s and 1840s, especially the influence of romantic ideas and liberal values that shaped the education of the Sicilian elites to whom the three patriots belonged.

Chapter 4 analyses the experiences of three patriots during the cholera epidemic that affected the Two Sicilies from 1837 to 1838, concentrating on their perceptions and feelings of fear and anguish associated with the disease. It also examines the societal impact of the epidemic, including its political and social consequences, as well as the cholera riots that erupted in numerous Sicilian towns and villages, involving the three protagonists of this study. These riots played a vital role in setting the stage for the 1848 ‘Glorious Revolution’.

Chapter 5 investigates La Farina’s exile in Florence, which occurred during two separate periods: the first from the cholera riots of 1837 until 1838, and the second a longer interval, from 1841 to 1848. During this latter period, for which I was able to access unpublished archival sources, the Sicilian patriot engaged with Viesseux’s circle, maintained close ties with liberal groups in Malta through the Democratic Committee, which was founded in 1840, and actively participated in historical, literary, journalistic, and theatrical pursuits.

Chapter 6 discusses political dissent through anti-Bourbon rhetoric, analysing the press and satire of the time. One section is dedicated to the soundtrack of the Sicilian Revolution of 1848, drawing comparisons with the sounds experienced in other European countries such as France, Austria, and Germany during the same year. Another section highlights the dual struggle faced by Sicilian women, focusing on their involvement in journalism and associations. It also portrays three prominent female figures from the Sicilian intellectual elite.

Chapter 7 explores the dynamics of the 1848 Sicilian revolution through the memoirs and reflections of the three patriots. The key battle sites described by them are identified and highlighted using maps from that period. Although studies have shown increased interest in the 1848 revolutions since the 2000s, we know little about the Sicilian revolution, and existing works offer only a regional perspective. The fact that this revolutionary wave impacted the Two Sicilies before other European countries raises questions about its wider significance.

Chapter 8 explores the exile experiences of the three patriots during the post-1848 period. The opening paragraph examines the counter-revolution in Sicily, analysing the external events that marked the end of the so-called ‘glorious revolution.’ These included shifts in the geopolitical balance within Europe, which also affected the Bourbon Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. Two additional significant factors are discussed: the relationship between the Sicilian people, the monarchy, and the revolution, as well as the stance of the Church of Rome regarding the counter-revolution. The following paragraphs detail La Farina’s exile in France, Gemelli’s and Chindemi’s arrival in Malta, and the historian from Messina’s stay in Belgium. The chapter concludes with the three patriots reaching Piedmont after a prolonged series of journeys across the Mediterranean and northern-central Europe, coinciding with their move towards the moderate path for national unity proposed by Cavour.

AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to the University of Malta for allowing me to complete my project, which I began years ago. From the very start, I was impressed by the attentiveness and care shown by everyone, from teachers to administrative staff, toward activities such as workshops and seminars, courses, lectures and seminars.

I thoroughly enjoyed working in such a stimulating and inclusive environment, and I appreciated the beauty of this small island in the heart of the Mediterranean, rich in light and history.

In particular, I owe a special thanks to Professor Dominic Fenech, my first supervisor, and to Professor Simon Mercieca for their patience and understanding. They accepted me after Professor Christopher Duggan (University of Reading) and Alberto M. Banti (University of Pisa) withdrew from their commitments for various reasons; however, this in no way diminishes my esteem for them.

I also extend my thanks to the university administrators for their support throughout my journey. Additionally, I would like to thank the State Archives of Florence and the libraries in Palermo, Messina, and Syracuse for providing essential resources that facilitated my research during the years of the pandemic.

Culture has always been the most important value my parents instilled in me, serving as an endless source of wisdom, truth, and companionship. As long as I have a new book to read, a new language to learn, and a work of art to admire beyond my personal affections, I will always have something to inspire me and push me forward.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASPBG State Archives of Florence, *Presidenza del Buon Governo. Archivio Segreto (1814-1848)*

Chapter 1

THE KINGDOM OF TWO SICILIES AS A MEDITERRANEAN HUB: METHODOLOGY, SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

1. The Methodological Framework: Is the Global Microhistory Approach Applicable to Sicily?

This research explores the dynamics of the Italian Risorgimento in Sicily through the connected lives of three intellectuals and patriots¹: Giuseppe La Farina (Messina 1815 – Turin 1863), Carlo Gemelli (Messina 1811 – Bologna 1886), and Salvatore Chindemi (Syracuse 1808 – Palermo 1874), which scholarship have neglected and marginalised for too long.

Methodologically, a blend of historical approaches has been utilised, such as global microhistory, transnational cultural history, and, to some extent, the history of emotions. This methodological choice will be explained in the following paragraphs.

Francesca Trivellato argues that global microhistory² merges the narratives of individual lives with macrohistory. Meanwhile, Mark Gamsa and Linda Colley observe that global history has revitalised the study of global biographies.³

The narrative of small spaces, specifically Sicily, may contradict the broader context of global

¹ The term ‘patriots’ (in this case specifically ‘Sicilian patriots’ or ‘Sicilian revolutionaries’ or ‘Sicilian rebels’) is commonly used in scholarship to refer to the Italian *Risorgimento*’s struggles. For example, among others, see E. Blaqui re, *Letters from the Mediterranean [...]* (London, H. Colburn, 1813); D. Mack Smith, *Italy and its Monarchy* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1989); C. Duggan, *The Force of Destiny* (Boston and New York, Houghton Mifflin Company, 2008); L. Ryall, *Garibaldi* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2007). The terms ‘patriotism’, ‘Italian unification’ are also used by some of these authors (Ryall 2007; Duggan 2008).

² P.K. Crossley, P. Kyle, *What is Global History?* (Cambridge, UK, Polity, 2008); D. Sachsenmaier, *Global Perspectives on Global History: Theories and Approaches in a Connected World* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011); N. Zemon Davis, ‘Decentering History: Local Stories and Cultural Crossing in Global World’, in *History and Theory*, 50, no. 2 (2011), 188-202; S. Conrad, *What Is Global History?* (Princeton, Princeton University, 2016); L. Hunt, *Writing History in the Global Era* (New York, Norton, 2014); F. Trivellato, ‘The paradox of global history’, in *Cromohs* (Cyber Review of Modern Historiography), OA, ISSN 1123-7023, 2024, 1-16; ID., *Microstoria, Storia del Mondo e Storia Globale, in A venticinque anni da L'eredit  immateriale, Saggi in onore di Giovanni Levi*, ed. Paola Lanaro (Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2011), 119-131.

³ M. Gamsa, ‘Biography and (Global) Microhistory’, in *New Global Study*, 11(3), 2017, 231-241 (232); for the biographical approach see: G. Levi, ‘Les usages de la biographie’, in *Annales.  conomies, Soci t s, Civilisations*, vol. 44, 6(1989), 1325-1336; M. Ogborn, *Global Lives: Britain and the World, 1550-1800* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008); B. Caine, *Biography and History* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); B. Cossart, ‘“Global Lives”: Writing Global History with a Biographical Approach’, in *Entremons, UFP Journal of World History*, 5 (2013), 1-14; H. Renders et al. (eds), *The Biographical Turn: Lives in History* (London and New York, Routledge, 2017).

history. In contrast, Carlo Ginzburg wrote that microhistory does not indicate the size of the object of study, rather, it signifies an analytical and synchronous methodological approach.⁴

All three protagonists of this study were born in the insular part of the Bourbon kingdom, which did not experience the legacy of the French decade and Murat's government that significantly affected southern Italy during the Age of Revolutions. Nevertheless, Sicily also underwent political, economic, cultural and social changes that influenced the rest of the Bourbon kingdom and contributed to the nationalistic movements spreading across Europe and beyond, including the Americas.

Initially, I needed to reconcile two research needs: firstly, to emphasise the uniqueness of the Sicilian context, which will be discussed further, and secondly, to place the lives and actions of the three patriots within a broader framework. I then reflected on the key question: To what extent can the individual lives of the three Sicilian patriots be considered global (or transnational)? Consequently, I questioned whether the focus of my study would allow me to move beyond methodological nationalism or if I should adopt a narrower view. Thus, the primary research question was: Is the global microhistory methodology applicable to Sicily? The three biographies under examination may not be considered 'global' in a strict conventional sense, unlike those of Vasco da Gama,⁵ Elizabeth Marsh,⁶ and Leo l'Africano,⁷ which encompass extensive travels across multiple continents, crossing various cultures, religions, and languages. Nevertheless, considering this type of space gap, it is essential to note that these three patriots built significant transnational connections, and their individual experiences provided valuable insights into wider historical events. Furthermore, it is crucial to note that the patriots' movements often occurred in great secrecy to evade police checks, making it difficult to know the places reached or individuals met with absolute certainty.

Based on correspondence, writings and memoirs, the three protagonists' relational networks were extensive and enriched by indirect contact. For instance, La Farina and Gemelli were in touch with Michele Amari, who was exiled to France, where notable figures such as Thierry, Thiers, Guizot, and Renan welcomed him. Among Amari's friends were economist Giovanni Arrivabene and Marquise Costanza Arconati. With her husband Giovanni, Costanza Arconati transformed their family castle in Grosbeck, Belgium, into a refuge for many Italian

⁴ 'Microhistory and Worldhistory', in *The Cambridge World History*, J.H. Bentley, S. Subrahmanyam, M. E. Wiesner-Hanks (eds), Cambridge University Press (2015), 446-473 (462). DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139022460.019>

⁵ S. Subrahmanyam, *The career and legend of Vasco da Gama* (Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 1997).

⁶ L. Colley, *The ordeal of Elizabeth Marsh* (London, HarperCollins publishers, 2007).

⁷ N. Zemon Davis, *Trickster travels: a sixteenth-century Muslim between worlds* (New York, Hill and Wang, 2006).

exiles. Gemelli likely relied on the Arconati family for assistance during his exile in Belgium, although we lack sufficient documentation to confirm this. Furthermore, Antonio Panizzi, who was in exile in London, and Stanislao Bonamici in Switzerland were mutual friends of La Farina and Amari. Gian Pietro Viesseux and Giuseppe Ricciardi also formed part of La Farina and Gemelli's social network, as did Giuseppe Oddo, Matteo Raeli, and Ruggiero Settimo (Malta), Giuseppe Ribotti (London), and Vincenzo Natali (Alexandria). Additionally, the Masonic circles of Sicily, of which they were members, expanded the three patriots' contact networks. Similarly, the National Society, founded by La Farina in Piedmont in 1856, sent its emissaries to various countries, including France, England, Germany, Switzerland, Portugal, Egypt, Sweden, Hungary, and the United States of America. These encounters gave the three patriots support, information, opportunities, and interpersonal alliances.

Through the lens of these individual biographies, it has been possible to illuminate broader historical processes such as British expansionist policies and the constitutional debates in the Mediterranean region; the involvement of urban classes during the first half of the nineteenth century in the fight against monarchical absolutism; the impact of transnational cultural currents like Romanticism on the education of intellectuals and patriots, their experiences of exile, and the cholera riots of the 1830s, as well as their strong commitment to the 1848 Sicilian Revolution and its objectives.

The so-called 'glorious revolution' is crucial to this study, as it is the 'local version' of a global process. It should be said that the news of the Sicilian Revolution quickly spread across regional borders and reached other European countries and overseas. For example, the Irish press, *The United Irishman*, published in Dublin, reported that details about the uprising were communicated via correspondence sent to Marseille on the ship *Lombardo*.⁸ The newspaper embraced the Sicilian cause and drew a parallel between Ireland and Sicily, two islands exploited by foreign governments and ruled by a military viceroy. Some newspaper articles emphasise the British Empire's interest in Sicily's riches, such as the sulphurous mines and vineyards.⁹

The three biographies are set within the Euro-Mediterranean context. Consequently, this research acknowledges the contributions of Mediterranean studies, which have evolved significantly in recent decades. Peter N. Miller noted that the 'watery turn' has shifted scholarly focus toward thalassography, which emphasises human experiences, mobility, and the histories

⁸ Ibid., vol. 1 (12 February 1848), 2.

⁹ 'Sicily', in *The United Irishman*, vol. I, 2 (10 February 1848), 30.

of the sea, mainly through microhistories and exchange relations.¹⁰

1.1 The ‘New Thalassology’: a Euro-Mediterranean Setting

The ‘New Thalassology’ has challenged Braudel’s well-known thesis on the natural geographical unity of the Mediterranean area.¹¹ According to this new reading, the exceptionality of the *Mare nostrum* lies in the fragmentation of its complex topography, its high degree of connectivity and the diversity of its ‘micro-regions’. In addition, this perspective disrupts and further expands the classic Mediterranean boundaries, including Central Europe, the Ottoman Empire, the Balkans, North Africa, the North Atlantic and Latin America, reversing centre-periphery relations and integrating the chronology of events.

Claudia Karagozt and Giovanna Summerfield analysed the link between Sicily and the Mediterranean.¹² In their recent work, they depicted Sicily as a meeting place for various civilisations that have interacted, often through conflict, over the millennia, influencing modern Europe’s intellectual and cultural development.

The history of the Mediterranean is mainly the ‘history of human encounters’;¹³ therefore, many scholars have recently shifted attention to life stories in the Mediterranean Sea, as has been said. The *Mare Nostrum*, which is not necessarily made of water, as David Abulafia argued, is understood the most diasporic region in the world.¹⁴ It might also be called the ‘transnational sea’, comparable to a vibrant artery hit by an intense circulation of ideas, goods, warships, religions and people (travellers, immigrants, pirates, refugees, families, and commanders), from antiquity to the present. Ultimately, the central location of the Mediterranean gives new meaning to the historical events that have taken place over the

¹⁰ P. N. Miller, ‘Introduction: The Sea is the Land’s Edge Also’, in id. (ed), *Thalassography and Historiography* (Ann Harbor, MI, The University of Michigan Preindependence, 2013), 1-26.

¹¹ Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l’époque de Philippe II*, 3 vols. (Paris, Armand Colin, 1949); on the thesis of a Mediterranean ‘unity’, see M. Aymard, ‘Fernand Braudel, the Mediterranean, and Europe’, *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 2/1 (1987), 102-14. For a recent critical analysis of Braudel, see M. Isabella, K. Zanolis (eds), *Mediterranean Diasporas: politics and ideas in the long 19th century* (London, Bloomsbury, 2015); G. Piterberg, T.F. Ruiz, and G. Symcox (eds), *Braudel Revisited: the Mediterranean World, 1600-1800* (Toronto, University Toronto Press, 2010), and J. Main (ed), *Early Modern History and the Social Sciences: Testing the Limits of Braudel’s ‘Mediterranean’* (Kirkville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2002). For the ‘New Thalassology’ see: P. Horden and N. Purcell, ‘The Mediterranean and the ‘New Thalassology’, *American Historical Review*, CXI/3 (2006), 722-40; id., *The Corrupting Sea: A Story of the Mediterranean History* (Oxford, Blackwell, 2000); P. Horden, S. Kinoshita (eds), *A Companion to Mediterranean History* (Oxford, Wiley Blackwell, 2014); D. Abulafia, ‘Mediterraneans’, in W.V. Harris (ed), *Rethinking the Mediterranean* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005), 64-93; id., *The Great Sea: A Human History of Humanity* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2011).

¹² *Sicily and the Mediterranean: Migration, Exchange, Reinvention* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

¹³ D. Abulafia, ‘Mediterraneans’, 69.

¹⁴ Ibid.

centuries. Consequently, the process of Italian unification may also be seen from a different perspective, in particular as regards the significant role played by the Italian South, traditionally wrapped in the stereotypical image of a static, homogeneous region isolated from the rest of the world and if not hostile, at least alien to the process of nation-building in Italy.

The idea of a Mediterranean identity for Italy developed during the French decade. Vincenzo Gioberti deepened it later, arguing that ‘the central point of the Mediterranean is Italy’¹⁵ and asking Italy’s new nation to strengthen its naval forces to defend the Mediterranean’s freedom from foreign powers.¹⁶ In addition, according to Guglielmo Pepe, a general in the Bourbon army, the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies was the principal political laboratory for Italian patriots.¹⁷ More recently, Claudio Fogu’s thesis underlines the link between Italy’s and the Mediterranean’s history. This should be analysed within a meta-geographical context and culturally determined.¹⁸ Fogu stressed that Italian-ness stems from the oscillation between two Mediterranean matrices, *emporion*¹⁹ and *imperium*. In his own words:

I traced its formation [the Mediterranean be-longing] to the Archaic Mediterranean of *emporion* (trading colonies), described by Irad Malkin as a ‘multidirectional, decentralised, nonhierarchical, boundless and proliferating, accessible, expansive and interactive system [...] this is what I call the *emporion*, or fishing net matrix of the original Mediterranean imaginary [...] *emporion* was not the sole matrix of be-longing that arose from the ancient Mediterranean. The territorialised reconfiguration of the Mediterranean into a *Mare Nostrum* transfigured the fishing net into a spider web. It produced an *imperium* matrix that has proven historically dominant over the *emporion* imaginary (in all its forms).²⁰

The first term, *emporion*, refers to an idea of the Ancient Mediterranean and trading colonies that are the sociocultural fabric of the Neapolitan Kingdom; the second term describes the Roman and imperialist political model of Mediterranean-ness. From this view, the southern question is a ‘Mediterranean question’.

I, therefore, remapped Sicily within a European-Mediterranean framework. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the island served as a battleground for the major imperial powers—France, Austria, and England—as they vied for hegemony over Europe, particularly

¹⁵ V. Gioberti, *Del Primato morale e civile degli italiani* [1843], (Milano, Reina ed., 1848), 38: (‘Ora il punto centrale del Mediterraneo è l’Italia.’).

¹⁶ Ibid., 85.

¹⁷ G. Pepe, *Memoria sui mezzi che menano all’italiana indipendenza*, prefazione di A. Carrel (Paris, Paulin, 1833), 19.

¹⁸ *The Fishing Net and the Spider Web. Mediterranean Imaginaries and the Making of Italians* (New York, Palgrave, 2020); see also his ‘From Mare nostrum to Mare aliorum. Mediterranean Theory and mediterraneism in Contemporary Italian Thought’, *California Italian Studies*, 1 (2010), <https://doi.org/10.5070/C311008856>, and C. Fogu and Lucia Re (ed.), ‘Italy in the Mediterranean’, *California Italian Studies*, 1 (2010), 1-9.

¹⁹ Claudio Fogu used the more ancient Greek term ‘emporion’ instead of the Roman term ‘emporium’.

²⁰ Introduction’: *The Fishing Net and the Spider Web*, 1-10 (6).

Italy. Additionally, the Bourbons of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies were connected to the Spanish, Habsburg, Russian, and Ottoman empires due to familial, political, and commercial ties. Consequently, these dynastic relationships and the diplomatic manoeuvres of alliances and counter-alliances directly impacted Europe's overseas empires. More precisely, the space of the movements of the three patriots includes Italy (Florence, Rome, and Turin), France (Toulouse, Paris, and Marseille), Switzerland (Zurich and Geneva), Belgium (Brussels), and Malta. These displacements created a multifaceted identity, called 'Mediterranean liberals' who were 'the advocates of transnational liberalism, sharing the struggles for constitutions, civil rights, and parliaments.'²¹

We can find the idea of Mediterranean-ness in some Sicilian patriots' works. For instance, Michele Amari explored the 'ancient independence of the Kingdom of Sicily' in the context of the medieval Mediterranean.²² Yet, Giuseppe La Farina participated in the political debates of the second half of the nineteenth century regarding the construction of a maritime canal at the Isthmus of Suez. This canal aimed to connect the West with the East, linking the Mediterranean to the Red Sea.²³ The Sicilian historian argued that the peoples along the Mediterranean coast, particularly the ports of Southern Italy, would benefit from the canal, as it would open access to northeastern Egypt and the Sinai Peninsula. He noted that Sicilian ports would enhance trade with Abyssinia and Yemen, especially with the city of Moka and its lucrative markets for coffee, incense, and rubber. Furthermore, this trade would extend to eastern Beit-el-Jakib, Dehidda (the port of Mecca), and Muscat in Oman, central to commerce between the East Indies, the Arabian Gulf, and the Persian Gulf.

Gemelli and Chindemi's works are rooted in the same Mediterranean landscape and focus on classical Greece, especially the fifth-century BC Athenian culture. Indeed, that culture embodies values of freedom, democracy, beauty, and goodness at an ideal level. Furthermore, those values are strongly reflected in the philhellenism of the three patriots, who drew inspiration from ancient Greece to shape their political ideas.

As previously mentioned, the first research concern was Sicily's uniqueness, considering the island's particular cultural, political, economic and social features during the *Risorgimento*. For this reason, we can Sicily can be regarded as 'a kingdom within a kingdom'. Among its distinctive aspects, we can identify at least three factors:

²¹ T. Hauswedell, A. Körner, U. Tiedau (eds), *Re-mapping Centre and Periphery: Asymmetrical Encounters in European and Global Context* (London, UPress, 2019), 128.

²² Prefazione', *La guerra del Vespro siciliano scritta da Michele Amari* (Firenze, Le Monnier, 1851), v-xvi (viii).

²³ 'Del taglio dell'Istmo di Suez' (marzo 1856), in *Scritti politici di G. La Farina. Raccolti e pubblicati da A. Franchi*, vol. I (Milano, D. Salvi & C., 1870), 416-428.

- 1) Sicily remained one of the few European regions that was not incorporated into the Napoleonic Empire and, instead, for its strategic position, became the stronghold of the English Crown's anti-French policy;
- 2) Due to the distance from Naples, the royal seat, and a long tradition of viceroyalty, in Sicily the noble families held more powers in comparison to other regions of the Two Sicilies;
- 3) the third factor concerns Sicily's '*insolanità*', a term preferred to 'insularity', which, according to the nissology (or island studies) is 'an intervening variable that does not determine, but shapes and conditions in distinct and distinctly relevant ways, physical and social events'.²⁴

Following Napoleon's defeat and the decisions made at the Congress of Vienna, the geopolitical landscape shifted to strengthen the British Empire's influence in the Mediterranean basin and the Middle East.²⁵ During the Napoleonic Wars, many Mediterranean islands were occupied, and this 'insular strategy', as Diletta D'Andrea called it,²⁶ included Sicily, which is considered 'crucial' for the interests of the British Empire. Southern Italy, especially Calabria, became a battleground between France and the anti-French coalition led by Britain. Indeed, in 1704, Admiral Rooke's forces captured the fortress of Gibraltar, and just four years later, the English seized Menorca in the Balearic Islands. By 1813, the Royal Navy had taken control of the Grand Harbour of Valletta, and two years later, the British protectorate expanded to include the seven Ionian Islands.

When discussing Sicily, examining the so-called 'English decade' from 1806 to 1816,²⁷ is crucial. During this period, liberal forces advanced various political theories, proposed constitutional projects and strategies to combat absolutism. Sicilian intellectuals engaged in the broader debates around 'Mediterranean constitutionalism'.²⁸ This latter brought together liberal

²⁴ Quoted in G. Baldacchino, '*Studiando il nostro mondo di isole. Fondamenti, storie, prospettive*', in F. Sedda (a cura di), *Isole. Un arcipelago semiotico* (Roma, Meltemi, 2019), 223-255 (242): ("una variabile interveniente che non determina, ma modella e condiziona in modi distinti, e distintamente rilevanti, gli eventi fisici e sociali"). On geopolitical and cultural peculiarities of the islands and how they influence the autonomist and separatist claims, see: A. A. Moles, E. Rohmer, *Psychosociologie de l'espace* (Paris, Casterman, 1978); Id., 'Nissologie ou sciences des îles', in *L'Espace géographique*, n. 4, 1982, 281-289; G. McCall, 'Nissology: The Study of Islands', *Journal of the Pacific Society*, vol. 17, 1994, n. 2-3, 1-11.

²⁵ G. Grieco, 'British imperialism and Southern liberalism: re-shaping the Mediterranean space, c. 1817-1823', in *Global Intellectual History*, 2018, 13(2), 202-230. DOI: 10.1080/23801883.2018.1450618; R. Holland, *Blue-Water Empire: The British in the Mediterranean since 1800* (London, Allen Lane, 2012).

²⁶ Nel "*decennio inglese*" 1806-1815. *La Sicilia nella politica britannica dai "Talenti" a Bentinck* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2008), 30.

²⁷ G. Bianco, *La Sicilia durante l'occupazione inglese 1806-1815* (Palermo, Reber, 1902).

²⁸ E. Sciacca, 'Il modello costituzionale inglese nel pensiero politico in Sicilia tra Sette ed Ottocento', in *Il modello costituzionale inglese e la sua ricezione nell'area mediterranea tra la fine del '700 e la prima metà dell'800, Atti del seminario internazionali di studi in memoria di Francesco Tomas y Valiente* (Messina, 14-16 novembre 1996), a cura di A. Romano (Milano, 1998), 375-390; Id., *Riflessi del costituzionalismo europeo in Sicilia (1812-1815)*, (Catania, Bonanno, 1966), 12-15; D. Novarese, 'Tra Francia e Inghilterra: Riflessioni sulla Carta costituzionale del 1812', in *Il modello costituzionale inglese e la sua ricezione nell'area mediterranea fra la fine del 700 e la*

factions from across Europe, typically aligning around three main constitutional models: the French, the English, and, following 1812, the Cadiz model.

1.1.1 The British Decade (1806-1816) and the Constitutional Debates

Much has been written recently about British imperialism and ‘British constitutionalism’,²⁹ the latter understood as two opposing forms of hegemony: liberal and despotic.³⁰ In Sicily, as Robert Holland argues, many liberals viewed the presence of the English as the only safeguard against the Bourbons.³¹ Remaining untouched by the Napoleonic conquest, Sicily, supported by the British fleet and a military garrison, became a constitutional nursery in the heart of the Mediterranean. Many questions arose concerning this matter, such as what Sicily’s role was in the Anglo-Mediterranean context? What constitutional model did the Sicilian patriots aspire to? What role did Lord Bentinck play in establishing the Sicilian constitution of 1812? In particular, what were La Farina’s, Gemelli’s and Chindemi’s views regarding the events of 1812, even though they did not participate due to their age?

The writings of the three protagonists who examined the political makeup of the Sicilian Parliament in 1812 were analysed. This included the constitutional debates among Sicilian patriots such as Abbot Paolo Balsamo, Count Aceto, Niccolò Palmeri, and Michele Amari, the features of the Sicilian Constitution, and reflections on its failure. The investigation also discusses how the concepts of Sicilianism and municipalism may have interacted with the constitutional debates, influencing revolutionary dynamics and shaping regional identity.

1.1.2 Sicilianism and Regionalism/Municipalism

This study did not aim to define the above terms. Still, the objective was to examine how Sicilian patriots like Gemelli and La Farina considered the concepts of ‘regionalism’ and ‘municipalism’, seeking to understand how and whether these factors have influenced liberal and constitutional forces on the island.

prima metà dell’800, 771-812; E. Pelleriti, *1812-1848. La Sicilia tra due costituzioni* (Milano, Giuffrè, 2000); D. Novarese, *La tradizione “inventata”. La costruzione dell’ideologia parlamentare in Sicilia fra XVI e XIX secolo* (Milano, Giuffrè Editore, 2011); J. A. Davis, ‘The Spanish Constitution of 1812 and the Mediterranean Revolutions (1820–1825)’, *Bulletin for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies*, 37, 2 (2012), 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.26431/0739-182X.1132>. Available at: <https://digitalcommons.asphs.net/bsphs/vol37/iss2/7>.

²⁹ C. R. Ricotti, ‘Il costituzionalismo britannico nel Mediterraneo (1794-1818): alle origini del ‘modello siciliano’, in *Clio*, XXXI (1995), n. 1, 5-63.; id., *Il costituzionalismo britannico nel Mediterraneo* (Milano, Giuffrè, 2005).

³⁰ L. Cooley interprets British constitutionalism as an instrument of imperial rule: *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (Yale, University Press, 2009).

³¹ R. Holland, *Blue-Water Empire: The British in the Mediterranean since 1800* (London, Allen Lane, 2012).

A question arises. What does Sicilian-ness – or, as some scholars prefer, Sicilianism – mean? Answering this question involves a complex discussion that this study cannot fully address. Sicily's uniqueness is closely linked to its ancient history, which is intertwined with the Mediterranean. From this perspective, Sicily represents an almost unexplored Mediterranean hub, serving as an international trade route and an eclectic space where new ideas of freedom, nationality, and democracy emerged.

Linda Colley has argued that we can see Great Britain as 'an invented nation superimposed',³² and Britishness as a factor that emerged from blending internal differences among the Welsh, Scottish, and English. This process occurred between 1707, the year of the Act of Union uniting Wales, England, and Scotland, and 1837, marking the beginning of the Victorian era. Similarly, the process of cultural mixing in Sicily — often regarded as a nation by many rebels during the *Risorgimento* — took place much earlier, through a succession of sixteen different dominations over the centuries. An example of the legacy of the past is given by Michele Amari's *La guerra del Vespro siciliano*.³³ The author, a scholar of Arab Sicily and one of the most ardent patriots, wrote in the Preface that during the revolution of 1848, the Sicilians fought to restore a form of government that had lasted on the island for seven centuries, inherited from the Middle Ages and unknown on mainland Italy. Amari's work was enthusiastically received abroad and among Italian patriots such as Francesco Domenico Guerrazzi, Giovan Battista Niccolini, Gino Capponi, Giuseppe Borghi, and Pietro Giordani. Giuseppe La Farina, a fraternal friend of the author, shared Amari's ideas and read his work, which was 'devoured rather than read in two days', during his second exile in Florence.³⁴

The main argument is that isolationist particularism, also known as 'Sicilianism', 'regionalism' or 'municipalism', originated during a specific historical period in the Middle Ages when Sicily was under Norman rule. Pre-unitarian regionalism has developed a long debate among scholars. Ernesto Pontieri first questioned regionalist historiography.³⁵ He defined 'municipalism' according to three criteria. The first factor is geographical and connected to insularism: in other words, living on an island, the Sicilians felt the need for isolation and

³² L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (Yale, University Press, 2009), 5.

³³ 'Preface', *La guerra del Vespro siciliano* (Florence, Le Monnier, 1851), v-xvi (viii). The work was printed for the first time in Palermo in March 1842, with the title *A period of the Sicilian stories of the thirteenth century*, and suffered Bourbon censorship, causing the author's exile in France. A second edition of the work, with the current title and enriched by new research in the French archives came to light in Paris in two volumes in 1843. A third edition was published in Lugano, under the false name of Paris, in 1844, and two translations of it, in German and English, in 1850.

³⁴ 'Letter to Michele Amari', Florence, June 24, 1842, in A. d'Ancona, *Carteggio di Michele Amari, raccolto e postillato coll'elogio di Lui*, vol. II (Torino, Roux Frassati & c., 1896), 47.

³⁵ E. Pontieri, *Il tramonto del baronaggio siciliano* (Firenze, Sansoni, 1943).

separation from the rest of the peninsula. According to a second questionable ethnic factor, regionalism is due to the alleged characteristics of the Sicilian populations, of ‘fierce and boiling nature’, also resulting from ‘the mixture of Arab blood and Norman blood’.³⁶ The last factor linked Sicilianism to the historical past of Sicilians, ‘free from any subjugation, independent of any foreigner and only subject to their kings’³⁷ during the four centuries from Roger I of Altavilla to Alfonso the Magnanimous. In 1820, the ancient franchises and all the privileges enjoyed by the Sicilian nobility and municipalities, as well as the introduction of the third arm of the municipalities, which went to join those of the clergy and nobles within the Sicilian Parliament, seem to date back to the time of Federico II and the Hohenstaufen dynasty. In his classic work, Pontieri understood regionalism as the predominant Sicilian baronage on social, economic and institutional levels. Following Pontieri’s thesis, Rosario Romeo argued that the struggle for the independence of the Sicilian barons in the first half of the nineteenth century was reactionary and, in essence, directed to the defence of the island’s particularism. He claimed, ‘Strengthening the Parliament meant strengthening the bulwarks of political and economic privilege for the nobility. The struggle for independence, conducted with great enthusiasm and sincerity, acquired a reactionary value from this point of view as a reaffirmation of a state of affairs rooted in medieval particularism.’³⁸ Romeo, however, did not fail to recognise within the aristocratic class, alongside a more conservative component and attached to the secular privileges they had enjoyed in the past, a more progressive current. Carlo Gemelli, born into an ancient aristocratic family from Messina, is a fitting example of the Sicilian noble class’s cultural and political renewal process that came to embrace nationalist and unitary ideals.

Giuseppe Giarizzo’s assertion that Sicilianism originated in the eighteenth century is a different and even more recent perspective. He wrote that it emerged from the conflict between the Neapolitan government and the island’s political and cultural elites. Later, during the era of nationalism, this sentiment intensified due to the struggle between the Bourbon monarchy and the Palermitan aristocracy. By the twentieth century, it evolved to incorporate aspects of pre-unification anti-Neapolitan sentiment and the broader anti-state feelings present in southern Italy.³⁹

³⁶ *Storia politica d'Italia: Scritta da una Società di professori*, vol. 9 (Milano, F. Vallardi Ed., 1897), 155.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Il Risorgimento in Sicilia* (Bari, Laterza, 1950), 30: (‘Rafforzare il Parlamento significava, per la nobiltà, rafforzare i baluardi del privilegio politico ed economico; e anche la lotta per l’indipendenza, che pure fu condotta con grande entusiasmo e sincerità, acquistava da questo punto di vista un valore nettamente reazionario, in quanto riaffermazione di uno stato di cose che aveva le sue radici nel particolarismo medievale.’).

³⁹ *Città in guerra: Sicilia 1820-21* (Bari-Roma, Laterza, 2022).

Recent work by Giuseppe Barone⁴⁰ has linked events in Sicily to the new political culture emerging from the French Revolution and to the liberal and constitutional movements active in southern Europe, often referred to as the ‘Mediterranean Risorgimenti.’ He argued that the uprisings of 1820-21 were fundamentally a ‘civil war’ among local elites, including the nobility and the emerging bourgeois classes, who embraced the nationalist ideals circulating throughout Europe. According to the well known Gramscian interpretation, these urban and non-peasant revolts were characterised by widespread conflicts that set neighbouring cities and regions against one another. These tensions were intensified by the new institutional changes introduced by the Bourbon administrative reforms of 1816-1817, which were inspired by Napoleonic centralisation. These reforms disrupted the established urban hierarchies in Sicily, granting economic and political advantages to some cities while disadvantaging others. For example, Palermo lost its status as the capital of the Kingdom. This situation led to inter-municipal conflicts and rivalries, commonly called the ‘bell-tower wars.’⁴¹

The uprisings of 1820-1821 that occurred in Sicily were analysed from a cultural perspective. Drawing inspiration from American historian Lynn Hunt’s⁴² work on the symbolism of the French Revolution, I focused on the rhetoric used by the Sicilian patriots. This included examining aspects such as their clothing and the currency in circulation during that revolutionary period. Additionally, I analysed the reflections of these three patriots on those Carbonari upheavals, which provided helpful information for understanding the island’s social and political conditions, particularly of Messina, Palermo and Syracuse, in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Before discussing the second approach adopted in this study — transnationalism — I would like to focus on a long-debated issue: the political, economic, and social conditions of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies in the first half of the nineteenth century. This aspect cannot be separated from considerations regarding the nature of political leadership of the Bourbon monarchy. Was the latter, in particular, reformist or highly reactionary? It is essential to distinguish between the mid-eighteenth century, during the rule of Charles III, who was oriented toward reformism, and the subsequent years leading up to the period of unification. Furthermore, a thorough analysis would require a separate examination. However, two main historiographical trends emerged regarding this issue. The first categorises the kingdom’s circumstances as exceptional, suggesting that the backwardness of Southern Italy and Bourbon

⁴⁰ *La guerra di Sicilia: il distretto di Caltagirone nella rivoluzione 1820-21* (Bonanno, 1992).

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1984).

monarchical absolutism were unique cases in the European context. The second perspective argues that the conditions of 'stagnation' and 'backwardness' were similar to those of other parts of Europe.⁴³ From this latter viewpoint, a third strand emerged: Neo-Bourbonism, often represented by non-professional historians. Consequently, the memoirs about the Two Sicilies and the Neapolitan Bourbon dynasty appear diverse and conflicting.

1.1.3 Divisive Memories of the Two Sicilies: Stereotypes, Myths, New Perspectives, and Mystifications

Research on Southern Italy in the second post-war period focused on the rural countryside, the agrarian bourgeoisie, and the concept of 'peasant civilisation.' During the 1970s and 1980s, scholars explored socio-economic issues related to the Mezzogiorno, following Italy's unification. Key topics concern the origins of the 'Southern Question,' brigandage, the Cassa per il Mezzogiorno,⁴⁴ and the economic disparities between the two regions of the Italian peninsula.⁴⁵

A new perspective of Southern Italy emerged in the mid-1980s with the foundation of the IMES (Southern Institute of History and Social Sciences) and its *Meridiana. Rivista di storia e scienze sociali* journal. The collaborators of IMES, including Augusto Placanica, Mario Barbagli, Piro Bevilacqua, Paolo Sylos Labini, Rosario Villari, Vittorio Consolo, and Gabriella Gribaudi, among others, set the goal of rethinking the categories of scientific analysis of the South, born from the reflection on classical meridionalism.⁴⁶ The IMES's studies provided a

⁴³ For criticism of the category of 'exceptionalism' see Galasso, *L'altra Europa. Per un'antropologia storica del Mezzogiorno d'Italia* (Milano, Mondadori, 1982), 456-460. For an overview of the economic, environmental and cultural changes affecting southern Italy see F. Barbagallo, *La modernità squilibrata del Mezzogiorno d'Italia* (Torino, Einaudi, 1994).

⁴⁴ The Cassa per il Mezzogiorno was established by law number 646 on August 10, 1950, with the purpose of financing projects of significant public interest in Southern Italy. This 12-year fund aimed to promote economic and social development in the region. For more information on this topic, see A. Lepore, *La Cassa per il Mezzogiorno e la Banca Mondiale. Un modello per lo sviluppo economico italiano* (Soveria Mannelli, Rubbettino, 2013); S. Cafiero, *Storia dell'intervento straordinario del Mezzogiorno (1950-1993)* (Manduria: Lacaita, 2000), and G. Pescatore, *La «Cassa per il Mezzogiorno». Un'esperienza italiana per lo sviluppo* (Bologna, il Mulino, 2008). See also A. Placanica, *Cassa Sacra e beni della Chiesa nella Calabria del Settecento* (Napoli, 1970).

⁴⁵ See, for example, A. Lepre, *Storia del Mezzogiorno nel Risorgimento* (Roma, Editori Riuniti, 1969); A. Lepre, P. Villani, *Storia del Mezzogiorno moderno e contemporaneo* (Napoli, Guida, 1974). For an overview of the historiography up to the end of the 1990s see Anna Maria Rao, 'Mezzogiorno e rivoluzione: Trent'anni di storiografia', in *Studi Storici* (ott-dice 1996), 37, No. 4, 981-1041.

⁴⁶ For the first 'Meridionalismo' (Southernism), see L. Franchetti and S. Sonnino, *La Sicilia nel 1876* (Firenze, Barbera, 1877); G. Fortunato, *Il Mezzogiorno e lo Stato italiano: discorsi politici*, II vols (1st. ed. Bari, Laterza, 1911); for a socialist reading of the agrarian-industrial bloc in post-unification Italy, see G. Salvemini, *Scritti sulla questione meridionale* (1896-1955) (Torino, Einaudi, 1958); A. Gramsci, *La questione meridionale* [1912], with an introduction by F. De Felice and V. Parlati (Roma, Editori Riuniti, 1966); on the causes of brigandage, see P. Villari, *Le lettere meridionali*; on the need for a process of industrialisation to be initiated in the South, see F. S. Nitti, *Nord e Sud* (Torino, Roux e Viarengo, 1900) and *Napoli e la Questione meridionale* (Napoli, Piero, 1903).

more complex line of interpretation, so-called revisionist ‘critical’ and revisionist ‘modernising’, focused on the dynamics of change in the contemporary Mezzogiorno.⁴⁷ Current topics of IMES’ studies were families, urban workers instead of peasants, mafia organisation, and networks of relations, production and exchange instead of backwardness.

In the late 1990s, Robert Lumley and Jonathan Morris edited a collection of essays, *The New History of the Italian South. The Mezzogiorno Revisited* introduced a new debate among revisionist historians who shared the thesis that the history of Southern Italy has been limited to the ‘Southern question’. Furthermore, these scholars argued that the South should not be conceived as a whole and homogeneous ‘backwards’ region but as a set of differentiated realities, which does not allow a superficial schematisation based on a series of commonplaces.⁴⁸

Since 2000, scholars have focused on revising the history of the South, re-evaluating analytical categories and modernising methodological approaches.⁴⁹ In particular, the historiography on the Bourbon Kingdom of the Two Sicilies and the Italian *Risorgimento* has had to deal with the ‘cultural turn.’⁵⁰ Initial hesitations, which Alessandro Arcangeli attributed to the weight of the Crociana tradition and a preference for the history of ideas,⁵¹ have been

For the hypothesis of a national political solution to the Southern Question, see L. Sturzo, *La battaglia meridionalista*, G. De Rosa (a cura di) (Roma, Bari, Laterza, 1979); for the thesis of a ‘royal conquest’ of the South on the initiative of the House of Savoy, see G. Dorso, *La rivoluzione meridionale. Saggio storico-politico sulla lotta politica in Italia* (Torino, Gobetti, 1925); P. Villani, *Le lettere meridionali ed altri scritti sulla questione sociale in Italia*, with an introduction of F. Barbagallo (Napoli, Guida, 1979). On the suggestions to go beyond the classical themes of meridionalism see G. Giarrizzo, ‘Sicilia e Mezzogiorno nell’età giolittiana’, in *La modernizzazione difficile. Città e campagne nel Mezzogiorno dall’età giolittiana al fascismo*, Atti del convegno, Catania 29-31 ottobre 1981 (Bari, De Donato, 1983), now in id, *Mezzogiorno senza meridionalismo. La Sicilia, lo sviluppo, il potere* (Venezia, Marsilio, 1992).

⁴⁷ R. Gravina, P. Di Gregorio and F. Ramella, ‘Attività dell’Imes’, *Meridiana*, No. 21 (settembre 1994), 263-274.

⁴⁸ *The New History of the Italian South. The Mezzogiorno Revisited* (Exeter, University of Exeter Press, 1997).

⁴⁹ For this subject, see M. Isabella, ‘Rethinking Italy’s Nation-Building 150 Years Afterward: The New Risorgimento Historiography’, *Past and Present*, 217 (2012), 247-268; J. A. Davis, ‘The South and the Risorgimento: Histories and Counter histories’, *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 1 (2014), 53-61; M. Meriggi, ‘Il Risorgimento rivisitato: un bilancio’, in A. Roccucci (a cura di), *La costruzione dello Stato-nazione in Italia* (Roma, Viella, 2012), 39-57; id., ‘Legitimism, Liberalism and Nationalism: The Nature of the Relationship between North and South in Italian Unification’, *Modern Italy*, 19 (1), 2014. DOI: 10.1080/13532944.2013.871421

⁵⁰ For the cultural turn at a more general level, see L. Hunt, *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley, University California Press, 1989); L. Hunt, V.E. Bonnell, R. Biernacki (eds.), *Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture* (Berkeley, University California Press, 1999); J. Appleby, L. Hunt, M.J. Jacob (eds.), *Telling the Truth about History* (New York and London, Norton & Company, 1994); R. Chartier, *Cultural History: Between Practices and Representations*, trans. by L. G. Cochrane (Ithaca, N.Y, Cornell University Press, 1988) [It. Trans. edited by A. Arcangeli, Verona, Quiedit, 2010]; J.-P. Rioux, J.-F. Sirinelli (ed.), *Pour une histoire culturelle* (Paris, Le Seuil, 1997); A. Green, *Cultural History* (New York, Palgrave MacMillan, 2008); L. Hunt, *La storia culturale nell’età globale* (Pisa, Ets, 2010); A. Arcangeli, *Che cos’è la storia culturale* (Roma, Carocci, 2007); J. Rogge (ed.), *Cultural History in Europe. Institutions, themes, perspectives* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2011); J. Serna, A. Pons, *La Historia cultural* (Madrid: Akal, 2005).

⁵¹ A. Arcangeli, ‘Cultural History in Italy’, in *Cultural History in Europe: Institutions – Themes – Perspectives*, ed. J. Rogge (Bielefeld, Transcript Verlag, 2011), 239–256. Jstor, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv1xxs28.16. Accessed 15 April 2023. On the Italian declination of cultural history, see also C. Sorba, F. Mazzini, *La svolta culturale. Com’è cambiata la pratica storiografica* (Bari and Roma Laterza, 2021); C. Sorba, ‘La storia culturale. Parabole

overcome. An example is the essay by Nelson Moe, *The View from Vesuvius. The Italian Culture and the Southern Question* (2002) shifted the focus to a cultural reading of the Mezzogiorno. In Moe's analysis, the representation of Southern backwardness results from the interaction between intellectual Southerners (such as Genovesi and Galanti), Northerners, and the gaze of foreigners. He writes: '[...] visions of the South were produced within a broader geographical and historical context, shaped, in particular, by the accentuation of Western Eurocentrism after the mid-eighteenth century.'⁵² Furthermore, Moe took a different approach to explore the classic theme of North/South dualism, which was central in the earlier Meridionalism and served as the starting point for discussing the South. John A. Davis also provided an alternative reading of the South of Italy. In his *Naples and Napoleon: Southern Italy and the European Revolutions 1780-1860* (2006), he redeemed southern Italy from a historiographic tradition that has emphasised its social and political backwardness. He focused on the French Decade, a period in which the Bourbon Kingdom, albeit with its contradictions, was the first to experience, more violently than elsewhere, the political, social, and economic changes that preceded the unification of Italy and led the nation to modernity. Davis's analysis is innovative in proposing a non-stereotypical image of Southern Italy.

On the other hand, in her work *Borbonia Felix*, Renata De Lorenzo offers a detailed analysis of public finance institutions while exploring the economic conditions of the South. She challenged the stereotype of a prosperous Bourbon kingdom, addressing what she called the 'misunderstanding of southern supremacy.'⁵³ Eugenio Di Rienzo argues that there is no credible evidence supporting the existence of a *Borbonia Felix* land. He also contends that the idea of a thriving industrial system in the Bourbon kingdom is equally mistaken. The notable achievements often cited by Neoborbonic proponents, such as the Calabrian steel production in Mongiana, the Pietrarsa mechanical engineering industry, and the silk industry in San Leucio, had only a minor impact on the overall economy of the Kingdom. Nevertheless, Di Rienzo dismisses the negative stereotypes associated with this period, the so-called 'black legend' about the South. Nonetheless, at the same time, he also downplays the developmental gap between the South and the North of Italy, as well as with European powers.⁵⁴

di un approccio critico al passato', *Memoria e ricerca*, 40 (2012); C. Sorba, 'A chi giova la storia culturale? Diverse definizioni di un campo di studi in Francia e in Italia', *Il mestiere di storico*, X, 1 (2018), 5-25.

⁵² *The View from Vesuvius. The Italian Culture and the Southern Question* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, University of California Press, 2006), 'Introduction', 2.

⁵³ R. De Lorenzo, *Borbonia felix. Il Regno delle Due Sicilie alla vigilia del crollo* (Roma, Salerno Editrice, 2013).

⁵⁴ E. Di Rienzo, *Il Regno delle Due Sicilie e le potenze europee, 1830-1860* (Soveria Mannelli, Rubbettino, 2012); id., *L'Europa e la 'questione napoletana', 1861-1870* (Nocera Superiore, D'Amico Editore, 2016).

More recently, Carmine Pinto has focused on the resistance of the Bourbons from 1867 to 1911. Following Italy's unification, the Bourbon monarchy refused to recognise the new nation-state and instead aimed to restore the Bourbon kingdom. To achieve this goal, the Bourbons enlisted the support of legitimists, clergy representatives, and even brigands hired to pursue their objectives.⁵⁵ Notable royalists, primarily Pietro Callà Ulloa,⁵⁶ Giacinto de Sivo,⁵⁷ and Raffaele de Cesare,⁵⁸ promoted nostalgic proposals to reconstitute the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. In reality, after the unification of Italy, a 'war for memory' began, as Pinto called it, lasting until the First World War.⁵⁹ The efforts of these and other legitimists have provided Neo-Borbonists with material to justify their beliefs, and they continue to do so.⁶⁰

The neo-Bourbon claims encompass several key points, including, for instance, the existence of an independent and autonomous State, the 'Nazione napoletana' transformed into a prosperous Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. Others points are: the Bourbon prestigious monarchy; the conquest of the Two Sicilies by the Sardinian-Piedmontese army, which resulted in the subsequent Piedmontization of the former kingdom; the plundering of the wealthy Bourbon treasury; and the mythologising of the brigades, which were reimagined as defenders of the impoverished southern populace. The nostalgic and victim-oriented perspective of neo-Borbonism is encapsulated in their thesis, which historiography has been deemed antihistorical. This thesis posits that the unification of Italy, enforced from above by Cavour, Garibaldi and Vittorio Emanuele II, resulted in the conquest of the Bourbon Kingdom. This realm had previously experienced prosperity and happiness, and later eradicated by the Unity. In addition to the previously mentioned industrial centres of Mongiana, Pietrarsa, and San Leucio, another Bourbon landmark is Italy's first railway, the Napoli-Portici line, which has been celebrated by

⁵⁵ 'Gli ultimi borbonici. Narrazioni e miti della nazione perduta duo-siciliana (1867-1911)', *Meridiana*, 88 (2014) [Crolli borbonici], 61-82. See also his *Il patriottismo di guerra napoletano (1861-1866)*, in *Nuova Rivista Storica*, 3 (2016), 841-69. Silvia Sonetti also examined the clash between legitimists' duosiciliani and nationalists supporter of the unity of Italy and Vittorio Emanuele II. Both were engaged in the so-called 'war for the South': *La guerra per l'indipendenza. Francesco II e le Due Sicilie nel 1860* (Soveria Mannelli, Rubbettino, 2021); id., 'Carlo e Filippo Pisacane: un conflitto civile privato nel Mezzogiorno borbonico', *Meridiana*, 81, 3, 2014 [Crolli borbonici], 151-168.

⁵⁶ Pietro Calà Ulloa (1801-1879). Magistrate and essayist, He was the last Prime Minister of the Two Sicilies and author of the manifesto of the Bourbon legitimism, his *Lettere napoletane*.

⁵⁷ *Storia delle Due Sicilie dal 1847 al 1861*, Trieste (but Napoli, 1868), now Berisio, Napoli, 1964.

⁵⁸ R. De Cesare, *La fine di un regno*, III ed. con aggiunte, nuovi documenti e indice dei nomi (Città di Castello, Lapi, 1908-09).

⁵⁹ 'Crisi globale e conflitti civili. Nuove ricerche e prospettive storiografiche', in *Meridiana*, 78 (2013), 9-30 (10).

⁶⁰ Among the most famous representatives of the neoborbonic vein are journalists and essayists Pino Aprile (*Terroni, Tutto quello che è stato fatto perché gli italiani del Sud diventassero «meridionali»* (Piemme, 2010); *L'Italia è finita. E forse è meglio così* (Piemme, 2018); *Meglio soli. La secessione del Sud, stanco di essere colonia* (Piemme, 2024) and Luigi (Gigi) Di Fiore, *Controstoria dell'Unità d'Italia. Fatti e misfatti del Risorgimento* (Milano; Roma, Rizzoli, 2007); id., *Briganti! Controstoria della guerra contadina nel Sud dei Gattopardi* (Rizzoli, 2017); Id., *La nazione napoletana. Controstorie borboniche e identità «suddista»* (Torino, UTET, 2024).

the Neo-Borbonic counter-story (a term used by the Neoborbonics to define their alternative historical narrative). This topic calls for a brief digression.

1.1.3.1 The Naples-Portici Line: Was it True Glory?

King Ferdinando II entrusted Cavaliere D. Nicola Santangelo, the Minister of the Interior, with investigating the construction of the Naples-Nocera railway, which included a branch to Castellammare di Stabia. On 19 June 1836, the King signed a convention, a capitulation (contract), and a decree. The agreements made with French engineer Armando Bajard de la Vingtrie in early January of that year were formalised in a public act issued on 18 October 1836, in Naples. The amount requested by the French company to execute the work was 12,500,000 francs.⁶¹ The first segment of the railway connecting Naples to the port of Granatello in Portici was inaugurated on 3 October 1839 (see fig. 1).⁶²

One hundred years after the inauguration, Filippo Tajani noted that the railway trunk was only 7,250 km long, even though Bajard's project had planned to extend the line to Nocera, bringing the total to 40 km.⁶³ Additionally, he remarked that constructing the first railway in Naples was a matter of 'pure chance'.⁶⁴ This observation clarifies why, in 1861, twenty-two years after its inauguration, railway development in the ex-kingdom of Naples lagged behind other pre-unitary states. The maximum length of the whole railway reached only 125 km, in contrast to 850 km in the former Kingdom of Sardinia.⁶⁵ Giuseppe Galasso was among the first historians to object that there was no practical or rational domestic policy to improve the Kingdom's infrastructure. He believed that the construction of the railway primarily served private interests, specifically to provide the royal family with quick transportation to their usual holiday destinations.⁶⁶ For this reason, the historiographical *communis opinio* considers the Vesuvian railway as 'the king's toy.'

The question of the Vesuvian railway should be considered within a broader context, particularly concerning the process of industrialisation. While the United Kingdom had the financial resources to construct an extensive railway network due to its industrial development

⁶¹ *Annali Civili del Regno delle Due Sicilie*, vol. xix (gennaio, febbraio, marzo e aprile 1839), Napoli, Tip. del Ministero degli Interni, 1839, 60.

⁶² U. Baiocchi, 'Tre ottobre 1839', in *Rivista tecnica delle ferrovie italiane*, 57, 5, XXIX (1940), 193-214. On the inauguration of the Napoli-Portici line, see *Annali Civili del Regno delle Due Sicilie*, fasc. XLI (settembre–ottobre 1839), 54-58.

⁶³ F. Tajani, *Storia delle ferrovie italiane. A cento anni dall'apertura della prima linea. Con 123 illustrazioni* (Milano, Garzanti, 1939).

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 54: ('pura casualità').

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁶⁶ G. Galasso, *Intervista sulla storia di Napoli* (Bari, Laterza, 1978), 144.

that began in the mid-eighteenth century, other European nations, including the small state of Naples, France, Belgium, Spain, and Finland, faced significant challenges due to a lack of capital. In the case of the Napoli-Portici railway, we can propose a couple of hypotheses. The first is that Bayard's project was not for the public good, such as expanding the transport system, but instead served, as Galasso argued, the private interests of the Royal House. The second hypothesis suggests that the lack of prosperous industries in the Kingdom of Naples coincided with a low demand for railway construction. As a result, Ferdinand II and his ministers failed to consider the actual financial conditions of the kingdom. If that is the case, we should ask why. Perhaps the Bourbon king was driven by enthusiasm for the new invention. Otherwise, the risk of not being able to complete the rail network was considered.

Another critical factor noted by Tajani is that railway development during the *Risorgimento* was closely linked to national unity.⁶⁷ It is fair to say that the Bourbons did not particularly favour that goal.

The issue of the Venetian railway is not the main subject of this dissertation; rather, it falls within the broader theme of the nature of the Bourbon government. Both official and unofficial historiography have offered insights that clarify the political and ideological stances of the three patriots, particularly their criticisms of the Bourbons' rule, as we will examine further.

Returning to the methodology, the second approach discussed is transnationalism, which I will elaborate on in the following pages. One of the aims of this study was to provide a broader understanding of the biographies of the three leading actors involved. Therefore, the transnational approach addressed themes such as networks of contact (with family, friends, and acquaintances), interconnections, movements, and circulation of ideas within the European-Mediterranean context.

2. A Cultural and Ideological Transnationalism

This research explored the three characters' cultural exchanges, associations, encounters, and experiences, considering cultural history as 'an integral part of transnational history'.⁶⁸ Transnationalism can hold different meanings in various contexts. For Axel Körner, transnational history is an umbrella term encompassing several fields of investigation.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ *Storia delle ferrovie italiane*, especially chapter

⁶⁸ B. Yun Casalilla, 'Transnational history. What lies behind the label? Some reflections from the Early Modernist's point of view', *Culture & History Digital Journal*, 3(2), 2014, 1-7 (5).

⁶⁹ A. Körner, 'Transnational history: Identities, Structures, States', in W.D. Godsey, W. Mueller, B Haider Wilson (eds), *Internationale Geschichte in Theorie und Praxis*, 4(2017), 265-290 (275).

At the same time, Akyra Iriye argues that it is an ‘inclusive rather than exclusive’ concept that refers to a ‘way of approaching the past rather than a method.’⁷⁰ For this reason, Iriye asserts that transnational history may be defined as the study of exchange processes and the circulation of ideas and people that cross national borders. Meanwhile, Patricia Clavin points out that the term ‘transnational’ indicates an approach related to ‘movements, flows, and circulation’ and particularly ‘to people [...] and the social space they inhabit, networks they form and ideas they exchange’.⁷¹

There are various versions of transnationalism (political, aesthetic, and cultural). I combined the two fields (cultural history and transnationalism) under the term ‘transnational cultural history.’ Romanticism serves as a prime example of this methodology. Additionally, with the new term ‘ideological’, I aimed to outline the network of connections, exchanges of ideas, political projects, strategies, and information among the patriots in Sicily, as well as the exiles, sympathisers, and other supporters of the Sicilian and national causes from abroad.

At this stage, a preliminary hypothesis needs to be considered. The category of transnationalism does not necessarily involve physically crossing national borders. It is not solely a matter of space; it may also refer to de-territorialised communication networks⁷² created by people worldwide.

In other words, this doctoral dissertation uses the category of transnationalism as ‘a mental practice or attitude’ of exchanging ideas, information, plans, establishing connections, and sharing experiences and cultural models beyond Sicily’s borders. For example, this version of transnationalism is evident in the adherence to a cultural icon such as Lord Byron, for La Farina. He and his friend Gemelli, although having not yet travelled across foreign countries, in their youth, were captivated (or, as some critics said, ‘bewitched’) by the poetic and liberal values emerging in Northern Europe. One notable example is their tribute to the composer Vincenzo Bellini, who was transformed into a patriotic European symbol. In addition to joining a transnational cultural movement, such as romanticism, the crossing of national borders is also traceable in their participation in political debates focused on the ideological clash between liberal and conservative forces, republicans and monarchists, democrats and moderates, which took place in Europe and overseas.

Scholarship on southern Italy showed little enthusiasm towards cultural history until the

⁷⁰ A. Iriye, ‘Transnational History’, *Contemporary European History*, 13(2004), 211-222 (213).

⁷¹ P. Clavin, ‘Defining transnationalism’, *Contemporary European History*, 14(2005), 421-439 (422).

⁷² I borrowed this term from J.R. McNeill, W.H. McNeills, *The Human Web: A Bird’s Eye View of World History* (New York, W.W. Norton, 2003)

2000s. Some methodological resistance to the cultural approach may have been due to reasons such as a lack of sources, cultural tools adopted by medievalists and early modernists, and the development of new historical interpretations that could be perceived as a threat to the national historical tradition and even the nation's past. In the previous paragraph, I mentioned the principal authors who have taken on cultural change. Embracing Di Rienzo and Davis's thought of a not-predictable condition of great backwardness, often considered exclusive of Southern Italy, this study investigated the three patriots' cultural and political education in the first half of the nineteenth century, primarily focused on the cultural environment of Messina and Syracuse. The roles of urban elites, Masonic and Carbonari circles, and cultural institutions like the Peloritana Academia of Messina are analysed in this context. The Academia influenced the transition from the *anci en regime* to modern society, a shift marked by the events of 1820-21, during which the three exiles did not participate due to their age. However, since these uprisings should be considered precursors to liberal constitutional revolutions in Sicily and across the continent, their reflections are examined.⁷³

While the old Sicilian cultural elites did not embrace the Romantic movement, it began to spread across the Island between the 1830s and 1840s.

2.1. Romanticism's impact on Sicilian patriots' Cultural and Political Education

Whether there has been a Romantic season in Italy and the relationship between European Romantic culture and the Italian *Risorgimento* are complex issues. Italian historians have not explored this relationship for various reasons, sometimes even without any investigation. They have been caught in a 'methodological trap' and then focused on the *Risorgimento*'s political and social aspects, ignoring the movement's cultural, private, and emotional aspects. Paul Ginsborg has pointed out this issue and urged historians to analyse the "cultural, private and affective sphere"⁷⁴ of the *Risorgimento*. Thus, from this angle, European

⁷³ J. Sp  th, 'Turning Constitutional History Upside Down: The 1820s Revolutions in the Mediterranean', in T. Hanswedell et al. (eds), *Re-Mapping Centre and Periphery: Asymmetrical Encounters in European and Global Context* (London, University College London, 2019), 111-134 (128).

⁷⁴ Ginsborg, 'Romanticismo e Risorgimento: l'io, l'amore e la nazione', in A.M. Banti, P. Ginsborg (eds), *Storia d'Italia, Annali 22, Il Risorgimento* (Torino, Einaudi, 2007), 5-67 (5); C. Cesa, 'Romanticismo politico', in N. Bobbio, N. Matteucci and G. Pasquino (eds.), *Dizionario di politica* (Torino, UTET, 1983), 1011-1019.

Romanticism⁷⁵ offered the most precious material and imagery for the mythography of the Italian *Risorgimento*.

In the last twenty years, the process of Italian unification has undergone significant revisions, methodological shifts, and new interpretations inspired by the NCH, which assigns a crucial role to nationalism and culture in historical research. For example, the volume *Annali* 22, published by Einaudi in 2007 as part of the *Storia d'Italia* series, proposed a 'different thesis' on the *Risorgimento* that Irish historian Lucy Riall described as a 'decisive moment' in Italian history due to its role in causing critical transformations. Co-editors Banti and Ginsborg noted that the Italian *Risorgimento* lacks the characteristics of exceptionality and should be understood within a broader European context. Building on George Mosse's thesis of the nationalisation of the masses, they suggested that the idea of a nation was conveyed through new means of communication, establishing strong biopolitical connections between citizens and their homeland. These connections were so powerful that patriots sacrificed their lives for their country.

Current historiography has highlighted the strong emotional charge of the 'romantic revolution', recognising its influence on the private/individual sphere and the public dimension. This, in turn, has led to debate regarding the complex relationship between culture and nationalism.⁷⁶

Alberto M. Banti introduced a fresh cultural perspective on the Italian *Risorgimento* in his *La Nazione del Risorgimento*.⁷⁷ He examined the national-patriotic discourse of the first half of the nineteenth century, focusing on its various forms and consistent morphological

⁷⁵ Countless are the works, more dated and the recent one, concerning Romanticism, and so I will limit myself here to cite the following: J. Risinger, *Stoic Romanticism and the Ethics of Emotion* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2021); A. Novajra, 'Il romanticismo', in *La Storia*, N. Tranfaglia and L. Firpo (eds), *L'età contemporanea*, 7, (Torino, UTET, 1988), 1-31; F.C. Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution and Romanticism* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992); M. Butler, *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1981); M. Cranston, *The Romantic Movement* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994); P. Ginsborg, 'L'altro e l'altrove: esilio politico, Romanticismo e Risorgimento,' in M. Gottardi (ed.), *Fuori d'Italia: Manin e l'esilio* (Venezia, Ateneo Veneto, 2009), 18- 36; M. Ferber, *Romanticism. A concise introduction* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010); I. Haywood, *Romanticism and caricature* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013); M. Löwy; R. Sayre, *Révolte et mélancolie* (Paris, Payot, 1992); J. Mc Gann, *The Romantic Ideology: A Critical Investigation* (Chicago and London, UCP, 1983); A. De Paz, *Il romanticismo europeo: un'introduzione tematica* (Napoli, Liguori, 1987); id., *Romanticismo: l'arte europea nell'età delle passioni* (Napoli, Liguori, 2010); for the Italian case see: A. Manzoni, *Lettera al marchese Cesare d'Azeglio sul Romanticismo* (22 settembre 1823), insorga cura di M. Panetta, (Historica Edizioni, 2023); *Discussioni e polemiche sul romanticismo* (1816-1826), 2 vols. (Bari, Laterza, 1943); S. Battaglia, *Introduzione al Romanticismo italiano* (Bari, Laterza, 1953; 1960); G. Cingari, *Romanticismo e democrazia nel Mezzogiorno: Domenico Mauro* (1812-1873) (Milano and Napoli, Edizioni scientifiche italiane, 1965).

⁷⁶ Many still support non-political Romanticism, first introduced by C. Schmitt in *Political Romanticism*. (1925) [It. trans. *Romanticismo politico*, a cura di C. Gallo (Milano, Giuffrè, 1981)].

⁷⁷ A.M. Banti, *La Nazione del Risorgimento: parentela, sanità e onore alle origini dell'Italia unita* (Torino, Einaudi, 2000).

structure, which defined nationalism in the nineteenth and 20th centuries. By investigating a diverse range of cultural outputs—including novels, poetry, paintings, and melodramas, as well as political writings, proclamations, and constitutional documents—Banti pinpointed what he termed the ‘Risorgimento canon.’ This canon emphasises so-called ‘deep images’, which he described as ‘images, allegorical systems, and narrative constellations that embody specific values’⁷⁸ intertwined with the essential matrices of each community. These foundational matrices, which encompass themes of birth and death, love and hate, as well as sexuality and reproduction, are not random; they stem from historical cultural traditions—both national and global—and are reinterpreted by cultural elites to align with the evolving ‘new aesthetic of politics.’ Nationalist propaganda sought to evoke emotions and appeal to the more irrational facets of human nature. It adopted a communicative strategy utilising traditional media and novel communication methods, including hymns, sculptures, architecture, flags, theatrical acts, liturgical practices, and rituals, ensuring these messages were accessible to less educated audiences.

This cultural interpretation of the Italian *Risorgimento* raises several questions regarding the protagonists of this dissertation. Specifically, did they contribute to the formation and dissemination of Banti’s canon? Is there a distance from it, or a ‘hybridisation’ resulting from their contact with the dominant culture in the Bourbon kingdom of the Two Sicilies? To address these questions, I have analysed how Romanticism was received in the three patriots’ literary, historical, journalistic, and theatrical works. This analysis focuses on themes such as the concept of the nation as a large family, the brotherhood and sisterhood among the children of Italy, the sacredness of love for one’s homeland, martyrdom, and the ideals of honour and military virtue. Furthermore, I examine the relationship between opera and nationalism, which arises from the tributes paid to Bellini by La Farina and Gemelli, as I mentioned earlier. Other factors influencing the reception of Romantic values include the education of the masses, which encouraged collaborative learning methods in both public and private schools, and the advancement of women’s education.

In October 1837, Sicily was struck by a cholera epidemic, despite sanitary cordons and a ban on ships landing from the mainland. The disease, which had spread to Europe from the banks of the Ganges, caused a crisis that resulted in many casualties. This epidemic intensified existing economic and social tensions in some Sicilian cities. Discontent with the Bourbon government, which was initially blamed for the outbreak, sparked popular uprisings involving

⁷⁸ Ibid., 66: (‘immagini, dei sistemi allegorici, delle costellazioni narrative, che incorporano una tavola valoriale specifica [...]’).

the three protagonists.

2.2 The Experience of Cholera and Cholera Riots (1837-1838)

I adopted the methodological tools of emotions history to describe La Farina, Gemelli and Chindemi's experience with cholera.⁷⁹ The objective was to investigate the impact of a global phenomenon on the lives of three patriots in both their private and public spheres.

David Gentilcore argues that a disease can be studied as 'an event with cultural significance'. Keeping his suggestion in mind, my main goal was to examine the three patriots' human experience of the cholera epidemic that struck the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies in 1836-1837. I explored how the three patriots personally perceived the cholera epidemic and whether their perceptions interfered with their political paths, plans, and projects, while assessing their feelings about it. Finally, I analysed their thoughts on its impact on the historical dynamics of the period, including the cholera riots. The primary sources include personal documents (such as private letters, memoirs and autobiographies), newspaper articles, and government documents.

The cholera experience in the Two Sicilies has received little scholarly attention. In her outdated 1976 essay, Antonella L. Forti Messina focused on the demographic aspects of the epidemic,⁸⁰ and Snowden's book concentrates on the fifth cholera epidemic in Naples (1884-1911) explored the resurgence of religiosity and superstition and the wave of racism against the gypsies.⁸¹ Salvatore Russo traced Syracuse's leading social and political events in the 1830s.⁸² Additionally, Alibrandi and Imperato published two other essays in the 2000s. The former discusses the public health laws and regulations issued by the Bourbon government, including those related to the cholera pandemic of 1837, while Imperato deals with the social and

⁷⁹ P.N. Stearns and C. Z. Stearns, 'Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards', *American Historical Review*, 90, 4 (1985), 813-836; B. Rosenwein, 'Worrying about Emotions in History', *American Historical Review*, 107, 3 (2002), 821-845; Id., *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 2006); id., *Generations of Feeling: A History of Emotions, 600-1700* (Cambridge, NY, Cambridge University Press, 2015); W.M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press, 2001); id., 'Patients and Passions: Languages of Medicine and Emotion, 1789-1850', in *Medicine, Emotion, and Disease, 1750-1950* (Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2006), ed. F. B. Alberti, 22-52; *Doing emotions history*, Susan J Matt and Peter N. Stearns (eds.), (Urbana, Chicago and Springfield, University of Illinois, 2014); *Early modern emotions: an introduction*, S. Broomhall (ed.), (New York: Routledge, 2016); I. Plamper, *The History of Emotions: An Introduction* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015); R. Boddice, *The History of Emotions* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2018); K. Barkley, *The history of emotions: a student guide to methods and sources*, (London, Bloomsbury, 2020).

⁸⁰ A.L. Forti Messina, 'Il colera a Napoli nel 1836-37. Gli aspetti demografici', *Mélanges de l'école française de Rome* 88 (1), 1976, 319-366; see also her *Società ed epidemia. Il colera a Napoli nel 1836* (Milano, Franco Angeli, 1979).

⁸¹ F.M. Snowden, *Naples in the Time of Cholera, 1884-1911* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995).

⁸² S. Russo (a cura di), *I moti del 1837 a Siracusa e la Sicilia degli anni Trenta* (Caltanissetta, Ediprint, 1987).

economic consequences of the second wave of cholera pandemic (1826-1849) concerning two rural towns, San Prisco and Forio d'Ischia.⁸³

There is no unanimous opinion on the nature of the cholera riots that occurred in Western Europe during the nineteenth century. Did they have social, political, or both causes? Samuel K. Cohn Jr. has recently concluded that almost all cholera riots show a standard class configuration, except in Sicily, where he acknowledges that urban turmoil had a political aspect. The 'poisoning myths' reinforced the Sicilian population's fear, distrust and anger⁸⁴ toward the Naples government. I tried to understand how these feelings might have exacerbated the pre-existing tensions, leading to the riots of 1837.

This emotional approach enabled me to capture beliefs about the disease and how this latter influenced the patriot's choices and behaviours. For instance, in La Farina's case, during his exile in Tuscany, I highlighted his concerns for his family left in Sicily and his perspectives on the differences in health policies between Sicily and the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. Additionally, I examined the relationship between disease, culture, and revolution, particularly the spread of the so-called myth of poisoning. This myth originated from believing the Bourbon monarchy had disseminated poison to eliminate the Sicilian rebels. Chindemi noted a widespread belief that the disease resulted from an attempt by the Bourbon government of Naples to eradicate the Sicilian rebels. Consequently, some cities, like Syracuse, Chindemi's hometown, revolted against Naples, driven by misery and influenced by conspiracy theories. La Farina, Gemelli, and Chindemi, who were involved in the cholera riots, were forced into exile to escape Bourbon persecution. This study also aimed to reconstruct their experiences, despite the different times and countries they faced.

2.3 La Farina, Gemelli and Chindemi's Exile between the 1830s and 1850s

Recent studies on the Mediterranean have redefined the concept of exile. From this perspective, Italian patriots are part of a 'gigantic mosaic' created by Mediterranean Diasporas during the long nineteenth century.⁸⁵ The Kingdom of the Two Sicilies was the pre-unification

⁸³ R. Alibrandi, *In salute e in malattia. Le leggi sanitarie borboniche fra Settecento e Ottocento* (Milano, Franco Angeli, 2012); Imperato, Pascal James et al., 'The Second World Cholera Pandemic (1826-1849) in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies with Special Reference to the Towns of San Prisco and Forio d'Ischia', *Journal of community health*, 40, 6 (2015), 1224-86.

⁸⁴ T. Dixon, 'What is the history of anger a history of? *Emotions: History, Culture, Society*, vol. 4 (2020), 10.1163/2208522X-02010074. <https://qmro.qmul.ac.uk/xmlui/handle/123456789/64354>; B.H. Rosenwein, *Anger. The Conflicted History of an Emotion* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1998).

⁸⁵ For the hypothesis of the Mediterranean as a category of historical analysis and the emphasis on 'individuals' and 'diasporas', see M. Isabella, C. Zanou, 'Introduction: The Sea, its People and their Ideas in the Long Nineteenth Century', in M. Isabella, K. Zanou (eds), *Mediterranean Diasporas*, 1-23 (3).

Italian state that mostly fuelled the migration of political exiles during the Age of Revolutions.⁸⁶ Many individuals were forced to leave their homes to escape persecution by the brutal Bourbon police and the numerous death sentences issued against them. These southern exiles sought refuge in more tolerant pre-unification states, such as Piedmont and Tuscany, or journeyed to various Mediterranean destinations, including nearby Malta, Greece, the Ionian Islands, North Africa, and parts of Central and Northern Europe, such as France, England, Switzerland, Spain, and Belgium. Some travelled aboard old merchant ships and transatlantic steamers to reach North and Latin America, pursuing the American myth of freedom.

Historiography has given little attention to the southern exiles of the Italian *Risorgimento*. Few works are devoted to their lives, ideas, and activities. Their contribution to the nation-building process is underestimated. Mine was an attempt to fill this gap in the existing scholarship.

The three protagonists were exiled during two periods: after the cholera riots of 1837 and again following the events of 1848. This study traced their journeys along the shores of the Southern Mediterranean to Northern Europe. Their displacements across Italy (Florence, Rome, and Turin), France (Toulouse, Paris, and Marseille), Switzerland (Zurich, Geneva), Belgium (Brussels), and Malta led to the emergence of a multifaceted identity, often referred to as ‘Mediterranean liberals’.

This displacement raises questions: for instance, were the periods spent in exile isolating, or did they help establish support and contact networks? What motivated La Farina and Gemelli to choose Tuscany as their initial refuge? What were their views on Tuscany’s governance, particularly regarding its connection to the myth of the Tuscan ‘Buon Governo’? How did they adjust to their new cultural environment abroad? What kinds of friendships did they seek, what encounters did they have, and what activities were they involved in during their exile? In this respect, particular attention was devoted to what Emma Rothschild termed ‘connected lives’: family ties and friendships. This latter expression signifies solidarity and

⁸⁶ There is an extensive bibliography on Italian political emigration during the *Risorgimento*, from which I have selected: A. Galante Garrone, ‘L’emigrazione politica italiana nel Risorgimento’, *Rassegna storica del Risorgimento*, XLI, 1-2 (1954), 223-224; F. Della Peruta, *Mazzini e i rivoluzionari italiani. Il “partito d’azione”, 1830-1845* (Milano, Feltrinelli, 1974); R., Balzani, “I giovani del Quarantotto: profilo di una generazione”, *Contemporanea*, III, 3(2000), 403-416; A. Bistarelli, *Gli esuli del Risorgimento* (Bologna, il Mulino, 2011); for the formation of a Liberal International and the contribution offered by political exiles to the Italian nation-building process, see M. Isabella, *Risorgimento in exile. Italian Emigrés and the Liberal International in the Post-Napoleonic Era* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009); For a global perspective on the Italian *Risorgimento*, see A. Bonvini, *Risorgimento atlantico. I patrioti italiani e la lotta internazionale per le libertà* (Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2022).

‘l’amitié politique,’ as noted by Gilles Pecout.⁸⁷ Therefore, friends’ biographies may be the most fitting term for this research.

After briefly returning to Messina in 1841, La Farina returned to Florence, where he stayed for seven years. This second exile was crucial for the historian from Messina, as it allowed him to connect with the Cabinet Viesseux, a gathering place for Europe's cultural and liberal elite, and to continue his involvement. Firsthand sources, including police reports, have been uncovered in the Secret Archive of the Presidency of Buon Governo, located at the National Archives of Florence. These documents reconstructed part of the movements, activities, and encounters, including those with M. Amari and G. Niccolini. His meeting with the renowned Tuscan playwright inspired the publication of his historical novel, *Matteo Palizzi*, which I analysed to trace its convergence with the canon of the *Risorgimento*. Furthermore, the freedom of the press granted in Tuscany by Grand Duke Leopold II enabled La Farina to launch one of the first political newspapers, *L’Alba*, with a democratic orientation.

I offered an overview of Sicilian patriotic rhetoric against the Bourbon government of Naples, particularly emphasising the role of the press (newspapers, pamphlets, flyers, and speeches). In the summer of 1847, Luigi Settembrini’s pamphlet suggested that the outbreak of the 1848 revolution was imminent in Sicily, a key focus of this dissertation.

2.4 The Bourbons’ Misrule and the 1848 Revolution

All three patriots played a key role in this crucial event. Many publications have addressed the 1848 revolution, but few have examined the Italian experience during that year, particularly in Sicily. Scholars such as Christopher Clark,⁸⁸ Axel Körner,⁸⁹ and John Sperber⁹⁰ provide perspectives on the revolution’s global dimensions and emerging themes of memory and commemoration.

In his classic work, Giorgio Candeloro⁹¹ provided a Gramscian perspective to analyse the 1848 revolution. Despite being published many years ago, this work provides a

⁸⁷ G. Pecout, ‘Pour une lecture méditerranéenne et transnationale du Risorgimento’, *Revue d’histoire du XIXe siècle*, 44 (2012), mis en ligne le 30 septembre 2015, consulté le 08 mars 2023. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/rh19/4232>; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/rh19.4232>; Id., ‘The international armed volunteers: pilgrims of a Transnational Risorgimento’, *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 2009, 14, (4), 413-426.

⁸⁸ C. Clark, *Revolutionary Spring: Fighting for a New World 1848–1849* (Crown Publishing Group, Penguin Random House, 2023).

⁸⁹ A. Körner (ed.), *1848: a European Revolution? International Ideas and National Memories of 1848* (London, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2000).

⁹⁰ J. Sperber, *The European Revolutions, 1848–1851* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005).

⁹¹ *Storia dell’Italia moderna*, XI vols. (1956-1086), (Milano, Feltrinelli, 1860): vol. I, *Le origini del Risorgimento, 1700-1815*.

comprehensive view of the Italian 1848 uprising, emphasising the economic crisis that preceded it, the division between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, the failure of neo-Guelfism, and the conflict between the two main moderate and democratic factions involved in the revolution. Enrico Francia's more recent cultural analysis, depicts the revolution as a plural phenomenon, highlighting its impact on the politicisation of urban and popular masses through various media such as newspapers, theatres, and literary cafés.⁹²

This dissertation examines the dynamics of the Sicilian revolution through the recollections of three patriots and eyewitnesses, revolutionary rhetoric in the contemporary press, war songs, satire, and hymns, as well as La Farina and Gemelli's critiques of the revolution's failure.

After the failure of the Sicilian revolution in 1848, the three central figures resumed their exiles. Gemelli travelled to Belgium and Malta, while Chindemi had arrived on the island before the revolution began. Malta became a hub for exiles, primarily from Sicily, with La Farina maintaining communication. The narrative continues with La Farina's exile in France, where he lived in Marseille, Paris, and Tours. He later moved to Piedmont, where his close friend Gemelli joined him. A significant meeting with Camillo Benso di Cavour led to La Farina's shift to moderatism, resulting in accusations of betrayal from many democrats. After the armistice of Villafranca in 1859, La Farina offered his support to Garibaldi, despite frequent disagreements among the General, Cavour, and La Farina regarding the organisation of the Expedition of the Thousand in May 1860. The Messina historian witnessed the Thousand's departure from the port of Quarto on 5 May 1860. Following another conflict with Garibaldi in Sicily, to which Cavour had sent him, La Farina died in Turin in 1863. Gemelli spent his final years in Bologna, Modena, and Milan, where he died in 1866. Chindemi left Sicily for Malta in 1852, and two years later, he arrived in Turin. He returned to Sicily after the proclamation of Italian unity and died in 1874.

⁹² *La rivoluzione del Risorgimento* (Bologna, il Mulino, 2013).

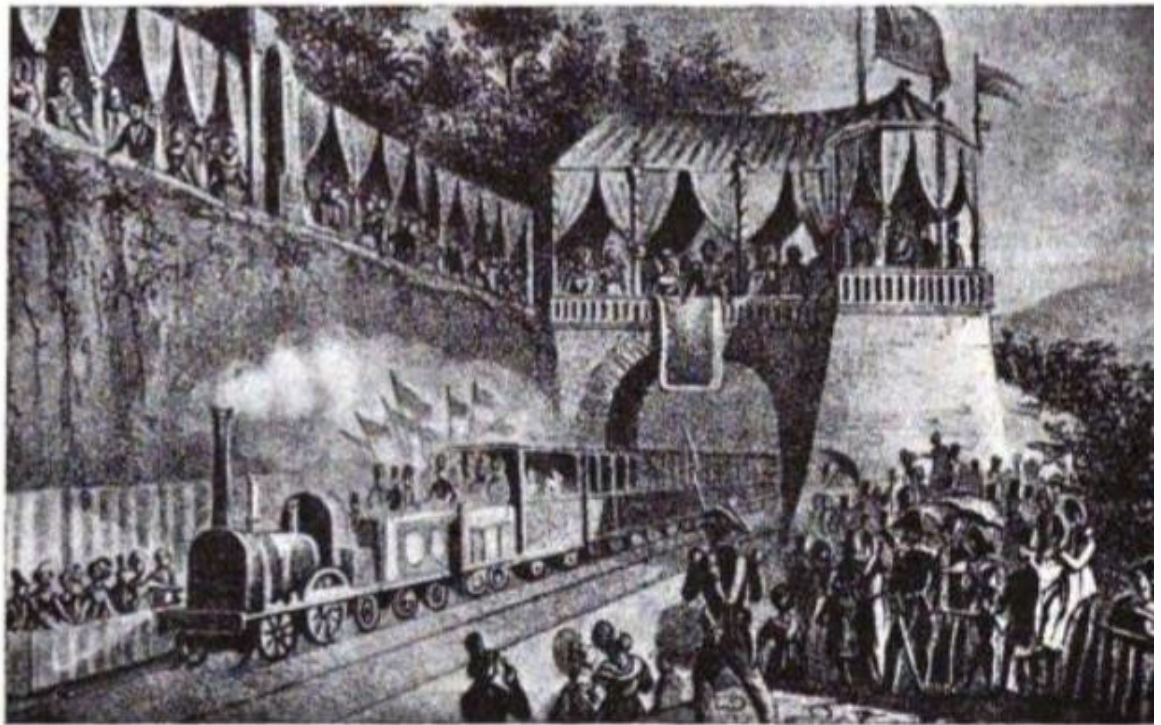


Figure. 1

Inauguration ceremony of the Naples Portici. Taken from *Rivista tecnica delle ferrovie italiane*, a. *Rivista tecnica delle ferrovie italiane*, a. 29, 57, 5 (1940), 202.

Chapter 2

SICILY BETWEEN REGIONALISM AND COSMOPOLITANISM

Before delving deeper into the discourse on Sicilian urban activism, we must first introduce the three protagonists of this dissertation, Giuseppe La Farina, Carlo Gemelli, and Salvatore Chindemi, providing some biographical notes.

2.1 Giuseppe La Farina

Giuseppe La Farina was born in Messina on 20 July 1815, during the Restoration period, when the Bourbons were restored to the throne of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, following decisions made at the international assembly held in Vienna from 1 November 1814 to 9 June 1815. Giuseppe's family and the local environment had a significant influence on his cultural education. As an affiliate of the Calabrian-Messina Masonic lodges, which established numerous connections with those in Naples, Marseille, and Malta in 1808, Carmelo was arrested and imprisoned in the Fortress of Castellamare del Golfo. At his express request, Giuseppe wished to share the harsh experience of prison; thus, he began to prepare for the many sufferings and deprivations that the future would hold for him.

The *Rivista Contemporanea Nazionale Italiana* reported: ‘Giuseppe spontaneously asked Lieutenant Favara to be locked up with him and was granted it’.¹ Growing up, Giuseppe actively participated in the cultural life of Messina, which in the first thirty years of the nineteenth century was infused with innovative ferment and patriotic ideals. The centre of cultural and political activism was the Accademia Peloritana, where Giuseppe was admitted to study philosophy and mathematics and presented his first poetic verses. However, despite preferring more historical and artistic studies, Giuseppe attended law school and graduated in 1835. In 1833, he founded the newspaper *Lo Spettatore Zancleo*, which, after being censored in 1836, resumed publication later under the title *Il Faro*, published by G. Fiumara. The publications of *Il Faro* lasted only a couple of years (1836-1838), with contributors including C. Gemelli, F. Bisazza, R. Mitchell, and G. Morelli. In addition to publishing reviews of literary, musical, and theatrical works, La Farina maintained a regular column in which he reviewed Sicilian newspapers.

In 1837, La Farina was directly involved in the Messina riots, which resulted in his arrest and

¹ *Rivista Contemporanea Nazionale Italiana*, ns, vol. trigesimoquarto, XII (1864), 58: (“Giuseppe chiese spontaneamente al luogotenente Favara di essere con lui rinchiuso, e l’ottenne”).

subsequent exile to Tuscany. He lived in Florence during two separate periods: initially, for a few months between 1837 and 1838, and then again, for a longer duration, from 1841 to 1848. He often expresses his appreciation for his time in Florence in his writings. He could engage cultured circles, including the Gabinetto Vieusseux, during his stay. The governance of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Leopold II of Habsburg-Lorraine, fostered a tolerant atmosphere in the Tuscan capital. I will demonstrate later that the *Archivio Segreto della Presidenza del Buongoverno* (1814-1848) at the National Archives in Florence served as a tool for uncovering information about La Farina's stay in Florence.

To meet the demands of everyday life in Florence, La Farina dedicated himself to compiling illustrated works that appealed to the taste of contemporary readers, thus publishing his *L'Italia coi suoi monumenti, le sue rimembranze, e i suoi costumi*;² *La Germania renana coi suoi monumenti e le sue leggende*;³ *La Svizzera storica ed artistica*.⁴ In 1842, he completed his work *Studi storici sul secolo XIII*,⁵ in which he proposed a 'patriotic' interpretation of Dante's life, based on extensive archival research regarding the poet's stay in Florence and Rome. After working for *L'Alba*, a newspaper established in 1847, La Farina left Florence to return to Messina in February 1848, as he mentions in his correspondence, he was entrusted with several government responsibilities: 'I was elected member of the Revolutionary Committee of that city, holding the rank of colonel; I was almost unanimously elected as deputy of the Chamber of the municipality of Messina. I was also appointed secretary by that Chamber, along with Prof. E. Amari and Baron Pisani, to meet with Pope Pio IX, Grand Duke Leopoldo II of Tuscany, and Carlo Alberto of Sardinia as a commissioner of the Sicilian Government.'⁶

The failure of the revolution in Sicily led to La Farina's exile again, this time to France, where he lived for five years, from 1849 to 1854. He initially settled in Marseille, then moved to Paris and Tours. During his exile in France, he resumed his studies, which he had previously neglected due to the revolution, while maintaining contact with other liberal conspirators. In a letter to his friend Ernesta Fumagalli Torti, La Farina recalls that, beginning in 1851, he worked intensively on his *Storia d'Italia dal 1815 al 1850*.⁷ Turin publisher Maurizio Guigoni published this work

² G. La Farina, *L'Italia coi suoi monumenti, le sue rimembranze, e i suoi costumi* (Firenze, Bardi Editore, 1841).

³ Id., *La Germania renana coi suoi monumenti e le sue leggende* (Firenze, Bardi Editore, 1842).

⁴ Id., *La Svizzera storica ed artistica*, 2 vols. (Firenze, Bardi Editore, 1842-1843).

⁵ Id., *Studi storici sul secolo XIII* (Firenze, Stamperia e Fonderia Fabris, 1842).

⁶ 'Letter to Maurizio Guigoni', Paris, 29 September 1850, in *Epistolario di Giuseppe La Farina: raccolto e pubblicato [sic] da Ausonio Franchi*, vol. II (Milano, Treves, 1869), 366-367: ("membro del Comitato rivoluzionario di quella città, ov'ebbi il grado di colonnello; eletto alla quasi unanimità dalla città di Messina deputato della Camera dei Comuni; dalla Camera eletto suo segretario; dal ministero inviato commissario del governo siciliano col prof. E. Amari e barone Pisani presso Pio IX, Leopoldo II, e Carlo Alberto.").

⁷ 'Letter to Ernesta Fumagalli Torti', Paris, 8 March 1851, *ibid.*, 394.

in six volumes (two containing diplomatic documents) between 1851 and 1852. La Farina's friend, historian Luigi Zini, continued it from 1850 to 1866.⁸

During his exile in France, La Farina solidified his conversion to pro-Piedmontese moderatism, prompting him to move to Turin. He developed a close friendship with Count Camillo Benso di Cavour, leading to a beneficial political alliance in the Piedmontese capital. La Farina also established the *Rivista Enciclopedia Italiana* (1855-1856), published the historical novel *Gli Albigesi*, and the fifth volume of *L'Italia dai tempi più antichi fino ai giorni nostri* (1857-1863). In 1857, alongside Daniele Manin, Giorgio Pallavicino and Giuseppe Garibaldi, he co-founded the *Società Nazionale Italiana*, whose political agenda can be summarised by the well-known motto 'Independence, Unification, and the House of Savoy'.

A few years later, Minister Cavour appointed La Farina to represent the new government in Sicily. Garibaldi did not hold La Farina in high regard, which ultimately led to La Farina's departure from the island. Following the referendum, which resulted in the annexation of Naples and Sicily to the Kingdom of Italy in October 1860, La Farina was elected vice-president of the Chamber of Deputies in the National Parliament. In 1863, he made his final trip to Messina before returning to Turin, where he passed away in September 1865. His remains were transferred from Turin to Messina in March 1872.

2.2 Carlo Gemelli

Carlo Gemelli was born in Messina on 4 September 1811 to an aristocratic family. His initial education was provided by private tutors, including the abbot and philosopher Giovanni Saccano, who also tutored Giuseppe La Farina and influenced Gemelli's deep understanding of Greek. After completing law school, Carlo returned to Sicily, having visited major Italian cities. In 1830, he engaged in cultural and political life, producing his first works, which included eulogies, academic readings, and articles on philological and historical criticism. In those years, the young man of letters also began his journalistic career, contributing to several Sicilian periodicals, such as *Lo Spettatore Zancleo*, which he helped re-found in 1833 (its initial issues having been published in 1831), alongside Carmelo La Farina, his sons Giuseppe e Silvestro, and poet Felice Bisazza – and *Il Faro* in 1834, a literary monthly.

The political stance of *Lo Spettatore* was anti-municipal and supportive of unification.

⁸ *Storia d'Italia dal 1850 al 1866 continuata da quella di G. La Farina per Luigi Zini* (Milano, Guigoni, 1869).

Meanwhile, some articles in *Il Faro* advocated for mutual schools, a concept that La Farina also supported. In the same period, Gemelli completed his first translations, including Demosthenes' *Olintiae*, showcasing his skills as a Greek scholar. This was followed by translating Isocrates' *Demonic Oration* (1835) and Lucian's dialogue *Charon* (1836). In 1835, alongside other young intellectuals from Messina, Gemelli penned a tribute to the late composer Vincenzo Bellini. Nevertheless, the Bourbon government censored these eulogies and *Lo Spettatore* magazine due to their patriotic content.

Involved in the 1837 cholera riots, Gemelli took refuge in Tuscany, marking his first exile. He stayed in Florence from 1837 to 1841, where he had the opportunity to engage with the most influential liberal circles, including the Gabinetto Viessieux. He met notable intellectuals, such as the poet G. Giusti, the playwright G. B. Niccolini, the Marquis G. Capponi, and Quirina Mocenni Maciotti, whom Ugo Foscolo immortalised as 'Donna Gentile'. This noblewoman persuaded the Messina patriot to write a biography of Foscolo in response to his critics, particularly Giuseppe Pecchio. Gemelli aimed to deliver his *Della vita e delle opere di Ugo Foscolo* shortly before leaving Florence, and his work was published in 1849. Rewriting the life of the illustrious Italo-Greek poet led Gemelli to revive the Italian cause. Guardione states that his work is 'more of a political than literary interest'.⁹

In 1841, Gemelli received permission to return to Sicily. However, he was arrested and imprisoned for a few days upon arriving in Naples. In the years prior, while in Naples, Gemelli had met the Poerio brothers, G. Del Re, M. Ayala, D. Romeo, F. Pepe and other patriots who were preparing uprisings in Reggio Calabria and Messina, scheduled for 1 September 1847. The failure of the revolutions in both cities forced Gemelli to seek refuge with his brother-in-law. He declined to join the *Società Nazionale* founded by La Farina and Cavour in 1857.

In 1853, Gemelli settled in Piedmont and taught history at the military college in Ivrea for a few years. After 1859, he became the headmaster of a high school in Parma and later served as Director of Education in Ancona. In 1860, he published his essay, *La Sicilia e il suo avvenire*, in Turin, expressing support for the Savoy option. He also dedicated his 1862 essay, *Studio storico sullo svolgimento dell'idea nazionale in Italia* fino al 1848, to the concept of Italian unity.

When Minister Coppino abolished the position of Director of Education, Gemelli faced severe financial difficulties. As a result, he accepted a job as a deputy librarian at the University of Bologna, where he worked until 1882. The Sicilian patriot began to address the issues faced by the working classes, giving a speech in 1871 at the headquarters of the League for the Education

⁹ F. Guardione, *Carlo Gemelli* (Verona, C. Kayser succ. H.F. Münster, 1881), 98.

of the People. At the same venue, he delivered three *Lezioni sul comunismo e socialismo antico e moderno* at Bologna in 1876, in which he supported the principles of humanitarian socialism while respecting the institutions of family and property. He published his essay *Ritratti dei fratelli Bandiera e loro compagni in 1877*.

In the final years of his life, he faced various hardships, including criminal proceedings resulting from a charge of maladministration, which was later proven to be unfounded. Furthermore, he endured the loss of one of his two daughters from his union with Virginia Viola, who had passed away in 1849. Eventually, he was forced to sell even his cherished books. Old, ill, and saddened, Gemelli died from apoplexy in Bologna on 1 April 1886.

2.3 Salvatore Chindemi

Unfortunately, there is limited biographical information available about Salvatore Chindemi. He was born on 19 January 1808, in Syracuse. From an early age, he was influenced by the works of Vittorio Alfieri. Along with other young individuals, he developed liberal ideas and formed cultural circles that openly opposed the Bourbon government. In 1838, Salvatore was arrested for political reasons. From the 1840s onwards, he worked as a private tutor and became an integral part of Sicily's cultural life through his writings on poetry, literary criticism, history, and other various topics.

Some of Chindemi's essays were published in 1843 in the *Giornale del Gabinetto letterario* of the Accademia Gioenia, which focused on popular education. This issue was also crucial to Gemelli and La Farina. Chindemi advocated for a comprehensive reform of teaching methods and wrote his work, *Rudimenti generali intorno alla Sicilia* (1843). In 1844, he published his translation of Calpurnius's *Eclogues*. At the same time, he contributed to the compilation of a women's publication titled *La Rosa e la Viola* (1846), in which he emphasised the unique role of women in promoting civilised customs. Chindemi was one of the leaders of the 1848 Sicilian revolution and successfully established a liberal government in Syracuse for a few months. After failing the 'glorious revolution'¹⁰ and not benefiting from the amnesty, he went into exile, departing for Malta in February 1852.

After spending about two years in Malta, Chindemi moved to Genoa and stayed in the Kingdom of Savoy until Italy was unified. Like La Farina and Gemelli, he embraced moderatism and supported the Cavourian cause. Following the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy, he returned to Palermo, where he held the chair of History at the university until 1869. His nephew, the poet

¹⁰ Sicilian revolutionary rhetoric used this term to highlight the people's courage and heroism.

and patriot Gabriele Rossetti,¹¹ dedicated the following verses upon Chindemi's return to Sicily after ten years of exile:

You did not leave sweet Sicily so soon to escape ruthless anger.
Amid inaccessible valleys, you wandered alone, a
miserable fugitive like the divine Father Alighieri. Around you,
the fierce Nembo roared, and the walls of Aidona served as
your first refuge and hostel, where you were a venerable guest.
Come among us, for your fellow citizens' love and warm yearning will console you,
honoured CHINDEMI. In you, this beloved Ortigia rejoices in fortune
Forget the ancient offences and new insults. Set aside
the races and the glorious honours, and instead
discuss your decade, highlight new hopes and happy adventures.
The future matures in beautiful Trinacria, in this ancient land of glories [...].¹²
Chindemi passed away in Palermo on February 3, 1874.

2.4 La Farina and Gemelli: A Long-Lasting Friendship

As we have seen, the biographies of Carlo Gemelli and Giuseppe La Farina, two patriots and fellow citizens, indicate that they were separated by only a few years, with Gemelli being four years older. Despite occasional breaks and political differences, they maintained a deep bond of friendship, forged through their shared literary, historical, and patriotic passions. This friendship dated back to childhood. Here is what Giovanni Raffaele commented on this relationship, criticism of their historical narrative:

Carlo Gemelli and Giuseppe La Farina, villagers and friends since childhood, aimed to contribute to history by assessing events and people. However, instead of accurately preserving

¹¹ Gabriele Rossetti (Vasto 1783 – London 1854) was a poet and playwright who served at the court of the king of Naples, Giuseppe Bonaparte. He adapted two of Lord Byron's works, *The Corsair* (1830) and *Medora and Corrado* (1832), which were performed in London. Rossetti was affiliated with the Carboneria and was actively involved in the 1820 Neapolitan uprisings. During the Bourbon persecutions, he received assistance from the English admiral Roger Graham Moore, who sheltered him on his ship which sailed from Naples to Malta. Rossetti lived in Malta for three years, where he taught Italian and continued his work as a poet. In 1824, he was compelled to leave Malta and took refuge in London, receiving support from Moore, John Hookman Frere, and Charles Lyell. In 1826, he married Maria Francesca, the daughter of scholar Gaetano Polidori. He continued his studies on Dante and served as an Italian professor at King's College. Gabriele Rossetti passed away in London in 1854.

¹² *Poesie di Gabriele Rossetti raccolte da G. Carducci* (Napoli, Rondinella, 1862), 249, 254: ('A campar da spietata ira la dolce Sicilia tosto non lasciavi / In mezzo Ad inaccesse valli erravi solo / Miserando fuggiasco al par del divo Padre Alighieri: a Te d'intorno il fero Nembo ruggiava, e le Aidonensi mura / Für tuo primo rifugio e 'l primo ostello, Ospite venerando. // Vieni adunque tra noi, l'amor, la calda Brama de tuoi concittadin consola, / Onorato CHINDEMI. In Te s'allegri / Questa Ortigia diletta, e di fortuna / Scordi le antiche offese ei nuovi insulti. / Tu le corse vicende, ei còliti onori / Narra del tuo decennio, e tu le nuove Speranze addita e le venture liete / Che alla bella Trinacria, a quest'antica Terra di glorie l'avvenir matura [...]').

the events that unfolded almost always before their eyes, they passed down a reflection of their passions.¹³

The two Sicilian patriots shared numerous experiences and events that often mirrored each other. For example, they both attended the same private school, run by Father Giovanni Saccano, who was instrumental in educating generations of young people in the study of Italian and Latin classics, particularly Dante's Comedy. While La Farina likely received his first lessons on the Supreme Poet from Saccano, to whom he honoured in his works, Gemelli benefited from Saccano's excellent Greek instruction.

The Accademia Peloritana de' Pericolanti's members played a significant role in the cultural scene of Messina and beyond, starting in the eighteenth century. They were the founders of periodicals such as *Lo Spettatore Zancleo*. They contributed to *Il Faro*, *La Sentinella del Peloro* (alongside Felice Bisazza and Domenico Ventimiglia), *Il Maurolico* and the *Giornale del Gabinetto Letterario* (with Salvatore Chindemi).

Francesco Guardiano, the author of a well-known biography of Carlo Gemelli, recounts an episode highlighting the friendship and solidarity between the two young patriots from Messina. This incident involved the periodicals *Il Faro* and *Il Vapore*. The latter was an 'instructive and enjoyable journal' published in Palermo from 1834 to 1837, directed by brothers Vincenzo and Antonino Linares, who worked in the Secretariat of the Gran Core dei Conti. In 1835, *Il Vapore* published an article on Sicilian literature, written by Vincenzo Linares, which notably did not mention Gemelli's translation of the *Olintiache* of Demosthenes. In response, La Farina stepped in to defend his friend. However, Linares's diatribe was not a diplomatic response; instead, it was a personal attack reflecting the differing approaches of the two periodicals and their political stances. Gemelli was vehemently criticised and subsequently challenged one of the Linares brothers to a duel, which was to take place in Leonforte, between Messina and Palermo. However, the duel never took place because Linares failed to appear. Gemelli faced severe repercussions from the Bourbon government, which suppressed *Il Faro* newspaper and banned historians from Messina from collaborating with other publishers.

In the same year, on the evening of 9 November, the two young patriots found themselves in the Great Hall of the Palace, the seat of the Messina Philharmonic, to read the composite funeral verses paying homage to Vincenzo Bellini. In the following paragraphs, I will provide further details about these eulogies and their nationalist implications.

¹³ *Rivelazioni storiche della rivoluzione dal 1848-1860* (Palermo, Amenta, 1883), 4: ('Paesani ed amici fino dall'infanzia Carlo Gemelli e Giuseppe La Farina vollero essere anche conformi nello scrivere la storia, nel giudicare i fatti e le persone, ed è accaduto che invece di tramandare ai posteri la storia esatta di avvenimenti che ebbero principio e si svolsero quasi sempre sotto i loro occhi non hanno tramandato che un saggio delle loro passioni.').

The year 1837 was pivotal for the two comrades. Involved in the cholera riots, they were compelled to leave their hometown, and a few months later, both sought refuge in Tuscany. In Florence, the two intellectuals gravitated toward the city's most prestigious circles, including the Gabinetto Vieusseux. Presumably, they met in the Tuscan capital; however, no documents confirm their meetings in 1841 and 1847. In February 1848, the two patriots returned to Sicily, Gemelli from Malta and La Farina from Tuscany. They emerged as prominent protagonists during the Sicilian Revolution, which I will discuss in Chapter Five, and held significant positions within the provisional government established by the rebels. Years after the revolutionary period ended, Gemelli, who faced the figure's 'malicious insinuations and clear lies'¹⁴ regarding his actions, was forced to defend himself against accusations made in an anonymous article in the *Gazzetta di Palermo*. In his response, Gemelli spoke of the fraternal bond he shared with La Farina, which remained strong despite their differing political views, as demonstrated by Gemelli's decision not to join the Società Nazionale. Gemelli stated the following:

I will not comment on the alleged alignment between La Farina and me in writing history. I considered myself a true friend of his, but when it came to political opinions, we had to agree and collaborate with mutual understanding and unity of thought. I never wished to join his Società Nazionale. He always respected my beliefs, and I never opposed his.¹⁵

There was no lack of opportunities to show mutual esteem and solidarity, such as when an anonymous accuser claimed that Gemelli was appointed as a representative to various Italian governments and received generous rewards, thanks to the mediation of his friend La Farina. Gemelli rejected the accusations made by the anonymous editor, asserting that 'La Farina, in March 1848, was not in a position to protect anyone, neither friends nor clients, due to his pro-republican views, which he advocated in Parliament, and did not garner the favour of Minister Stabile. ' Despite this, in his work dedicated to the thorough reconstruction of the Sicilian Revolution, Gemelli spoke fondly of La Farina, describing him as 'an industrious man, who loves freedom and his country'.¹⁶

¹⁴ C. Gemelli, *Una risposta prima ed ultima alla Gazzetta di Palermo* (Bologna, Tip. Vitali, 1871), 3.

¹⁵ Ibid., 319: ('Nè dirò alcun motto sulla pretesa conformità fra me e il La Farina nello scrivere la Storia. Io fui amico a quell'uomo e vero amico, ma nelle opinioni politiche noi non fummo concordi nè mai operammo con mutua intelligenza ed unità di pensiero. Infatti, io non feci nè volli mai far parte della sua Società Nazionale. Egli rispettò sempre le mie convinzioni ed io non contrastai mai le sue.').

Gemelli, *Storia della Siciliana Rivoluzione del 1848-49*, vol. 2 (Bologna, G. Lignani Edit., 1867), 47: ('uomo operoso, ed amatissimo della libertà e della patria').

¹⁶ Gemelli, *Storia della Siciliana Rivoluzione del 1848-49*, vol. 2 (Bologna, G. Lignani Edit., 1867), 47: ('uomo operoso, ed amatissimo della libertà e della patria').

Reports have emerged regarding the friendship between La Farina and Gemelli; however, there is insufficient information on the exchange of letters or meetings between Carlo Gemelli, Giuseppe La Farina, and Salvatore Chindemi. The latter recalls the patriot of Messina in his memoir, where he mentions a secret plan for an insurrection, which was concerted among Palermo, Catania, Syracuse, and Messina for the year 1838. The Prefect of Palermo, Felice Genovesi, a trusted associate of Del Carretto, was aware of the plan. This strategy aimed to arrest Giovanni Denti, Raffaele Lanza, and Carlo Gemelli.¹⁷ Likewise, no source currently documents the encounters between the Syracusan patriot and La Farina. However, Chindemi's works contain numerous references to La Farina and Gemelli, highlighting their role as historians.

3. The Activism of Urban Classes

During the 1820s and 1840s, the urban intellectual elites in Sicily made significant efforts to revive the island's culture. This revival followed a long period of stagnation that began after the anti-Spanish revolution (1674-1678), which originated in Messina and ended with severe repression. The effects of this repression on the social fabric of Sicily were felt for many years, extending into the early 1800s.¹⁸

On 8 January 1679, Francisco de Benavides, the Spanish viceroy and Count of Santisteban, issued a decree ordering the confiscation of city archives containing privileges fundamental to the city's autonomy. Furthermore, his decree mandated the closure of the *Studium Messanae*, the first Jesuit University in Europe, established on 16 November 1548, through the intervention of Pope Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556). The decree also led to the abolition of the Senate.¹⁹ Prominent jurists at the Studium expressed their discontent with Jesuit management, raising suspicions about their involvement in organising the anti-Spanish revolt. This reaction aligns with the Spanish crown's polycentric strategy, which aimed to prevent the political capital of

¹⁷ *Siracusa e l'ex-prefetto di polizia di Palermo memoria di Salvatore Chindemi* (Palermo, 1848), 30.

¹⁸ On the Sicilian anti-Spanish revolt, see R. Villari, 'La rivolta di Messina e la crisi del Seicento', in *La rivolta di Messina (1674-1678) e il mondo mediterraneo nella seconda metà del Seicento* (Atti del Convegno storico internazionale, Messina, 1978), a cura di S. Di Bella (Cosenza, 1979), 19-39; F. Benigno, 'Lotta politica e sbocco rivoluzionario: riflessioni sul caso di Messina (1674-78)', in *Storica*, 13 (1999), 7-56; A. Musi, *L'Italia dei Vicerè: integrazione e resistenza nel sistema imperiale spagnolo* (Cava dei Tirreni, Avagliano, 2001); S. Barbagallo, *La guerra di Messina 1674-1678: "Chi protegge li ribelli d'altri principi, invita i propri a' ribellarsi"* (Napoli, Guida Ed., 2016).

¹⁹ For the history of the University of Messina see: G. Cesa, *L'Università di Messina e la Compagnia di Gesù* (Messina, 1990); *'Il Messanense Studium Generale' tra politica gesuita e istanze egemoniche* (Milano, 1994); D. Novarese, 'Note bibliografiche sulla storia dell'Università di Messina', *Atti dell'Accademia Peloritana dei Pericolanti*, vols. LV-LVI (1986-1987), 243-328; V. Calabrò, *Istituzioni universitarie e insegnamento del diritto in Sicilia, 1767-1885* (Milano, 2002).

Palermo from gaining further strength.²⁰ Messina became the island's cultural capital.

The second decade of the 1800s coincided with the human, cultural, and political education of Sicilian patriots. These patriots saw the anti-Spanish war as a symbol of Sicily's fight for independence from foreign rule. In this context, Giuseppe La Farina, a patriot from Messina, dedicated his 1845 play, *L'Abbandono di un popolo* (The Abandonment of a People), to this event, which I will explore in more detail.

The local intelligentsia sought to reconnect the threads of continuity with the past, attempting to fill a void created after two catastrophic events: the plague of 1734 and the earthquake of 1783. In this process of re-appropriation of traditions and civic places, but also of welcoming new cultural movements, the *Accademia Peloritana de' Pericolanti* played a leading role and showed the transition from eighteenth to nineteenth-century culture from a provincial dimension to a more cosmopolitan one. approach.

The activism of the urban classes in Sicily during the Risorgimento period was driven by the aristocratic and bourgeois classes, who sought to reclaim a glorious past. They focused on three main objectives: 1. Politically, they aimed to reintroduce a model of self-governance inspired by historical precedents. 2. They sought to reform education to restore the prestige of the ancient city universities. 3. Economically, they aimed to revitalise trade and revive maritime traditions.²¹ Additionally, these classes undertook a cultural initiative to build consensus around their political ideas and mobilise urban masses in support of their goals.

A significant outcome of the activism of the social and cultural elites in Sicily was the establishment of the *Accademia Peloritana* (The Peloritana Academy) in Messina.

3.1 The Accademia Peloritana: Bridging the Ancien Régime and Modern Society

In his letter to Ludovico Antonio Muratori, Paolo Aglioti requested the merging of the *Accademia degli Accorti* (an ancient name attributed by Dr Pietro Guerriera) with that of the *Dissonants* of Modena. Following an affirmative response and the Viceroy's approval, a royal decree established the *Accademia Peloritana de' Pericolanti* in Messina in 1728. The Academy

²⁰ D. Novarese, 'Policentrismo e politica culturale nella Sicilia spagnola' in G. P. Brizzi, J. Verger (a cura di), *Le Università minori in Europa (secoli XV-XIX)* (Soveria Mannelli, Rubbettino, 1998), 317-336; O. Cancila, *Storia della Università di Palermo dalle origini al 1860* (Bari and Roma, Laterza, 2006).

²¹ See S. Lupo, 'Regione e nazione nel Risorgimento in Sicilia', *Storica*, VIII, 2002, 24, 7-30; G. Giarrizzo, 'Borghesie e 'provincia' nel Mezzogiorno durante la Restaurazione', *Atto del III Convegno di studi sul Risorgimento in Puglia (10-12 dicembre 1981). L'età della Restaurazione (1815-1830)* (Bari, Bracciodieta, 1983), pp. 19-33; E. Iachello, 'Retorica politica e poteri locali nella Sicilia di primo Ottocento', in *Archivio Storico per la Sicilia Orientale*, XCII, 1996, 1-3, 183-192; A. Signorelli (ed.), *Le borghesie dell'Ottocento: fonti, metodi e modelli per una storia sociale delle élites* (Messina, Sicania, 1988).

officially opened with its initial location at the Royal Palace. The chosen coat of arms depicted the promontory of the Peloritani Mountains. At the same time, the image of the boat at the mercy of the currents of the Strait, along with a view of Scilla and Cariddi, symbolised the name 'Pericolanti' given by its members.²² Furthermore, each member of the Academy was assigned a title (or nickname) for identification. Notable examples include the *Misurante* (Paolo Aglioti), the *Dubbioso* (Maria Atanasio Ciampoli), the *Intempestivo* (Francesco Abate Micali), and the *Zelante* (Father Francesco Pasquale-Romano).²³

After the devastating epidemic of the pestilence of 1743, the Academy was re-established thanks to the efforts of the so-called *Riparatori* (Repairers), a group of distinguished scholars led by Andrea Gallo (1734-1814), a learned Freemason and son of Cajo Domenico, the author of the *Annals of Messina*, to which Andrea also contributed. These activities increased the prestige of both the institution and the city on an international level.

The severe cataclysm of 1783, which nearly destroyed Messina, led to a temporary suspension of *Pericolanti's* activities. Andrea Gallo, elected president in 1797, guided the Academy in addressing Enlightenment themes, including agriculture, public markets, religious festivals, begging, and infrastructure (roads, bridges, and waterworks). Besides, there was significant emphasis on poetic and musical compositions, particularly the so-called 'cicalate', satirical poems that gained considerable popularity among the public. A. Gallo and G. Romeo made a notable contribution to this genre.

In addition to conducting activities in the humanities and scientific studies, some members of the Academy devoted themselves to antiquarian collecting. This pursuit had characterised the tastes of European elites since ancient times. They studied not only the transfer of ownership of artworks, antiques, documents, and collections, but also the recovery of the city's historical memory, its social fabric, and the identities of families and individuals. Their efforts contribute to revitalising the territory, thereby performing a significant civic service. While discussing the 'cultural policy' of antique collectors, it is essential to highlight the contributions of Andrea Gallo. Alongside him, Carmelo La Farina, Giuseppe's father, was a prominent figure in the *Accademia Peloritana*. His activities were extensive and can be linked to those of a modern 'cultural operator'. In the 1830s, he was appointed a Professor of Geometry and Arithmetic. His education spanned from Greek and Latin history to mathematics, the arts, and geography. This

²² For the history of the *Accademia Peloritana*, see 'Memorie storiche e letterarie della Reale Accademia Peloritana di Messina, dal tempo della fondazione fino al presente (1729-1779) per Gaetano Oliva, socio ordinario della stessa Accademia, in *Atti della R. Accademia Peloritana*, aa. V e VI, 1884-1888 (Messina, Tip. d'Amico, 1888), 3-254; *Statuti della Reale Accademia Peloritana* (Messina, 1889).

²³ *Ibid.*, 24-28.

broad cultural background had a significant impact on the two brothers, Silvestro and Giuseppe. In addition, Carmelo served as editor of a scientific, literary, and artistic periodical, *Lo Spettatore Zancleo* and *Il Faro*. He was also the director of the Peloritano Museum, chancellor of the Messina Archives, and a judge of the Great Criminal Court.

Sicilian intellectuals such as Andrea Gallo and Carmelo La Farina bridged two critical cultural periods: the erudition of the eighteenth century and the new romantic ideas of the nineteenth century, which focused on the rediscovery of the heritage of Sicilian people. In his *Discorso* read before the members of the Academy on 2 July 1806,²⁴ Carmelo proposed the establishment of a City Museum, which was ultimately realised through municipal and private financial support. He acknowledged Andrea Gallo as his ‘praiseworthy teacher’ on that occasion. Over the following decades, the Museum was enriched with collections of paintings from the school of Messina painters, fossils, Greco-Roman marbles, weapons, and coins. In addition to the Civic Museum, Messina was gifted another treasure from the Academy, a sundial designed by Abbot A. Maria Jaci and installed within the Cathedral. In the second decade of the nineteenth century, the *Accademia de’ Pericolanti* experienced a noticeable decline in literary and scientific production. This prompted the members to reflect on the Academy’s aims and content. In light of this reflection, the Academy amended its Regulations following President Monsignor Gaetano Grano’s death.²⁵ The new Statute of 1826 categorised the sciences and fine arts into four classes: physical sciences, moral and political sciences, experimental morality (History), and acceptable letters and arts (including Poetry, Architecture, and Music). In the last category, new names were introduced; among the most notable were the brothers Giuseppe and Silvestro La Farina, Carlo Gemelli, Riccardo Mitchell, Letterio Subba, Michele Panebianco, and Felice Bisazza. On 27 September 1832, Bisazza presented his *Discorso sul Romanticismo*, marking the Academy’s engagement with cultural issues from beyond the Alps. I will explore this aspect further.

The Academy also promoted an art exhibition inaugurated by Giuseppe La Farina, accompanied by his *Discorso*, in January 1840. This exhibition aligned with the cultural ideas of the Romantic season, emphasising the importance of art in society. Between 1839 and 1847, several Italian cities, including Pisa, Milan, Turin, Florence, Padua, Lucca, Naples, Genoa, and Venice, hosted Congresses of Italian scientists. These congresses aimed to enhance the quality of scientific

²⁴ ‘Sopra le antichità di Messina. Discorso Accademico recitato nell’Accademia Peloritana de’ Pericolanti a 2 luglio 1806’, in *Discorsi accademici inediti*, vol. II, 1803-1808, ms della Biblioteca Museo Regionale di Messina.

²⁵ Gaetano Grano was a versatile figure with a wide range of interests, including classics, history, numismatics, palaeography, physics, and law. He was born in Messina in 1754 and passed away in 1838. The abbot Grano served as the president of the Accademia dei Pericolanti and was a member of the Accademia degli Zelanti di Acireale. As the librarian of the Accademia Carolina, he played a significant role in the cultural development of his city.

studies in Italy, foster collaboration among scientists, and form a national culture. However, less tolerant pre-Union governments, such as the Bourbon regime, attempted to restrict the participation of scholars whose activities were considered conspiratorial.

As I will discuss further, Sicily was the first region to rise in January 1848, marking the beginning of the Year of the Spring of Nations. During this period, the *Accademia Peloritana* had to halt its various activities due to heavy bombardment by the Bourbon government in Messina. Despite losing many local talents and facing strict Bourbon censorship, the Academy's work resumed in 1852 until Italy's unification. To commemorate this long-awaited event, the Academy held three days of celebrations. The first celebration took place on May 6, 1861. On that day, the Academy's new headquarters, located next to the palace of the Carolina Academy, resonated with verses written by Cav. Riccardo Mitchell.

3.2 The Sicilian Masonic Circles

The urban elites of Sicily relied on various social, economic, and cultural networks. These included foreign communities, such as the British and Germans, particularly in port cities like Messina and Palermo.²⁶ Additionally, various associations and private groups, many of which were tied to European radical freemasonry,²⁷ played a significant role. It is noteworthy that Carmelo La Farina succeeded his mentor Andrea Gallo (1734-1814), an intellectual Mason, in the chair of arithmetic and geometry at the *Royal Accademia Carolina* in Messina.

During the first thirty years of the nineteenth century, the conspiratorial activities of the Carbonari secret societies became increasingly prominent among middle-class circles on the island. There were approximately thirty Carbonari sects in Messina.²⁸ Carmelo La Farina was arrested for leading *I Filantropi*, a pro-Mazzini group.

Salvatore Chindemi's writings reference the Carboneria, which was 'in full bloom' in Syracuse since 1820. He argued that the Tuscan Bartolomeo Senesi had introduced the movement earlier in the Sicilian city. Senesi was an improvisational poet who travelled to Italy while spreading his political ideas. In 1819, he was arrested and sentenced to Caltagirone. After his release, he went

²⁶ For the presence of alien communities, see, among others: M. D'Angelo, *Comunità straniere a Messina tra XVIII e XIX sec.: alle origini del British Cemetery* (Messina, 1995); Ead, *Mercanti inglesi in Sicilia 1806-1815. Rapporti commerciali tra Sicilia e Gran Bretagna nel periodo del blocco continentale* (Milano, 1988); R. Battaglia, 'Attività commerciali nei porti della Sicilia tra Settecento e Ottocento', in *Sopra i porti di mare. III. Sicilia e Malta* (a cura di G. Simoncini (Firenze, 1997), 111-158.

²⁷ On the Masonic circles and 'vendite' in Sicily, see: Z. Ciuffoletti (a cura di), 'La Massoneria e le forme di sociabilità nell'Europa del Settecento', *Il Viesseux*, 11(1991), 147 ff.; G. Giarrizzo, *Massoneria e Illuminismo nell'Europa del Settecento* (Venezia, 1994), 383, ff.; L. Chiara, *Messina nell'Ottocento. Famiglie, patrimoni, attività* (Messina, EDAS, 2002); C. Francovich, *Storia della Massoneria in Italia. Dalle origini alla Rivoluzione francese* (Firenze, 1974).

²⁸ A. Checco, G. La Farina, *la vita, le idee, le opere* (Messina, Sfameni, 2005), 25-26.

into exile in Paris, where he eventually died.

Among the Carbonari followers, many were churchmen. Chindemi suggested their involvement stemmed from discontent over the loss of privileges once enjoyed in the old parliaments, where high-ranking clergy had significant representation.²⁹ He noted that ‘in every political conspiracy, a priest or monk was typically involved.’³⁰ Furthermore, he attributed the presence of undesirable elements, such as ‘ambitious hustlers seeking blood revenge’³¹, to the lack of thorough oversight in incoming controls. This resulted in ‘instances of scandals and illicit gains’.³² While corruption was prevalent within the Carbonari sects, some provided benefits, such as establishing a mutual teaching school in Syracuse, modelled after the Bell-Lancaster system. The Carbonari’s propaganda significantly impacted the first Sicilian separatist uprisings of 1820-21, which Giuseppe Rosaroll³³ organised in Barcelona, Spain. This location had many initiatory circles that attracted numerous Italian patriots.

During the Napoleonic Wars, Southern Italy became a battleground between France and an anti-French coalition led by England. Following Napoleon’s defeat and the agreements made at the Congress of Vienna, the geopolitical landscape shifted, enhancing the influence of the British Empire in the Mediterranean. British expansionism had begun in the early eighteenth century. In 1704, Admiral Rooke’s forces captured the fortress of Gibraltar, and just four years later, the English seized Menorca in the Balearic Islands. By 1813, the Royal Navy had taken control of the Grand Harbour of Valletta, and two years later, the British protectorate expanded to include the seven Ionian Islands.

When discussing Sicily, examining the so-called ‘English decade’ from 1806 to 1816,³⁴ which began with Napoleon’s implementation of the continental blockade, is crucial. During this period, Sicilian liberal intellectuals engaged in broader discussions around ‘Mediterranean constitutionalism.’ This latter brought together liberal factions from across Europe, typically aligning around three main constitutional models: the French, the English, and, following 1812,

²⁹ *Siracusa dal 1826 al 1860 pel professore Salvatore Chindemi* (Siracusa, Tip. A. Pulejo, 1869), 23: (‘negli antichissimi parlamenti, dove avea largo seggio l’alto clero’).

³⁰ *Ibid.*: (‘Non vi fu cospirazione politica ove non v’entrasse il prete o il monaco’).

³¹ *Ibid.*, 3: (‘faccendieri ambiziosi e cupidi di vendette di sangue’).

³² *Ibid.*: (‘episodi di scandali e di illeciti guadagni’).

³³ Giuseppe Rosaroll (Naples, 1775 – Nafplion, 1825) was an officer in the Napoleonic army who fought in the battles of Magenta and Tuscany. In 1806, he accompanied General A. Masséna and was sent to the Ionian Islands in 1808. Upon his return to Italy, he supported Murat in the conquest of Sicily in 1811 and the entire Italian peninsula in 1815. In July 1820, Rosaroll participated in the uprisings in Messina, and in 1821, he led an insurrection against Austria. Unfortunately, this attempt failed, and he fled to Spain with his family. There, he joined the ranks of the constitutionalist liberals. Eventually, he was forced to leave Spain and sought refuge first in Malta and later in the Ionian Islands, where he died in 1825.

³⁴ G. Bianco, *La Sicilia durante l’occupazione inglese 1806-1815* (Palermo, Reber, 1902); D. D’Andrea, *Nel “decennio inglese” 1806-1815. La Sicilia nella politica britannica dai “Talenti” a Bentinck* (Soveria Mannelli, Rubbettino, 2008).

the Cadiz model. This raises some questions, for example, what was the role of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies within this English-Mediterranean context? Additionally, what influence did Lord Bentinck have in establishing the 1812 Sicilian constitution? Which constitutional model did the Sicilian patriots aspire to? What were La Farina and Gemelli's reflections regarding these subjects?

3.3 'Constitution, or Revolution!' The Constitutional Debate in Sicily: La Farina and Gemelli's Reflections

Recently, considerable attention has been devoted to British imperialism³⁵ and 'British constitutionalism'.³⁶

The latter was understood as two opposing forms of hegemony: liberal and despotic.³⁷ In Sicily, as noted by Holland, many liberals viewed the presence of the English as the only safeguard against Bourbon despotism.³⁸ Remaining untouched by the Napoleonic conquest, Sicily, supported by the British fleet and a military garrison, became an important 'constitutional laboratory' in the heart of the Mediterranean, serving an anti-Napoleonic function.

The political structure within the Sicilian Parliament was complex. In addition to the moderate constitutionalists, often referred to as the 'English party,' and those who sympathised with the French constitutional model, known as the 'democrats,' there were other significant factions. One was the 'court party' or 'regii,' led by Queen Maria Carolina and strongly supported the Neapolitan-Austrian model. Another faction was the 'demagogues,' representing the most radical constitutionalists, favouring the Spanish model.

Enzo Sciacca remarked that the Sicilian constitutionalists largely supported the privileges of the baronage and opposed the Bourbon monarchy. They advocated for preserving and adjusting the old Sicilian constitution. In contrast, the Crown sought the backing of the middle classes interested in implementing significant economic and social reforms to undermine the barons'

³⁵ G. Grieco, 'British imperialism and Southern liberalism: re-shaping the Mediterranean space, c. 1817–1823', in *Global Intellectual History*, 2018, 13(2), 202-230. DOI: 10.1080/23801883.2018.1450618; D. D'Andrea, 'Great Britain and the Mediterranean Islands in the Napoleonic Wars – The 'insular strategy' of Gould Francis Leckie', in *Journal of Mediterranean Studies*, n. 1/2 (2006), vol. 16; ID., 'La 'insular strategy' della Gran Bretagna tra Mediterraneo e Mar Nero in età napoleonica', in *Mediterraneo e/è Mar Nero. Due mari tra età moderna e contemporanea*, a cura di L. Mascilli Migliorini e M. Manfrici (Napoli, Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 2011).

³⁶ C.R. Ricotti, 'Il costituzionalismo britannico nel Mediterraneo (1794-1818): alle origini del 'modello siciliano'', in *Clio*, XXXI (1995), n. 1, 5-63.; Id., *Il costituzionalismo britannico nel Mediterraneo* (Milano, Giuffrè, 2005).

³⁷ L. Cooley interprets British constitutionalism as an instrument of imperial rule, see her *Britons. Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (Yale University Press, 1992).

³⁸ R. Holland, *Blue-Water Empire: The British in the Mediterranean since 1800* (London, Allen Lane, 2012), 54.

power on the island.³⁹ Giuseppe Giarrizzo explains that the preference for the English constitutional model over the French one stemmed from a fear of Jacobin France after 1799.⁴⁰

La Farina's chronicle, although not extensively detailed, notes that during the first twenty years of the nineteenth century, a 'constitutional party' emerged on the Island, led by the Prince of Belmonte⁴¹ and the Prince of Castelnuovo.⁴² He also mentions that the Prince of Aci⁴³ and the Prince of Cassaro⁴⁴ among the local nobility supported the British governance model. In contrast, the general populace and other nobles, such as Count Aceto and Colonel Requens, preferred the Constitution of Cadiz (1812), which was regarded as more democratic than the English model.

Within these constitutional groups, varying positions often arose from shifting beliefs and perspectives. For instance, Count Aceto initially supported the English model, but after 1820, he adopted the ideas of the Spanish model. These shifts sometimes resulted in deep and irreconcilable divisions among the parliamentarians.

³⁹ E. Sciacca, 'Il modello costituzionale inglese nel pensiero politico in Sicilia tra Sette ed Ottocento', in *Il modello costituzionale inglese e la sua ricezione nell'area mediterranea tra la fine del '700 e la prima metà dell'800, Atti del seminario internazionali di studi in memoria di Francesco Tomas y Valiente* (Messina, 14-16 novembre 1996), a cura di A. Romano (Milano, 1998), 375-390; ID., *Riflessi del costituzionalismo europeo in Sicilia (1812-1815)*, (Catania, Bonanno, 1966), 12-15.

⁴⁰ G. Giarrizzo, 'La Sicilia nel 1812: una revisione in atto', in *Storia Patria per la Sicilia Orientale*, a. LXIV, n. 64 (1968), 53-65; ID., '1812. Sicilia inglese?', in *Il modello costituzionale inglese e la sua ricezione nell'area mediterranea fra la fine del 700 e la prima metà dell'800*, a cura di A. Romano (Milano, Giuffrè, 1988), 59 ff; ID., 'La Sicilia dal Cinquecento all'Unità d'Italia', in V. D'Alessandro e G. Giarrizzo, *La Sicilia dal Vespro all'Unità d'Italia* (Torino, Utet, 1989), 97-793.

⁴¹ Giuseppe Ventimiglia and Cottone, the Prince of Belmonte (born in Palermo in 1776 and died in Paris in 1814), was closely associated with the Academy of Studies in Palermo. He supported the adoption of the English constitutional model, which was opposed by the French party led by Queen Maria Carolina. Alongside his uncle Carlo Cottone and the abbot Paolo Balsamo, he played a significant role in drafting the Sicilian Constitution of 1812.

⁴² Carlo Cottone, Prince of Castelnuovo (1756-1829, Palermo), was a strong supporter of British constitutionalism. He served as the Minister of Finance in the Sicilian government established by Lord Bentinck. Following the return of the Bourbons to the throne of Naples in 1814, he retired from public life.

⁴³ Giuseppe Reggio e Grugno, Prince of Aci (Palermo 1765-1820), was a key figure in the political landscape of his time. As a factotum of King Ferdinand I and a member of the baronial arm of the Sicilian Parliament, he actively supported the protest against a tax that many nobles deemed unfair. Consequently, he was imprisoned and confined to Ustica. In 1812, thanks to the intervention of Lord Bentinck, he was liberated. Following this, the Prince of Belmonte invited him to join the new government as Minister of War in March 1812. Reggio was an advocate of the English constitutional model, which proposed a separation between the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily. However, his political conduct was inconsistent, as he navigated between two coexisting orientations in Aci: the liberal and the monarchist. This often led him to adopt demagogic and contradictory positions. When his attempts to reconnect with the Bourbon court were discovered, Bentinck removed him from the government in February 1813. During the Palermo riots of 1820, due to his unclear actions, Aci was killed by the rage of the people.

⁴⁴ Francesco Maria Statella, Prince of Cassaro (Palermo, 1758 - Naples, 1823), had a political career marked by adaptability, similar to that of the Prince of Aci. After his split with Lord Bentinck in March 1813, he shifted his allegiance from the constitutionalist party, which included many Sicilian barons, to the royal court. Despite this change, his political and administrative experience led Lord Bentinck to appoint him as the Secretary of State for Grace and Justice in the new ministry established in March 1812. As a supporter of the Bourbon monarchy in the Sicilian Parliament, Cassaro opposed, alongside the Prince of Belmonte, the proposed law that aimed to nationalize state property and abolish trusts. His disagreement with Lord Bentinck over criticisms of the Constitution ultimately resulted in his expulsion from the government. In March 1813, with the restoration of the vicariate, Francesco I appointed him as his chief butler, and Cassaro joined the king's private council. When Ferdinand I returned to the throne in July 1814, Cassaro worked to limit the power of the House of Commons. The constitutional Parliament was dissolved on May 17, 1815, after which Cassaro and his family moved to Naples, where he passed away in 1823.

Abbot Paolo Balsamo⁴⁵ also contributed to the constitutional debate in the Sicilian context. He was representative of the House of Commons. He argued that the French and Spanish constitutions were ‘too democratic and tending to anarchy.’⁴⁶ Count Giovanni Aceto Cattani, during his exile in Paris after the events of 1820, detailed the events leading up to the granting of the 1812 constitution in *De la Sicile et des rapports avec l'Angleterre à l'époque de la constitution de 1812* (1827). He also illustrated the protest by the parliamentary barons in March 1811 against a royal edict from February 1811 that imposed a 1% duty on all payments. This protest resulted in the arrest and exile of five rebellious barons,⁴⁷ and the English cabinet's intervention led to the appointment of Lord William Bentinck as Minister Plenipotentiary and Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in the Mediterranean.⁴⁸ He aimed to intervene in the Neapolitan court, ‘engaging in discussions with the king, the queen, and the crown prince.’⁴⁹ While the queen appeared inflexible, the king hesitated. Ultimately, the crown prince was persuaded to grant concessions.⁵⁰ Faced with the strong resistance of Queen Maria Carolina, Lord Bentinck, during a conversation with her, reportedly exclaimed, ‘Madam, there is no middle way: it is either a Constitution or a revolution.’⁵¹

Lord Bentinck persuaded the reluctant King Ferdinando to abdicate on 16 January 1812, appointing his son Francesco as the vicar general of the Kingdom. In response, Francesco called

⁴⁵ Paolo Balsamo (Termini Imerese, 1764 - Palermo, 1816) was an abbot and a member of the ecclesiastical branch of the Sicilian Parliament. He held the chair of Agriculture at the Accademia Reale degli Studi in Palermo. His research interests included political economy and local history. His frequent travels to Tuscany (1787-88), Paris (1788), London (1789-1790), and the Netherlands (1790) allowed him to engage with Enlightenment circles, which helped shape his arguments in favor of political, economic, and social reforms. Balsamo was one of the main authors of the Sicilian Constitution of 1812. Among his most notable works are: *Economic and Agrarian Memories Related to the Kingdom of Sicily* (Palermo, 1803); ‘Sopra la ruggine e il cattivo raccolto dei grani del corrente anno 1804 in Sicilia, lettera a Giuseppe Ventimiglia principe di Belmonte’, *ibid.*, 1804; ‘Catalogo della privata libreria di S. M. Ferdinando III’, *ibid.*, 1808; *Sistema metrico per la Sicilia presentato a Sua Maestà dalla Deputazione dei pesi e misure* (along with G. Piazzì and D. Marabitti (Palermo, 1809); *Memorie inedite di pubblica economia ed agricoltura*, voll. 2 (Palermo, 1845); ‘Lettere di P. B. al principe di Torremuzza’, in *Nuove Effemeridi siciliane*, I (1875), 281-288. For the figure of Paul Balsamo see N. Palmeri, ‘Necrologia di P. Balsamo (1818)’, in *Biblioteca italiana*, Milano, 29 maggio 1818, premessa alle *Memorie inedite di pubblica economia ed agricoltura*, voll. 2 (Palermo, 1845); G. Giarrizzo, ‘Paolo Balsamo economista’, in *Rivista Storica Italiana*, LXXVII (1966), 5-60.

⁴⁶ P. Balsamo, *Memorie segrete sulla istoria moderna del Regno di Sicilia*, a cura di G. Ugdulena, Palermo 1848, rist. con Introduzione di F. Renda (Palermo, Edizioni della Regione siciliana, 1969), 95.

⁴⁷ The Royal Edict mandated the arrest and exile of the prince of Belmonte Ventimiglia, the prince of Villafranca, the prince of Aci, the prince of Villarmosa, and the duke of Angiò.

⁴⁸ For Lord William Bentinck, see J. Rosselli, *Lord William Bentinck and the British Occupation of Sicily, 1811-1814* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1956); trad. it. A. Cosmai, *Lord William Bentinck e l'occupazione britannica in Sicilia 1811-1814*, a cura di M. D'Angelo (Palermo, Sellerio, 2002); L. Giardina, ‘Lord Bentinck e il suo Sicilian Journal (1812-1814)’, in *Archivio Storico per la Sicilia Orientale*, LXXI (1975), 372-373.

⁴⁹ Conte Aceto, *La Sicilia e i suoi rapporti con l'Inghilterra all'epoca della costituzione del 1812, o Memorie storiche su' principali avvenimenti di quel tempo, con la confutazione della storia d'Italia di Botta, etc.* (Palermo: F. Ruffino, 1848), 60: ([Lord Bentinck] Ebbe delle conferenze ora col re ora con la regina ora col principe ereditario.).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Quoted in N. Palmieri, *Saggio storico e politico sulla Costituzione de Regno di Sicilia*, 116: (“Madama, non v'è strada di mezzo, o Costituzione, o rivoluzione”).

for the convocation of the Sicilian Parliament, which met in an extraordinary session on 18 July 1812. During this session, he proposed modelling reforms on the English Constitution, and the Sicilian Charter was promulgated on 10 August 1812, coming into effect in June 1813. The exiled barons were recalled, and alongside the Prince of Cassaro, they joined the Council of State, which was presided over by Lord Bentinck.

The Sicilian Constitution⁵² can be described as ‘hybrid.’ On one hand, it represented the ‘Sicilian nation,’ a concept embraced by many patriots. On the other hand, it was influenced by English interests on the island and the ambitions of the local aristocracy, who sought to enhance their power and elevate their position above the king.⁵³ Count Aceto believed it was not a new constitution: it was ‘in substance nothing but the ancient Constitution of Sicily regulated and made more analogous to the needs and enlightenment of modern societies.’⁵⁴

The Parliament discussed the specific proposals presented by Abbot Balsamo in committee meetings. However, the vicar prince rejected many of these proposals, and other provisions were modified. As a result, the Sicilian Charter emerged ‘pruned and mutilated, containing even more imperfections and gaps than before.’⁵⁵

⁵² *Costituzione del Regno di Sicilia* (Palermo, Stamperia Reale, 1813), anastatic print by A. Romano (Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli, Rubbettino, 2003). On the Sicilian constitution there is a rich bibliography, here we cite only some selected works: N. Palmeri, *Saggio storico e politico sulla Costituzione del regno di Sicilia fino al 1816: con un'appendice sulla rivoluzione del 1820*, opera postuma, introduzione di Michele Amari (Palermo, Anno Primo della rigenerazione, 1848); F. Guardione, *La costituzione siciliana del 1812* (Roma, Tipografia dell'Unione Editrice, 1912); S.F. Romano, *La Costituzione siciliana riformata nel Parlamento del 1812: discorso letto nella seduta del 12 maggio 1912* (Palermo, Scuola Tipografica Boccone del Povero, 1912); E. Pontieri, *Ai margini della costituzione siciliana del 1812* (Roma, 1933); V. Titone, *La costituzione del 1812 e l'occupazione inglese della Sicilia* (Bologna, Tip. Cappelli, 1936); F. Renda, ‘La costituzione del 1812 e l'autonomia siciliana’, in *La Sicilia e l'Unità d'Italia*, Milano, 1962, Vol. II, 523-532; A. Romano, ‘1812: due Costituzioni per l'Europa’, in *Culture parlamentari a confronto Modelli della rappresentanza politica e identità nazionali*, a cura di A. Romano (Bologna, CLUEB, 2016), xi-xix; ID., *Introduzione alla Costituzione di Sicilia stabilita nel generale straordinario Parlamento del 1812. Preceduta da un discorso sulla medesima, e da diplomi relativi alla Convocazione del Parlamento, ed alla Sanzione di tutte le proposte di esso: Coll'aggiunta di un Compendio della Costituzione d'Inghilterra* (Palermo, 1813; anastatic reprint Soveria Mannelli 2000), xix-lxiii; L. Bianchini, ‘Carattere aristocratico e conservatore della costituzione del 1812 e i dannosi effetti della protezione inglese’, in *Nuovi Quaderni del Meridione*, XIII (1975), n. 49, 100 ff.; C. Spoto, ‘Le fonti ideologiche della costituzione siciliana del 1812’, in *Annali della Facoltà giuridica dell'Università perugina*, XIX (1982-3), 459 ff.; M. Ganci, ‘Costituzionalismo e costituzioni in Sicilia e a Napoli dal 1812 al 1848’, in *Archivio Storico Siciliano*, serie IV, XXV (1999), 9 ff.; Andrea Romano, ‘En los albores del constitucionalismo europeo: la “carta” siciliana del 1812’, in *Anuario de Historia del Derecho Espanol*, LXVII, 1997, 777-797; H.M. Lackland, ‘The failure of the constitutional experiment in Sicily, 1813-1814’, in *The English Historical Review*, Vol. XLI, 1926, 210-235; D. Novarese, ‘Tra Francia e Inghilterra: Riflessioni sulla Carta costituzionale del 1812’, in *Il modello costituzionale inglese e la sua recezione nell'area mediterranea fra la fine del 700 e la prima metà dell'800*, 771-812; E. Pelleriti, *1812-1848. La Sicilia tra due costituzioni* (Milano, Giuffrè, 2000). For a comprehensive understanding of the constitutional changes during the Risorgimento period, see C. Ghisalberti, *Istituzioni e società civile nell'età del Risorgimento* (Bari, Gius. Laterza & Figli, 2005).

⁵³ D. Novarese, ‘Tra Francia e Inghilterra: Riflessioni sulla Carta costituzionale del 1812’, in *Il modello costituzionale inglese e la sua recezione nell'area mediterranea fra la fine del 700 e la prima metà dell'800*, 771-812 (778); see also her *La tradizione “inventata”. La costruzione dell'ideologia parlamentare in Sicilia fra XVI e XIX secolo* (Milano, Giuffrè Editore, 2011).

⁵⁴ Conte Aceto, *La Sicilia e i suoi rapporti con l'Inghilterra all'epoca della costituzione del 1812*, 2: (‘non è in sostanza che l'antica Costituzione della Sicilia regolata e resa più analoga ai bisogni ed ai lumi delle moderne società’).

⁵⁵ Ibid., 84: (‘ne uscì monca e mutilata ed ebbe più di prima imperfezioni e lacune’).

The final version of the constitutional text was quite complex. The prominent editors included nobles such as Carlo Cottone, Prince of Castelnuovo, and Giuseppe Ventimiglia, Prince of Belmonte, as well as Abbot Paolo Balsamo. The text comprised over five hundred articles developed by the three branches of the Sicilian Parliament: the baronial, ecclesiastical, and state branches. Although the individual articles received approval from the Parliament, they also required royal sanction, which could be either a ‘Veto’ (rejection) or a ‘Placet’ (approval) from the king. In contrast to the Cadiz Constitution, as Gemelli noted, the Sicilian Charter allowed for the coexistence of ‘two parliaments—the Neapolitan and the Sicilian—while maintaining a unified monarchy.’⁵⁶

The Sicilian Parliament was divided into two chambers: one representing the Communes, which was elected based on a census and included both state and baronial representatives, and the other consisting of peers, who were hereditary members, comprising ecclesiastics and barons holding peerages. The Sicilian Charter established a clear separation of powers in line with Montesquieu’s theories: legislative power resided in Parliament, the Crown held executive power, and judicial power was entrusted to the Magistracy (which, although independent, had its magistrates appointed by the Crown). While the bicameral structure looked well-defined on paper, it was somewhat flawed because the House of Commons held the most power. This chamber had the exclusive right to initiate tax legislation, whereas the Chamber of Peers could only propose amendments to existing legislation. Additionally, the charter declared the Kingdom of Sicily independent from the Kingdom of Naples and any other kingdom or province. Among the most significant constitutional reforms were those that abolished feudal systems and transformed state lands into allodial lands. Nevertheless, the shift in English policy towards Sicily following the fall of Napoleon led to King Ferdinand’s return to the throne of Naples after the Congress of Vienna.

Things turned out differently from what Abbot Balsamo had predicted. The first constitutional experiment was not implemented because it was foreign to Sicily’s social and cultural context. The reflections of Gemelli and La Farina, developed a few years later, provide fascinating insights into the failures of the constitutional period of 1812 and the relationship between Sicily and England. Gemelli highlights a significant mistake made by the Sicilian liberals: their agreement to establish the vicariate under Francesco I. Indeed, as both the son and subject of King Ferdinand, he faced a difficult situation, attempting to navigate a new political landscape while having limited freedom to act.⁵⁷ As noted by Gemelli, one of the key reasons for the failure

⁵⁶ Carlo Gemelli, *Storia della Siciliana rivoluzione del 1848-49*, vol. 1 (Bologna, Fava & Garagnani, 1867), 109: (‘di due Parlamenti, quello napoletano e quello siciliano, due Statuti, pur conservando l’unità monarchica.’).

⁵⁷ Ibid., *Storia della Siciliana rivoluzione del 1848-49*, vol. 1, 85.

disagreement emerged between two constitutionalist barons: the Prince of Castelnuovo, who advocated for the abolition of the *fideicommissum*, and the Prince of Belmonte, who opposed this idea.⁵⁸ Count Aceto also supported this interpretation.⁵⁹ This fracture led to an irreparable split within the ‘constitutionalist party’. As a result, the dialogue among the various political parties became stagnant regarding the potential introduction of more democratic structural reforms. These reforms aimed to fundamentally alter the existing social dynamics, ultimately to the detriment of the Sicilian aristocracy.

In discussing the relationship between Sicily and foreign powers, particularly England, both Gemelli and La Farina assert that England repeatedly betrayed the trust of the Sicilian people, effectively leaving them to their fate. Addressing his fellow citizens, La Farina expresses his concerns about the willingness of France and England to go beyond mere informal non-intervention in the 1848 Sicilian revolution. He stated, ‘First of all, I should tell you that if people in Sicily expect a change from the armed interference of England and France, they are living in complete delusion. England and France intend to offer nothing more than an opportunity for insurrection. They essentially say to the people: ‘Civil Europe condemns the Bourbon government; if you want to free yourselves, we will not intervene. Nothing more than this.’⁶⁰

On 8 December 1816, King Ferdinando, relying on the decisions made at the Congress of Vienna, assumed the title of Ferdinando I and established a new, uniform organisation for his states. As a result, the old and new constitutions were abolished simultaneously, along with Sicily’s independence. Although the Sicilian constitution of 1812 was never officially revoked, it was not enforced and was effectively nullified by the abovementioned decree uniting the two kingdoms of Naples and Sicily.

4. Political divisions: Nationalism, Sicilianism, and Municipalism

In the ideological array of Sicilian patriots, there were differences of views on the form of state to be given to Sicily in the event of victory over the Bourbon monarchy: some remained loyal to the monarchy, even if not to the Bourbon dynasty, while others expressed their faith in the republic, as initially supported by democrats La Farina and Gemelli. Additionally, together with the

⁵⁸ Ibid., 109.

⁵⁹ Conte Aceto, *La Sicilia e i suoi rapporti con l'Inghilterra all'epoca della costituzione del 1812*, 82-89.

⁶⁰ Giuseppe La Farina, *Epistolario*, vol. 2, 27: (‘Bisogna prima di tutto che vi dica che, se in Sicilia si attende un mutamento di cose dall’ingerimento armato dell’Inghilterra e della Francia, si vive in un completo inganno. L’Inghilterra e la Francia intendono non offerire altro che l’opportunità di una insurrezione. Esse intendono dire ai popoli: ‘Il governo borbonico è condannato dalla civile Europa se voi volete liberarvene noi non vi avverseremo. Niente più di questo.’

Fusionists (or Unitarians), the varied political composition includes the component of the Federalists and Medialists, as sustained by *La Forbice's* article.⁶¹ As already mentioned, the same division existed within the group of constitutionalists: some favoured the Anglo-Sicilian constitution of 1812, and others praised the Spanish constitution of the same year. In this regard, a further rift between the constitutionalists was also the product of the municipal sentiments on the island. For example, rival cities such as Messina, Syracuse, Caltanissetta, and Trapani proved willing to accept the constitution offered by Ferdinando II and remain united in Naples, rather than the solution proposed by the separatists in Palermo.

Amari's introduction to an earlier work by Niccolò Palmieri, published in Switzerland in 1847, supported the idea of a league of constitutional states. However, it had an immediate purpose and was treatable in the future because Amari was open to other political solutions after unity. Thus, he wrote: 'Those who aspire to absolute unity, or a new compartment of Italy and longer forms of government, could walk with us along the long stretch of road that we have made together, supplied which we will look back on both.'⁶² If Amari professed to be a 'mediational federalist', La Farina reconfirmed to his Arabist friend his republican ideals, albeit subordinate to the achievement of unity:

Dearest Michele,

I know that these days, I am not always a master of my mind, but I did not think I was small enough to write things I never imagined. Your letter surprised me. Did I invite you to reconsider your political perspective? Did I urge you to abandon the plans for unity and the republic and join the Piedmontese kingdom? To avoid any doubt, I tell you that I am a Republican, but I put unity above the Republic, as I said and printed a hundred times. This is for the doctrine. As for the practical application, I must start a revolution in Sicily, if not in the name of a prince or a dynasty, in the name of an independent and united Italy.⁶³

Carlo Gemelli, who moved to Tuscany as Commissioner of the Provisional Revolutionary

⁶¹ 'Seduta di un circolo italiano. Di Fusionisti, Federazionisti, e Mediazionisti', *La Forbice*, a. I, n. 144 (Palermo, 15 dicembre 1848), 573.

⁶² *Saggio storico e politico sulla costituzione del Regno di Sicilia infino al 1816 con un'appendice sulla Costituzione del Regno di Sicilia opera postuma di Niccolò Palmieri, con un'Introduzione e annotazione di anonimo [M. Amari]* (Losanna: Tip. Bonamici e Compagni, 1847), x-xi: ('Coloro che aspirano all'unità assoluta, o ad un novello scompartimento dell'Italia e a forme più lunghe di governo, potrebbero camminare insieme con noi per quel lungo tratto di strada che abbiām fa fare insieme; fornito il quale vi ripenseremo gli uni e gli altri').

⁶³ 'Letter to M. Amari', Tourin, May 13, 1856, in A. d'Ancona, *Carteggio di Michele Amari: raccolto e postillato coll'elogio di lui, letto nell'Accademia della Crusca*, vol. 2 (Torino, Roux Frassati & Comp., 1896), 41-42: ('Carissimo Michele, so bene che di questi tempi io non sono sempre completamente padrone della mia testa ma non credevo poi d'esserlo sì poco da scrivere cose che non ho mai immaginato. La tua lettera mi fa cascare dalle nuvole. Ti ho invitato io a cambiare di opinioni politiche? Ti ho esortato io a dare un calcio all'unità e alla repubblica, e a fare adesione al principato piemontese? A scanso di equivoci ti dico adunque che io sono unitario e repubblicano, ma che metto l'unità, come ho detto e stampato cento volte, al di sopra della repubblica. Ciò in quanto alla dottrina.

In quanto alla pratica applicazione, io sento il dovere di dar mano ad una rivoluzione in Sicilia qualora s'insorga non in nome di un principe o di una dinastia, ma in nome d'Italia indipendente ed una.').

Government, reported to Mariano Stabile, Minister of Foreign Affairs, about his meeting in Florence with the French Minister, who advocated the establishment of a republic in Sicily. More explicitly, Gemelli declared his republican ideals, harshly criticising the political decisions of moderate governments in his account of the events of the Sicilian revolution of 1848:

Now, the revolution, which the political factions of the peninsula did not understand, and the princes, fearful and opposed, were splendid and powerful, as long as popular action persisted. It expired because, and finally perished, from which the moderates were always the arbiters of its destiny and availability. [...] Nor would it have been a strange party to proclaim the republic suddenly. It can be said that Sicily was governed as a people's government, and it was, therefore, easier to sustain the uprising with a president than with a monarchy without a monarch. The fear, therefore, that such a change was not its own and did not conform to the political conditions of Sicily at that time, along with the desire to believe that the republican form—nothing else should or could give birth to our age—and that the evils of all social subversion, was the most deplorable cause, which left the revolt immobile [...].⁶⁴

Many Sicilian patriots between the 1830s and 1850s concentrated on developing a unified strategy to oppose the municipal and separatist tendencies that, instead, had characterised the uprisings of 1820-21. Amari, Gemelli, and La Farina's writings demonstrated a move beyond the regionalist and municipal outlook. For example, Gemelli, regarding the internal divisions between factions and cities, noted:

It was a grave misfortune that, without unity and harmony among the warring parties for preeminence and leadership, could not have been paralysed or extinguished. Nevertheless, the factions that naturally tend to devour each other do not renounce the desires and illusions that, due to fatigue or corruption alone, could not see or did not want to see the health of the homeland in the union of souls and forces.⁶⁵

A few years later, in his letter to the editor of the magazine *Diritto*, La Farina clarified once again his reasons for defending the unitary solution:

⁶⁴ *Storia della siciliana rivoluzione del 1848-48*, vol. 2 (Bologna, Presso l'Editore Giuseppe Legnani, 1867), 314-315: ('Or questa rivoluzione, che le parti politiche della penisola non compresero, ed i principi, impauriti avversarono, fu splendida e potente, finché l'azione popolare durava, scadeva dipoi, e finalmente periva, da che i moderati si mantennero ognora arbitri delle sue sorti e disponitori. [...] Nè strano partito sarebbe stato pur quello di proclamare subitamente la repubblica. La Sicilia reggevasi [sic], si può dire a governo di popolo, ed era perciò più facil cosa salvare la sollevazione con un presidente, che colla [sic] monarchia senza monarca. Il timore quindi che siffatta mutazione non fosse propria e conforme alle politiche condizioni siciliane di quel tempo, e il voler credere che la forma repubblicana, altro non debba nè possa all'età nostra partorire, che i mali tutti di una sovversione sociale, fu la più deplorabile cagione, che lasciò nell'immobilità la rivolta [...]').

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 205: ('Grave sventura che, senza l'unità e la concordia tra le parti in lotta per la preminenza e il comando, non avrebbe potuto essere paralizzata o altrimenti estinta. Ma le fazioni che per natura e natura tendono a divorarsi a vicenda non rinunciano ai desideri e alle illusioni che per stanchezza o sola corruzione non vedevano o non volevano vedere la salute della patria nell'unione degli animi e delle forze.').

My greatest desire for my homeland, Italy, is unity because, in unity, there is strength and, consequently, independence and freedom. The separatists and federalists may oppose this view and the effectiveness of the measures I propose to achieve it, but they must remember the purpose I aim for. Therefore, I support everything that tends to unite Italy politically and oppose all that seeks to maintain the current terrible division or even introduce a new one.⁶⁶

In 1848, an anonymous columnist of *La Forbice* stated that in the rest of Italy, municipalism was understood as ‘the obstinacy of Sicily in wanting independence from Naples and expelling the Bourbons.’ The same journal, in February 1849, thus justifies the decision of the Sicilian Parliament not to join the Italian Constituent Assembly, except as an independent state, distancing the Sicilians from the accusation of municipalism:

At the same time, however, Sicily has declared that it does not intend to join the Constituent Assembly, except as one of the *free* and *independent* States, so by this solemn declaration, it has previously rejected any idea of a merger, of that fusion to which the Italian Constituent seems from the birth to manifest such an alive tendency [...] Nor for this refusal can one call Sicily not Italian. Sicily has always exhibited a distinctly Italian character.⁶⁷

The interpretation of the effects of the Bourbon government on municipalism also varies. Michele Amari directed much criticism at the vice-royalty of Domenico Caracciolo, who, in the first half of the nineteenth century, diminished the old concessions enjoyed by the island, weakening the two leading institutions, namely the Parliament and the Deputation of the Kingdom of Sicily. According to La Farina, the contrast between the Bourbon monarchy and its insular part appears to have fostered, since the 1830s, greater solidarity and closeness among the cities, which strong municipal sentiments and rivalries had previously marked. He writes:

Never had Sicilianism been as powerful as it was in those days, and a thousand guises it was manifested with the impetuosity and ardour of a love opposed: the letters, as far as censorship allowed, praised in Palermo the things of Messina, in Messina the Palermo, and so in the other cities of the island: the Palermitani flocked to the festivals of Messina and were welcomed, hosted and honoured by all citizens as if they were friends and relatives; similar receptions received the Messinesi in Catania. The government strongly frowned upon, suppressed, and closed literary

⁶⁶ La Farina, *Epistolario*, vol. 2, 570: (‘Ciò che io sopra ogni cosa desidero alla mia patria Italia è l’unità, perchè secondo me, nell’unità sta la forza e quindi l’indipendenza e la libertà. I separatisti e federalisti possono combattere questa opinione e la efficacia dei mezzi che io propongo per conseguirla; ma per essere giusti, non debbono dimenticare lo scopo al quale io miro. Io parteggio quindi per tutto ciò che tende ad unire politicamente l’Italia ed avverso tutto ciò che tende a mantenere l’attuale vituperevole divisione, ed anche più ciò che potrebbe introdurre una divisione nuova.’).

⁶⁷ ‘La Costituente italiana e la Sicilia’, in *La Forbice*, Palermo, 24 febbraio, 1849, 145: (‘Però la Sicilia ha contemporaneamente dichiarato che essa non intende aderire alla Costituente se non qual uno degli *stati liberi ed indipendenti* cosicchè con questa solenne dichiarazione essa ha anticipatamente respinto qualsivoglia idea di fusione, di quella fusione a cui sembra sin dal suo nascere manifestare così viva tendenza la Costituente Italiana. [...] Nè per tale rifiuto la Sicilia potrà essere chiamata non italiana. La Sicilia ha mostrato sempre un contegno altamente italiano.’).

newspapers, as well as academies, and forbade steamboats from touring the island.⁶⁸

It is relevant to consider how Sicilianism (or regionalism) was symbolically represented. The clothing and banners of Sicilian patriots offer some examples. Instead of the Carbonari tricolour, the revolutionaries displayed yellow ribbons, which symbolise the island's independence. Meanwhile, the rebels raised flags with the Sicilian eagle (fig. 4), replacing the Bourbon coats of arms. Another aspect of regionalism is connected to religion and pertains to the 1820 Sicilian revolution, which I will further discuss through the reflections of Gemelli and La Farina.

La Fenice Gazzetta's title reflects the aspiration to regenerate Sicily. It was published in Palermo from July to September 1820, reporting on the determinations of the Provisional Council of Public Security and Tranquillity. This latter council was constituted by 72 consuls elected in Palermo on 18 July 1820, appointed from among the urban 'maestranze', the clergy, and the aristocracy. On 24 July 1820, the newly formed Council decreed the minting of a silver medal to commemorate the victory of the Sicilian rebels on 17 July. The junta also decided that the medal would be awarded to the families of all the volunteers who died during that battle, including the women who had encouraged their husbands and children to take up arms in defence of their homes. It is no coincidence that the medal features the effigy of Santa Rosalia, the patroness of Palermo (fig. 3), and portraits of a golden eagle, which was the emblem of the Senate of Palermo. The decision to create a civic badge appears to reflect the dual purpose pursued by the members of the Provisional Council: to lend an aura of sacredness to the liberal revolution and, plausibly, to unify the different factions of revolutionaries around a symbol of the city, which can rightly be considered the most charismatic and endowed with unifying power. The sacred image of Santa Rosalia, therefore, gained a political significance: what better icon than a young woman of noble origin (according to hagiographic stories), a symbol of purity, strength, and rebellion, but with reassuring angelic traits venerated by all Sicilians, nobles and commoners, and in rival cities such as Palermo and Messina? Nonetheless, this sacred icon could also have helped confer a strong municipal connotation to the revolution.

⁶⁸ La Farina, *Epistolario*, vol. II, 491: ('Non mai il sicilianismo era stato così potente come in que' di, e in mille guise manifestavasi col l'impeto ed ardore d'un amore contrastato: le lettere, per quanto la censura permetteva, lodavano in Palermo le cose messinesi, in Messina le palermitane, e così nelle altre città dell'isola: i Palermitani accorrevano alle feste messinesi ed erano accolti, albergati e onorati da tutti i cittadini come fossero amici e parenti; simili accoglienze riceveano i Messinesi in Catania. Il governo fortemente corruciossi, sopprese giornali letterarii, chiuse accademie, proibì che i battelli a vapore facessero il giro dell'isola.').

For the new Sicilian ruling classes, the traditional iconography of the saint patron was a resource to depict the union between political and religious authority. The features on the coin depict a young woman, recognised by the crown of roses on her head as Saint Rosalia, who, with her evocative pose reminiscent of a ‘sacred Marianna’ and her right hand waving a flag (probably bearing the colours of the Carbonari), holds a crucifix in front of an eagle, the symbol of the Senate of Palermo, placed at her feet. A similar image appears in the ancient 1850 engraving (fig. 4). A work by Pasquale Amato, one of the period’s most renowned artists (fig. 5). In both images, the saint appears seated on an eagle, clawing at a dragon (in the twelfth century, the eagle symbolised the Holy Roman Empire, used by Federico Barbarossa; in medieval heraldry, the dragon represented heresy).⁶⁹

Due to their young age, La Farina, Gemelli, and Chindemi did not participate in the 1820-1821 uprisings. This period was, in fact, crucial for the education of the three patriots and deserves our attention. In particular, I will analyse the influence of Romanticism on their cultural and political thought.

Conclusions

The chapter provides biographical notes on the three patriots being examined, offering further insight into the cultural context of their lives, experiences, encounters, and interactions with one another and the broader society. Notably, it emphasises the enduring friendship between La Farina and Gemelli, as well as their mutual sense of solidarity.

The next focus is on the activism of urban Sicilian social classes, particularly highlighting the role played by the Accademia de’ Pericolanti (Academy of Pericolanti) in guiding Messina, the hometown of La Farina and Gemelli, through its transition from the ancien régime to a modern society. Additionally, other elements, including Masonic circles and Carbonari sects, are examined to gain a deeper understanding of the Sicilian social and political landscape.

Another section concentrates on the constitutional debate that took place in Sicily during the first half of the nineteenth century. It emphasises the leading figures involved and the models that the patriots drew upon. Furthermore, it examines the political stance within the Sicilian Parliament and the debates that led to the drafting of the Sicilian Constitution of 1812.

⁶⁹ F. Cardini, ‘Mostri, belve, animali nell’immaginario medievale. L’Aquila’, *Abstracta*, n. 13 (marzo 1987), 38-43; Id., ‘Il Drago’, *Abstracta*, n. 8 (ottobre 1986), 42-47. Articles available in the online magazine *Airesis*, section *Il Giardino dei Magi* (<http://web.mclink.it/MH0077/IlGiardinoDeiMagi>). [Accessed on 26 March 2021].

The final paragraph discusses various perspectives on municipalism and Sicilianism/Regionalism. Many patriots, such as La Farina, Gemelli, Chindemi, and Amari, believed it was essential to move past the rivalries between different Sicilian municipalities. In contrast, the Bourbon monarchy sought to exploit these municipal divisions to its advantage, creating fractures within the liberal movement. Furthermore, the cultural approach enabled the illustration of an episode concerning the 1820 uprisings, which shows the symbolic connection between regional identity and the Catholic faith.



Figure 2

A silver medal minted in Palermo in July 1820. Source: A. Brambilla, *Le medaglie italiane negli ultimi 200 anni* (Milano, 1895).



Figure 3

This eagle appeared on the title page of the newspaper *La Fenice*, published in Palermo in 1820. The motto 'Post fata resurgo', meaning 'After Death I Rise', is emblematic of Sicily's rebirth during the Risorgimento.

Figure 4

[Anonymous] *Engraving of Santa Rosalia (1850)*. Coll. Barbera, Palermo.



Figure 5

P. Amato, 'Antiporta', in *Reverendo Padre D. Pietro Antonio Tornamira, E Gotto di Palermo, decano della Congregazione Casinese [...] Idea conjecturale della vita di Santa Rosalia Vergine palermitana* (Palermo, Bua e Tamagna, 1668).



CHAPTER 3

THE INFLUENCE OF ROMANTICISM IN SICILY

3. ‘Quel letale contagio chiamato Romanticismo’: Reception and Rejection (1830-1840)¹

Romanticism spread in the Two Sicilies a few decades later than in other Italian pre-unification states, specifically during the 1830s and 1840s. It played a vital role in shifting from an old cultural background characterised by strong regionalism to the cosmopolitanism adopted by the Sicilian elite. Alberto M. Banti remarks that this cosmopolitanism embodied ‘the habitus of European intellectuals’ who, during the nineteenth century, ‘became acquainted with one another, communicated, translated, read, and imitated each other, easily transcending institutional and linguistic boundaries. In doing so, a discursive fabric that was structurally and morphologically common was formed.’²

Although experts disagree on its timeframe and definition, Romanticism can be regarded as a transnational phenomenon. The existence of a romantic season in Italy and the connection between European romantic culture and the Italian Risorgimento are complex issues. Italian historians have not thoroughly examined this relationship for various reasons, sometimes without conducting thorough investigations. They have been confined to a methodological approach that concentrates on the political and social aspects of the Risorgimento, overlooking its cultural, personal, and emotional dimensions. Paul Ginsborg has highlighted this issue and urged historians to explore the ‘cultural, private and affective sphere’ of the Risorgimento season.³

The current historiography on the Italian Risorgimento has emphasised the strong emotional charge of the ‘romantic revolution’, recognising its influence on both the private and public spheres. This, in turn, has led to debate regarding the complex relationship between culture and

¹ *Giornale di Scienze, Letteratura ed Arti per la Sicilia diretto dal Barone Vincenzo Mortillaro*, a. 14, vol. 55 (1836), 126: (‘That Lethal Contagion Called Romanticism’).

² ‘Prefazione’: A.M. Banti, *L’onore della nazione: identità sessuali e violenza nel nazionalismo europeo dal XVIII secolo alla Grande Guerra* (Torino: Einaudi, 2005), i-xii: (‘si conoscevano, comunicavano, si traducevano, si leggevano e si imitavano a vicenda, superando facilmente i confini istituzionali e linguistici. In tal modo si formò un tessuto discorsivo, strutturalmente e morfologicamente comune’).

³ Ginsborg, ‘Romanticismo e Risorgimento: l’io, l’amore e la nazione’, in A.M. Banti, P. Ginsborg (eds), *Storia d’Italia, Annali 22, Il Risorgimento* (Torino: Einaudi, 2007), pp. 5-67 (5); C. Cesa, ‘Romanticismo politico’, in N. Bobbio, N. Matteucci and G. Pasquino (eds.), *Dizionario di politica* (Torino, UTET, 1983), 1011-1019.

Italian nationalism.⁴

The romantic culture faced notable resistance in Sicily. For instance, in 1836, Filippo Minolfi authored an article praising Count Giulio Porticari, director of the Arcadian journal, the *Araldico*.

Minolfi believed that Porticari's greatest achievement was his role in 'acting as a barrier to the innovators' paradoxes, follies, and daring thoughts.'⁵ He argued that such a role was essential to keep 'young people immune from the distracting oddities that elsewhere caused so much commotion and wasted intellect. [...] That deadly contagion was called Romanticism.'⁶

On 27 September 1832, the young poet Felice Bisazza presented his essay *Del Romanticismo* to the Reale Accademia Carolina of Messina. This work is now considered the manifesto of the Sicilian Romantic movement. In doing so, Bisazza positioned himself within the classicist/romantic debate and courageously aligned himself with the new cultural wave. In his own words:

I believe that the moral purpose of poetry, across all generations, places, and times, should be to celebrate love, country, religion, worship, memorials, and all the virtues considered civil and sacred. True poetry, particularly national poetry, arises from vibrant ideas rather than stagnant beliefs. How can we genuinely embody beliefs that are not our own? Do stagnant beliefs not stifle poetry? Therefore, let us use old mythology merely as a basic nomenclature.⁷

Bisazza's reflections on Romanticism provoked a strong reaction from the classicists who dominated the Sicilian literary and cultural scene. Andrea Maurici wrote: 'He [Bisazza] had never said that. The classicists gathered around Olympus and rose against him, outraged by the insult and sparkling angrily for the sacrilege.'⁸

⁴ Many scholars supported the thesis of a non-political Romanticism, which was first introduced by C. Schmitt in *Political Romanticism*. (1925) [It. trans. *Romanticismo politico*, a cura di C. Gallo (Milano, Giuffrè, 1981)].

⁵ *Giornale di Scienze, Letteratura ed Arti per la Sicilia*, 125: ('[...] che principalissimo suo merito si è il formare un argine ai paradossi, alle follie, e agli arditi pensamenti dei novatori [...]').

⁶ *Ibid.*, 126: ('i giovani sono immuni da quelle stranezze, che altrove hanno fatto tanto rumore e tanti ingegni persi [...] quel letale contagio chiamavasi Romanticismo').

⁷ *Giornale di Scienze, Letteratura ed Arti per la Sicilia directed by Baron Vincenzo Mortillaro*, a. 14, vol. 55 (1836), 425-426: ('Io credo che il fine morale della poesia di tutte le generazioni, e di tutti i luoghi e di tutti i tempi, sarà quella dell'amore, della patria, della religione, del culto, dei sepolcri e di tutte quelle virtù che civili e religiose si chiamano. [...] Non si sa forse che la vera poesia, la poesia nazionale derivasi da idee viventi, non da credenze morte? E, dico io, come investirci di credenze che non son nostre? E le morte credenze non fan quasi morta la poesia? Si usi dunque, se vogliasi, come semplice nomenclatura la vecchia mitologia.').

⁸ A. Maurici, *Il romanticismo in Sicilia* (Palermo, Sandron, 1893), 59: ('Non l'avesse mai detto. I classicisti, schierati in torno [sic] all'Olimpo, gli si levarono contro, oltraggiati per l'insulto e corruscanti d'ira per il sacrilegio.').

An anonymous columnist reminisced about how Bisazza's theories ultimately led to 'literary scandals.' The columnist noted, 'Felice Bisazza was enthusiastic about embracing new doctrines and, to remain true to his conscience, he preached them fervently. He fully adopted the principles of that school. However, he took on a cause filled with dangers and significant negative consequences, ultimately leading to serious literary scandals.'⁹

The Sicilian opposition to the Romantics was led by Francesco Paolo Perez (Palermo, 1812- 1892), a poet, man of letters, and head of the Bourbon Legation in Palermo. He established a private school of literature in his home, using Dante Alighieri, Vittorio Alfieri, and Ugo Foscolo as models. However, some of his pupils became prominent supporters of Romantic and patriotic theories, including Paolo Giudici, Giuseppina Turrisi-Colonna, and Isidoro La Lumia. Francesco Paolo Perez wrote an impassioned poem on Foscolo, extolling national unity. He participated in the 1848 revolution, was arrested alongside Enrico Amari and the Ferrara brothers, and was subsequently exiled to Florence. Many of his articles appeared in the magazine *La Ruota*, including the Manifesto of Association, published in Palermo on 20 September 1839, and signed by Enrico Amari, Francesco Ferrara, Pasquale Pacini, Paolo Morello, Francesco Aceto, Giambattista Castiglia, and Benedetto Castiglia, who are among the main compilers.

Despite resistance from many Sicilian intellectuals to Romanticism and its emerging style, the movement continued to gain popularity. This was especially evident when news of Vincenzo Bellini's sudden death spread worldwide on 23 September 1835. The announcement evoked strong emotions everywhere, particularly in Sicily, the composer's homeland. Bisazza composed a delicate elegy in his memory to honour the great artist.¹⁰

3.1 'Methodological Nationalism': A Current Debate

Sicilian romantics and patriots viewed Bellini as more than just an artist; he symbolised hope and renewal for Italy. Along with other poets and writers such as F. Bisazza, G. La Farina, C. Gemelli, and R. Mitchell, they paid tribute to the 'Swan of Catania' through heartfelt writings. These tributes reveal their commitment to the new European movement and their patriotic ideals. They showcase melodrama's passion and emotional impact, positioning it as a tool for national propaganda.

⁹ *Giornale di scienza, letteratura e arti per la Sicilia*, XI (luglio, agosto, settembre 1833), 56-71 (56): ('[...] Felice Bisazza si attaccò avidamente alle nuove dottrine e per non tradire la coscienza le predicò a piena voce. Abbracciò egli il sistema di quella scuola [...] Ma una causa piena di pericoli e di conseguenze assai dannose egli imprese a difendere e che porta con seco scandali gravissimi in fatto di letteratura').

¹⁰ *Elegia di Felice Bisazza da Messina* (Napoli, Tipografia Perretti, 1836).

The relationship between Italian Opera and the Risorgimento — or the nationalist interpretation of melodrama — is a subject of much debate and reflection. Bellini's death and the eulogies written by La Farina and Gemelli should be understood within this ongoing historiographical discussion concerning the production, circulation, and reception of artistic texts and works. Recent studies have examined the link between nationalist themes and Italian melodrama. Works published between 1998 and 2015 have identified the concept of 'national opera' as a category for historical analysis.¹¹

An article by Axel Körner titled 'Beyond Nationaloper'¹² challenges the idea that Italian opera served as a tool for political nationalism, viewing it as an ideological distortion and an idealistic manipulation of history. The author highlights the lack of sources regarding the reception of librettos and theatrical performances, emphasising the transnational nature of musical techniques. Körner also examines the role of Italian (and German) opera within the multinational Austrian Empire and Imperial Russia. For example, he focuses on Gioacchino Rossini, a prominent composer in the Habsburg Empire, whose music was often used in dynastic ceremonies such as weddings and diplomatic conferences.

Additionally, Körner discusses Giuseppe Verdi, who was appreciated by both liberals and conservatives, including Austrian Chancellor Metternich.¹³

Körner's critique of 'methodological nationalism' can be analysed from two perspectives. The first focuses on the internationalisation of Italian opera, while the second relates to its reception. It is well-known that the music of Italian composers such as Rossini, Verdi, and Bellini had 'a

¹¹ On this issue, see especially C. Sorba, 'Il 1848 e la melodrammatizzazione della politica', in A.M Banti and P. Ginsborg (eds), *Annali* 22, 481-505; Ead, 'National Theater and the Age of Revolution in Italy', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 17 (4), 2012, 400-413; Ead, 'Teatro, politica e compassione. Audience teatrale, sfera pubblica ed emozionalità in Francia e in Italia tra XVIII e XIX secolo', *Contemporanea*, 3 (2009), 421-445; Ead., *Il melodramma della nazione. Politica e sentimenti nell'età del Risorgimento* (Milano, Laterza 2015); B. Curtis, *Music Makes the Nation. Nationalist Composers and Nation Building in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Amherst, NY, Cambria, 2008); G. Gavazzeni 'Il melodramma ha fatto l'unità d'Italia', in G. Gavazzeni, A. Torno and C. Vitali (eds), *O mia patria. Storia musicale del Risorgimento, tra inni, eroi e melodrammi*, (Milano, Dalai, 2008), 51-183; A. Gerhard, *The Urbanization of Opera. Music Theater in Paris in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1998); M. Cohen, *The Politics of Opera. A History from Monteverdi to Mozart* (Princeton (NJ), Princeton University Press, 2017).

¹² A. Körner, 'Beyond Nationaloper. For a critique of methodological nationalism in reading nineteenth-century Italian and German opera', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 25 (4), 2020, 402-419. DOI: 10.1080/1354571X.2020.1764244.

¹³ On Verdi's reception, see M. Smart, 'Magical Thinking: Reason and Emotion in Some Recent Literature on Verdi and Politics', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 17 (4), 2012, 437-447; and also P. Stamatov, 'Interpretative Activism and the Political Usages of Verdi's Operas in the 1840s', *American Sociological Review*, 67 (3), 2002, 345-366.

global appeal'¹⁴ and 'drew from a complex transnational network,'¹⁵ regarding musical techniques and operatic repertoire. It is essential to recognise that every artistic work results from interweaving elements from different cultures, whether contemporary or historical. Körner refuses to recognise melodrama's national origin, thus ultimately denying Italianness in Verdi's and Rossini's operas. In his own words:

Such choices in the imperial politics of opera complicate the view that opera in nineteenth-century Europe, especially Italian opera, mainly served to express nationalist and anti-imperialist messages, which were fiercely suppressed throughout the century by an imperial police state – a claim still often made. For example, Carlotta Sorba interprets all early nineteenth-century Italian operas with historical themes as 'the mirror-image of contemporary Austrian domination' [...] although the Habsburgs did more than any other European court to promote these works, including appointing Gaetano Donizetti as court composer in Vienna.¹⁶

This critique raises essential questions about the universality of artistic language. If we consider Körner's thesis in a literary context, we could argue that even if Dante had been born in Vienna or Paris, he would still have been able to write his *Divine Comedy*. However, this hypothesis is difficult to sustain because Dante's imagination was shaped by the Tuscan *stilnovo*, the Florentine language, and the conflicts between the Guelphs and Ghibellines, all of which were unique to his contemporary context. Similarly, the characters in Pietro Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* — Alfio, Turiddu, and Santuzza — would not be believable if they were separated from the Sicilian backdrop of Giovanni Verga's novella, which inspired the opera. These specific cultural elements did not exist in other contemporary contexts. While themes such as love, hate, and peace are universal, this does not mean that works of art cannot also possess unique cultural characteristics. Although these themes can be appreciated in theatres worldwide, the national traditions inherent in creative works deserve recognition. Every creative endeavour, whether a novel, a poem, or a painting, is shaped by the particular time and place in which it was created. It cannot be separated from its geographical and chronological context. For example, Giacomo Leopardi's *Infinito* would not have been written if the poet had not looked at the hills of Recanati at a particular time in his life cycle.

According to Körner, it is challenging to view melodrama as a vehicle for conveying nationalist or anti-imperialist messages, particularly given the appreciation for Italian opera in multicultural settings like the Habsburg and Russian courts. This complexity arises because aesthetic tastes often transcend national and cultural boundaries. Nevertheless, two additional

¹⁴ A. Körner, 'Beyond Nationaloper', 404.

¹⁵ Ibid., 412.

¹⁶ Ibid., 406.

factors must be taken into consideration. Firstly, we must differentiate between a work's content and its interpretation. For example, within the European aristocratic courts, it is reasonable to assume that their enjoyment of Verdi's arias was motivated solely by aesthetic appreciation. They may have been unaware that the composer from Busseto also symbolised the Italian unification process, particularly after 1848, as Körner notes. For those who are well-informed and attentive listeners, the enjoyment of Verdi's operas is profound. During that period, melodrama was highly valued, and the symbolic meanings behind compositions were often overlooked, whether inherent or imposed from outside perspectives.

Therefore, the critical question is not whether Verdi's works or those of other composers contained nationalist themes, but how we evaluate the significance and reception of Italian opera during the Risorgimento era. Another example. Körner discusses Austrian Chancellor Metternich and Emperor Franz Joseph's admiration for Verdi's music. Given their political positions, they were unlikely to be unaware of the broader context and political implications of Verdi's melodies. Instead, they likely chose to consciously overlook the liberal sentiments associated with the composer to further their own agendas. For instance, they may have sought to appropriate a symbol of Italian national propaganda. After all, what better strategy to maintain power than to use the same tools as one's adversaries?

An example of the politicisation of theatres and the connection between 'emotions, politics and entertainment'¹⁷ is illustrated by an article that appeared in the magazine *Il Mondo illustrato*, edited by Luigi Cicconi (1804-1856), an improvised poet and playwright, from 1848 to 1849. The article discusses a play featuring G. La Farina, performed in Turin in 1849, during the Sicilian historian's exile. The capital city of Piedmont was in the midst of a war for independence. Nevertheless, a 'patriotic representation [sic]' was being staged, and the theatre was filled with applause, singing and joy.'¹⁸ The drama in question was *Giovanni da Procida*, written by G.B. Niccolini in 1830, a domestic tragedy 'linked to the epic of liberated Sicily.'¹⁹

The writer recalls that night at the theatre:

They shouted enthusiastically, 'Long live Sicily!' Gottardi, Woller, and Boccomini — the actors — brought Procida, Palmiero, and Gualtiero to life with genuine Italian passion. Their performance was filled with heart and a spirited defiance of artistic constraints, making them seem like the Sicilians of today while effectively portraying the cruelties of Carlo. At the same

¹⁷ For this link see C. Sorba, *Il melodramma della nazione. Politica e sentimenti nell'Italia del Risorgimento* (Roma; Bari, Laterza, 2015).

¹⁸ L. Cicconi, 'Teatri', *Il Mondo Illustrato. Giornale Universale*, a. II, n. 4 (1848), 383-384 (383).

¹⁹ Ibid., 384: ('legata all'epopea della Sicilia liberata').

time, tears filled our eyes as we reflected on the harshness Ferdinando inflicted.²⁰

Above the stage of the opera house, four individuals were preparing to attend the performance. They were the envoys from Sicily: La Farina, the Amari brothers, and the lawyer Pisani, who had come to Turin to visit Carlo Alberto's camp.²¹ When the news of their presence spread throughout the theatre, it was 'filled with shouts, affectionate voices, and applause for the illustrious messengers of a heroic people.'²² Cicconi concludes his brief account with words that carry significant weight:

We seemed to be rich in talent and patriotism in that land [Sicily]. That Procida was Ruggiero Settimo, that Niccolini sang a song of freedom, the hymn of triumph [...] Poetry is the war cry of the Sicilians, who are inflamed by the song of sweet and strong affections, and at the time of the Vespres as today, They adorn their love for their homeland with fiery imagery.²³

The iconographic source (fig. 4) from the *Mondo Illustrato* visually depicts the connection between theatre and nationalism. Here, the Theatre of Genoa is filled with flags and waving banners following the signing of the Customs League in 1847, a crucial step toward the country's unification. The link between Italian opera and patriotism is also evident in the tributes in memory of Vincenzo Bellini by La Farina and Gemelli.

3.2 La Farina and Gemelli's Eulogies to Vincenzo Bellini

On the evening of 9 November 1835, the Philharmonic Society of Messina, of which Bellini was a member, echoed with fascinating harmonies. At the entrance to one of the rooms used for the ceremony, an inscription reads: 'On the urn of the son of Sicily, Vincenzo Bellini, a truly Italian soul, who, with his harmonies, inspired the hearts of the Italian brothers — not towards lasciviousness but to magnanimous and civic endeavors — unites the laurel of Sicily

²⁰ Ibid., 383: ('[...] si gridava con fremito 'Viva la Sicilia', perché Gottardi, Woller e Boccomini [gli interpreti] rappresentando Procida, Palmiero e Gualtiero con tutta l'anima italiana, con l'arte vivificata dal cuore e con la foga che sprezza i freni dell'arte, sembravano i Siciliani d'oggi e dipingevano le crudeltà di Carlo, mentre avevamo gli occhi caldi di lagrime per le crudeltà di Ferdinando').

²¹ Ibid.: ('venuti in Torino per recarsi al campo di Carlo Alberto').

²² Ibid.: ('gli illustri messaggeri d'un popolo di eroi').

²³ Ibid.: ('ci sembrava di essere in quella terra [la Sicilia] ricca di ingegno e di patriottismo: che Procida fosse Ruggiero Settimo, che Niccolini intuonasse un canto di libertà, l'inno del trionfo [...] La poesia è il grido di guerra dei Siciliani, che s'inflammavano col canto di dolci e forti affetti, e tanto al tempo del Vespro come oggi, vestono di focose immagini l'amor della patria').

with the tears of all Europe!’²⁴

The inscription carved into walnut wood incorporates elements of the national-patriotic discourse, such as the notion of belonging to the nation based on race, characterised by the idea of an ‘all-Italian soul.’ It emphasises brotherhood among the children of the same homeland and highlights the civic duties that must be fulfilled.

Carlo Gemelli delivered the first funeral oration, preceded by Bellini’s *Il Pirata* opera. In this eulogy, we can discern the early embodiment of nationalist rhetoric, specifically the theme of kinship (the first Banti’s ‘deep figure’) that unites the ‘children of mother Sicily and Italy [...] envied and gentle land’ that serves as ‘the glorious cradle of all knowledge.’²⁵ Gemelli’s tribute explores Bellini’s artistic journey, starting at the Royal College of Music in San Sebastiano, Naples. He studied under Durante, Zingarelli, Pergolesi, Mayer, and Rossini, who “‘had already diminished the influence of the old Italian school.’”²⁶ The tribute also highlights Bellini’s successes in London and Paris during the final years of his brief life. Gemelli emphasises the romantic influence on the young composer, noting that he faced a crucial decision: ‘either to serve the art by imitating others, which could harm and endanger true creativity, or to innovate by creating new music and establishing a new style.’²⁷ He believed “‘everything required a reform — art, individuals, society, and the hopes for the future.’”²⁸ For Gemelli, the renewal of musical culture, not just on a stylistic level, was evident in Bellini’s early operas, such as *Adelson e Salvini* (1825). However, this renewal reached its full maturity with *Bianca e Fernando*, which was performed at the San Carlo Theatre in Naples in 1826. The title was later adjusted to *Bianca e Gernando* to avoid upsetting King Ferdinando I of Bourbon. Finally, Bellini’s *Il Pirata*, presented in 1827 at La Scala in Milan, successfully collaborated with the poet Felice Romani, enabling the ‘Swan of Italy’ to realise his reform.²⁹ Gemelli writes: ‘With his *Il Pirata*, he moved us, descended to our hearts, and his music was true feeling and

²⁴ *Onori alla memoria di Vincenzo Bellini* (Messina: Stamperia Fiumara, 1835), 8. (‘SULL’ URNA DEL FIGLIUOLO DI SICILIA - VINCENZO BELLINI / ANIMA VERAMENTE ITALIANA / CHE COLLE SUE ARMONIE / I PETTI DEGL’ITALICI FRATELLI / NON A LASCIVIE MA A MAGNIME E CITTADINE IMPRESE SOSPINGEA SICILIANI / A QUELLI DELL’INTIERA EUROPA / I VOSTRI ALLORI UNITE E LE LAGRIME’).

²⁵ C. Gemelli, ‘Elogio in morte di Vincenzo Bellini, letto nell’Accademia Filarmonica la sera de’ 9 novembre 1835’, in *Alcuni opuscoli di Carlo Gemelli* (Firenze, 1842), 93-122 (100): (‘i figli della madre Sicilia e dell’Italia, terra invidiata e gentile, e culla gloriosa di ogni sapere’).

²⁶ Ibid., 106: (‘il quale aveva già spento il gusto della vecchia scuola italiana’).

²⁷ Ibid., 107: (‘bisognava o servire imitando con danno e pericolo dell’arte, o crear novella musica, e nuovo stile’).

²⁸ Ibid., 108: (‘Tutto insomma richiedea una riforma, l’arte, gli uomini, i tempi e le stesse speranze dell’avvenire’).

²⁹ Ibid., 110.

expression'.³⁰ Bellini's later operas *La Straniera* (1829), *La Sonnambula* (1831), and *Norma* (1831) consecrated his musical genius not only in Milan but also in London and Paris. The verses of *I Puritani*, staged at the Théâtre Italien in Paris on 24 January 1835, to a libretto by Carlo Pepoli, a noble patriot exiled to France after the 1831 uprisings, captivated French and Italian audiences (including, presumably, many exiles). It is worth noting an excerpt from a duet between Sir George Valton and Richard Forth, the Puritans led by Oliver Cromwell, who, as is well known, fought against tyranny during the English Civil War of 1644. The reasons for the fight against tyranny and the call to martyrdom align with the national-patriotic discourse:

GEORGE. Let there be a voice of terror: Fatherland, victory, honour; / Sound the trumpet, and intrepid I'll fist as strong; / Beautiful it is to face death / Shouting: freedom! / Fearless love of country / Reap the bloody laurels, / Then wipe away the beautiful sweat.

GEORGE, RICHARD. Dawn! To the dawn! To the dawn! / Sunrise that rises for a people that entrusts itself to liberty, joyful to him, smiling the nunzia of eternal sun. / Sunrise that rises to the treacherous tyrants of the earth, be nunzia to them of war, dawn of eternal grief.³¹

Gemelli aimed to revive the pride of the Italian people, along with their moral strength and honour, which are key elements of the national-patriotic discourse. He expressed this sentiment by writing: 'Who among us has not felt their heart swell with profound national love at the glory of such a remarkable brother? Who has not recognised that Bellini was gifted to us to be celebrated by the world and this age? How often do we misjudge the moral strength of a people that are neither degenerate nor base?'³² The tribute delivered by Gemelli culminates in a significant and heartfelt call to the Sicilian people, particularly the youth, urging them to honour the memory of their illustrious brother, cherish their homeland, and cultivate love for their country. He declared:

And you, generous Sicilian youth, the hope and solace of our troubled times, turn your attention away from the relentless fate that has extinguished the lives and genius dedicated to the honour and glory of our beloved Sicily. He prays for us to the Eternal, for poor Italy, and the future of

³⁰ Ibid.: ('ei col Pirata ci commosse, scese al cuore, e la sua musica fu quella del vero sentimento, e della vera espressione.').

³¹ *I Puritani*, su libretto di C. Pepoli, musica di V. Bellini, a. II, sc. IV: ('GEORGE. Sia voce di terror: Patria, vittoria, onor. / Suoni la tromba, e intrepido Io pugnerò da forte; / Bello è affrontar la morte / Gridando: libertà! / Amor di patria impavido / Mieta i sanguigni allori, / Poi terga i bei sudori'. GEORGE, RICHARD, All'alba! All'Alba! All'Alba! / Alba che surgi a un popolo che a libertà s'affidi giuliva a lui sorridi nunzia d'eterno sol. / Alba che surgi ai perfidi tiranni della terra sii nunzia a lor di guerra, alba d'eterno duol.').

³² C. Gemelli, 'Elogio in morte di Vincenzo Bellini', 111-112: ('Chi non sentiva scaldare il petto di grande amore nazionale alla gloria di un cotal fratello gloriosissimo! Chi non vedeva, che Bellini era serbato a noi per far conoscere agli uomini ed al secolo, quanto spesso mal si giudica delle forze morali di un popolo non degenerato, nè vile? [...]').

our suffering homeland. Sicilians! Love your homeland; always honour the memory of Bellini, and strive to emulate his example and glory.³³

As noted by La Farina, upon Bellini's death, the honours paid to his memory in Sicily were remarkable. Vincenzo Bellini's melodies warmed the hearts of young patriots, and his untimely passing was felt as a 'national catastrophe.'³⁴ Many tributes were composed in honour of the occasion. Salvatore Chindemi tells that the police commissioner in Syracuse, who was Carlo Gemelli's father, defied the Bourbons' censorship by preserving copies of Bellini's eulogies, which were 'requested and read with great enthusiasm.'³⁵

The Bourbon government refused to allow the young maestro's remains to be repatriated from France. They also prohibited fundraising efforts for a funeral monument, threatening those who organised such initiatives and confiscating the manuscripts of commemorations that, as previously mentioned, were read in the halls of the Philharmonic Society.³⁶ All these governments' actions demonstrate that the composer's name was linked to liberal ideas.

Giuseppe La Farina paid tribute to Bellini with a heartfelt funeral eulogy, describing the composer as a man who, by blending action and sentiment, had his country's fate at heart. He referred to Bellini as 'the man who, through his works, served the needs of his country.'³⁷ What stands out in La Farina's speech is his passionate appeal to the Sicilian people to transcend their divisions and aspire for a cultural rebirth of their homeland. In his own words: ' [...] as long as such geniuses are born in this classic land, all is not lost. Perhaps we can return to the level of might, power, valour, and glory we once possessed, from which misfortunes and divisions have cast us down.'³⁸

Both commemorations exhibit a clear national-patriotic theme, which, according to the letter written by Puteaux to his librettist and friend Carlo Pepoli, resonates with Maestro Bellini. He

³³ Ibid., 121-122: ("E tu, generosa gioventù siciliana, speranza e conforto dell'afflitta e combattuta età nostra, volgi disdegnosa il pensiero all'inesorabile fato nemico, che spense la esistenza di una vita e di un genio consacrati all'onore e alla gloria della nostr'alma Sicilia [...] Egli fa voti, egli già prega l'Eterno per noi, per la povera Italia, e pe' futuri destini della dolente sua patria. Siciliani! amate dunque la patria; onorate sempre la memoria del vostro Bellini, e seguitene ognora il suo esempio e la gloria").

³⁴ S. Chindemi, *Siracusa dal 1826 al 1860, pel Professore Salvatore Chindemi* (Siracusa, A. Pulejo, 1869), 45: ("una catastrofe nazionale").

³⁵ Ibid.: ("furono ricercate e lette con maggiore avidità").

³⁶ G. La Farina, *Storia d'Italia dal 1815 al 1850*, vol. I, 176, and also in his *Epistolario*, vol. I, p. 308.

³⁷ *Rivista sicula di scienze, letteratura ed arti*, a. I (1869), vol. 1, 25: ("l'uomo che con le sue opere a' bisogni della patria serviva").

³⁸ Ibid.: ("[...] finché nascono in questa classica terra geni di tal fatta non è tutto perduto e potremo forse ritornare a quel grado di forza potenza valore e gloria ove eravamo un giorno e da dove le sventure e le divisioni ci hanno rovesciato.').

wrote: ‘The duet that I have almost finished is great, and the sound of the trumpets will make the free hearts in the theatre tremble with joy. Farewell, – Long live freedom!’³⁹

These eulogies serve as a meaningful example of how Italian melodrama became one of the primary instruments of the national-patriotic discourse. Its straightforward language resonated with patriots, including those from less literate backgrounds.

Other works by the three Sicilian patriots show their adherence to Romantic style and values. For instance, La Farina’s early novellas and civil songs, Gemelli’s articles advocating for the spread of kindergartens and female education in Sicily, and, to a lesser extent, Chindemi’s essay on the state of Italian poetry, in which he shares his thoughts on the emerging culture.

3.3 La Farina’s Romantic Phase: His Civic Songs and Early Byronic Novels

In 1846, during his exile in Tuscany and on the occasion of the railroad opening between Lucca and Pisa, La Farina composed his song *All’Italia*. In this piece, he presents the railway as a symbol of unity, not only in terms of territory but also in a spiritual sense: the railway became a symbol of the connection among the brothers of Italy, as illustrated in the following verses:

The creative genius of our century Who breaks the elements
Crafted from iron, an enduring machine,
To challenge the winds and the horses of the people that soar, To share both light and knowledge.
[...]
They will no longer fight against one another They will all experience one joy and one sorrow
And no one will lie in the mud,
For that which I mourn, long for, and weep!⁴⁰

Most of La Farina’s novels have been published in the *Spettatore Zancleo*, which typically features a Byronic structure. Byronism is a complex and underexplored phenomenon. Some

³⁹ ‘Letter to Carlo Pepoli’, undated, in *V. Bellini: memorie e lettere*, ed. F. Florimo (Firenze, Barbera, 1882), 416: (‘[...] il duetto che ho quasi finito, ed è venuto magnifico, e lo squillo delle trombe farà tremare di gioia i cuori liberi che si troveranno in teatro. Addio, Viva la libertà!!!’).

⁴⁰ *All’Italia*, in F. Guardione, *Poeti siciliani del secolo XIX: raccolta, ordinata e preceduta da un proemio* (Palermo; Torino, C. Clausen, 1892), 53-55: (‘Il genio creator del secol nostro / Che affrena gli elementi / Creò di ferro infaticabil mostro / Per gareggiar coi venti / E il destriero dei popoli che vola / A diffonder la luce e la parola // Non saranno tra lor più si rubelli / Avran tutti una gioia ed un dolore / Ne dormirà nel fango / Quella per cui mi dolgo e spero e piango!’).

scholars describe it as a ‘deplorable... and hypnotic monster.’⁴¹ From a purely literary perspective, it has often been viewed as merely a stylistic imitation. However, recent historiographical studies have examined the symbolic aspects of the national-patriotic discourse, suggesting that Byronism should be understood as a significant element of European culture that has influenced the personal development of generations of patriots. Paul Ginsborg characterised Romanticism as the ‘strongest motivating ideology’⁴² for Italian nationalists, as it merges passion and emotion with political action.⁴³

Byronism fully reflects the *mal du siècle*; that is, the discomfort of a society grappling with the degenerations of the goddess of reason, the disillusionment of the post-revolutionary age, the Thermidorian terror, and the Napoleonic wars. Beyond being a literary trend or spiritual mood, Byronism can be interpreted as the most dynamic expression of the Romantic ego.⁴⁴ Lord Byron’s status as an aesthetic-cultural icon can be traced back to several causes, which Samuel Chew has linked to the literary tastes of the time (diaries, travels, and Gothic tales), the English liberal tradition, Orientalism, and Dandyism.⁴⁵ Another factor can be added to these elements, which I called ‘The process of emotional and collective identification.’⁴⁶ This factor involves a ‘European lost generation’ caught between the Goethean *Sehnsucht* and the *besoin de la fatalité* (Alfieri),⁴⁷ who looked to Byron not only as an aesthetic-literary symbol but also as a political one, in the sense that the excellent English poet was the embodiment of civic commitment.

The painful journey of Byron’s *Childe Harold* represents the quest for identity of an entire generation.

⁴¹ P. Cochran, *Byron’s Romantic Politics. The Problem of Metahistory* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011), 7.

⁴² P. Ginsborg, ‘European Romanticism and Italian Risorgimento’, in *The Risorgimento Revisited*, 18-37 (33).

⁴³ A. Porta, *Byronismo italiano* (Milano: Cogliati, 1923), p. 240. The bibliography on Lord Byron is extensive, but I will limit my selection: G. Muoni, *La fama del Byron e il byronismo in Italia* (Milano: Società Editrice Libreria, 1903); M. Praz, *La fortuna di Byron in Inghilterra* (Firenze: La Voce, 1905); M. Blessington (Lady), *The Works of Lady Blessington: Confession of an Elderly Lady*, vol. 2: *Conversations with Lord Byron* (Philadelphia: Carey and Hurt, 1838); A. Farinelli, *Byron e il byronismo: sei discorsi* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1924); M. Borgese, *L’appassionata di Byron* (Milano: Garzanti, 1949); L.A. Marchand, *Byron: A Biography*, vols 3 (New York: Knopf, 1957); M. Kelsall, *Byron’s Politics* (New Jersey: The Harvester Press, 1987);); P. Vassallo, *Byron, the Italian influence* (London: Macmillan, 1984); A. Rawes, *Byron’s Poetical experimentation: Childe Harold, the Tales, and the Quest for Comedy* (Aldershot (UK): Ashgate, 2000); J. McGann, *Byron and Romanticism*, ed. J. Soderholm (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); P. Cochran, ‘Romanticism’ and Byron (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholar Press, 2006); R. Beaton, *and Byron’s war: Romantic Rebellion, Greek Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, New York 2013).

⁴⁴ M.G. Tigani Sava, *Risorgimento: l’Io-romantico in azione. Emozioni, cultura europea e identità nazionale nel byronismo italiano* (Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli 2017), which examines the interconnections between the nation-building process and European Romantic culture, focusing on the Italian patriots who looked to Lord Byron as an aesthetic-literary icon and also as a model of civic and political engagement.

⁴⁵ S.C. Chew, *Byron in England: His Fame and after Fame* (London, J. Murray, 1924).

⁴⁶ Tigani Sava, *Risorgimento: l’Io-romantico in azione*, 67: (‘il processo di identificazione emotiva e collettiva’).

⁴⁷ C. Du Bos, *Lord Byron et le besoin de la fatalité* (Au Sans Pareil, Paris, 1929).

This generation sought various responses to the discomforts of their time, such as isolation and escape from society (as seen in Foscolo and Leopardi), death (exemplified by the suicides of Werther and Ortis, or Mazzini's expression of 'storm of doubt'), or a spirit of rebellion and action (as demonstrated by Alfieri and Byron himself). It is not coincidental that several prominent patriots — including José de Espronceda, João Almeida Garrett, Alphonse de Lamartine, Alfred de Musset, Aleksandr Sergeevič Puškin, Michail Jur'evič Lermontov, Adam Mickiewicz, Arany János, Sommelius Gustaf Lorentz, Silvio Pellico, Francesco Domenico Guerrazzi, Pasquale De Virgillii, Francesco Dall'Ongaro, Pietro Giannone, and Biagio Miraglia

— shared the core message of *Childe Harold*. These individuals combined their literary contributions with intense civil and political engagement. Indeed, patriots recognised the truth in Byron's statement to Teresa Gamba, his last Italian love: "A man ought to do more for society than write verses."⁴⁸ During the period marked by the political and cultural conflict between Classicists and Romantics, the first translations and adaptations of Byron's works emerged in Italy. Notable figures, including S. Pellico, A. Maffei, G. Gazzino, P. Isola, and P. De Virgillii, contributed to this movement. Edoardo Zuccato analysed Byronism based on two criteria: geographical location and thematic-chronological context. In the Lombardy region, Byronism was characterised as 'Catholic and sentimental' from 1816 to 1830, while from 1829 to 1850, it took on an 'anticlerical' nature in Tuscany. In Southern Italy, where the movement developed later than in the other pre-unitary states (between 1840 and 1870) and was described as 'wildly romantic.'⁴⁹

Byronic themes and characters can also be found in the works of several Sicilian writers and poets. Notable figures include Giuseppina Turrisi Colonna (Palermo, 1822-1848), a student of Giuseppe Borghi and Michele Amari, who dedicated a trilogy of poems to Lord Byron⁵⁰ and wrote verses in praise of Italian unification. Other writers include the poet Mariannina Coffa (Noto, 1841-1878) and Luigi Scalia, who translated *L'Addio di Lord Byron*.⁵¹ Felice Bisazza dedicated several poems to the author of *Manfredo*,⁵² while the priest Paolo Pappalardo

⁴⁸ Cited in I. Origo, *The Last Attachment: The Story of Byron and Teresa Guiccioli as Told in Their Unpublished Letters and Other Family Papers* (London: Cape & Murray, 1949), 15.

⁴⁹ E. Zuccato, 'The fortune of Byron in Italy (1810-1870)', in R. Cardwell, *The Reception of Byron in Europe*, vol. I (London, Continuum, 2004), 80-97.

⁵⁰ G. Turrisi Colonna, 'Addio di Lord Byron all'Italia'; 'Lord Byron a Ravenna'; 'Lord Byron a Missolungi', in *Liriche di Giuseppina Turrisi-Colonna* (Firenze, Le Monnier, 1846).

⁵¹ L. Scalia, 'L'Addio di Lord Byron', in *Effemeridi scientifiche e letterarie per la Sicilia* (Palermo, Tip. F. Solli, 1833), t. 5, 138.

⁵² F. Bisazza, 'A Byron'; 'Byron moribondo', in *Opere* (Messina, Ribera, 1874), 24-31.

translated *Parisina*.⁵³ Additionally, Giuseppe Zappalà Finocchiaro analysed Byron's poem *La morte di Calmar ed Orla*, which was published in 1835 in the journal *La Fenice*.

Even La Farina could not resist the allure of the great English poet, whose influence is evident in his novellas published in the first issue of *Lo Spettatore Zancleo* (1834). These novels, which display a typical Byronic structure, featuring a blend of passion, hatred, gothic elements, and revenge — include the following titles: *Ghino di Tacco* (22 January), *Gherando* (4 June), *Atene Risorta* (9 April), *Beatrice Cenci* (22 and 29 October), *L'Amante Vampiro* (30 April), and *Gabriella* (24 December).⁵⁴

La Farina reinterprets the character of Ghino di Tacco. Rather than the thirteenth-century Tuscan brigand remembered by Dante in Canto VI of *Paradiso* and Boccaccio's novel, this version is modelled after the portrayal by Francesco Domenico Guerrazzi in his work *La battaglia di Benevento: storia del secolo XIII*, published in France in 1835. This work is included in the Risorgimento canon. In the traditional narrative, Messer Ghino is a nobleman stripped of his possessions by the rival Counts of Santa Fiora, leading him to contemplate 'ideas of revenge and death'.⁵⁵

The Lafarinian Ghino is a gentleman who lives in a fortress with his wife, the Guarnincella, his son, and his brother, Turrino. Their quiet family life is disrupted by the arrival of a criminal, Benincasa (who, in the traditional narrative, is the vicar of the mayor of Siena). Knowing that Ghino and Turrino are away, he goes to the fortress and encounters the beautiful Guarnincella, who is overlooking the veranda, and falls in love with her. The next day, Benincasa's men arrive at the castle and order Ghino and his brother to accompany them to court, accusing them of robbery. A fight ensues, resulting in mortal wounds to Turrino, his sister-in-law Guarnicella, and his little nephew. Ghino swears revenge. Upon reaching Rome, Ghino approaches Benincasa, who holds the position of judge of the Sacred Rota. Taking him by surprise, Ghino beheads him and intends to keep his head as a trophy near the tomb of his loved ones, as he had vowed:

He takes it and quickly flies away

⁵³ P. Pappalardo, 'La Parisina', in *Il Poligrafo. Rivista scientifica, letteraria ed artistica per la Sicilia*, vol. 2 (Palermo, Tip. dell'Armonia, 1856), 110-114.

⁵⁴ G. Biundi, *Di Giuseppe La Farina e del risorgimento italiano dal 1815 al 1900-1893: memorie storico-biografiche seguite da illustrazioni e da documenti editi ed inediti* (Palermo; Torino, Clausen, 1893).

⁵⁵ F.D., Guerrazzi, *La battaglia di Benevento: storia del secolo XIII* (Livorno, Bertani, 1827), 201.

Among the crowd of people who are fleeing.
He does not run but flies like a hawk that
has captured its prey in its talons.
So, to everyone, he appears like a lightning bolt
that creates a furrow in the darkness and then disappears.⁵⁶

The typical elements of a Byronic novel are all in La Farina's *L'Amante Vampiro*: the Gothic aesthetic, intense passion, power struggles, victims, and revenge. The story follows Paolo and Giulia, two young lovers whose relationship is obstructed by Giulia's father, the Duke. After the Duke kills Paolo, he is transformed into a vampire. Giulia, in turn, is compelled to marry the elderly Prince Odorone. On their wedding day, during Carnival, a masked figure approaches Giulia at the wedding ball and invites her to follow him. Behind the mask is Paolo. As the guests pursue them, the two lovers are discovered lifeless in a secret room, surrounded by a pool of blood.⁵⁷

The themes of betrayal and remorse, commonly found in Byronic novels, are central to the story of *Gherando*.⁵⁸ Gherando is a knight in love with Emma. However, since he is called to the Holy Land, he hastily marries her before leaving. Unfortunately, Bajante, a presumed friend of Gherando, betrays him by seducing Emma. When Gherando returns home from the war, he discovers that Emma has committed adultery and has taken her own life. Feeling threatened, Gherando kills Bajant. The story concludes with Gherando wandering, feeling remorseful for the crimes committed, and unable to find peace.⁵⁹

Gabriella and *Beatrice Cenci* also convey a macabre theme. In the first novel, a young girl is forced by her father to marry an older man named Faïl, despite her love for a young man named Raül. Gabriella confesses her love for Raül to Faïl, who decides to kill Raül and Gabriella is kept confined in a tower. The following scene describes the young girl's captivity:

In the prime of her life, Gabriella lies buried in a dark tower. She is burned out, dead to joy and splendour, consumed by an impure flame. She has no ray of hope; when fate offers a glimmer, it is concealed in death. A sunbeam never penetrates her surroundings, nor does the night's torch

⁵⁶ 'Ghino di Tacco', *Lo Spettatore*, a. I, 4, 5 (22 e 29 gennaio 1834), 30: ('Pel crin lo prende e rapido s'involà / Tra la folla del popol che fuggiva / Non corre no ma qual sparviere vola / Che negli artigli ha la preda captiva / Sicchè ad ognuno come un lampo appare / Che fa un solco nell'ombra e poi dispare').

⁵⁷ 'Ghino di Tacco', *Lo Spettatore*, a. I, 4, 5 (22 e 29 gennaio 1834), 30: ("Pel crin lo prende e rapido s'involà / Tra la folla del popol che fuggiva / Non corre no ma qual sparviere vola / Che negli artigli ha la preda captiva / Sicchè ad ognuno come un lampo appare / Che fa un solco nell'ombra e poi dispare").

⁵⁸ 'Gherando', *Lo Spettatore*, a. 2, n. 18 (30 aprile 1834), p. 141.

⁵⁹ 'L'Amante Vampiro', *Lo Spettatore*, a. II, 18, 30 (18 e 30 aprile 1834), p. 18 e 30.

illuminate her marble-like ashes. The chain rests heavily upon her, while the restless wind beats against the iron bars, lamenting her fate.⁶⁰

One day, Gabriella receives an envelope wrapped in a cloth. She thinks that Raul has sent her some of the poison he used to kill himself. However, when she lifts the handkerchief, she discovers the horrific truth: it conceals the heart of the young man whom Fail killed. Shocked by the sight, Gabriella collapses and dies.

Beatrice Cenci has become a symbol of rebellion against the powerful, and her story has been included in the Risorgimento canon. Many authors have drawn inspiration from her tale, including G.B. Niccolini and F.D. Guerrazzi. Guerrazzi, a Tuscan democrat who played a significant role in the 1848 riots, was inspired by Guido Reni's famous painting of Beatrice Cenci to write a novel based on her tragic story. Similarly, La Farina wrote a romance about Beatrice, slightly modifying the original narrative and following a typical Byronian plot, which is filled with violence, kidnappings, and revenge.⁶¹

In 1835, La Farina also wrote a civil poem expressing his deep love for his country. The theme of exile, which was also significant in the literature of the Risorgimento, is central to the poem. Exile, regarded as a 'mass experience', became a popular subject in dramatic works. The exiles contributed to the nation's writing, drawing inspiration from figures such as Dante, Machiavelli, Alfieri, and Foscolo. La Farina conveys nostalgia for the places of his childhood, feelings of loneliness and rootlessness, and the pain of living in a foreign land. Thus, he captures the emotional turmoil of exile: 'Unhappy people live on foreign soil, far from their native land. Their days are filled with sorrow, and their nights are filled with fear. Every home feels strange to them, and every place is unfamiliar. The unfortunate person realises too late how precious their beloved homeland truly is.'⁶² The following verses describe heroic death and sacrifice, which, according to Banti, are integral to the national-patriotic discourse and shape political language. The exiles' sufferings are transformed into a 'sweet pain' as they are sublimated by their love for their homeland, the Great Mother. This bio-cultural bond is an absolute priority, taking precedence over everything, even life itself.

⁶⁰ 'Gabriella', *Lo Spettatore Zancleo*, a. 2, 43, 24 dicembre 1834: ("Così Gabriella dell'età sul fiore / Giace sepolta in una torre oscura / Morta al godere e morta allo splendore / Arsa consunta d'una fiamma impura / Non ha un raggio di speme e a lei la sorte / Se mostra speme sta riposta in morte // Ove non mai di sole / Penetra un raggio nè notturna face / Non cove il cener suo marmorea mole / La catena vi posa e rotto il vento / Batte fra le ferrate e dà un lamento.").

⁶¹ 'Beatrice Cenci', *Lo Spettatore*, n. 34 e 35 (22 e 29 ottobre 1834), p. 15.

⁶² 'Amor patrio', *ibid.*, p. 15: ("Infelice chi in terra d'altrui / Vive lungi dal patrio suo suolo / I suoi giorni son giorni di duolo / E le notti son notti d'orror / Ogni casa gli è casa straniera / Ed è nuovo ogni loco a suoi sguardi / Se ne avvede il meschino ma tardi / Quanto è caro il suo cielo d' amor. //

Here are some verses: ‘If one dies fighting on the field, / where the bones of our ancestors rest, / oh, how sweet and dear are / even the fierce pains of death. May God curse the wicked heart of anyone who does not recognise / these joys and does not feel their homeland’s love.’⁶³

In La Farina’s literary and later political works, we observe a profound engagement with themes such as love for one’s homeland, heroic sacrifice, and concepts of virtue and honour. These themes are part of the broader cultural code of the Italian Risorgimento, which encompasses ideas such as holy war, brotherhood among Sicilian citizens, and the notion of being children of the same mother—the Nation.

3.4 Love of Country, Honour and Virtue in La Farina and Gemelli’s Political Writings

On 13 January 1848, La Farina called for harmony and unity in an article published in *L’Alba*, the newspaper he founded in Florence. He believed that love for one’s country should be the bond that holds society together and that everything must be sacrificed for this cause. His message emphasised the importance of patriotism and collective effort. His words also demonstrate that he was far from the perspective of Municipalism and particularism:

We urge for one thing only: harmony and unity. Yes, harmony and unity among all citizens, all cities, and all states of Italy. Whoever truly loves their country, whoever holds a sincere affection for the cause of Italian freedom and independence, should sacrifice everything - resentments, grudges, personal interests - for the holiest end, the desire of the past, the hope of the present, the heritage of the future. United, we will be a people; divided, we will be a flock prey to hungry wolves. [...].⁶⁴

Carlo Gemelli reported that during the 1848 revolution, the people of Messina enthusiastically welcomed the news of the Neapolitan expedition to Sicily. Their love for their country was so intense that they were ready to make any sacrifice, even if it meant risking their lives or the

⁶³ Ibid.: (“Se pugnando si muore sul campo / Ove dormono le ossa degli avi / Ah son cari soavi / Della morte anche i fieri dolor / Or chi queste dolcezze non cura / Chi non sente di patria l’amore / Pera Iddio nel suo giusto / Maledica quel perfido cor.”).

⁶⁴ ‘Concordia’ (*L’Alba*), in *Scritti politici di G. La Farina, raccolti e pubblicati da Ausonio Franchi* (Milano, Tip. D. Salvi e G., 1870), 206-209 (207): (‘Ad una sola cosa esortiamo concordia ed unione. Sì, concordia ed unione fra tutti i cittadini, fra tutte le città, fra tutti gli Stati d’Italia. Chi veramente ama la sua patria, chi serba affetto sincero alla causa della libertà e della indipendenza italiana, sacrifichi tutto, risentimenti, rancori, personalità... tutto al fine santissimo, desiderio del passato, speranza del presente patrimonio dell’avvenire. Uniti saremo un popolo, disuniti saremo un gregge preda dei lupi affamati [...]).’).

destruction of their city, to overthrow the tyranny of the Bourbon government. He noted: “In Messina, upon receiving news of the nearby battle, the citizens resolved to endure any hardship rather than submit to King Ferdinando’s tyranny and witness the destruction of their homeland.”⁶⁵ A few days before the Sicilian revolution broke out, La Farina addressed the people in another of his contributions to *L’Alba*. He emphasised the need for heroism and sacrifice, urging the patriots to stand firm in their struggle for freedom. The Sicilian historian also reminded them that their weapons were intended to defend their homeland and that their duties were of ‘the highest and most solemn nature.’⁶⁶ Yet in the newspaper *L’Alba*, La Farina argued that virtue and freedom are inseparable concepts, stating that there is no freedom without virtue. He distinguished between ‘the virtue of martyrdom’ and ‘the virtue on the ground’. In other words, the Messinese patriot did not see martyrdom as a passive act; instead, he recognised it as an active form of protest and a call to arms.

Both La Farina and Gemelli’s writings contain numerous references to the concept of honour. In an article titled ‘The Miracles of Enthusiasm’ published in *Democrazia*, a magazine established on 1 March 1849, La Farina defines democracy as ‘the broadest possible form of government, adapted to our times and circumstances’.⁶⁷ He also addresses the famous criticism of the poet Alphonse de Lamartine, who described Italy as the ‘land of the dead.’ Following the bombing of Messina in early September 1848, the Sicilian historian highlighted the fierce response of the ‘sublime city,’ which ‘faced its fate bravely, without a cowardly cry or a single complaint.’⁶⁸

La Farina wrote an article a few days after the Sicilians’ defence, where the term ‘honour’ appeared frequently and aligned with nationalist rhetoric: ‘Honour to the heroic cities of Reggio and Messina, which first raised the war cry amidst the hail of bullets! Eternal honour to the immortal city of Palermo, which stood strong against the barrage of bullets and bombs. [...] Honour to Naples, which responded with sympathy and affection to the call for resurrection.’⁶⁹

⁶⁵ *Storia della Siciliana rivoluzione del 1848-49*, vol. II, 57: (‘In Messina ricevute le novelle della non lontana battaglia, i cittadini tutti deliberavano patire, prima che arrendersi, qualunque estrema, sopportare lo sterminio della patria, anzichè cedere sotto la tirannide di re Ferdinando.’).

⁶⁶ ‘Al popolo’ (*L’Alba*), in *Scritti politici*, 148: (‘sfuggi l’ozio; il giuoco del lotto; le veglie prolungate; tutti quei disordini che apportano lo squallore e il pianto nelle tue famiglie’).

⁶⁷ ‘Guerra!’ (*Democrazia*, n. 1, 6 marzo 1849), in *Scritti politici*, 295-311 (295): (‘la più larga forma possibile di governo, che sia ai tempi e alle condizioni nostre adattata.’).

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 297: (‘senza mandare un lamento, arse senza un grido codardo’).

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*: (‘Onore all’eroica Reggio ed alla prode Messina che prime sotto la mitraglia alzarono il grido di guerra! Onore eterno all’immortale Palermo che la mitraglia e le bombe non impaurirono [...] Onore a Napoli che rispose con simpatia e con affetto al grido di risurrezione alzato dai fratelli dell’isola. Onore a tutto il popolo delle Due Sicilie che sorse come un sol uomo ed infranse il giogo del dispotismo Ma onore più che ad ogni altro a quella

The Sicilian liberal intellectual elites played a significant role in fostering anti-Bourbon sentiments through their speeches, appeals to the public, pamphlets, novels, and poems. They employed symbols, allegories, imagery, and language that can be categorised under the ‘Risorgimento canon.’ The narrative crafted by Sicilian patriots encompasses a diverse range of elements. For instance, the political entity they sought to oppose — the Bourbon monarchy — differed from other pre-unification states. Additionally, their propaganda was characterised by a belief in a dual identity: Sicilian and national. The Sicilian identity was rooted in a historical heritage, which was sometimes mythologised. Many writings by Sicilian patriots focused on restoring the prerogatives, freedoms, and autonomy that, as Pontieri notes, were often the result of questionable legal interpretations by experts and abuses by the Sicilian barony.⁷⁰ In contrast, the national identity was still being formed. The reconciliation of these two identities — regional and national — required a cultural transformation, which began with public education.

4.1. La Farina, Gemelli, and Chindemi on Public Education: Promoting Mutual Teaching Schools and Women’s Education.

La Farina served as Minister of Education from 13 August to 23 September 1848, a period too short to effectively manage the country’s school system. During this time, La Farina delivered his *Discorso* in front of the Parliament, which warrants attention. He strongly criticised the government’s educational policies, accusing them of promoting ‘systematic ignorance that kept the population in a state of blindness and isolation.’⁷¹ The Sicilian patriot also described the dire condition of schools under the Bourbon monarchy, stating: ‘Public education does not exist in our country; it is an empty phrase. We are not discussing reforms but rather the need to create an entirely new system.’⁷²

The Sicilian historian emphasised the significance of popular education, viewing it as the foundation of every civilisation and a key to freedom. This belief was shared by the collaborators of the *Antologia* of Viesseux, including notable figures like Gino Capponi, Abbé

santa legione di martiri che col suo sangue fecondò il seme della libertà in una terra che pareva dall’oppressione isterilita [...].’).

⁷⁰ E. Pontieri, *Il tramonto del baronaggio siciliano* (Firenze, Sansoni, 1943), 9-14.

⁷¹ ‘Discorso del ministro di Pubblica Istruzione alla Camera dei Comuni’ (agosto 1848), in *Scritti Politici*, 269- 273 (269): (‘alla ignoranza sistematica, onde il nostro popolo viveva nella cecità e nello isolamento’).

⁷² Ibid.: (‘L’istruzione pubblica da noi non esiste, è una parola vuota di senso: non parliamo di riforme ma di creare, tutto daccapo’).

Lambruschini, and Niccolò Tommaseo, whom La Farina had met during his exile in Florence. The magazine aimed to reach the general public by promoting ‘elementary education, the understanding of scientific findings that could enhance everyday life, and the establishment of mutual teaching schools.’⁷³

La Farina’s literary output demonstrates an evident adherence to Romanticism, as well as Gemelli and Chindemi’s articles and essays. For instance, in his *Sul Romanticismo* letter directed to Professor E. Panzacchi, Gemelli argued that Italy was ‘oppressed by foreign tyranny, theocracy, and old despots. [...] It placed great hopes for revival in its literature, its writers, and the unceasing efforts of secret societies [...].’⁷⁴ He did not claim to be a blind admirer of the Romantics, particularly the neo-Catholic school, whose guiding principles include legitimism, aversion to revolution and the impossibility of reconciliation between Catholicism and Italian nationality. Gemelli cautions intellectuals against what he sees as a utopian idea that originated in Germany and spread to France and Italy. In its most extreme forms, this idea contradicts the ‘true moral and civil progress of peoples’⁷⁵ which he believes should have been the guiding principle of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution.

The promotion of the Bell-Lancaster method and the opening of kindergartens, carried out by Pietro Thouar (1809-1861) from Florence and Abbot R. Lambruschini (1788-1861) from Genoa, was a commitment of Gemelli’s friend La Farina. He dedicated his speech on kindergartens, delivered at Santa Croce Church in Florence on 3 October 1841, to this cause.⁷⁶ Gemelli was also interested in the concept of mutual teaching schools. In his *Discourse* delivered in Palermo in 1835, he noted that the Bell-Lancaster method resulted ‘from thirty years of observational experience by two exceptional men.’⁷⁷ He emphasised that this method highlighted the importance and urgent necessity of educating, instructing, and enlightening the masses.⁷⁸ Gemelli also recognised the contributions of Abbot Nicola Scovazzo, the general director of the mutual teaching school in Sicily, which was established in 1849. Abbot Scovazzo initially founded four schools in Palermo that were accessible to women. Additional schools

⁷³ P. Prunas, *L’Antologia di Gian Pietro Viessieux: storia di una rivista italiana* (Roma, Società editrice Dante Alighieri di Albrighi, Segati, 1906).

⁷⁴ ‘Sul Romanticismo’, in *Scritti letterari e politici di Carlo Gemelli*, a cura di F. Guardione (Torino, Loescher, 1887), 112: (‘[...] l’Italia, oppressa dalla tirannide straniera, dalla teocrazia, e dai vecchi despoti restaurati, che tutti volevano ricacciarla nell’antica barbarie, riponeva ogni sua speranza di risorgimento nella sua letteratura ne suoi scrittori e nell’opera incessante delle società segrete [...]).’

⁷⁵ Ibid., 114: (‘vero progresso morale e civile dei popoli’).

⁷⁶ *Il 3 ottobre in S. Croce di Giuseppe La Farina* (Firenze, Fabris, 1841).

⁷⁷ *Alcuni opuscoli di C. Gemelli* (Firenze, 1842), 142: (‘frutto di trent’anni di esperienze di osservazioni di due uomini straordinari’).

⁷⁸ Ibid.: ‘ha fatto conoscere l’importanza e il grave bisogno d’ingentilire, educare, istruire ed illuminare la massa generale di un popolo’.

were opened shortly in Catania, Trapani, and Messina. Notably, the first school for women opened in Messina received much praise from those who valued goodness and the honour of the fatherland. At the same time, it was met with disdain and anger from the ignorant and despicable critics.⁷⁹ The passage in which the Sicilian man of letters discusses Abbot Scovazzo's proposal is fascinating. Scovazzo suggested introducing linear design (geometry) and teaching the Italic language alongside the foundational subjects of reading, writing, and basic arithmetic. Gemelli accepted Scovazzo's proposal, finding the method of translating from Sicilian to Italian very beneficial. He believed it would help students quickly develop the ability to translate mentally and instantly and speak and write the language accurately, without relying on rules.⁸⁰

His purpose of stimulating the growth of civil society led Gemelli to collaborate with another magazine, *L'Amico delle Donne. Giornale di amenità e di istruzione*, founded by La Farina, Felice Bisazza, and Domenico Ventimiglia. This periodical was short-lived (from 20 January to 20 April of the same year), and only nine issues emerged. Gemelli attributed ignorance to 'one of the principal and most powerful causes of our misery'⁸¹ and, together with the other compilers, he aimed to educate and delight women, who were considered 'the firmest support of public morality.'⁸²

This goal is rooted in the ideas of Mazzini and the romantic culture of the 19th century, which emphasised the importance of including women in building the new Italian nation. This inclusion was seen as essential for the development of society. Beyond their traditional role as 'family angels,' dispenser of consoling sweetness,⁸³ women were entrusted with the vital responsibility of educating the new citizens, acting as a bridge between the family and the nation. Mazzini's thought encompassed central themes such as education, association, and emancipation, blending conservative and progressive elements. Starting in the second half of the 19th century, Mazzinians advocated for women's right to vote, viewing it as crucial for establishing a democratic society.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ Ibid., 145: 'per le donne, con molto plauso de' buoni e degli amanti del bene, e dell'onore della patria, con dispetto e con rabbia de' vili, e degli oscuri, o spregevoli pedanti').

⁸⁰ Ibid., 148: ('in breve acquistar la consuetudine di tradurre colla mente ed istantaneamente, e di parlare e scrivere correttamente, e senza il soccorso delle regole il toscano idioma.').

⁸¹ Ibid., 229: ('una delle cause principali e più potenti della nostra miseria').

⁸² Ibid., 230: ('il più saldo sostegno della pubblica morale').

⁸³ G. Mazzini, *Doveri dell'uomo* (Londra, 1860), 66: ('dispensatrice di dolcezza consolatrice').

⁸⁴ For this argument see F. Falchi, G. Mazzini, *La democrazia europea e i diritti delle donne* (Firenze, Centro ed. toscano, 2011); I. Porciani, 'Famiglia e nazione nel lungo Ottocento', *Passato e Presente*, 57(2002), 9-39 (and then her book *Famiglia e nazione nel lungo Ottocento italiano: Modelli, strategie, reti di relazioni* (Roma, Vielli, 2006); M. Bonsanti, 'Amore familiare, amore romantico e amore di patria', in *Storia d'Italia, Annali 22, Il Risorgimento*, A.M. Banti, P. Ginsborg (Torino, Einaudi, 2007), 127-152; A. Russo, 'Nel desiderio delle tue care nuove': *Scritture*

In the *Preface* of the inaugural issue of the journal *L'Amico delle Donne*, Gemelli invited women to engage in a 'civil correspondence of arts, letters, and pure emotions, enhancing their spirits and hearts.'⁸⁵ Ultimately, women should encourage men to cultivate a love for literature that would elevate their nobility and purity, benefiting the affections of their country.

Salvatore Chindemi also voiced his admiration for romantic values and ideals. In response to a request from Mr. Gerolamo Ardizzone to review some songs, Professor Chindemi wrote a letter sharing his thoughts on the state of poetry in Italy.

4.2 'The Archimandrites of Greek Art' and the Renewal of Italian Thought

Chindemi's letter also discusses aspects of Italian history and expresses his views on romantic culture. The Sicilian patriot expressed that the agreements made at the Congress of Vienna had left Italy in an unjust and harsh situation. He highlighted that foreign domination had increased and internal oppression had become excessive and brutal. Moreover, he observed that the failed uprisings of 1820 and 1821, along with the movements in Romagna, were suppressed through imprisonment and exile, leaving the Italian people in despair and resentment.⁸⁶

For the Sicilian patriot, historical events affected poetry, which 'interprets sorrow and public disasters'.⁸⁷ Thus, poetry evolved in form and content, moving away from its classical form and mythology. Manzoni's sacred hymns and Borghi's mysteries of Christianity opened the realm of poetry to religious thought, becoming its emblem. In his writing, Chindemi effectively explores the relationship between the Romantic movement and Christianity, which was initiated by Chateaubriand's *Genie du Christianisme* (1808), elevated by the paintings of the Nazarenes, and reflected in numerous religious conversions within literary and artistic circles, such as those of Fredrick Schlegel in 1808 and Alessandro Manzoni in 1810-1811. Chindemi wrote:

Furthermore, if scepticism disturbs the muse of Foscolo, Byron, and Leopardi, it is essential to note that the foundation of their sentiments is purely Christian. Having been born and raised in

private e relazioni di genere nell'Ottocento risorgimentale (Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2006); F. Pieroni Bortolotti, *Alle origini del movimento femminile in Italia, 1848-1892* (Torino, Einaudi, 1963); S. Amarena, *Donne mazziniane, donne repubblicane* (Imola, Santerno ed., 2005).

⁸⁵ Ibid.: ('quella civile corrispondenza di arti, lettere, e di pure commozioni, onde migliorare lo spirito loro ed il cuore, ed ispirar agli uomini l'amor delle lettere rendendoli più nobili puri per affetti di patria.').

⁸⁶ Ibid., 4: ('ci lasciavano in una condizione ingiusta e crudele, il servaggio straniero accresciuto e dilatato, il domestico esorbitante e selvaggio, quindi i falliti tentativi del 1820 e 1821 e i movimenti delle Romagne, arrestati e compressi con le prigioni e gli esilii, avean prostrato gl'Italiani tra la disperazione e i rancori.').

Ibid., 229: ('parte carissima dell'uman genere').

⁸⁷ Ibid.: ('interprete de' dolori e de' pubblici disastri').

a Christian environment, they cannot escape the deep-seated emotions that have nourished their hearts since childhood. These feelings have become second nature to them, deeply rooted habits. Pellico described Foscolo as a sceptic in mind but a Christian in heart, and Gioberti made a similar claim about Leopardi. With Manzoni and Pellico, religion emerged as a sentiment in poetry. This was not an indulgence, a mere fiction, or simply an artistic tool like mythology in classical poetry; instead, it represented a genuine and healthy transformation of their creative expression.⁸⁸

Additionally, he acknowledged that spiritual renewal offered a twofold advantage to art. First, it helps prevent emotions from becoming too intense due to genuine passion, similar to what happens to Dante in his *Inferno*. Second, the new art draws inspiration from Christianity, which he believed was essential for achieving equality, freedom, and true fraternity. The transformations in literature began with *Il Conciliatore*, where several contributors delved into the depths of the Spielberg. The Florentine *Antologia* continued the legacy of the Milanese periodical.

Chindemi noted that the renewal of Italian thought faced two significant obstacles: politics and ‘the archimandrites of Greek art, who saw their influence diminish as their celebrated mythological subjects lost popularity.’⁸⁹ However, in line with the well-known Schillerian distinction, he credited ‘psychological poetry’ with awakening Italy, particularly through the rediscovery of Dante’s work.

All three patriots explored romantic themes in distinct ways, with a particular focus on the roles of intellectuals in society and the concepts of homeland and nation. They were among the young intellectuals involved in the cholera riots of 1837. The outbreak of cholera, referred to as the ‘blue disease,’ resulted in a significant number of fatalities in the Bourbon kingdom, with around 27,000 deaths reported in Palermo alone.⁹⁰ This epidemic also led to traumatic upheavals in the kingdom’s political, social, and economic fabric, profoundly affecting the living conditions of the southern population.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 18: (‘E se lo scetticismo travaglia la musa di Foscolo, Byron, Leopardi, però il fondo dei sentimenti è prettamente cristiano, poichè nati, educati nel cristianesimo, non possono smettere quei sentimenti abituali che dall’infanzia hanno nudrito il loro cuore, divenuto quella seconda natura che sono le abitudini profondamente radicate e quel che diceva il Pellico di Foscolo, scettico di mente e in fondo del cuore cristiano, ha asserito il Gioberti di Leopardi. Col Manzoni e il Pellico la religione entrò come sentimento nella poesia, non fu lenocinio, finzione e strumento d’arte, come la mitologia per la poesia classica, ma fu una vera e salutare trasformazione.’). ⁸⁹ Ibid.: (‘archimandriti dell’arte greca, che vedevano rovesciati i loro altari e fallito il botteghino mitologico a cui dovevano la loro celebrità.’).

⁸⁹ Ibid.: (‘archimandriti dell’arte greca, che vedevano rovesciati i loro altari e fallito il botteghino mitologico a cui dovevano la loro celebrità.’).

⁹⁰ A. Corradi, *Annali delle epidemie occorse in Italia dalle prime memorie fino al 1850*, vol. VI dall’anno 1833 al 1850 (Bologna, Gamberini e Parmiggiani, 1880), 1041.

Conclusions

Chapter three examines the cultural environment in Sicily during the 1830s and 1840s, which was crucial for the formation of the three patriots under examination. During this period, romantic culture began to make its mark on the Island, even though classical and seventeenth-century models heavily influenced the existing cultural tradition. A section is dedicated to how values and romantic themes were embraced by La Farina, Gemelli and Chindemi.

The relationship between melodrama and the Italian Risorgimento is highlighted, particularly through tributes to Vincenzo Bellini that reflect the spread of patriotic values among Sicilian youth. Elements of national and patriotic discourse are evident not only in the literary works but also in the political writings of these protagonists. Recent historiography has emphasised themes such as virtue, honour, heroic death, martyrdom, and the concept of the nation as a Great Mother, as well as the brotherhood and sisterhood among patriots. These themes are recurrent in the three patriots' narrative. Special attention is given to the youthful novellas of La Farina, which Byron inspires. These stories incorporate themes of revenge, passion, betrayal, remorse, and a gothic style.

The analysis of the national-patriotic discourse reveals significant differences between Sicily and other pre-unitary Italian states. For instance, the political entity that faced dissent in Sicily was the Bourbon monarchy. Additionally, patriotic propaganda in Sicily exhibits a dual identity: one rooted in the island's millennia-old history, which defines its uniqueness, and another that is still in formation at the national level. This duality of identity has characterised the Risorgimento struggles in Sicily.

In the context of the Romantic age, the three Sicilian patriots emphasized the importance of public education, which was severely lacking in the Bourbon kingdom, advocating for the establishment of kindergartens and schools focused on mutual learning. Believing in Mazzini's idea that literary renewal should accompany political reforms, Gemelli was also dedicated to promoting the education of women: he believed that women should be entrusted with nurturing the growth of good citizens and patriots.



Figure 6

*The Sacking of the register of Palermo in 1820. The lithograph is taken from G. Pestelli, *Storia d'Italia dal 1815 fino alla promulgazione del Regno d'Italia narrata al popolo*, I (Firenze, A. Usigli, 1864), 595.*

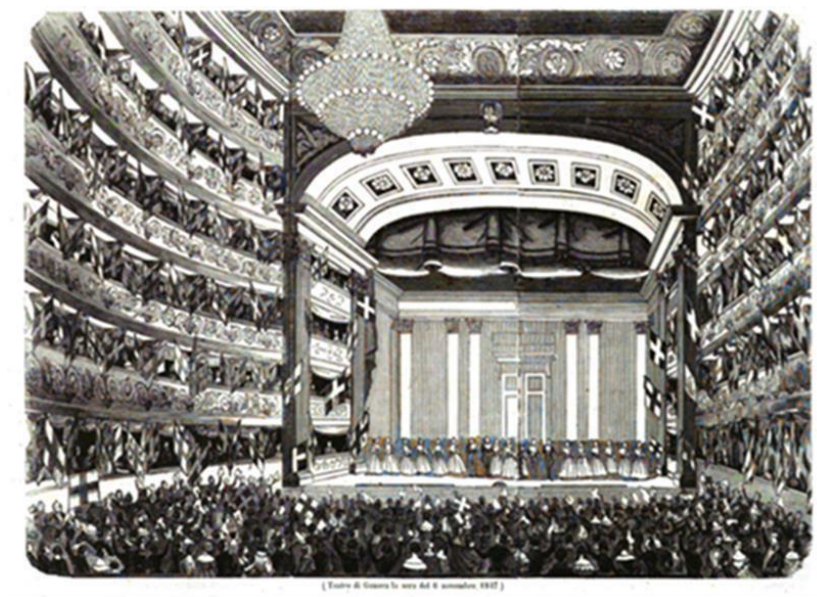


Figure 7

The Genoa Theatre on the evening of November 6, 1847. From the *Mondo Illustrato* magazine, No. 47 (20 November 1847). The theatre was filled with flags and waving banners that testified to the growing political sensitivity of the spectators.

CHAPTER 4

G. LA FARINA, C. GEMELLI AND S. CHINDEMI'S EXPERIENCE OF THE 1837 CHOLERA PANDEMIC AND RIOTS

4. The 1837 Cholera Epidemic in Sicily

In the 1830s, the cholera epidemic swept through Europe in multiple waves until the end of the century. The rise in transportation and trade, enabled by the introduction of the steam engine, facilitated the spread of the disease. Before reaching the Two Sicilies, the cholera pandemic began in 1817 in the Bengal Delta and rapidly moved from Asia to Russia. After causing numerous deaths among the Tsar's soldiers during the Russo-Persian war of 1826-1828, it crossed the Balkans and then spread worldwide. In the summer of 1831, the epidemic affected Hungary, Poland, Germany, the Netherlands, and Austria. By March 1832, cholera also reached London and Paris, followed by Spain and Portugal. Travellers infected aboard British ships bound for the New World brought the epidemic to Quebec. Between 1833 and 1834, cholera also struck the Spanish colonies in the Americas.

Despite the precautionary and strict measures taken by European governments, along with the creation of cordons sanitaires, the cholera morbus from Nice entered the Kingdom of Savoy, and, in spring 1836, nearly all the old pre-unitary Italian states had to face the terrible disease. In autumn 1836, after some Apulian cities, such as Rodi, Trani, and Barletta, the epidemic reached Naples. In his contemporary account *Quadri storici del cholera di Napoli* (1837), Marquis Cesare de Sterlich recounted that the first case of cholera occurred in Naples and was made public on 2 October 1836. The victim was Gennaro Maggi, a customs officer from the Porto district.¹ When it first appeared in Naples, cholera was not recognised as a disease and was perceived as 'an illusion, a rumour, a plot'² or even as a 'political thing.'³ At the time, there were divergent ideas about cholera, its nature, prevention and treatment methods. As P. Gilbert noted, 'The first and main opposition, from the beginning, was between the contagionists (those who believed that the disease spread through direct human contact) and the non- contagionists (those who believed that the disease usually resulted from environmental causes)'.⁴

¹ C. de Sterlich, *Quadri storici del cholera di Napoli di C. de Sterlich dei marchesi di Cermignano, a beneficio delle orfane dei cholerici* (Napoli, Flautina, 1837), 12.

² Ibid.: ('una illusione, una diceria, un intrigo').

³ Ibid.: ('una cosa tutta politica').

⁴ P.K. Gilbert, *Cholera and Nation, Doctoring the Social Body in Victorian England* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 2008), 93.

Gilbert's analysis refers to the Victorian context, but the same opposition occurred in the Two Sicilies. One example is offered by Luigi Ajello, a professor at the Faculty of Medicine of the Supreme Magistrate of Health in Naples, which is the royal institution established by a public health law of 1830 (another Supreme Magistrate was based in Palermo) and charged by the king with observing the cholera epidemic in the kingdom. In his letter addressed to one of his colleagues, Ajello defended the thesis of the contagion, as we read in the following passage:

[...] we have more and more ascertained that cholera was contagious, which up to that time was denied by many (and still rejected), and others considered problematic. The Medical Faculty of this Supreme Magistrate, on the other hand, consistently uniform in its opinions and always consistent with itself, held firmly to the argument that cholera-morbus was contagious, having discovered it both from medical journals and ministerial and consular reports.⁵

Filippo Parlatore, a young pathologist from Palermo and a distinguished botanist, agreed with Ajello. In fact, in his work on cholera, he asked his colleagues: 'What epidemic, if it depends on atmospheric generals, proceeds so slowly in the space of many years and does not travel rapidly through kingdoms to attack almost every country in a nation or part of the world?'⁶ However, there were numerous accounts of the disease ravaging southern Italy. Understanding the epidemic's impact on the lives and actions of the three patriots is relevant to this work: what were their perceptions and feelings about it? As already mentioned, La Farina and Gemelli were denounced and arrested for their membership in secret societies and involvement in the Messina cholera riots of August 1837, together with P. Landi, I. Pompeiano, M. Pispisa, A. Grillo, and F. Laguidara. La Farina took refuge in Tuscany, where he arrived in late summer 1837, just as cholera was about to invade the Bourbon kingdom. He sent several letters to his family in Sicily, from which we can deduce his beliefs and feelings about cholera.

4.1 The Experience of the Cholera Epidemic in La Farina's Letters to His Family

In a letter to his father, Carmelo, the young patriot La Farina appeared enthusiastic about his arrival in Tuscany. The schooner he had embarked on in Sicily with his wife, Maria Luisa di Francia, had

⁵ L. Ajello, *Lettera sul cholera-morbus diretta al suo chiar.mo amico Sig. Dr. Mario Giardini* (Napoli: Stamperia N. Mosca, 1837), 4. ('[...] ci accertammo sempre più d'essere il Cholera contagioso, il che fin a quel punto da molti negavasi (e tuttora si nega), e da altri tenevasi per problematico. La Facoltà Medica di questo Supremo Magistrato per altro, sempre uniforme ne' suoi pareri e conseguente sempre a se stessa, tenne ferma l'opinione sull'esser contagioso il Cholera-morbus, avendolo scorto tanto da giornali medici, quanto dalle relazioni ministeriali e consolari;').

⁶ F. Parlatore, 'Della storia del colera di Palermo, del carattere contagioso o epidemico dello stesso, e della profilassi', in *Giornale di scienze, letteratura ed arti per la Sicilia diretto dal barone V. Mortillaro*, 15, vol. 37 (gennaio-febbraio-marzo 1837), 81-120 (95): ('Quale epidemia, qualora da generali atmosferiche dipende, così lentamente procede per lo spazio di tanti anni e non percorre rapidamente i regni per attaccare quasi tutti i paesi di una nazione o di una parte

been stopped in Livorno because of the cholera epidemic. He noted: '[...] after Longone and near Portoferraio, we headed for Livorno, and here we are happily'⁷. The Sicilian historian adds that time on the ship was spent 'going up and down on the deck, eating and being in good spirits.'⁸ From La Farina's letters, we can learn his opinion of the disease, most likely influenced by the foreign newspapers circulating at the Gabinetto Viessesux, frequented by the young patriot in Florence.

During the first wave of cholera, from 1835 to 1837, medical controversies remained anchored in the old debate between 'epidemicists' and 'contagionists'. It is plausible to think that the contagion thesis could somehow worry patriots like La Farina, for whom mobility between states was a primary need. La Farina aligned himself with the 'non-contagious' current of thought, as his following words testify: 'Tuscany is almost entirely exempt if it was God's will that Sicily was so. Nonetheless, cholera is not a contagious disease. Tuscany offers such palpable examples that I think it is nonsense to doubt it.'⁹ Moreover, later, he states, 'As for His Majesty's order to remove all the cordons, I am not so much terrified, persuaded that cholera is a real epidemic disease. This may be an illusion, a false belief, but I am almost calm about it and hope my family and Messina's people are too.'¹⁰

It is worth noting that they also considered the economic consequences. For this reason, the Sicilian historian opposed the blocking barriers that the Bourbon government had arranged, as they penalised trade. He wrote here about this issue: ('and I would also like to remove the internal cords in Sicily. And what? France has recognised it as an epidemic, as have Switzerland and Spain, where it disappeared, and almost all of Italy. This eyelash, to say it is still contagious ... will it be reserved for only Sicilians? Furthermore, indeed, we have to console ourselves with our cords and our waste after the massacre of Palermo and Catania! [...].')

In subsequent letters, La Farina established a comparison between Tuscany and Sicily concerning the health measures adopted. He thus commented: 'Cholera has left Tuscany; in Siena, Pisa, Piombino, Arezzo and Firenze it is excellent, as well as in Lucca and Corneto Montalto.'¹¹

del mondo?').

⁷ G. La Farina, *Epistolario*, vol. I, 12: ('dopo Longone e nei pressi di Portoferraio, ci siamo diretti verso Livorno, ed eccoci qui felicemente').

⁸ Ibid., 13: ('andando su e giù sul ponte, mangiando e stando bene di spirito').

⁹ 'Letter to Carmelo', Florence, September 12, 1837, *ibid*, p. 25: ('La Toscana è quasi interamente esente volesse Iddio che così fosse la Sicilia. Potete accertarvi però che il cholera non è un contagio e la Toscana offre esempi così palpabili che credo sciocchezza il dubitarne.').

¹⁰ 'Letter to Carmelo', Florence, 24 October 1837, *ibid*, 77: ('Per quanto poi l'ordine di Sua Maestà, onde venga tolto ogni cordone, non molto mi atterrisce, persuasissimo come sono essere il cholera vera malattia epidemica, sarà questa un'illusione, una falsa idea, ma grazie ad essa io per questo canto sto tranquillo, e spero che non solo la famiglia ma tutti i Messinesi lo siano altrettanto.').

¹¹ Ibid., 14: ('Il colera ha lasciato la Toscana; a Siena, Pisa, Piombino, Arezzo e Firenze è eccellente le condizioni, così come a Lucca e Corneto Montalto').

Later: 'In Tuscany, no health restrictions have been imposed, and in Livorno, a town of 75.000 souls, after 40 days, the disease has exploded in all its strength.'¹² In another of the numerous letters to his father, Carmelo, he argues that Sicily should have been drawing inspiration from the sanitary measures adopted by the Tuscan government:

Do you want to know the sanitary measures that made the disease last a few days in this country two years ago? Here they are: they will help you, as far as you are concerned, to be prepared for any misfortune that may befall us, which I hope will not include cholera. As soon as individuals felt affected, if they were poor, they were taken to the appropriate hospital; if they were wealthy, they were taken to their own home. There, the Health Service deployed two or three guards, one of whom remained in the doorway of the house to prevent all communication; the others took care of the sick person: the latter, whatever the result, remained in absentia; the same applied to those relatives who voluntarily wished to assist the ill person. Healed or dead, all furniture connected with its service was burned, and the community compensated the family.¹³

During the cholera epidemic, many folk and scientific remedies were employed to prevent or treat infection. According to De Sterlich, camphor was considered superior to all other remedies, whether solid or mixed with spirit.¹⁴ Doctor Ajello pointed out a valid remedy provided by pharmacist Vincenzo Pepe, known as anticholinergic wine from the Hospital of Santa Maria di Loreto, made from the fruit of the plane tree.¹⁵ La Farina indirectly informs us about another urban remedy against cholera adopted in Tuscany, which involved using gunpowder and fire to purify the air. Thus, he recalls, 'To purify the air, the city's forts continuously fired cannons; high pyres were lit in every street, and the poor boatmen competed in burning their boats. This way, Livorno was freed from the disease [...].'¹⁶ The same letter reveals that he consistently devoted his thoughts to the patriotic cause. He wrote to his brother Silvestro about the possibility of procuring weapons: 'Dear brother, here there are immense stores of weapons, and I am sure that at the end of my contumacy, I could make some mediocre purchases, but how to send them to you? [...].'¹⁷

¹² Ibid.: ('In Toscana non vi è contumacia alcuna per queste provenienze ed in un paese di 75.000 anime che tante ne conta Livorno, dopo 40 giorni, la malattia è esplosa in tutta la sua forza.').

¹³ 'Letter to Carmelo', Livorno, 1 September 1837, *ibid.*, 15-16: ('Volete sapere le misure sanitarie che han fatto due anni or sono durare pochi dì la malattia in questa? Eccovele: serviranno onde impegnarvi, per quanto sta in voi, a venire esse predisposte per la nostra patria, se la disgrazia, ciò ch'io spero non sia, vi portasse il cholera. Appena un individuo sentiasi affetto del male, se povero, era portato negli adatti ospedali, se agiato alla propria casa. Ivi la Sanità spedia due o tre guardie, delle quali una restava nell'andito della casa onde, impedire ogni comunicazione; e l'altre prendean cura dello ammalato: queste ultime, qualunque n'era il risultato, restavano in contumacia; lo stesso dicasi di quei parenti che volontariamente volevano assistere l'infermo. Guarito esso o morto, tutta la mobiglia addetta al suo servizio veniva bruciata, e la comunità ne indennizzava la famiglia').

¹⁴ *Quadri storici del cholera di Napoli*, 67.

¹⁵ *Lettera sul cholera-morbus*, 24.

¹⁶ 'Letter to Carmelo', 1 September 1837, *Epistolario*, vol. I, 16: ('Per purificare l'aria poi i forti della città sparavano continuamente i loro cannoni; in ogni strada si accendevano altissime pire, fino i poveri navicellai facevano a gara nel bruciare le proprie barcelle; così Livorno in poco tempo fu libero; così i suoi morti non furono che in pochissimo numero').

¹⁷ Ibid., 17: ('Caro fratello, qui ci sono immensi depositi di armi e sono sicuro che alla fine della mia contumacia potrei

La Farina's correspondence also reveals concern about a potential contagion spreading to Sicily, where he had mainly left his family of origin: 'I want to hope that cholera does not enter our province; the fear that it might do so disturbs me greatly. Nevertheless, do not fear it as a contagion. If such were the case, what would become of Pisa, what of Florence, what of Tuscany? In Tuscany, there have never been internal sanitary cordons, which in the same kingdom is a very anti-fraternal thing.'¹⁸ Despite desperate attempts to prevent the contagion from reaching the island, cholera struck Sicily in the summer of 1837. Health authorities took the strictest measures, trying to intercept all communication with the mainland part of the Bourbon Kingdom. Sanitary cordons were imposed, and patrols of civilians and landowners were established to control and prevent landings on the island. The Bourbon government ordered the death penalty for anyone who violated sanitary cordons or falsified sanitary licences. However, 'cures and pains were useless: cholera penetrates and invades everything',¹⁹ as Charles Antoine Manhès, the ruthless French general who fought brigandage in the Bourbon Kingdom and was an eyewitness to the 1837 epidemic, being in Naples at the time of a pleasure trip, notes.

A belief in hypothetical poisoning by governments or secret sects was also widespread in Sicily. This thesis was the cultural terrain from which the social and political tensions, already present on the island, drew nourishment and led to the 1837 cholera riots.

4.2 Chindemi and Gemelli's Memoirs

Salvatore Chindemi left us a valuable record of the events that took place in Sicily during the cholera epidemic of 1837 with his two essays, *Riflessioni politiche sul cholera morbus epidemic: appendice alla storia degli avvenimenti di Siracusa in Luglio e Agosto 1837*, published in 1838, and *Siracusa dal 1826 al 1860*, published more than thirty years later, in 1869.²⁰ In his first essay, Chindemi accepts the thesis of the 'political use of cholera' elaborated by some European liberals, not just Sicilians.

fare qualche mediocre acquisto, ma come spedirtele? [...]').

¹⁷ Ibid., 17: ('Caro fratello, qui ci sono immensi depositi di armi e sono sicuro che alla fine della mia contumacia potrei fare qualche mediocre acquisto, ma come spedirtele? [...]').

¹⁸ 'Letter to Carmelo', Florence, 24 September 1837, *ibid.*, 36: ('Voglio sperare che il cholera non entrò nella nostra provincia: il timore che ciò potrebbe essere, mi conturba moltissimo. Non lo temete però come contagio. Se tale fosse, che ne sarebbe di Pisa, che di Firenze, che di tutta la Toscana? In Toscana non vi sono stati mai cordoni sanitari interni che nello stesso regno è cosa molto antifraterna.').

¹⁹ *Notizia storica del tenente generale conte Carlo Antonio Manhès, tenente generale dell'armata francese commendatore della legione d'onore Cavaliere di San Luigi Gran Cordone del Real Ordine delle Due Sicilie, scritta da un antico ufficiale dello stato maggiore del sudetto generale Manhès nelle Calabrie* (Napoli, Pei torchi di Giovanni Ranucci [Antonio Quintavalle], 1846), 8.

²⁰ S. Chindemi, *Siracusa dal 1826 al 1860, pel Professore Salvatore Chindemi* (Siracusa, A. Pulejo, 1869); Id., *Riflessioni politiche sul Cholera Morbus Epidemico: appendice alla Storia degli avvenimenti di Siracusa in Luglio e Agosto 1837*, introd. di S. Russo (Siracusa: ristampa anagrafica Ediprint, 1988).

The epidemic was conceived, in fact, as a tool in the hands of an ‘absolutist government cabal’²¹ to stop the liberal revolution. In support of his thesis, the author provides examples, such as the French Revolution of 1830, when the spread of the disease appears to have favoured the legitimist party, which sided with Louis-Philippe, Duke of Orléans. The other case concerns Spain, where the epidemic struck at the time of the revolts against Don Carlos; again, Chindemi calls cholera ‘the Tsar’s first agent’,²² referring to the cholera epidemic that struck Russia between 1826 and 1828. The convictions about the nature of cholera were not always the same, even as far as Chindemi was concerned. In fact, at first, the Syracusan patriot embraced the conspiracy thesis, considering cholera as an element giving rise to a ‘confusion of opinions, interests, feelings and needs’ and would lead society to a ‘state of anarchy’ (‘anarchy of thought’).²³ In his view, the Bourbon monarchy would pursue a ‘cholera policy’, following a precise strategy of physically eliminating his enemies (the Sicilian secessionists).

La Farina accurately describes the climate of witch-hunting that developed in Sicily due to the alleged poisoning plot, which, depending on political stance, was believed to have been orchestrated by either the Bourbon monarchy or the liberals. Thus, he commented: ‘Seditions and revolts arose in Naples and its provinces. The government revealed that the liberals poisoned food and water to incite rebellion. Thus, the rumours of poisoning were not denied but credited, and the people were confirmed in their error, looking everywhere for poisons and poisoners.’²⁴

Gemelli observes that the belief that cholera was ‘the nefarious work of the government’²⁵ was more deeply rooted in the starving, ignorant and suspicious working class. However, as we have seen, not only illiterates but also Chindemi and other intellectuals believed King Ferdinando was the propagator of the epidemic.

Chindemi writes his second essay in response to allegations by priest Bufardecì (Syracuse 1816-1899), who participated in the 1848 uprisings. Bufardecì, in his *Le funeste conseguenze di un pregiudizio popolare*, published in Florence in 1868, provided his reconstruction of the 1837 riots, reversing the thesis that the Bourbon government had attempted to poison the people. He discussed the tragic consequences that popular beliefs about cholera had been fomented by a group of young liberals,

²⁰ S. Chindemi, *Siracusa dal 1826 al 1860, per Professore Salvatore Chindemi* (Siracusa, A. Pulejo, 1869); Id., *Riflessioni politiche sul Cholera Morbus Epidemico: appendice alla Storia degli avvenimenti di Siracusa in Luglio e Agosto 1837*, introd. di S. Russo (Siracusa: ristampa anagrafica Ediprint, 1988).

²¹ S. Chindemi, *Riflessioni politiche sul Cholera Morbus Epidemico*, 59.

²² Ibid., 38: (‘il primo agente dello zar’).

²³ Ibid. 39: (‘anarchia di pensiero’).

²⁴ *Storia d'Italia dal 1815 al 1850 di Giuseppe La Farina*, vol. II, 521: (‘Nacquero sedizioni e tumulti in Napoli e nelle provincie. Il governo divulgò che i liberali avvelenavano i cibi e le acque per incitare alla ribellione. Così le voci di avvelenamento erano, non smentite, accreditate, ed il popolo confermato nel suo errore, ricercava dappertutto veleni e avvelenatori.’).

²⁵ *Storia della siciliana rivoluzione del 1848-49*, vol I, 127.

including Chindemi, to incite the people and push them to revolution.²⁶ He also claimed authorship of the sources used by priest Bufardecì, who allegedly took possession of his manuscripts compiled in 1839. Indeed, after his arrest, Chindemi gave them to his friend Baron Pancali, who stored the documents in his Villa in Maieggiò. Next, Bufardecì allegedly plundered, misrepresented, and modified Chindemi's memoirs.

Chindemi admits that, initially, he accepted the poisoning thesis, as did many others in Syracuse, and remarks: 'It was then a universal belief: men who were enemies of the government believed to be capable of every evil lent faith to it, without saying the special and strong arguments that the Syracusans had.'²⁷ However, simultaneously, he rejects the accusation launched by Abbot Bufardecì. The Syracuse patriot – who, after the Unification of Italy, taught ancient and modern history at the Faculty of Palermo – reconstructed the social, political and cultural climate of Syracuse in the 1830s and dwelled on the activities of the liberal party, to which he belonged, before elaborating again on the dynamics that led to the 1837 uprisings.

4.2.1 The Cholera Riots in Syracuse

Chindemi affirms that under Bourbon rule, the noble classes, having lost their ancient privileges, embraced more liberal ideas. Due to their desire for supremacy, they began to resent the monarchy. The most dynamic classes in Syracuse were the bourgeoisie (or third estate) and the working class. It is indicative that a sartorial workshop, as Chindemi recalls, became the venue for meetings among the town's most elite youth.²⁸ The owner was Giuseppe Mancarella, an amateur playwright and great admirer of Alfieri. He had joined the Carbonari secret society in the 1820s, but had left them since he was disappointed. This fact testifies to the role the bourgeoisie of artisans played in the political scene in those years. Indeed, a lawyer, Diego Fernandez, 'of good studies, deep convictions, firm faith,' influenced the Syracuse youth.²⁹ This latter nourished its liberal values and ideals by reading *Giovine Italia's* publications from Malta, thanks to the efforts of a merchant, Gaspare Campisi, who entrusted their distribution to his brother, the priest Felice. At the head of the liberal party was Emmanuele Francica, Baron of Pancali. In the 1820s, he turned his villa in Maieggiò into the headquarters of a Masonic secret society entitled 'Friends of Humanity'.

²⁶ *Le funeste conseguenze di un pregiudizio popolare: memorie storiche di Emilio Bufardecì* (Firenze, Botta, 1868).

²⁷ *Siracusa dal 1826 al 1860*, 11: ('fu allora credenza universale: con più ragione doveano aggiustarvi fede uomini nemici al governo credulo capace d'ogni nequizia, senza dire gli speciali e forti argomenti che ebbero i Siracusani a prestarvi fede').

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 21: ('la maggior parte della élite giovanile').

²⁹ *Ibid.*: ('di buoni studi, di profondi convincimenti, di salda fede')

The first rumours of cholera-poison spread in Sicily after numerous letters arrived from Naples mentioning hidden poisons in foods, fruits, and waters.³⁰ The Bourbon police were considered complicit in a series of poisonings, and some priests were accused of administering the poison hidden in sacred hosts. While cholera raged fiercely in Naples, in Sicily, the tension grew day by day, and the poisoning thesis was gaining ground. La Farina notes:

Atrocious were the cases of the Two Sicilies in that year. The cholera disease raged in various provinces of the state. The people, discontented and willing to believe every villainy, believed themselves poisoned by the government. The clamours were great, the hatreds blind and fierce; minds wandered. It was reported that police intendants, commissioners, and chiefs of the gendarmerie had received boxes of poison from Naples to stir the bread, springs, and air: many claimed to have seen the poisoners, to have read letters, to have had the poison in their hands.³¹

The Sicilian historian reports that towns closed in as if they were preparing to withstand a siege, and city guards were stationed around coastlines, water sources, and ovens to protect the population from any poisoning attempts. Municipalities bordering Palermo, such as Bagheria, Torretta, Carini, Corleone, Misilmeri, and Abate, rebelled against the Bourbon government.

Young liberals, who decided that the first city to ignite the dust would be Palermo, followed by Messina, Catania and Syracuse, led the revolution. C. Gemelli from Messina, G. Peraino from Palermo, and G. Carnazza from Catania maintained connections between the Sicilian provinces and the island of Malta. Here, Luigi Orlando had been sent to procure weapons from the various liberal circles spread throughout the island and to establish contacts with other military leaders who had found refuge there.

In April 1837, Palermo's Supreme Magistrate allowed eight small fishing boats and *Archimedes* from Naples to dock in the city's harbour. Forty days later, two sailors residing in the seafaring district of the city of Palermo, the Kalsa, were attacked by the disease and died.

La Farina also states that in Sicily, 'the revolution was impossible' during the time of cholera.³²

In mid-June, the epidemic reached Syracuse, where popular agitation could not be stopped because the people were 'exhausted by cholera.'³³ Popular uprisings, according to Chindemi's account, were due to the indefatigable work of Mario Adorno, an eloquent lawyer and orator, who

³⁰ Ibid.: ('nei cibi, nella frutta, nell'acqua').

³¹ *Storia d'Italia dal 1815 al 1850*, vol. I, 66: ('Atrocissimi furono in quell'anno i casi delle Due Sicilie. Il cholera morbo infieriva in varie province dello stato: i popoli malcontenti e disposti a credere a ogni scelleratezza, si reputavano avvelenati dal governo: i clamori erano grandi; gli odi ciechi e feroci; le menti vagellavano. Narravano: gli intendenti di polizia, i commissari e i capi della gendarmeria aver ricevuto da Napoli cassette di veleno per attossicar il pane, le fonti e l'aria: molti affermavano aver veduto gli avvelenatori, aver letto lettere, aver avuto nelle mani il veleno.').

³² Ibid., 532.

³³ Chindemi, *Siracusa dal 1826 al 1860*, 76.

enjoyed great credit and ‘openly gave himself to advocating everywhere the idea of poisoning in conventions, in the squares, in the forum, in circles, in stores.’³⁴ The rich, wealthy, the other civil and judicial authorities, and most of the militia soon abandoned the city, where a few liberals and ‘an unhappy plebe, a penurious master, because it was unemployed’ remained.³⁵

On 15 July, ‘the tide rose with impetus and violence [...] feelings, suspicions became concrete, looking for where to unload’.³⁶ The following days, a ‘wandering plebs, exasperated, spoke of rockets, which every night came to be seen through the air, yellowish in colour, leaving an infernal stench, and it was true, I witnessed it [...]’.³⁷

Chindemi, as well as Gemelli, cites a trial led by Francesco Mistretta, an investigating judge, against Andrea Vaccaro, a provincial administrator, in whose house boxes containing a mysterious substance were found. The trial involved Swiss Giuseppe Schewentzer, who supported himself and his young wife Maria Lepyck by exhibiting a large ‘cosmorama’ (a type of optical device) in Syracuse. Schweitzer was believed to be a Bourbon spy, and the couple was arrested. Then, both were massacred by the fury of the people, along with some police officers. Meanwhile, news of the Sicilian uprisings had reached Naples, where King Ferdinando, concerned about the stability of his kingdom and intent on firmly supporting the popular uprisings, decided to send to Sicily his ‘alter-ego’, the police minister Marquis Del Carretto. Fear of an impending Bourbon expedition, along with betrayals, confusion, and discouragement, weakened the liberal forces, which were soon overwhelmed.

While in Messina, the insurrection failed before it began, and Palermo was ravaged by disease, in Catania, however, the cholera riots were quickly suppressed and ‘the Bourbons, proud of their victory, triumphantly led the image of King Ferdinando through the squares.’³⁸

Once in Catania, Del Carretto established a court-martial to judge and punish the rebels. Gemelli recalls the punitive action carried out by the ‘Bourbon duce’ as follows:

Arriving quickly in Catania, he issued the first orders dictated by a cruel spirit. He promised one hundred grams to anyone who delivered a rebel alive to the government and half that amount to anyone who thoughtfully presented his head. He ordered the province's inhabitants to lay down their arms and return them within a short time, on pain of death for disobedient subjects and created a court martial to judge and punish all rebels. [...]. Inhuman edicts announced the ferocious minister's cruel intentions and the offended Bourbon's inexorable intentions.

³⁴ Ibid., 77.

³⁵ Ibid., 81: (‘una plebe infelice, una maestranza penuriante perché senza lavoro’).

³⁶ Ibid., 77: (‘la marea ascendea con impeto e violenza [...] i sentimenti, i sospetti si concretarono, a cercar dove scaricarsi’).

³⁷ Ibid.: (‘una plebe vagante, esasperata, parla di razzi, che ogni notte si vengon a scorgere per l’aere, color giallastro, che si spegneano dopo corso breve tratto, lasciando puzzore infernale, ed era vero, ne fui io testimonio [...]’).

³⁸ Ibid.: (‘I filo-borbonici, fieri della loro vittoria, portavano l’immagine di re Ferdinando trionfalmente nelle strade’).

Twenty-three citizens, including Adorno and his unfortunate son, were executed in a single day. Prisons and jails were filled with multitudes of men, all of whom were sentenced to severe punishments.³⁹

On 10 August, Del Carretto reached Syracuse, which was punished for its treason: three days later, the king deprived the town of its honorary title of ‘capital of the Valley’, which was given to Noto and rewarded for its loyalty. As a ‘new Silla’,⁴⁰ back in Catania, Del Carretto ordered numerous arrests and life and death sentences. Thus, Gemelli remarks:

Those who had escaped the cholera plague did not escape condemnation or Bourbon persecution. Great were the victims, and unbridled was the rage of the executioners against the ignorant and miserable people who, believing that the cholera massacres were the work of human wickedness, had risen against the hated government. Thus, within a few days, Sicily was suddenly oppressed by three great calamities: a terrible plague, failed rebellions and a cruel tyranny (...).⁴¹

Bourbon revenge and the atrocious tortures inflicted on the rebels reinforced the fear of the Bourbon police, which was superimposed on the panic spread by the cholera epidemic. In addition, King Ferdinando II, to curb Sicily’s powerful anarchist and secessionist tendencies, issued a promiscuity decree on October 31, 1837, under which governmental and ecclesiastical posts could be assigned to people from both sides of the Kingdom.⁴²

According to Gemelli, this ‘slap decree’ was a means improvised by the Bourbon government, which wanted to unite the two parts of the kingdom to the detriment of Sicily’s autonomous life. In the fall of 1837, the epidemic came to an end. However, economic crisis, backwardness and social and political tensions would continue to affect southern Italy until the completion of the unification process in 1861 and in the years to come.

Involved in the cholera riots of 1837 that broke out in Sicily to escape Bourbon persecution, La Farina reached the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, where the Buon Governo of Lorraine allowed him to spend long periods of hectic literary and political activity.

³⁹ *Storia della siciliana rivoluzione del 1848-49*, vol. I, 135-136: (‘Giunto rapidamente in Catania, ei dava fuori le prime ordinanze da truce animo dettate. Prometteva onze cento a chi consegnato avesse vivo al governo un ribelle, ed una metà della somma a colui che ne presentasse mozza la testa. Ordinava agli abitatori della provincia di deporre e restituire in brevi ore le armi, pena la morte al suddito inobbediente. Creava, infine, una corte marziale per giudicare e punire tutti i rivoltosi [...] Editti inumani annunziavano i crudeli intendimenti del fiero ministro e gli inesorabili propositi dell’offeso Borbone. Morivano moschettati in un giorno ventitrè cittadini infra i quali l’Adorno e il suo infelice figliuolo. Le prigionie e gli ergastoli empivansi di moltitudine d’uomini tutti a severissime pene dannati.’).

⁴⁰ Ibid.: (‘un nuovo Silla’).

⁴¹ Ibid., 140-141: (‘Chi scampato avea la colerica pestilenza, non isfuggiva le condanne o le persecuzioni borboniche. Grandi furono le vittime, e sfrenata la rabbia dei carnefici contro quelle genti ignoranti e misere, le quali credendo le stragi coleriche opera dell’umana malizia eran sì contro l’odiato governo sollevate. Così in brevi giorni era la Sicilia da tre grandi calamità repentinamente oppressata, cioè una terribile pestilenza, le fallite ribellioni, ed una crudelissima tirannide [...]’).

⁴² *Collezione delle leggi e de’ decreti reali del Regno delle Due Sicilie*, semestre I (gennaio-giugno) (Napoli, Stamperia Reale, 1837), 105.

Conclusions

This chapter is dedicated to the cholera epidemic that affected the Two Sicilies from late 1836 to 1837. Using tools from the history of emotions, we analysed the feelings and perceptions of the three patriots involved regarding this global event and its impact on both private and public spheres. For example, La Farina's correspondence, written while he was in exile in Florence, reveals his anguish for family members remaining in Sicily, as well as his views on the nature of the epidemic. This perspective led him to join the ongoing debate that crossed national borders between contagionists and non-contagionists. Furthermore, some of La Farina's letters compare the measures taken by the Tuscan government with those of the Bourbon government. The latter failed to consider the economic effects of strict sanitary cordons that penalised the movement of goods and people, a policy absent in the Grand Duchy.

Gemelli's memoirs, along with those of La Farina, have been analysed and provide insight into the spread of the 'myth of poisoning' among the Sicilian people. This belief was prevalent not only among the less educated classes but also among intellectuals. Gemelli, like Chindemi, particularly focused on the trial of a young couple: the Swiss Giuseppe Schewentzer and his Polish wife, Maria Lepyck. The couple lived in Syracuse, earning a living through a form of cosmorama performance. They were arrested, tried, and ultimately killed by a mob that believed they were agents sent by the Bourbon government to disperse poisonous dust. During the popular uprisings in various cities, including Syracuse, police officers and several liberals, including Mario Adorno and his son, were also victims of the violence. Chindemi dedicated an essay to recounting the events related to his hometown of Syracuse, explicitly addressing the outbreak of disease that intensified existing social and political tensions, leading to the so-called cholera riots. The three patriots were involved in these uprisings, and when Del Carretto arrived, they were compelled to flee Sicily. Notably, Gemelli discusses the aftermath of the brutal repression carried out by the Bourbon monarchy.

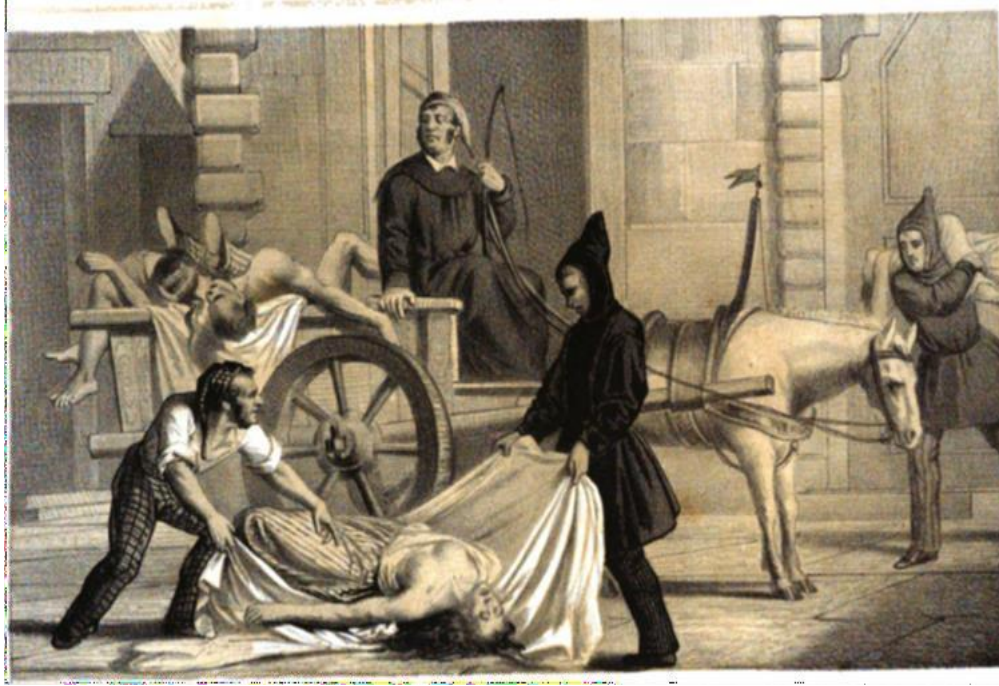


Figure 8

Cholera in Palermo (1835). Litograph from G. Pestelli, *Storia d'Italia dal 1815 fino alla promulgazione del Regno d'Italia*, vol. 2 (Firenze, Usigli, 1864), 51.

CHAPTER 5

LA FARINA'S CULTURAL AND POLITICAL ACTIVISM IN HIS TUSCAN EXILE, 1837-1838; 1841-1848

5. From Sicily to Tuscany

After the popular uprisings in Sicily in 1837, the Bourbon government's police accused and persecuted Giuseppe La Farina, who was regarded as a state offender. As a result, he was forced to suspend all political and cultural activities. Given the impossibility of making a living, he had to leave his hometown and return to Tuscany. Unpublished papers in the *Archivio Segreto della Polizia del Buon Governo della Toscana* (1814-1848), which were previously stored in the State Archives of Florence, reveal the experiences of patriots in exile. These papers also detail the surveillance of other exiles in the Grand Duchy of Tuscany.

La Farina's Tuscan exile occurred in two periods, from 1837 to 1838 and again from 1841 to 1847. Unfortunately, no archival sources are available about his shorter stay. After the second period of exile, he returned to Messina, where he played a vital role in the 1848 Sicilian revolution as part of the wave of the Spring of Nations, which swept through many European states.

Some questions arise about La Farina's extended exile in Tuscany. For instance, what led him to choose Tuscany as his first refuge? What were his opinions on Tuscany's governance? How did he adapt to the new political and cultural milieu? What kind of friendships did he make, what encounters did he have, and what activities did he engage in during that time?

Sicily was connected to various European and eastern ports through a fleet of steam ferries known as 'pacchetti a vapore.' These ferries played a crucial role in enabling the underground press to disseminate information, allowing patriots to exchange ideas, news, and political strategies across the Mediterranean. For example, the *Ferdinando II* and *Nettuno* ferries regularly sailed between the ports of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies—such as Naples, Tropea, Messina, Catania, and Syracuse—as well as Malta (Valletta), the Holy See (Gaeta, Civitavecchia), Tuscany (Livorno), Genoa, the southern coast of France (Marseille), and North Africa. In August 1837, La Farina arrived in Milazzo and then took one of the steam ferries to Livorno, where he spent fifteen days in a lazaretto. He finally reached Florence on 9 September 1837, accompanied by his wife, Luisa de' Marchesi di Francia, whom he had married at the age of twenty in 1835.

5.1 Experiencing the Grand Duchy of Tuscany's Good Governance'

During the first half of the 19th century, the Grand Duchy of Tuscany was regarded as one of the most liberal states. This was due to the enlightened policies pursued by Peter Leopoldo I of Lorraine (Vienna 1747-1792). Liberals, both within and outside Tuscany, highly valued the climate of tolerance that prevailed in the region, which they saw as a place where they could enjoy freedoms not available in other pre-unification states.

The 'myth of Leopold reformism' has been the subject of much debate among historians. Counter-revolutionaries' criticism of Leopoldo's government, since his departure from Tuscany in May 1791, was primarily economic and accused the government of severe corruption. Leopold's son, Ferdinando III (Florence, 1769-1824), commissioned work to defend his father's memory.

Leopold II was the last Grand Duke of Tuscany and a member of the House of Habsburg-Lorraine, who ruled over Tuscany for just over a century. He succeeded his father in 1824 and held office from 1829 to 1859. Leopoldo II was considered the 'best of princes' by some patriots. He advocated Enlightenment culture, was passionate about art and literature, and was interested in agricultural techniques. Often, Leopoldo opposed Austria's rigid centralist policies, and his tolerant and liberal spirit clashed with the conservative and reactionary positions of the Roman Catholic Church.

A group of Tuscan reformers played a significant role in preserving the reforms established by Leopoldo I of Lorraine. They gathered around the Viesseux Cabinet, frequented by La Farina, and as we learn from the Register of Members, his friend Carlo Gemelli, in October 1837.

5.1.1 The 'Myth of Leopoldine Reformism'

During his Tuscan exile in 1837, Gemelli experienced the grand ducal policy firsthand. While serving as a representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the revolutionary government in 1848, he expressed his opinions in his correspondence. He argued that despite the Tuscan government's efforts to gain the love of its people, it was still a tyranny. He said the biggest obstacle to progress and democracy was the heavy legacy of the 'pestiferous Medici kingdom', which transformed 'the proud republican customs of the people' into a soft indifference to the rule of the Medici.¹ Gemelli argued that the House of Lorraine did not complete the work of Leopoldo I, but, anyway, it reorganised Tuscany, where the Grand Duchy was 'neither good nor bad',² and citizens could enjoy, if not freedom of right, freedom of fact that sweetened the despotic form of

¹ C. Gemelli, *Storia delle relazioni diplomatiche tra la Sicilia e la Toscana negli anni 1848-1849 con documenti inediti* (Torino, Società Editrice della Biblioteca dei Comuni Italiani, 1853), 128: ('pestifero regno mediceo'; 'i fieri costumi repubblicani del popolo').

² Ibid., 130: ('né buono né cattivo').

government.

Furthermore, owing to the unique character of Tuscans, who were known to be cordial and considerate, and the influence of a clever and perceptive subterranean press, a temperate atmosphere was always maintained. The rule of the Grand Dukes of Lorraine was perceived as a 'benevolent dictatorship.'³

In 1846, the election of Pius IX affected the government's action in the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. Significant reforms were implemented in the emotional wake of a Pope with liberal sympathies, at least initially, including the freedom of the press. This new law was granted in Tuscany with the Grand Duke's. The first political newspapers, such as *La Patria*, *L'Italia*, *Il Popolo*, and *Corriere Livornese*, emerged during this time. These newspapers' political and civil battles influenced not only Tuscany's public opinion but also that of the whole peninsula.⁶ La Farina was one of the exiles who benefited from the freedom of the press. Indeed, he founded the newspaper *L'Alba* in Florence, as we will see further. He also expressed his opinion on press freedom, saying that the system for introducing forbidden books was so rigid that it surpassed the penalties reserved for thieves.⁷ Despite this, he sustained that there were more censored works in the Two Sicilies than in Tuscany. This was because the prohibition made people more curious about books that would have been less popular if they were freely available. Furthermore, in an article in the *L'Alba* journal, La Farina stated that 'the press should be free and independent and should lead, not follow government reforms. It should urge and hasten changes instead of waiting for them to happen.'⁸

5.2 La Farina's First Exile in Florence (1837-1838)

The young Sicilian patriot exile's first months were spent enjoying Florence's rich history and culture, the beauty of its landscapes, the city's vibrancy, and its beautiful palaces and libraries. He immediately wrote to his beloved brother Silvestro to narrate his impression of Florence, defined as 'divine', especially for the atmosphere of peace and tranquillity and the people's kindness:

³ Ibid., 129: ('una benevola tirannia').

⁴ Ibid., 130: ('fu variamente accolta dalla capitale e dalle provincie. In Firenze si volle solenneggiare con una manifestazione popolare di ringraziamento al principe, ma nelle provincie le manifestazioni furon confuse, sfavorevoli ed anche ostili al governo [...]').

⁵ Ibid.: ('per solo eccitamento di popolo, che sentiva il bisogno delle civili franchigie, e non già per volontario e generoso convincimento').

⁶ Ibid., 131.

⁷ *Scritti politici di G. La Farina*, vol. I, 43: ('la pena eccedeva quelle riservate ai ladri').

⁸ Ibid., 184: ('la stampa libera e indipendente dee precedere, e non seguire le riforme governative; essa dee precederle, sollecitarle, affrettarle').

Dearest brother,

I can only tell you that I love this divine country where one lives in angelic peace, tranquillity, and security. For those who wish to study, I assure you that you cannot find a nation in Italy that offers so many opportunities. I do not speak of that superhuman kindness and courtesy that distinguishes the Florentines. It is incredible, and I do not think anyone knows it better than I do, having studied it carefully.⁹

In a later correspondence, La Farina expressed his appreciation for Grand Duke Leopoldo's government. He wrote a letter to his father, in which he discussed the criminal justice system, noting that death sentences were rare. If any were handed down, the Grand Duke would immediately pardon them without executing anyone.¹⁰ La Farina admired the tolerant environment he experienced in the Tuscan capital, and his impressions were likely shaped by a comparison with the situation in his homeland, the Two Sicilies:

Tuscany was renowned for its tolerance, which was particularly necessary given the surrounding tyrannies and constant threats from Austria and the Roman Empire. These circumstances resulted in its inability to take any initiative for freedom and nationality. While some may praise Fossombroni's policy of neutrality, they cannot ignore that his internal administration was based on the principle of *laissez-faire*, as reflected in his famous motto, 'The world goes by itself.'¹¹

In the letter above, a subtle admiration is expressed for Minister Vittorio Fossombroni, who held a significant position in the Tuscan government. He appeared committed to the concept of an enlightened absolute monarchy and a form of paternalistic liberalism.¹²

La Farina reaffirmed his positive assessment of Fossombroni in a later letter, stating, 'Some laws of the present Grand Duke, assisted by an excellent minister called Fossombroni, are wise and

⁹ La Farina, 'Letter to his father Carmelo', Florence, 4 November 1837, in *Epistolario*, vol. I, 98: ('Carissimo fratello, solo ti dico ch'io sono innamorato di questo divino paese ove si vive in una pace, in una tranquillità ed in una sicurezza veramente angelica. Per chi poi ha voglia di studiare ti assicuro non potersi trovare in Italia uno Stato che offra tanti mezzi. Non ti parlo di quella sovrumana gentilezza e cortesia che distingue i Fiorentini essa è cosa incredibile e nessuno credo la conosca meglio di me che l'ho attentamente studiata.')

¹⁰ Id., 'Letter to his father Carmelo', Florence, 9 November 1837, *ibid*, 107: ('Qui le sentenze di morte sono rarissime; e se ve ne sono, il Granduca fa subito la grazia, non essendo mai capitato che alcuna di esse venisse eseguita.').

¹¹ La Farina, *Storia d'Italia dal 1815 al 1850*, vol. II, 51: ('Il pregio della Toscana era (né altro potea essere) la tolleranza. Circondata da tirannidi atrocissime, minacciata sempre dalle armi austriache e dalle scomuniche romane, ella non poteva prendere niuna iniziativa di libertà e di nazionalità. Chi del Fossombroni loda la politica inerte e neutrale, non può biasimare la sua interna amministrazione, la quale tutta poggiavasi sulla massima del lasciar fare, tradotta in quel motto per lui divenuto famoso 'il mondo va da sé.').

¹² Vittorio Fossombroni was born in Arezzo in 1754. Educated at the Tuscan school of economics, which included figures like S. Bandini, P. Neri, G. Fabbroni, and F. M. Gianni, as well as at institutions for philanthropic landowners such as G. Capponi, Fossombroni became interested in the practical application of economic theories to foster progress in trade, agriculture, and the economy overall. His education was also shaped by his interactions with prominent scientists and intellectuals of his era, whose ideas can be linked to Leopold's reformism. Thanks to his studies in hydraulics, Ferdinando III, Grand Duke of Tuscany, invited him in 1788 to assist with land drainage projects in the Val di Chiana. From 1792 to 95, F. advocated for free trade. Although he supported Physiocratic theories, he also sought to reconcile them with the principles of economic liberalism associated with Adam Smith's school of economics. At the end of 1814, Ferdinando III wanted him in his government and the aftermath of Napoleon Bonaparte's rise in 1796, he was imposed on the Grand Duke as Foreign Minister. The following year, F. sent Bonaparte his *L'Oracle sur la*

humane.’¹³

However, starting in the 1830s, Fossombroni’s political career began to decline due to growing disagreements with Tuscan liberals, such as Gino Capponi and Cosimo Ridolfi, who were landowners associated with the Academy of Georgofili and the Viesseux Cabinet. During this time, La Farina worked to counteract the negative criticism aimed at the ageing minister.

In the past, Fossombroni’s external policy and internal administration were highly praised by writers. However, today, people blame him more than they should, as they exaggerate his past successes. Public opinion tends to swing from one extreme to the other. Tuscan customs weakened during Fossombroni’s government, but it was not entirely his fault. The conditions in which he lived and governed significantly contributed to this weakness.¹⁴

In a subsequent letter to his father, Carmelo, and brother Silvestro, La Farina gives ‘a general idea’ of Tuscany’s legislative and judicial system, where the legal system followed the Napoleonic code for civil, criminal, and commercial matters. However, the organic judicial law was distinct from it. Though the law recognised the death penalty, it is not enforced in practice:

As far as the administration is concerned, we have no resemblance to each other. The names are still predominantly those of the republic. The gonfalonier (first authority) administers the municipal treasury. There are, independent of him, civil officials who take care of the civil status. There is a governor, who largely corresponds to the old Bargello and our Director-General of Police. There are gatekeepers subordinate to him, who are inspectors. These guard the gates for the introduction of foreigners. There are no brewers (they are called ‘famili’ there), but they do exist, and they are

Toscane to prevent the military occupation of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. Referring to Leopold’s reformism, F. presented Tuscany as an ideal political model which needed no further reform and claimed its neutrality and independence. In 1798, the Grand Duke appointed him and Nero Corsini Secretary of State and Finance. He was having retired from politics during the French occupation. In 1805, F. accepted the post of head of the Tuscan army and was one of the most capable officials during the annexation of Tuscany to the Kingdom of Etruria. In the Restoration period that followed the French Decade, he once again held the posts of Secretary of State and Minister of the Royal Secretariats. As the latest studies point out, Fossombroni always remained faithful to the model of an enlightened absolute monarchy and a paternalistic form of liberalism. From the 1830s onwards, when the contrasts with Tuscan liberals such as G. Capponi, C. Ridolfi and other landowners revolving around the Accademia dei Georgofili and the Gabinetto Viesseux became more acute, F. gradually began to retire to private life. He died in Florence in 1843.

¹³ ‘Letter to his father Carmelo’, Florence, 16 September 1837, in *Epistolario*, 32: (‘Alcune leggi poi del presente Granduca, il quale è assistito da un ottimo ministro chiamato Fossombroni sono cosa savia ed umanissima.’).

¹⁴ La Farina, *Storia d’Italia dal 1815 al 1850*, vol. II, 51: (‘Fu un tempo in cui non solo la politica esterna del Fossombroni, ma anche la interna amministrazione da lui diretta, erano lodate ed esaltate dagli scrittori: oggi si biasima troppo, ciò che troppo allora si magnificava; solito flusso e reflusso della pubblica opinione che si allontana da un vizio e cade nel suo contrario. Vero egli è, che sotto il governo del Fossombroni vie più infiacchironsi e snervarono i costumi toscani: ma chi bene osserva vedrà questo difetto derivare meno dall’uomo, che dalle condizioni nelle quali egli visse e governò.’).

the ones who make the arrests at night. Here is a general idea.¹⁵

The patriot of Messina was able to expand his cultural and political interests in Florence, and he also resumed his journalistic activity, which had been halted in Sicily due to Bourbon censorship. Most of La Farina's works reflect Mazzini's ideas about the role of culture in society. He believed that intellectuals should serve as a driving force for progress in both civil and militant spheres. In his early years, the Sicilian historian was influenced by Romanticism, which led him to distance himself from Sicily's conservative and provincial cultural background, developing a democratic view of culture. His beliefs about the aesthetic and literary function at a political level translated into his rejection of Sicilian separatism and municipalism (for this issue, see Chapter 2).

During the Risorgimento era, Dante symbolised the idea of national identity for Italian patriots. La Farina continued his studies in Florence and planned to compile a dictionary of Dante, as he revealed in his letter of 15 March 1838. However, his project was abandoned when the patriot discovered, in the Magliebechiana Library, that another writer, Ferdinando Arrivabene, had already published a similar work.¹⁶ La Farina's letter includes inspiring thoughts on the Divine Comedy, a 'unique allegory and a poetised history; today, it could be considered a quasi-historical novel, where men, actions and moral entities are personified.'¹⁷

During his first year in Florence, La Farina met a group of liberals who gathered at the Vieusseux Cabinet. This literary and political Cabinet, founded by the Swiss merchant Gian Pietro Vieusseux, played a critical role in the cultural and social regeneration of pre-unification Tuscany and the whole country.¹⁸

¹⁵ 'Letter to his father Carmelo', in *Epistolario*, vol. I, 193-194: ('Per quanto poi all'amministrativo, nessuna rassomiglianza con noi. I nomi sono rimasti ancora in molta parte quelli della repubblica. V'è il gonfaloniere (prima autorità), e questi ha l'amministrazione dell'erario comunale. Vi sono indipendentemente da lui gli ufficiali civili, addetti allo stato civile. V'è un governatore, che in molta parte corrisponde all'antico bargello, ed al nostro direttore gen. di polizia. Vi sono de' portieri a lui subordinati, e sono una specie di ispettori. Questi sorvegliano alle porte per l'introduzione de' forestieri. Birri (colà detti volgarmente famigli) non se ne vedono; ma esistono, e sono quelli che fanno gli arresti di notte. Ecco un'idea generale.').

¹⁶ 'Letter to his father Carmelo', Florence, 21 November 1837, *ibid.*, vol. I, 120.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*: ('un'allegoria unica e storia poetizzata; oggi potrebbe essere considerato un romanzo quasi storico, in cui uomini, azioni ed entità morali sono personificati.'). On the 'Dantephilia' of the Risorgimento season, see among others F. Di Giannatale, *Specchi danteschi: letture politiche di Dante nel Risorgimento* (Pisa, ETS, 2020); *Culto e mito di Dante dal Risorgimento all'Unità: atti del Convegno di studi, Firenze, Società dantesca italiana, 23-24 novembre 2011* (Firenze, Le Lettere, 2011); *Dante nel Risorgimento italiano*, vol. 40, a cura di A. Cottignoli (Ravenna, Longo, 2012). On La Farina's writings on Dante, see also L. Perroni Grande, *Pagine dantesche del patriotta messinese Giuseppe La Farina: Spigolature bibliografiche* (Messina, D'Amico, 1939).

¹⁸ For the Florentine 'stabilimento' history, whose activities continue today, see *Il Vieusseux. Storia di un Gabinetto di lettura 1819-2003, Cronologia, saggi, testimonianze*, a cura di L. Desideri (Firenze, Polistampa, 2004); P. Prunas, *Il Gabinetto Scientifico-letterario G.P. Vieusseux, 1819-1914* (Firenze, Società tipografica fiorentina, 1914); R. Ciampini, *Gian Pietro Vieusseux. I suoi viaggi, i suoi giornali, i suoi amici* (Torino, Einaudi, 1953); E. Sestan, *Gian Pietro Vieusseux* (Firenze, Arti grafiche C. Mori, 1963); *L'Archivio storico del Gabinetto Vieusseux. Inventario*, a cura di C. Del Vivo e L. Di Tolla (Firenze, Polistampa, 2011); on G.P. Vieusseux, see A. Volpi, *Commercio e circuiti culturali: Giovan Pietro Vieusseux, un borghese di inizio Ottocento* (Pisa, Pacini, 2008).

In late March 1838, La Farina decided to return to Sicily.

5.2 La Farina's Brief Return to Messina (March 1838-September 1841)

After a brief stay in Naples, he returned to Messina, eager to resume his law career. He found a mentor in the jurist Gaetano Pisano, a historian from Sicily who was involved in both cultural and conspiratorial activities with propagandistic elements. During this time in Messina, he revived the *Democratic Committee*, as we will see later.

During those years, La Farina was very active in trying to bring the stimulating cultural environment of Florence to his hometown, engaging the most progressive and liberal intellectuals.

In December 1835, the journal *Spettatore Zancleo* ceased publication, and in June 1838, so did *Il Faro*. On 1 October 1839, La Farina established a new journal, *La Sentinella del Peloro*, edited alongside A. Catara-Lettieri and Giuseppe Monasta. This effort included collaboration with Felice Bisazza and Domenico Ventimiglia. The journal was published from October 1839 to April 1841.¹⁹ The published articles included various artistic studies, a poem by La Farina titled *La Domenica del Villaggio*, and a translation of a song by V. Hugo, *Les rayons et les ombres*.

Between 1839 and 1840, the Sicilian historian founded the Società del Gabinetto Letterario, modelled after the Gabinetto Viessesux. He also continued the newspaper *Il Maurolico* (1833-34; 1834-39). From May 1841 to January 1843, the newspaper was published under the title *Giornale del Gabinetto Letterario di Messina*. However, the newspaper and the eponymous Gabinetto were suppressed during the 1848 revolution. Indeed, since the 1840s, censorship from the Bourbon Neapolitan government increased, as La Farina himself recounts in his letters:

In 1840, I proposed to use the proceeds from a performance of one of my dramas, which had a non-political theme, to fund the construction of a modest sepulchre for the illustrious mathematician Abbot Aci. The drama underwent several levels of censorship: first, it was reviewed and approved by ordinary censors; next, it was subjected to extraordinary police censorship, which also approved it; then, it was sent back to Naples for further review, where it received approval once more. Finally, it was reviewed by censors specially appointed by the minister of police, and again, it was approved. With rehearsals underway, posters advertising the performance were put up. However, a telegraphic order from Naples arrived, prohibiting the performance.²⁰

¹⁹ On the Sicilian press of the Risorgimento era, see: N. Evola, *La stampa periodica siciliana nel Risorgimento* (Roma, 1930); R. Composto, *Giornali siciliani nella Restaurazione borbonica* (Palermo, 1979); A. Saitta, 'La stampa periodica di Messina', in *Cinque secoli di stampa a Messina*, ed. G. Molonia (Messina, 1988); T. Mirabella, 'Il giornalismo siciliano dell'Otto- Novecento', in R. Romeo (ed), *Storia della Sicilia*, vol. IX (Napoli, 1977), 297-355.

²⁰ La Farina, 'Letter to Giuseppe Ricciardi', Paris, 7 January 1851, in *Epistolario*, vol. II, 388: ('Nel 1840 proposi con l'incasso della rappresentazione di un mio dramma di argomento non politico s'innalzasse un modesto sepolcro all'illustre matematico abate Aci. Il dramma fu sottoposto alla censura ordinaria ed approvata poi alla censura straordinaria di polizia ed approvato, poi richiamato in Napoli e sottoposto alla censura di Napoli e approvato da ultimo a censori appositamente scelti dal ministro di polizia ed approvato. Si cominciano le prove si affissano i cartelloni nel corso della giornata arriva un ordine telegrafico di Napoli, e lo proibisce.').

Another example of the harsh climate of intolerance and corruption in the Bourbon Kingdom is offered by a subsequent letter addressed to his friend Giuseppe Ricciardi,²¹ where La Farina : revealed that

During the Messina uprising of 1837, the people stormed the offices of the naval police. I witnessed firsthand the rooms filled to the ceiling with salt. Despite a cordon sanitaire being in effect and the punishment for its violators being death, the police were smuggling salt from Calabria. It is important to note that salt was not a matter of royal competition in Sicily. In 1840, before my arrest, the police instructed me not to write anything on any subject (verbatim).²²

5.3 La Farina's Second Exile in Florence (1841-1848)

Unable to continue his intellectual pursuits, La Farina returned to Florence in September 1841. His return was partly aimed at reconnecting with the Gabinetto Vieusseux and the liberal circle associated with it. Some records of Giuseppe La Farina's second exile in Florence, which lasted from 1841 to 1848, were uncovered among the papers of the *Presidenza del Buon Governo. Archivio Segreto (1814-1848)* at the State Archives of Florence. This archive collects reports from police inspectors regarding the movement of people in and out of Tuscany during the first half of the 19th century.

Upon reviewing the letters written by police officers assigned to the Legazione di Firenze, information about La Farina was found, requested by the Bourbon government of the Two Sicilies. The Grand Ducal Police used the term 'Affari' to describe individuals under surveillance, and Giuseppe La Farina was identified as part of this 'affair'.

²¹ Giuseppe Ricciardi was a prominent figure born in Naples in 1808, with affiliations to both the Democrat and Republican movements. He was arrested in 1830 on charges of lese majesty. Two years later, he founded the journal *Il Progresso delle scienze, delle lettere e delle arti* in Naples. The journal aimed to preserve the cultural legacy of G.P. Vieusseux's *Antologia*, which had been suppressed by censorship. *Il Progresso* quickly became one of the most important publications in the Bourbon kingdom and served as the voice for Neapolitan romantic intellectuals. In 1833, Ricciardi met Giuseppe Mazzini, who encouraged him to help organise insurrectional uprisings in Naples. However, these early attempts at revolutionary independence were unsuccessful, leading to Ricciardi's arrest once again. As a result, he was forced to resign as editor of *Il Progresso* and chose to go into voluntary exile. He traveled to France, Switzerland and England before returning to Naples to participate in the liberal uprisings of 1848. However, he was discovered by the police and sentenced to death in absentia. Ricciardi then sought refuge in Calabria, where he continued his anti-Bourbon struggle. In July 1848, he passed through Corfu, Malta, Rome, Tuscany, and France again. He returned to Italy only after its unification and was subsequently elected to the National Parliament of the Kingdom of Italy. Nevertheless, he later left Parliament due to disagreements with members of the Destra Storica Party. Throughout his life, Ricciardi wrote numerous memoirs and biographies, including an *Epicedio* dedicated to the Bandiera brothers, whom he had met. He published *Memorie di un Ribelle* in 1857 and *Opere selezionate* between 1867 and 1870. Ricciardi died in Naples in 1882.

²² La Farina, 'Letter to Giuseppe Ricciardi', Paris, 7 January 1851, in *Epistolario*, vol. I, 389-390: ('Nel movimento di Messina del 1837, il popolo entrò negli uffici della polizia navale. Ho visto con i miei occhi le stanze piene di sale fino al tetto. Mentre era in vigore il cordone sanitario e i suoi trasgressori venivano puniti con la morte, la polizia contrabbandava sale con la Calabria. Ricordiamo che il sale non è una rivalità reale in Sicilia. Nel 1840 (prima del mio arresto) la polizia mi ordinò di non scrivere più su nessun argomento (parole testuali).').

A confidential report from the Police Inspector in Florence, dated 10 September 1841, reveals that, having obtained a passport from the Bourbon Government, La Farina was set to arrive in Florence. The report also shows the reasons given by the patriot for his transfer. He mentions 'private affairs' and his need to oversee the printing of some of his works, requesting permission for a two-month stay.²³

The subsequent confidential report from the Florence Police specifies the exact date of La Farina's arrival in Florence, as well as the address of his residence. Additionally, the report details his participation in the first scientific congress held in Florence, specifically in the Agronomy and Technology section:

Report of the Police Inspector of Florence 11 October 1841
Reserved

Dr Giuseppe La Farina from Messina arrived in Florence on 2 September as a Deputy of the Scientific Congress of the Accademia dei Peloritani and the Accademia degli Zelanti of Acireale. He attended the Congress in the section focused on Agronomy and Technology. He is staying at Antonio Caramelli's guesthouse in Porta Rossa.²⁴

The police report also outlines the movements and activities of the Sicilian patriot, including his conversations with scientists and social gatherings with Marquis Ridolfi and printer Fumagalli. He visited the printing press of Fabris, who helped him prepare his well-known historical work *Studi sul Secolo decimoterzo*:

La Farina's wife accompanied him. He has been attending Congress, where he frequently engaged in discussions with scientists and attended their evening meetings at the Palazzo Riccardi. He shared lunch with Marquis Ridolfi and printer Fumagalli at the Senzoni house in Piazza Santa Croce. He has compiled a work titled *Studi sul Secolo Decimoterzo*, which will be printed in this city by Fabris Typography. Attached is the Manifesto that was printed this morning.²⁵

Maria Pia Casalena defined the Congresses of Italian Scientists, organised in various Italian ci-

²³ State Archives of Florence, *Presidenza del Buon Governo. Archivio Segreto (1814-1848)* (henceforth ASPBG), Anno 1841, filza 18, Affari 67-123 (97), pezzo 291, 10 Settembre 1841.

²⁴ ASPBG, Anno 1841, filza 19, Affari 96-120, pezzo 379, 11 Ottobre 1841: ('*Rapporto dell'ispettore di polizia di Firenze. Confidenziale*. Il dottor Giuseppe La Farina di Messina giunse in Firenze il dì 2 dello scorso Settembre, come Deputato del Congresso Scientifico dell'Accademia dei Peloritani e dell'altra degli Zelanti di Acireale, avendo di fatti presa parte al Congresso medesimo della sezione di Agronomia e Tecnologia. Il Suo alloggio è presso Antonio Caramelli affittacamere in Porta Rossa.').

²⁵ Ibid.: ('Ha seco la Moglie, e pendente il Congresso, ha conversato continuamente con Scienziati, intervenendo alle loro Riunioni serali nel Palazzo Riccardi; è stato a pranzo dal marchese Ridolfi, in casa Senzoni in piazza S.a Croce, e dallo stampatore Fumagalli. Ha compilato un'Opera intitolata "Studi sul Secolo Decimoterzo", che si stamperà in questa città con l'assistenza dell'Autore nella Tipografia Fabris, come dall'annesso Manifesto sortito dai Torchi questa mattina.').

ties from 1839 to 1848, as ‘tools of progressive nationalist discourse.’²⁶ During these meetings, the ‘conveners discussed various topics such as contracts, rents, the prison system, and legislation, often in defiance of pre-unification censorship.’²⁷

During his first Congress in Florence, the historian from Messina took part in a debate about the significance of education for peasants and artisans. La Farina showed a keen interest in popular education and championed the establishment of kindergartens, as already mentioned. His speeches and published writings reveal his passion for this cause, which was a central focus of the Florentine Cabinet, particularly among figures such as Abbot Raffaello Lambruschini, Lapo de’ Ricci, and Cosimo Ridolfi. They published the *Giornale Agrario* (1827) in Florence, with G.P. Viesseux serving as editor.²⁸

Although La Farina enjoyed a certain degree of freedom in the Tuscan Grand Duchy, his movements and activities were under discreet yet persistent police surveillance, even when he acted cautiously. La Farina was indeed known as a ‘flaming Liberal’, as confirmed by another Secret Report:

Report of the Police Inspector of Florence 28 December 1841
Reserved

The Sicilian writer Giuseppe La Farina frequently visited the printer Fabris to have his work published. He also visited the family of another printer, Fumagalli, and the Gabinetto Viesseux, where he stayed with other writers and foreigners. He became friends with Luigi Barvilis from Turin, who lived in the same house as him in Porta Rossa. So far, La Farina’s behaviour has been very cautious, and there is no indication of his political affiliations, although his speeches suggest he is a passionate liberal. Surveillance will continue as per the received orders.

Signature

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²⁶ ‘In Europa e ritorno. I congressi degli scienziati italiani tra modelli europei e via nazionale’, in *La fabrique transnationale de la «science nationale» en Italie* (1839-fin des années 1920), 273-283 (<https://doi.org/10.4000/mefrim.4007>). On Italian scientific congresses in the Risorgimento period see also C. Fumian, ‘Il senno delle nazioni. I congressi degli scienziati italiani dell’Ottocento: una prospettiva comparata’, in *Meridiana*, 24 (1995), 95-124.

²⁷ Ibid., 1: (‘per discutere vari argomenti – a dispetto della censura pre-unificazione – quali contratti e affitti, il sistema carcerario e la legislazione’).

²⁸ *Atti della Terza Riunione degli Scienziati Italiani tenuta a Firenze nel Settembre 1841* (Firenze, Tipi della Galileiana, 1841), 16.

²⁹ ASPBG, Anno 1841, filza 20, Affari 121-128, pezzo 379, 28 Dicembre 1842: (‘Rapporto dell’Ispettore di Polizia di Firenze. Riservato. Il Letterato Giuseppe La Farina siciliano, continua a frequentare lo stampatore Fabris, ove si stampa l’Opera da Esso scritta, come rendiconto del precedente Rapporto. Frequenta pure la famiglia dell’altro stampatore Fumagalli, e il Gabinetto Viesseux, ove si trattiene con gli altri Letterati e Forestieri che vi capitano. Ha poi stretto amicizia con certo Luigi Barvilis [?] di Torino Possidente, che alloggia nella stessa casa Caramelli in Porta Rossa. La sua condotta è stata fin qui delle più prudenti, nulla dando da sospettare di Esso in Materie Politiche, sebbene si riscontri nei suoi discorsi di essere geniato di Liberalismo. La Sorveglianza vien continuata, giusta gli ordini ricevuti. Firma - - - - -’).

The daily life of the Sicilian patriot in Florence appears to be peaceful, featuring frequent visits to the city's libraries, archives, and monuments, as well as leisurely walks, evenings at the theatre, and gatherings in the lively historic caf  s. Below, La Farina described his activities:

You might wonder what to do inside a coffee shop for an hour and a half. To answer that, let me give you an idea of what a caf   truly is. Imagine five to six large, connected shops with columns and walls encrusted with mirrors. Beautiful English lamps, mahogany sofas, and hundreds of exquisite tables, surrounded by 100-200 knights and ladies enjoying their time. Some read, some drink tea, some have ice cream, and others eat pastries and *sfogliatelle* [pastries]. Imagine the tables all full of newspapers from everywhere: government notices and orders, notices of theatres, plays, panoramas, sales, posters of literary works, fares, notices of departures, etc. All this in a state of profound silence. Furthermore, You will gain an almost exact idea of Florentine caf  s. You will persuade yourself to spend an hour. and a half, perhaps more, in these places.³⁰

The Grand Duchy Police expressed concern about his acquaintances, as the Note below shows:

Note to the Police Inspector 14 September 1842

The Government of the Two Sicilies is eager to understand the conduct of Giuseppe La Farina from Messina, who is currently in Florence and focused on publishing his work titled '*Studi sul secolo XVIII.*' I am instructed to request that Your Excellency provide this Royal Ministry with any pertinent information regarding him. I am honoured to reaffirm this request with the highest esteem and respect. From the Department of Foreign Affairs

For the Minister,
Uff.-----³¹

Another police report informs us of La Farina's intention to extend his stay and change his residence in Florence. The Sicilian patriot also wished to participate in another Scientific Congress in Padua:

³⁰ 'Letter to his father Carmelo', 21 September 1837, in *Epistolario*, vol. 1, 35: ('Ma mi direte: cosa fate un'ora e mezzo in un caff  ? Vi rispondo con darvi un'idea di ci   che intendesi qui per caff  . Immaginatevi 5, 6 grandissime botteghe, tutte poste in comunicazione, adorne di colonne, con le pareti tutte incrostate di specchi, con bellissimi lumi inglesi, con sof   di mogano, e con centinaia di bellissimi tavolinetti: immaginatevi poi vedere l   dentro 100 o 200 cavalieri e signore, chi leggendo, chi bevendo il th  , chi prendendo gelati, chi mangiando pasticcetti e sfogliatelle; immaginatevi in fine i tavolini tutti ripieni di giornali di qualunque luogo indistintamente, avvisi del governo ed ordini, avvisi di teatri, di giuochi, di panorami, di vendite, manifesti di opere letterarie, tariffe di trattorie, avvisi di partenze ecc., ecc., e poi un silenzio profondissimo: ed avrete un'idea quasi esatta de' caff   fiorentini. In questi luoghi vi persuaderete come si pu   passare un'ora e mezzo e forse pi  .').

³¹ ASPBG, Anno 1842, Filza 18, Affari 30-59 (43), pezzo 310, 14 Settembre 1842 (Fatta nota all'Ispettore di Polizia. Dimostrandosi il Governo delle Due Sicilie desideroso di conoscere quale condotta tenga in Firenze Giuseppe La Farina Messinese, intento alla pubblicazione di un'opera intitolata "Studi sul secolo 18.mo", di cui    autore, io sono incaricato di pregare V.stra Ill.ma di fornire a questo a voler somministrare a questo Regio Ministero ogni opportuna informazione. Ho l'onore di ripetermi in questo riscontro colla pi   distinta stima ed ossequio di V.stra Ill.ma. Dal Dipartimento degli Affari Esteri L   9 Settembre 1842 Pel Ministro, Uff.-----:').

The well-known Sicilian patriot Giuseppe La Farina from Messina has been observed to conduct himself with caution and reserve, seemingly to avoid raising suspicion regarding political matters. He spends significant amounts of time in the Magliabecchiana Library, leading us to believe that he intends to write and publish additional works beyond the one already printed under the title 'Studi sul Settecento', which was published by the printer Fabris, whom he frequently visits. He maintains connections with other printers, such as Fumagalli, and has various relationships with distinguished individuals. It is suggested that he plans to stay in Florence for another two years, as he intends to relocate. Recently, he attended a party in Siena with his wife and returned shortly after. There were indications that he wished to participate in the Scientific Congress in Padua, but it appears that his departure did not occur.³²

Based on these police reports and private letters, it was possible to reconstruct part of the Florentine relational network established by La Farina, including three publishers and printers. Among them were Fabris, with whom he published *Studi storici sul secolo XIII in 1842*, and Bardi, who published some of his works, including *L'Italia coi suoi monumenti e le sue leggende*, 1842, the substantial seven-volume work *La Svizzera storica e artistica*, 1842-1843, and *La China considerata nella sua storia, ne' suoi riti, ne' suoi costumi, nella sua industria, nelle sue arti, e ne' più memorabili avvenimenti della guerra attuale, I-IV*, 1843-47. The other publisher mentioned was Fumagalli, whom La Farina referenced in a letter to his close Vincenzo Gallina, who was in exile in Livorno. In this letter, La Farina revealed that he had purchased a publishing house from Fumagalli; however, the owner's name had remained unchanged.³³

5.3.1 On the Eve of the 1848 Sicilian Revolution: The People in the Theatre and the Political Scene

As previously mentioned, La Farina had a personal acquaintance with Giovanni Battista Niccolini,³⁴ whom he greatly admired, as evident in his *Storia d'Italia*:

³² ASPBG, Anno 1842, filza 20, Affari 121-128 (?), pezzo 379, 14 Settembre 1842: ('Rapporto dell'Ispettore di Polizia di Firenze. Riservato. La condotta del noto Giuseppe La Farina, Messinese, dalla Polizia non perduta di vista, è stata riscontrata prudente e riservata, da non somministrare il minimo sospetto in materie Politiche. Egli consuma molto tempo nella Biblioteca Magliabecana e da ciò si arguisce che abbia intenzione di scrivere e pubblicare qualch'altra Opera, oltre quella già data alle Stampe e col titolo di Studi sul 18° secolo dal tipografo Fabris, ch'Egli frequenta, avendo anche relazione con l'altro stampatore Fumagalli. Altre poche relazioni tiene con Persone distinte e dicesi che sia per trattenersi in Firenze altri due anni, cercando ora di variare abitazione. Si recò con la Moglie alle Feste a Siena, e ritornò poco dopo. Credevasi che volesse far parte del Congresso Scientifico a Padova, ma la di lui partenza a quella volta non è accaduta. Firma -----').

³³ 'Letter to Vincenzo Gallina', Florence, 25 December 1846, *Epistolario*, vol. 1, 293.

³⁴ Giovanni Battista Niccolini (San Giuliano, Pisa 1782-Florence 1861) began teaching history and mythology at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Florence in 1807, where he also served as a librarian. He was a republican and liberal, known for opposing the Church. A friend of notable figures such as Foscolo, Manzoni, and Carducci, Niccolini was also a translator of Greek works, an academician of the Crusca, and an author of lyric poetry, critical essays, and

Niccolini's *Arnaldo da Brescia* stands in opposition to the emerging neo-Guelphism. It is an admirable poem that leaves readers unsure of whom to praise more: the historian, the philosopher, the citizen, or the poet [...]. Ultimately, it serves primarily as a guardian of the sacred legacies of Dante and Machiavelli, as well as the passionate spirits of Alfieri and Foscolo.³⁵

While in his second exile in Florence, La Farina reviewed and redefined his political ideas, likely bringing him closer to the anti-papal views of his friend, the dramatist and poet Giovanni Battista Niccolini. Additionally, the Sicilian historian maintained close contact with other intellectuals who had sought refuge after facing various hardships. One such individual was Michele Amari, who was forced to escape to Paris after the Bourbon government censored his well-known work on Muslim Sicily. In one of his letters, La Farina shared his plan with Amari to establish a renowned bookshop and publish a serialised newspaper: 'The bookshop would be managed by twelve residents of Florence, including myself, and there would be sixty corresponding members, including you, if you do not mind. I believe I have shared enough information. All of us were reputable intellectuals. The concept was Italian, anti- Guelfo, and progressive, and it was still in the planning stages.'³⁶

La Farina's new project was never realised. However, during his second exile in Florence, he produced historical works and took part in various literary and journalistic activities. This was likely due to his careful study of Mazzini's ideas regarding the civil duties of intellectuals. At the same time, it is reasonable to assume that his friendship with Niccolini inspired him to develop a passion for playwriting.

5.3.1.1 The Historical Drama 'Matteo Palizzi'

During the Romantic period, many writers were captivated by the Middle Ages, and La Farina was

historical prose. Some of his well-known writings include *Dell'imitazione dell'arte drammatica* (1828) and *Discorso sulla tragedia greca* (1844). However, he is best known as a writer of tragedies, including *Polissena* (1810), *Nabucco* (1819), which portrays Napoleon, *Antonio Foscari* (1827), *Giovanni da Procida* (1830), *Arnaldo da Brescia* (1843), *Beatrice Cenci* (1844), and *Filippo Strozzi* (1847). All of his works reflect his libertarian ideals and his critiques of the tyranny of both the Empire and the Church.

³⁵ *Storia d'Italia dal 1815 al 1850*, 272: ('L'opera *Arnaldo da Brescia* di Niccolini si oppone al neoguelfismo emergente. È una poesia ammirevole che lascia i lettori incerti su chi elogiare di più: lo storico, il filosofo, il cittadino o il poeta [...]. In definitiva, serve principalmente come custode delle sacre eredità di Dante e Machiavelli, così come gli spiriti appassionati di Alfieri e Foscolo'). In this letter, La Farina also emphasizes the widespread popularity of Abbot Vincenzo Gioberti's influential book, *Il Primato morale e civile degli italiani* (1843) published in 1843. This text is notable for advocating a federation of Italian states under the guidance of the Church of Rome.

³⁶ 'Letter to Michele Amari', 31 January 1846, 289: ('diretta da dodici persone, residenti a Firenze, tra le quali ci sono io, ed ausiliata da 60 soci corrispondenti, tra le quali ci siete voi, se ciò non vi dispiacesse. Questi 60 nomi tra più e meno son tutti buoni e belli, e mi pare di avervi detto abbastanza. IL concetto è italiano, anti-guelfo, e progressivo, ma finora non si tratta che di un progetto.

no exception. Revisiting the past, the Sicilian historian highlighted the figure of Matteo Palizzi, the Grand Chancellor, amidst the conflicts between the Angevin and Aragonese dynasties in Messina. The rivalry among Sicilian barons led to violent internal wars, exacerbating the situation. Matteo and his brother Damiano, both ambitious for power, fought for control of the island. With the support of Queen Eleonora of Aragon and the Chiaramontani family of Messina, they succeeded in ending the dominance of the Catalans and Blasco d'Alagona. After Damiano's death, Matteo was left to govern the city alone, taking advantage of the youth of the regent, Ludovico of Aragon. However, Matteo and his wife, Margherita, became unpopular among the people of Messina and were seen as tyrants. Eventually, they fell into the hands of a furious crowd and were slaughtered.

In line with the national-patriotic discourse, the drama included explicit references to the historical situation experienced by La Farina, emphasising the people's right to overthrow tyrannical governments. The play was performed for the first time on 27 June 1844, at the Teatro Cocomero with the Compagnia de' Concoridi – 'a company of expert amateurs, recognised for their skill, comparable to the best actors.' It was represented for a second time in Siena on 14 August 1844, at the Teatro dei Rozzi, attracting 'a large audience and benefiting the nursery schools of Siena',³⁷ as La Farina enthusiastically recalled this event to his friend Vincenzo Gallina:³⁸

The performance, costumes, and decorations were all outstanding. The actors, all seasoned theatre professionals, delivered the piece with unmatched artistry and dedication. Thanks to Senesi's kindness, the outcome was delightful. The audience responded with a loud and enthusiastic round of applause, and I was called back to the stage several times, showered with crowns and laurels.³⁹

Matteo Palizzi's book did not receive the same acclaim as its theatrical adaptation. The author states that he did not intend for the drama to be published; instead, he wanted it to be performed on stage. For reasons he does not disclose, the editor Fumagalli published the drama in Florence in 1845, leading to significant criticism.

What deserves our attention here is La Farina's ideological and cultural alignment with Romanticism

³⁷ 'Letter to Vincenzo Gallina', Siena, 13 August 1844, in *Epistolario*, vol. I, 85: ('un immenso concorso di popolo a beneficio delle scuole d'infanzia.')

³⁸ Vincenzo Gallina (Ravenna 1795-Aleppo 1842) was a lawyer and a member of the Carbonari sects. He was involved in the 1844 failed revolution in Romagna, which aimed to separate the region from Papal control and annex it to the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. Following the failure of the revolution, he fled to Greece. He drafted the *Costituzione di Epidauro* based on the highest liberal principles. He passed away in Aleppo in 1842.

³⁹ *Ibid.*: ('L'esecuzione, l'abbigliamento, la decorazione, tutto era eccellente. I dilettanti, tutti uomini abili nel teatro, hanno eseguito il pezzo con un'arte e un'impegno indicibili. L'esito, grazie alla gentilezza di Sanese, è stato molto felice, gli applausi sono stati generali e davvero fragorosi, molte volte sono stato chiamato al boccascena e inondato di mazzi di corone e di alloro').

that he described it as ‘an excellent, useful, holy power that aims to dismantle a cold, lifeless, servile literature lacking creative force: it emerged to destroy, not to establish’.⁴⁰

A key aspect of La Farina’s cultural commitment, which also reflects the democratic ideals of the *Matteo Palizzi*’s book did not receive the same acclaim as its theatrical adaptation. The author states that he did not intend for the drama to be published; instead, he wanted it to be performed on stage. For reasons he does not disclose, the editor Fumagalli published the drama in Florence in 1845, leading to significant criticism.

The Sicilian patriot, is his decision to involve the people directly by bringing them onto the stage. confirmed this view in another historical drama, *L’Abbandono di un Popolo* (The Abandonment of the People), which was never published, but two manuscripts have been found.⁴¹

In *Matteo Palizzi*’s preface, La Farina stated, ‘I involved the people in action, not merely to fill a void, but to play a primary role because it is through their participation that great histories are made. Why should I have abandoned them?’⁴² He also criticised the lack of a national theatre in Italy.

The people, often central to nationalist discourse, carry the responsibility of defending their homeland. As Chiaramonti, together with Enrico Rosso, leads the popular rebellion against Palizzi, he states, ‘The country’s future lies solely with the people; the country has faith in them, and it lives through them’⁴³ Additionally, the author explores various aspects of his work, such as its origins, the sets, and the roles of the actors. He also shares examples that inspired his drama, drawing from the works of Shakespeare, Calderón de la Barca, López de Vega, and Cervantes.

In La Farina’s drama, we discover elements that align with the nationalist discourse previously discussed by Banti. For instance, the ‘deep figure’ of honour is highlighted in the dialogue between Chiaramonti and some commoners: ‘Friends, follow me: I will consider you part of my plans. Join me in an enterprise filled with danger and honour. God of battles! God, who made us conquerors of the formidable Charles of Anjou, smile upon our hopes!’⁴⁴

The plot of the drama emphasises the sacred bond between the homeland and its sons, who are called to sacrifice their lives for their country. This connection is particularly evident in

⁴⁰ *Matteo Palizzi*, 6: (‘un potere eccellente, utile e santo nel disfare una letteratura fredda, morta e servile che non aveva una forza creativa: sorgeva per distruggere, non per fondare [...]').

⁴¹ See D. Bombara (ed.), *L’Abbandono di un Popolo, dramma storico* (Reggio Calabria, *Città del Sole*, 2012), 7.

⁴² ‘Prefazione’: *Matteo Palizzi*, 18: (‘Ho messo il popolo sulla scena, non a riempire un vuoto, ma a prender parte, e parte primaria nell’azione: non è in esso e per esso che si compiono i grandi fatti storici? Perché avrei dovuto abbandonarlo?’)

⁴³ *Ibid.*, *Atto I, Scena 2*, 38: (‘Solo in esso spera la patria; esso ha fede, esso vive: in lui sta l’avvenire!’).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, *Atto III, Scena V*, 78: (‘Amici, seguitemi: io vi metterò a parte dei miei disegni: venite a concertare un’impresa piena di pericoli e di onore. Dio delle battaglie! Dio che ci rendesti vincitori del terribile Carlo d’Angiò, sorridi alle nostre speranze!’).

Chiaromonti's desperate soliloquy, where he laments, 'Oh, my lost hopes! Where do I turn now? Here are the commoners... I have no heart to approach them. Fatherland, daughter, holy names, for me, I would endure anything!'⁴⁵ In addition to the theme of heroic sacrifice, the drama also explores the concept of exile. This is illustrated through the intense dialogue between Matilde, Chiaromonti's daughter, who is betrothed to the Count of Aidone, and Enrico Rosso, the leader of the people:

Matilde

Nevertheless, tell me what you have suffered in four long years of exile? ... tell me your sorrows ... your adventures ... who guided you? Who reached out to help you? Which city welcomed my exile with open arms? (*Enrico takes off his helmet and hands it to Fedele, who steps back, exclaiming:*

Fedele (Andalusian damsel disguised as a page)

(Oh, unhappy me! All hope is lost!)

Enrico

Moreover, is there a land that smiles upon exiles? I crossed mountains and seas, visited villages, cities, courts, republics, and castles ... I went where fate led me: [...] Oh! Then I wandered through the countryside, shouting like a madman: Oh, give me my homeland! Oh, bring me my beloved! *Matilde*

Poor Enrico!

Enrico

However, do not think that due to the vileness of tears, I have dishonoured the dignity of exile. Pain may torment the body, but the soul can transcend exile, imprisonment, and suffering. The soul is the spark of God, and when a tyrant tramples on this fragile flesh, it rises [...] and cries with the voice of thunder: I am free!⁴⁶

Just a few months after the Grand Duke granted freedom of the press in March 1847, the theatrical production of *La Farina* accompanied the resumption of journalistic activity.

5.3.1.2 The *L'Alba* Journal: A 'Civilised Criticism'

On 14 June 1847, *La Farina* founded the political and literary newspaper *L'Alba*, edited by G. Bardi, in Florence. The initial issues started to be published weekly from November of that year. The editorial team included E. Meyer, F.B. Acquarone, C. Chiarini, C. Martelli, G. Mazzoni, B.

⁴⁵ Ibid., *Atto III, Scena V*, 75: ('Oh perdute mie speranze! E dove oramai rivolgermi? Ecco de' popolani... Non ho cuore di avvicinarmi — Patria! figlia! santi nomi, per voi si soffra tutto!').

⁴⁶ Ibid., *Atto I, Scena I*, 34-35: (*Matilde*: 'Ma dimmi, dimmi che soffristi in quattro anni, in quattro lunghi anni di esiglio? ... narrami le tue pene ... le tue avventure ... chi ti guidò? Chi ti stese la mano? Qual città accolse lieta l'esule mio? (*Enrico si staccia l'elmo e lo dà a Fedele, che si ritira dicendo:* *Fedele*: Oh me infelice! Ho perso tutte le speranze! *Enrico*: E v'è terra che all'esule sorride? Io varcai monti, passai mari, visitai villaggi, borghi, città ... vidi corti, repubbliche, castella ... Io andava, andava ove traevami il destino: [...] oh! Allora io andava per le campagne gridando come un forsennato: Oh, rendetemi la mia patria! Oh, rendetemi la mia diletta! *Matilde* Povero Enrico! *Enrico*: Ma non credete che colla viltà delle lagrime, io abbia disonorato la dignità dell'esiglio... il dolore martirizza il corpo; ma l'anima, l'anima può vincere l'esiglio, la prigione, i tormenti, la sventura; l'anima è scintilla di Dio: e quando un tiranno calpesta questa fragile creta, ella si eleva [...] e grida colla voce del tuono: io son libera!').

Nocchi, F. Orlandini, J. Piccinetti, P. Thouar, A. Vannucci, and C. Rusconi, with help from G.B. Niccolini, M. Amari, and E. de Boni. This periodical became a crucial platform for reflection and preparation for the future ruling class during the Unification era. Its editorial stance differed markedly from the aggressive and personalistic styles of other newspapers and periodicals involved in the struggles for Italian independence. In its first issue, the programme, influenced by what the editors called ‘civilised criticism,’ was clearly outlined:

The periodical’s contributors commit to speaking the truth with courage, modesty, and dignity. They are not biased towards any political party but are honest people who love their country and want it to prosper. They do not intend to support or oppose any government’s actions mindlessly. They aim to maintain their independent opinion and will not be influenced by any party or individual. They are open-minded and welcome reasonable and civilised criticisms. They are willing to retract any errors they make.⁴⁷

L’Alba was a journal that covered a wide range of topics, including politics, literature, business news, and reader feedback. The newspaper also translated foreign articles into Italian. In his book *Storia d’Italia*, La Farina compared the political views of the editors of *L’Alba* with those of other newspapers, such as *Patria* and *L’Italia*. These publications held contrasting opinions about Italy’s future in the mid-nineteenth century. The democratic and anti-Austrian *L’Alba* supported a republic and national unity, expressing distrust towards the papacy and the clergy. In contrast, the *Patria* journal declared the principality’s alignment with liberty and proposed a league of princes supporting Italian independence. *L’Italia* evoked a feeling of Catholic mysticism and held the belief that the country could experience a resurgence under papal guidance. Furthermore, the Sicilian patriot noted that ‘Tuscan newspapers gained popularity in neighbouring provinces, while the *Patria* was well-liked in Piedmont, *L’Alba* gained popularity in the Papal States. Although the papal government once attempted to ban it, they were unsuccessful due to the newspaper’s significant influence in Tuscany.’⁴⁸ In June 1848, *L’Alba* published a letter by Karl Marx, in which

⁴⁷ *L’Alba*, a. I, n. 1, Florence, 14 June 1847: (‘I compilatori dell’*Alba* assumono l’obbligo di dire il vero con coraggio, modestia e dignità: essi non sono né esaltati, né moderati, né conservatori; ma uomini onesti, buoni italiani, che amano la loro patria, e le desiano migliori destini. Noi non intendiamo farci né gli oppositori, né i lodatori sistematici di ogni atto governativo: vogliamo serbare intera l’indipendenza della nostra opinione, non saremo schiavi di alcun partito, né sacrificheremo giammai la verità sull’altare della vile adulazione, o degli odj iracondi. Tolleranti con tutti, accoglieremo con piacere e riconoscenza qualunque ragionevole e civile confutazione, e bisognando ritratteremo volentieri ogni errore di che potessimo essere convinti.’).

⁴⁸ *Storia d’Italia*, vol. 2, 50: (‘Il giornale *L’Alba* anelava alla repubblica e all’unità nazionale, e non aveva fiducia nel papato o nel clero; la *Patria* proclamava l’accordo del principato con la libertà, e proponeva una lega di principi, propugnacolo dell’indipendenza italiana; l’Italia si distingueva per un certo misticismo cattolico, e per la persuasione che la *Patria* potesse risorgere auspicata e guidata dal papato. I giornali toscani acquistarono presto grande autorità nelle province vicine: la *Patria* piacque molto in Piemonte; *L’Alba* divenne popolare negli Stati della Chiesa, e ci fu un momento in cui il governo pontificio voleva proibirla e non ci riuscì: in Toscana ebbe un potere meraviglioso.’).

he expressed his desire to collaborate with his newspaper *La Nuova Gazzetta Renana* (Neue Rheinische Zeitung), supporting the cause of Italian independence and proposing ‘the union of two free countries and

great nations’.⁴⁹ Marx’s letter was published with the following foreword by the editors of the journal: ‘We are publishing the following letter addressed to us from Cologne to testify to the feelings of the generous Germans about Italy, who earnestly aspire to forge a fraternal bond between the Italian and Germanic nations, at enmity with the despots of Europe.’⁵⁰

In an earlier letter dated 20 October 1847 to his friend Ernesta Fumagalli Torti, La Farina expressed his deep concerns regarding troubling news from the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. He revealed that uprisings in Messina. He noted that the heads of numerous individuals had been valued at 2,000 ducats each, which filled him with incredible anxiety. Additionally, he mentioned that he had not received a letter from his family in over a month. [...].⁵¹

On 9 October 1847, Giuseppe La Masa’s pamphlet titled *I popoli del Regno delle Due Sicilie ai fratelli italiani, agli inglesi, ai francesi, a Pio IX* printed in Florence, came out: ‘We [Sicilians] deserve your attention, Tuscans and Romans! We are Italians, too. We want to dispel the false accusations against us and share the story of our hardships.’⁵² La Masa’s call to arms began circulating as early as July 1847, bringing attention to the dire conditions in Sicily. In November, a letter written by Francesco Ferrara, believed to have been sent from Malta but likely printed illegally in Palermo, served as another significant indictment against the government of King Ferdinando II.

The revolution in Sicily in 1848, along with the uprisings of 1820-21 and 1837, was ideologically prepared by anti-Bourbon rhetoric that converged on several key issues. These included the misrule of the Bourbon government, the exploitation and impoverishment of Sicily, police brutality, and the abuses committed by the Neapolitan government’s officials in Sicily. Additionally, heavy censorship, high taxation, and widespread corruption further exacerbated political and social tensions.

Before examining the dynamics of the 1848 Sicilian revolution, it is therefore appropriate to focus on revolutionary propaganda, which warrants our attention.

⁴⁹ K. Marx, ‘Al Signor Direttore del giornale L’Alba’, in *L’Alba*, II, 258 (29 June 1848), 4: (‘l’unione di due libere e grandi nazioni.’)

⁵⁰ Marx’s letter was published with the following foreword from the editors: ‘Pubblichiamo la seguente lettera indirizzataci da Colonia per testimoniare quali sentimenti nutrono a riguardo dell’Italia i generosi alemanni, i quali aspirano caldamente a stringere un legame fraterno tra le nazioni Italiana e Germanica, inimicate dai despoti dell’Europa’.

⁵¹ La Farina, ‘Letter to Ernesta Fumagalli Torti’, in *Epistolario*, vol. I, 299.

⁵² G. La Masa, *I popoli del Regno delle Due Sicilie. Ai fratelli italiani, agli inglesi, ai francesi, a Pio IX* (Firenze, 1847), 3: (‘Toscani e Romani siamo noi degni del vostro pensiero – Italiani ... siamo anche noi Italiani. A disperdere le calunnie degli oppressi che ci straziano sin anco nella fama mandiamo a voi la storia delle nostre sciagure’).

Conclusions

This chapter examines the exile of Giuseppe La Farina to Tuscany, covering two distinct periods: 1837 to 1838 and 1841 to 1847. The research explores the reasons that led the patriot from Messina to choose Tuscany as his preferred destination and also delves into the interpretation of the myth of Leopoldian reformism, which was prevalent among nineteenth-century liberals.

La Farina arrived in Florence in the autumn of 1837, following the suppression of the cholera uprisings that year. Through his letters, it was possible to reconstruct how he spent his first year in exile, including his initial impressions of the Tuscan capital, which he greatly admired, especially for the cultural vibrancy of its cafés and literary salons.

Between March 1838 and September 1841, La Farina returned to Messina, where he resumed his law career. In 1841, he founded the Democratic Committee and, in an effort to recreate the cultural atmosphere he had experienced in Florence, established a Literary Cabinet. This was modeled after the one created by Viesseux and was accompanied by the magazine *Giornale del Gabinetto Letterario di Messina* (1841-1843).

La Farina was subjected to close surveillance by the Bourbon police, which, coupled with the inability to continue his cultural activities, forced him to return to Florence. His second period of exile lasted seven years, from the end of 1841 to 1848. Thanks to unpublished archival sources at the National Archives of Florence, we now have information about his long Florentine exile, including his activities and acquaintances. This second exile proved to be very productive; the historian from Messina published several of his works with the publishers Bardi and Fumagalli. While in Florence, he attended the Viesseux Cabinet, where he was joined by his friend Carlo Gemelli. There, he met the poet and playwright G.B. Niccolini, whom he greatly admired. Encouraged by Niccolini, La Farina ventured into dramaturgy, and in the summer of 1844, his play *Matteo Palizzi* was performed with considerable success in the theaters of Florence and Siena. Additionally, *Matteo Palizzi* was published in 1845.

La Farina was among the first exiles to take advantage of the freedom of the press granted by Grand Duke Leopold II in May 1847. The following month, he founded the Democratic-Republican newspaper *L'Alba*, which featured collaborators such as Michele Amari, G.B. Niccolini, Enrico Meyer, and Pietro Thouar. In February 1848, after bidding farewell to his collaborators in a letter published in his newspaper, La Farina returned to Sicily, where the revolution had already begun.



Figure 10

L'ALBA, a. I, no. 1 (Firenze, 14 GIUGNO 1847)



Figure 11

Florentine Edition of *Matteo Palizzi* (1845).

CHAPTER 6

THE BOURBON'S MISRULE AND THE POLITICAL DISSENT

6.1 The Patriotic Rhetoric and the Role of the Press

Dissent against the Bourbon government was expressed through various channels during the *Risorgimento*. Revolutionary propaganda aimed to shape public opinion and garner support for patriots, while also promoting its message to foreign audiences. Popular anger and discontent often led to uprisings and the spread of war songs, hymns, caricatures, and irreverent refrains. Sometimes, the people engaged in episodes of iconoclasm, during which the visual symbols of Bourbon power, such as monuments, statues, and portraits, were targeted. Yet, particularly, the press (newspapers, pamphlets, sheets, and speeches) expressed the tensions and hopes that fuelled the struggles of the bourgeois classes. Carlo Gemelli noted that in 1848 there was an 'unstoppable exuberance of journalism'¹ in Sicily, especially in Palermo, where dissatisfaction with the Bourbons' misrule was most acutely felt.

Several newspapers and periodicals were established, some with more extensive circulation, allowing us to understand the social and political conditions of those times. Among them were, for example, *L'Indipendenza* and *La Lega*, edited by Francesco Ferrara, which favoured a monarchical-federative solution for Sicily; *Luce*, under the editorial direction of Filippo Cordova, supported a league of monarchical states; in contrast, *Democrazia*, directed by G. La Farina, who 'with great intelligence and purposeful sanctity, aimed to overthrow the princes and the moderate monarchy, opposed the federal unity, and proclaimed the republican as the only and true outcome of the Italian revolution.'² The *Educatore*, directed by Giambattista Castiglia; the *Vipera: giornale quotidiano*, directed by Giovanni Raffaele; *Costanza*, founded by Gaetano De Pasquale, who was also the head of the editorial staff of the newspaper *Il Cittadino*; the periodic *La Rigenerazione*, founded by Luigi Turrìto, and *Staffile* edited by Filippo Cordova.

¹ Gemelli, *Storia della siciliana rivoluzione*, vol. I, 316: ('esuberanza infrenabile di giornalismo').

² Ibid., 318: ('con alto ingegno e santità di proposito, voleva l'abbattimento dei principi e della temperata monarchia, avversava l'unità federativa e proclamava quella repubblicana, come la sola e vera dalla italica rivoluzione conseguibile.').

Many newspapers and leaflets had a short life. Some followed the entire parable of the Sicilian revolution, others lasted only a few months, and the name of the director does not appear, such as *Il Giornale Patriottico*, *Gli occhiali del diavolo*, *Il Popolo: giornale della Sicilia*, *Vincere o morire*, *La bomba: giornale all'opposizione*, and *Il censore: foglietto settimanale per la Sicilia*. Some had satirical intentions, like *Pasquino: giornale siciliano*, *Il Bastone: giornale comico- tragico di tutti i colori*, *Finalmente! Giornale semiserio per gli ultimi giorni di Carnovale*, *La Forbice*, directed by Giacinto Scelsi and *Esopo: giornale di caricatura*. *La Patria: gazetta siciliana: pri lu populu* was written almost entirely in the Sicilian dialect.

In 1848, the Sicilian press presented various political solutions for the patriotic cause, leading to frequent attacks by writers from their respective newspapers and periodicals. Thus, Gemelli expressed the heated rivalry between the different newspapers: '[...] many were the races, the envy, the ambitions' that turned out 'not all profitable to the duration and the reaffirmation of the government.'³

La Farina expressed some of his less-than-positive thoughts on the Sicilian press during the 1848 revolution. He wrote that, with a few exceptions, 'it never responded to the height of its ministry: servile in its ideas, licentious in its words, it was a scandal, not strength'.⁴ The historian from Messina stated that the periodicals reflected the passions and mistakes made by the rebels and that, above all, the editors and publishers changed political beliefs too abruptly. Some articles, such as those of the *Libero Monitore*, which described itself as ultra-democratic, 'came out of the workshops of the Neapolitan police',⁵ as his editor, Salvatore Abate, confessed.⁶

On 25 March 1848, the Sicilian Parliament reopened after a 33-year hiatus. Palermo celebrated the occasion with a luxurious show featuring pumps and an almost Eastern aesthetic: 'The streets, squares, balconies, and shops were adorned with tapestries, oil-burning flowers, and bright flames, which heightened the general excitement, jubilation, and sincere pride of the triumph'.⁷ That same triumph led to heated debates over the future of the institutional framework of the island, which included different options, such as a constitutional monarchy, a republic, or a confederation of states. For instance, the pro-monarchical periodical *Il Gatto* attacked the republican faction, accusing it of Demagogy:

³ Ibid., 319: ('[...] molte erano le gare, le invidie, le ambizioni' che si rivelano 'non tutte proficue alla durata e al rafforzamento del governo').

⁴ Ibid., 319: ('[...] molte erano le gare, le invidie, le ambizioni' che si rivelano 'non tutte proficue alla durata e al rafforzamento del governo').

⁵ Ibid., 95: ('uscì dalle officine della polizia napoletana').

⁶ Ibid., 100.

⁷ Ibid., 303: ('Le vie, le piazze, i balconi, le botteghe ornate tutte di arazzi, di fiori olezzanti e di vivissime fiammelle, accrescevano la comune esaltazione, il giubilo degli animi, l'orgoglio schietto e verace del riportato trionfo [...]').

The People to Their Flatterers

Flatterers, I can no longer tolerate you! Courtiers of the square believe I must be treated as you treated your master of infamous memory, Ferdinando of Bourbon. When the wicked Ferdinando held me in chains, who protested in the face of the tyrant? Who called down the curse of heaven upon him? [...] Who fought tirelessly for me, who endured exile, imprisonment, and persecution on my behalf? [...] Where were you, Intendants and Sub-intendants, the men of darkness, the timid rabbits, that now, as exalted demagogues, come to flatter me? [...] You claim to be my sentinels, advocating for the republic and recommending a delay in choosing a king, which I wanted in the new statute.[...].⁸

The people's request was for a constitutional monarchy, and electing a king would have dashed any hopes that 'Ferdinando II the Bomber could ever set foot in this land that he had ravaged and bloodied.'⁹ To the Republicans, considered the 'traitors of the homeland', the columnist also dedicates some rhyming verses: 'They ask for the republic, they ask for unity, born for a useful despair'.¹⁰

Many newspapers asserted the need for Sicily to separate from the Kingdom of Naples, although local sentiments did not primarily drive this movement. On the contrary, independence from Naples would have promoted a coalition of Italian states. The periodical *La Luce*, as Gemelli recalled, 'supported Sicilian liberation, opposed democratic doctrines, and advocated for the federal principle'.¹¹ Likewise, the newspaper *Il Fulmine*:

Following the natural correlations, the best social system for Sicily is independence—independence in internal affairs, economic regulations, and state governance. Tyranny has deprived the island of its fundamental rights, as exemplified by the Constitution of 1812, suppressing its autonomy through despotism. This has rendered Sicily lifeless, binding it to the Neapolitan throne and thereby facilitating the exploitation of its riches.¹²

Patriotism, sacrifice of life, and honour are recurring themes in the first issue of the newspaper

⁸ 'Il Popolo a' suoi adulatori', *Il Gatto*, a. I, n. 9 (Palermo, 8 luglio 1848, 33-34: ('Adulatori, non ne posso più! Cortigiani di piazza credete voi ch'io debba essere trattato come già trattavate il vostro padrone d'infame memoria [Ferdinando di Borbone]! [...] Quando l'iniquo Ferdinando mi avvinghiava di nuove catene, chi protestò in faccia al tiranno, chi chiamò su lui la maledizione del cielo [...] chi tramava operoso per me, chi pativa esilii, carceri, persecuzioni per me [...] Dove eravate voi, Intendenti e Sottointendenti, uomini delle tenebre, conigli paurosi, che ora esaltati demagoghi, mi venite adulando [...] Voi vi dite mia sentinella e buccinate repubblica e consigliate ritardo nella scelta di un re [...] qual'io volli nel nuovo statuto [...]').

⁹ Ibid., 35: ('Ferdinando II il Bombardatore ogni speranza di porre piede in questa terra, da lui saccheggiata, insanguinata').

¹⁰ Ibid.: ('Voglion repubblica, Voglion fusione, Figlia d'un utile Disperazione').

¹¹ Gemelli, *Storia della siciliana rivoluzione del 1848-49*, vol. I, 318: ('parteggiava per il siciliano affrancamento, combatteva le democratiche dottrine, propugnava il principio federale').

¹² 'Proclama', *Il Fulmine*, a. 1, n. 2, 8: ('Seguendo quindi le necessarie correlazioni naturali, per Sicilia il miglior sistema sociale è l'indipendenza, l'indipendenza nell'interno regime, nelle leggi economiche, l'indipendenza di stato. [...] La tirannide rapiva all'isola i suoi diritti naturali e sociali, la costituzione del 12, l'indipendenza non solo, ma la comprimeva tanto con la leva del dispotismo, che fece della Sicilia un cadavere, lo legava a piedi del trono napolitano

L'Italiano, published in Palermo, which advocates for a confederation of states:

My mother is *Freedom*, and my homeland is *Italy*. My work is dedicated to the *National Milite*. I love my mother and my homeland by instinct and out of duty. I am an unwavering enemy of anyone who seeks to harm the life of my mother and my homeland [...] For you, my beloved homeland, I will offer the prayers of the righteous. I will dedicate my strength and my heartfelt sighs to you [...] My only passion is to be a free patriot in love with Italy.
An Italian!¹³

The sacredness of the patriots' militancy is rooted in their role as soldiers dedicated to defending the homeland from foreign advances. Themes such as the condemnation of betrayal of the national cause and the honour of combat were emphasized in the appeals addressed to the patriots by the newspaper *L'Imparziale*:

To the Soldiers. Soldiers! We have the sacred mission of defending our homeland from foreign enemies and guaranteeing freedom and tranquillity. This mission honours all those with feelings of love for the motherland; we have voluntarily given our souls and taken up arms. [...] Soldiers! Shall we betray this mission? Will the sword we bear at our sides ever be tainted by infamy or cowardice? [...] Sons of Sicily, wherever she may call us from her embrace, shall we go forth to sow horrors, rapes, robberies, straying from the purpose and duty to which we are summoned? [...] We have assumed a high office. As citizens and soldiers, we have obligations to our homeland and the world.¹⁴

Almost a year after the revolution of 1848, the opposition periodical *La Forbice*, which was first published on 9 May 1848, released a passionate article advocating for the continued fight against the 'infernal race' of the Bourbons of Naples:

No, Sicily has sworn, and so have its sons. The name of the Bourbon and his hellish slave will no longer rule this island. There can be no pact other than blood, fire, death, and war! War! War Today,

per meglio spogliarlo dalle ricchissime sue vesti.').

¹³ 'L'Italiano', in *L'Italiano*, n. 1, a. 1 (14 dicembre 1848): ('Mia Madre è *Libertà*. Mia Patria è *Italia*. Mio mestiere *Milite Nazionale*. Amo mia madre e la mia Patria per istinto e per dovere [...] Nemico irrenconciliabile di chi vorrà attentare alla vita di mia Madre e della mia Patria [...] Su te patria mia diletta, io spargerò le preghiere del giusto. Per te spenderò le mie forze, i miei sospiri [...] Altra passione non ho che essere *Libero patriotto innamorato*. [...] L'Italiano.').

¹⁴ *L'Imparziale*, a. 1, n. 6 (Palermo, 19 agosto 1848, 21: ('Ai Soldati. Soldati! Nelle nostre mani è confidata la sacra missione di difendere la patria dallo straniero, e di garantirle la libertà e la tranquillità. Questa missione che onora chiunque ha sentimenti di patrio amore, noi ce l'abbiamo tolta sull'anima e sulle braccia volontariamente. [...] Soldati! La tradiremo noi questa missione? La spada che cingiamo al fianco verrà mai profanata dall'infamia o dalla viltà? [...] figli della Sicilia, in qualunque parte del suo seno ella ci chiamerà, andremo noi a seminarvi orrori, stupri, rapine, allontanandoci dallo scopo e dal dovere onde siamo chiamati? [...] Alto incarico abbiamo assunto. Cittadini e soldati, agli obblighi di cittadini e di Soldati in faccia alla patria ed a mondo siamo tenuti.').

the war cries resonate along Sicily's beaches, hills, plains, and mountains. War is the choice of all and must begin now — without a moment's delay!!¹⁵

6.1.1 Political Satire

The deep-seated anger and dissatisfaction of the Sicilian people towards the Bourbon dynasty was often expressed through satire. A notable example is the unpublished fictitious heroic poem, 'La Ferdinandeide', which was released in instalments in the opposition periodical *La Forbice*. The first issue came out on 9 May 1848, and the initial cantos were published on 28 July 1848. The following scene portrays the protagonist, King Ferdinando II, depicted as a false hero in the conflict against the Sicilians, appearing simultaneously thoughtful and confident in his military capabilities.

Canto primo

The bombs, the bulwarks and the council
The boldness, the feats of thrilling military teams.
I sing the glories of a monarch, son of a hundred parents and a mother So that his name, taking
flight, Echoed from one pole to another. All the muses in my song I invoke,
Let the trumpet of the soldiers sound, And, animated by a terrible fire,
I will roar like lightning, striking down.
The style of effeminate poetry is vile for a warrior of caliber.
It was a deep night, and creation dipped into peaceful rest;
Only from a hundred heartbeats stirred, In himself, all collected and thoughtful, The new
Sacripante watched in a lonely, dark, neglected room.
It was that sacred, inviolable place... Then he exclaimed, "I am strong!
Every warrior before me is less than nothing!" And only from a hundred throbs stirred,
In himself, all collected and thoughtful, The new Sacripante watched in a
Lonely and black, neglected room.
It was that sacred, inviolable place [...] Then he exclaimed: I am strong!
Every warrior compared with me is less than *zero*!¹⁶

¹⁵ 'Un altro pugno di faziosi', in *La Forbice*, a. 1, n. 65 (Palermo 30 marzo 1849), 257-258: ('No, giurrollo Sicilia, giurarono [lo giurarono] i figli di essa, e *sillaba di lor non si cancella* il Borbone e la sua schiatta infernale, non governerà più quest'isola, fra esso e noi non potrà esservi altro patto che sangue, fuoco, morte, guerra E guerra! Guerra! Guerra! gridan oggi le spiagge, i colli, le lande, i monti di Sicilia; guerra è il voto di tutti, e guerra oggi... ora... senza l'indugio d'un istante ...!').

¹⁶ 'La Ferdinandeide, poema eroico-comico in 10 canti', in *La Forbice*, 168: ('*Canto Primo*. Le bombe, i baluardi ed il consiglio / L'ardir, le imprese di frementi squadre. / Le glorie canto d'un monarca figlio / Di cento genitori e d'una madre / Onde il nome di lui, spiccando un volo, / Echeggiasse dall'uno all'altro polo. / Tutte le muse nel mio canto invoco, / Suoni pure de' militi la tromba / Ed animato da un terribil foco, / Tuonerò come fulmine, che piomba... / D'effeminata poesia lo stile / Per un guerriero di calibro è vile. / Era notte profonda, ed il creato / Stava immerso in un placido riposo; / E sol da cento palpiti agitato, / In sé tutto raccolto e pensieroso, / Vegliava il nuovo Sacripante in una / Stanza negletta solitaria e bruna. / Era quel luogo inviolabil sacro [...] / Poi esclamava – Son forte! ogni guerriero / L'innanzi al mio cospetto è men di zero!').

In February 1849, the Sicilian rebels rejected King Ferdinando's proposal; they fought for a new Sicilian constitution and Parliament. In the ninth canto of the poem *Ferdinandeide*, King Ferdinando II is depicted sitting at a table with the queen, his ministers, and his confessor, Monsignor Cocle. News arrives that Sicily has refused to capitulate. This is the scene:

The benign confessor sat quietly, close to his true penitent
[...]

Meanwhile, discussions of archangels and saints took place as ministers met with the king. They spoke of gallows, steaming heads, and methods to oppress the people. Despite the serious topics, there was an immense and perfect harmony.

At that moment, the sound of a steamer warned that Sicily had declared war on the king. Every listener was astonished; The king appeared somewhat disoriented, overwhelmed by the anger that consumed him. "Ah, Saracens!" he exclaimed, saying no more.¹⁷

The scene turns to ridicule when, a few moments later, King Ferdinando preying to the bile that devours him, first bites both hands and then, seized by a suicidal instinct, turns a knife to his person. Meanwhile, Monsignor Cocle, hoping to bring the king to his senses, tries to ward off the 'infernal temptation' by reciting prayers and making repeated signs of the cross on the king's forehead. At the same time, the queen weeps, washing the floor with her tears:

Canto nono

After a moment, he stood up
impulsively to release the anger inside him.
He bit both his hands
more if they wanted to appease him And not finding what to vent
He took a knife and tried to kill himself "Stop it! Stop it!" shouted the bystanders.
If you slit your throat, you are dead.
[...]

The Father Confessor, with his prayers and an absorbed, prophetic expression,
tried to bring the king to reason,
driving away the infernal temptation.
He placed a cord on the king's head and made countless crosses on his face
to prevent him from returning to that troubling thought.
Holding the king in his arms, he offered solace,
In the meantime, the lonely queen wept,
Her tears were flowing like a stream across the ground.¹⁷

¹⁷ Ibid.: ('Seduto era il benigno confessore / Vicino a la real sua penitente // Mentre ei parlan d'arcangeli e di santi / I ministri col re sommessamente / Favellano di forche e di fumanti / Teste e del come opprimere la gente / Tra l'un discorso e l'altro par ci sia / Immensa perfettissima armonia/ In quel punto un piroscavo avviso / Che la Sicilia grida guerra al re / Ogni astante all'udir trasecolò / Il sire parve alquanto fuor di se / E affogato dall'ira che l'afflisse / Ahi saraceni disse e più non disse')

Similar disrespectful tones can be found in a letter dated 17 March 1849, addressed to King Ferdinando by some editors of *La Forbice*. The tongue-in-cheek purpose of this letter was to express the devotion of the Sicilian people and to invite the king to visit their rebel isle:

Beloved Ferdinando,

Ah! Come here, come here, beloved Ferdinando, come, beloved and August sovereign, to see how much love we have for you with your eyes. Indeed, witness the depth of our devotion—how much affection, sympathy, attachment, obedience, respect, loyalty, subjection, and veneration we, the Sicilians, hold for you. You are our idol, support, hope, father, and so much more. I struggle to find the right words and feel overwhelmed with tenderness [...] ¹⁹

Later, referring to the fortification works for the Sicilian-Neapolitan War: ('You decreed that the Sicilians should dig, and true to your word, the Sicilian people have begun digging enthusiastically, regardless of age, class, rank, or gender. A significant number of people visited the construction site yesterday. Although these were fortifications rather than agricultural works, the Sicilian people still obeyed the beloved monarch's decree by labouring diligently in the earth.'). The letter concludes with a reference to the songs sung by the workers/patriots to their King and the welcome extended upon his arrival:

Oh, dearest Ferdinando, if only you had listened to the songs and hymns sung in your honour by the immense multitude as they worked. The saints' litany pales in comparison to the titles that adorned you. [...] And then how sweet was that constant refrain: Go away Bourbons, death to Ferdinando, beyond those beautiful titles of Jetta secunni [?], infamous, coward, and other similar [...] That evening, splendid lighting for the quarterdeck was always in your honour. All this Sicily does while you remain far away: should you come here, there would be nothing but lights and flames, fire for you, and something even better. ²⁰

¹⁸ Ibid., 232: ('Dopo un istante prorompendo ei sorse / Onde sfogar la bil che il divorava / Ambe le mani per furor si morse / Più se il volean placare / E non trovando su di che sfogare / Prese un coltello e si volea scannare / Ferma ferma gridarono gli astanti / Se ti tagli la gola tu sei morto // E il padre confessor con detti santi / Con un viso profetico ed assorto / Tentò ridurre il re alla ragione / Cacciando l'infurnal tentazione / Gli posava il cordone sulla testa / Gli faceva mille croci nella faccia / Per non tornare a quell'idea molesta / Tutto se lo stringea fra le sue braccia / E la regina desolata intanto / Lavava il suolo con un rio di pianto').

¹⁹ 'Amato Ferdinando', Palermo, 17 marzo 1849, in *La Forbice*, a. 2, n. 56 (19 marzo 1849), 223: ('[...] Ah! Vieni, vieni Ferdinando amatissimo, vieni amatissimo ed augustissimo sovrano, vieni a vedere coi tuoi propri occhi quanto amore sviscerato, anzi quanto svisceramento, quanta affezione, quanta simpatia, quanto attaccamento, obbedienza, rispetto, fedeltà, sudditanza e venerazione hanno i Siciliani per te. Tu sei il loro idolo, il loro sostegno, la loro speranza, il loro padre, il loro eccetera eccetera, mi mancano i termini e sto quasi per affogare dalla tenerezza. [...]').

²⁰ Ibid.: ('E oh, Ferdinando carissimo [...] oh, se tu avessi ascoltato le canzoni, gli inni che in tua lode si cantavano da quella immensa moltitudine mentre era intenta al lavoro. Le litanie dei santi sono nulla al paragone dei titoli che ti decoravano. [...] E poi quanto era dolce quell'incessante ritornello: Fuori i Borboni, morte a Ferdinando, oltre quei bellissimi titoli di Jetta secunni, infame, carogna, ed altri simili [...] La sera poi ci fu grande illuminazione pel cassero, sempre in onore tuo. Tutto questo la Sicilia lo fa mentre ancora sei lontano: se poi verrai qui, allora altro che lumi e fiamme, ci sarà per te fuoco, e qualche cosa di meglio').

An example of satire can be found in the newspaper *Pasquino*, published in Palermo in May 1848. In its second issue, released on 8 May, the editors incorporate a dark sense of humour. The publication features a fictitious decree from the collaborators stating that King Ferdinand II must be beheaded. In response, the people start a collection to fund the construction of a statue by the city's best artist. However, instead of the king's head being placed on the statue, it is sent to the 'furies of hell.'²¹:

By the grace of God, who holds ultimate authority in the realm of opinion granted to us by the free institutions of all peoples, we have considered the report from our collaborator and the ministerial views of our esteemed organisation. Therefore, we have resolved to issue a decree:

1. May the head of him [Ferdinand de Bourbon] be consecrated to the fury of hell.
2. Send it to them immediately, immediately with the first convenience. The individual whocuts andredirects it may have a statue carved by the finest and most skilled artist erected in the Italic Forum, where the royal statues were previously displayed. The funding for this statue shall be obtained voluntarily.
3. Those who are not dishonourable will remain in charge of this decree.

Made in Palermo on 28 May 1848.

Pasquino

According to the compilers of the *Rivista Italiana*, published in Palermo in March 1848, 'intelligence, words, and weapons' represented the three key elements that would make the Sicilians 'great and invincible' and lead to the 'whole Risorgimento.'²² Hints of satire, for example, are evident in *La preghiera di un re*, which reflects Ferdinand's perspective on the outbreak of the revolution and the involvement of Pope Pius IX, who is referred to as a 'heretic':

Mamma mia! It was too bitter for me, the twelfth January / What a bad pill! / This demoniacal day/
It has forever baffled me/ Moral and physical. // If I had it in my hands/ I would like to do it in
pieces/ That heretic pope / // That rogue Pontiff / He sends them to perdition, And into the mouth

²¹ 'Noi Pasquino', in *Pasquino*, n. 2, 28 maggio 1848, 5: ('Per la grazia di Dio assoluto, Dittatore nel regno dell'opinione in virtù dell'autorità, che le libere istituzioni di tutti i popoli ci concedono; Giusta il rapporto del nostro Collaboratore ; Udito il parere ministeriale della nostra libera compagnia; [...] abbiamo risoluto di decretare e decretiamo:

1. Che la testa di lui [Ferdinando di Borbone] sia consecrata alle furie dell'inferno.
2. Che loro si spedisca subito, subito, subito col primo comodo,
3. Che colui il quale recidendola ne eseguirà il rinvio si abbia una statua scolpita dal più bravo, e più libero artista innalzata nel foro italico, ove pria levavasi la fu buona memoria delle statue reali,
4. Che il prezzo di quella si ottenga da una sottoscrizione volontaria,[...] Coloro che non sono vili restano incaricati del presente decreto.

Fatto in Palermo li 28 maggio 1848

Pasquino').

²² *Rivista italiana*, a. 1, n. 1 (6 marzo, 1848), 1.

of the devil // They will forget the impudent / That fasting and sufferings / Purge the soul.²³

Below are the Bourbon monarch's reflections on his Neapolitan subjects, who are vulnerable to the revolutionary influence of the Sicilian rebels. Although it is a fiction, it is essential to note the ethnic component of these verses. Indeed, the king refers to his Sicilian subjects as 'Saracen', alluding to the Arab colonisation of the island:

O Saracen people! / Without law and restraint/ I repudiate you // Enough for me of what is left to me / A bright hope / For my Naples. // Perhaps the good lazzaroni, / With some maccheroni / will become disciplined. / My dear Neapolitan, / It was those wicked Sicilians / Who ruined you. / But those sad ones I abandon: Only for you I love the throne/ My faithful ones. [...] ²⁴

The anti-Borbonic polemic also unfolded differently, expressing itself through music, specifically war songs, choirs, and hymns that the rebels sang in the city streets, during the parades, the torch-lit processions, on the barricades, the consecration of flags, in concerts and even in the living rooms or clubs.

6.2 Singing the Revolution: Hymns, Choirs and War Songs

Pieter M. Judson identified music as a key element in the revolutions of 1848-1849.²⁵ Judson argued that music served several vital functions, including the nationalization of the masses, the promotion of cohesion among political groups, and the strengthening of community identity.

The sounds of hymns, music bands, war songs, and both official and unofficial concerts, as well as film soundtracks, marked various moments of the revolutions that erupted across Europe. A study edited by Barbara Boisits focused on Vienna, Graz, Klagenfurt, Trieste, Lubiana, Zagabria, Novi Sad, Budapest, Bratislava, Praga and Lombardo-Veneto, highlighting how music defined political landscapes.

A comparison between Palermo and the Rhineland region revealed that in the Sicilian capital, but also in other towns and villages, the use of the vernacular in anti-Bourbon musical performances

²³ Ibid., a. 1., n. 3 (10 marzo 1848), 10: ('*Mamma mia!* Fu troppo amaro / Per me il dodici gennaio. / Che brutta pillola!! / Questo giorno indemoniato / M'ha per sempre sconcertato / Morale e fisico. // Se lo avessi nelle mani / Vorrei farlo a brani a brani / Quel papa eretico // Quel Pontefice briccone / Me li manda in perdizione, E in bocca al diavolo // Scorderanno gli impudenti / Che il digiuno e i patimenti / Purgano l'anima /').

²⁴ Ibid.: ('Popolaccio saraceno / Senza legge e senza freno, / io ti ripudio. / Basta a me quel che m'avanza / D'una lucida speranza / Per la mia Napoli / Cari miei napolitani, / Fur que' birbi siciliani / Che vi guastarono. / Ma quei tristi io l'abbandono: Sol per voi mi è caro il trono / Miei fedelissimi. [...]').

²⁵ 'About this Book': B. Boisits, *Musik Und Revolution: Die Produktion von Identität Und Raum Durch Musik in Zentraleuropa 1848/49* (Hollitzer Verlag, 2013), 11-12. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv6jmvgs>.

was quite common. This trend reflects at least two factors. First, lower levels of education compared, for instance, to European standards; second, it represents an attempt to foster a sense of belonging to the Sicilian ‘nation’ at a popular level. An example is the reinterpretation of the Italian tricolour anthem in Sicilian dialect,²⁶ the song *Lu Triculuri*, which was printed on a fly sheet. Let us see some verses:

And with green, white, and red The banner was raised
 Fire upon fire We have to win or die!
 From the head of the Bourbons We have to prepare cannons and fire upon fire
 We have to win or die! From the belly of Bourbons,
 We will do drums and fire upon fire,
 We have to win or die! [...] ²⁷

Music was also a tool to identify the enemy (and the construction of the ‘other’) and rally support for conflict. For example, in 1848, in Germany, some war songs by Berliners included phrases intended to humiliate Danish soldiers, emphasising their perceived cowardice.²⁸ Similarly, in Palermo, resentment towards the Neapolitan government was expressed through hostility towards the Neapolitans. They were often referred to as ‘guapparusi’ (or pretenders) or ‘mància-maccaruni’, which conveyed notions of being good-for-nothing or slackers. A Sicilian war song also highlighted the cowardice of the fleeing enemy, capturing this sentiment in its verses:

Sicilian brothers and friends,
 You hear all my songs that, in Palermo, your villagers
 were right to wage war. All the Neapolitans fled;
 They went away at night in secret. [...] ²⁹

It was very difficult to find sources confirming the spread of cat concerts, widespread in Germany and certain Austrian cities, such as Vienna and Graz, in Sicily.³⁰

²⁶ *Archivio per lo studio delle tradizioni popolari rivista trimestrale*, diretta da S. Pitre e S. Marino, vol. XI (Palermo: C. Clausen, 1892), 191: (‘E cu viridi, biancu, e russu / li bannera si nnalzò / E focu supra focu, / s’avi a vinciri o muri! / Di la testa di Burbuni / li cannuna hâmu a parà: / e focu supra focu, s’avi a vinciri o muri! Di li panza di Burbuni / nn’hamu a fà li tamburi’ / e focu supra focu s’avi a vinciri o muri! / [...]).

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 191: (‘E cu viridi, biancu, e russu / li bannera si nnalzò / E focu supra focu, / s’avi a vinciri o muri! / Di la testa di Burbuni / li cannuna hâmu a parà: / e focu supra focu, s’avi a vinciri o muri! Di li panza di Burbuni / nn’hamu a fà li tamburi’ / e focu supra focu s’avi a vinciri o muri! / [...]).

²⁸ *Musik Und Revolution*, 539-554.

²⁹ ‘Storia di la fujuta di li Napolitani a lu 1848’, in *Archivio per lo studio delle tradizioni popolari: rivista trimestrale*, vol. 11, 182: (‘Fratì ed amici miei siciliani / sintiti tutti chisti miei canzuni, / ca ‘n Palermo li vostri paisani / Di farti guerra nn’appiru raggiuni. / Fugeru, tutti, li Napolitani, / sinni jeru di notti a l’ammucciuni.’

³⁰ These were choirs composed of students who imitated the sounds of cats. They often performed in front of the offices of various politicians and administrators to create discomfort and provoke their removal: see Wolfgang Häusler, ‘Marseillaise, Katzenmusik und Fuchslid als Mittel sozialen und politischen Protests in der Wiener Revolution 1848’, in B. Boisits, *Musik und Revolution*, 37-81.

However, in Sicilian cities, revolutionary songs or hymns often celebrated the life of patriots in the Pantheon of heroes of the national revolution. Yet music served as a tool to celebrate struggles against tyrants (liberty songs), particularly in the Rhineland, where rebels raised choruses against Ottoman and Russian oppression.³¹ In the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, many poems were written against the Bourbon dynasty, particularly targeting Ferdinand II, known as 'King Bomba.' This can be illustrated by the following verses from a hymn composed to celebrate the start of the Sicilian revolution:

That ascend upon your head / the wrath of God/ Rebellious to the state, / rebellious to the great Pio. / I read your crime, / the infamy and sin, O source of faults, / or source of harm / Tyrant, tyrant, / tyrant, tyrant! You have turned into a dagger / the scepter broached, Girdest the laurel / fed blood: Gluttony of prey / spread your claws / On bread, on bread, / feeding your children / Sit on the throne / swimming in the blood / of a people who groan / of a people who languish [...].³²

In the song *L'ultima protesta di la Sicilia* (The Last Protest of Sicily), the verses were written when the revolution spread from Palermo to Naples:³³

Ferdinando, Ferdinando,
where does this sickness come from?
This solemn beating
with so many men and cannons? [...]
Naples has risen against Mariannazzu.³⁴

The song ends with the expulsion of the Bourbon dynasty and the establishment of a new government by the people. The final verse encapsulates the idea of popular sovereignty effectively: ('Your title of king has fallen: / You are alive, that is enough! / The king is now the people, / Master of himself!')³⁵

Revolutionary parades were often accompanied by bands, and in the case of the Italian *Risorgimento*, by the waving of the tricolour from city halls. The marches of the patriots traversed

³¹ B. Boisits, *Musik Und Revolution*, 214

³² 'Inno festivo pel 12 del '48', in *Raccolta, di varie scritture pubblicate dal comitato d dai piu' ardenti cittadini: in occasione della rivolta succeduta in Palermo dal giorno 12 gennaio 1848 in poi* (Palermo: Stamperia Carini, 1848), 71: ('Ti gravi sul capo / lo sdegno di Dio / Ribelle allo stato, / ribelle al gran Pio Ti leggo il delitto, / l'infamia il peccato, O fonte di colpe, / o fonte di danno Tiranno, tiranno, / tiranno, tiranno! Cangiasti in pugnale / lo scettro abborrito, Cingesti l'alloro / di sangue nudrito: Ingorde di prede / stendesti gli artigli Sul pane, sul pane, / che nutre i tuoi figli Ti assidi sul trono / che nuota nel sangue Di un popol che geme/ di un popol che langue [...]).

³³ 'L'ultima protesta di la Sicilia', in *Archivio per lo studio delle tradizioni popolari: rivista trimestrale*, 187-189

³⁴ Insulting epithet addressed to the Bourbon king which corresponds to 'traitor' and 'ruffiano'. *Archivio per lo studio delle tradizioni popolari: rivista trimestrale*, 189: ('Firdinannu, Firdinannu, / dunni ti vinni stu malunnu, / sta sulenni lignatuna / cu tan'omini e cannuna? [...] S'arrivutau Napuli contra di Mariannazzu').

the main streets of the cities and frequently concluded in front of the cathedral, where the Te Deum was sung. On this occasion, the blessing of flags took place.

In the following letter, partially reported, Giuseppe conveys to his son, a young patriot, the joy felt by the city of Girgenti [Agrigento] when the news of the revolution broke out in Palermo:

Dearest son,

Today, more than any other day, at six o'clock, having announced the victory of Palermo in the City of Girgenti, universal cries of joy and triumph resonate from every corner, echoing through every class: 1 *Viva Palermo*, 2 *Viva Pio IX*, 3 *Viva the Constitution*. These exclamations, arising from the depths of a heart always tied to the magnanimity, courage, and constancy of all Palermitani, are voiced by a multitude of people who, led by the Illustrious Colonel Bianchini, run and retrace their steps from Porta di Ponte to Porta di Mazzara, traversing the entire city with the band playing music and the tricolour flag [...].³⁶

In 1848, the sounds of the revolution in Europe encompassed the ringing of church bells, the firing of cannons and guns, patriotic choirs, hymns, war songs and the less conventional noises of cat concerts (see above). The soundtrack of the Sicilian revolution also featured specific sounds emanating from the working tools of the peasant classes. A popular song recounts that, following the bombing of Messina in February 1848, the population organised resistance to the advance of the Bourbon troops. In the Sicilian capital, amid great suffering, shortage of food, and also lacking in weapons, rebels resorted to hoes, shovels and picks:

Long live Ruggeru Settimu! Long live freedom! [...] Everyone in Palermo ran:
with weapons and hoes each to the moats,
The defence is here And za' za' za'
Long live freedom!³⁷

The refrain 'zà, zà, zà' evoked the sound of digging hoes. In April 1849, during the fortification of Palermo and the excavation of ditches, this refrain became part of a short ritual. This ritual allowed the recognition of patriots who wanted to continue the fight against the Bourbons. In response to

³⁵ Ibid.: ('Di Re, finiu lu titulu: / si' vivu, t'abbasta chissu! / Lu Re, ora, è lu Populu / Patruni di sé stessu!').

³⁶ *Raccolta, di varie scritture pubblicate dal comitato dai più ardenti cittadini*, 51-52: ('Girgenti, 22 Gennaro 1848. Carissimo figlio, Oggi più che in ogni altro giorno alle ore sedici essendosi annunziata la vittoria di Palermo nella Città di Girgenti i voti universali di gioia e di tripudio echegiano per tutti gli angoli ripetendosi da ogni classe 1 Viva Palermo, 2 Viva Pio IX, 3 Viva la Costituzione. Queste esclamazioni nate dal fondo di un cuore legato sempre alla magnanimità, al coraggio ed alla costanza di tutti i Palermitani si ripetono da una immensità di popolo che, guidato dall'Illustre Colonnello Bianchini, percorre e ripercorre da Porta di Ponte sino a Porta di Mazzara traversando cioè l'intera Città con alla testa la Banda musicale e la bandiera tricolori [...]').

³⁷ *Memorie della rivoluzione siciliana dell'anno 1848*, vol. 2 (Palermo, Tipografia degli operai, 1898), 25: ('Viva Ruggeru Settimu! / Viva la libertà! [...] / Tutti a Palermo currinu: / cu armi e zappe va / ognuno a li fussati, / pri la difesa è ccà. / E za' za' za! / Viva la libertà!').

the cry, the answer was to shout, ‘War! War! We want war! Now!’ while performing a small jump.³⁸ The anti-Borbonic protest in Sicily also brought women into the political arena. These were primarily from the upper-middle class or aristocracy, endowed with extensive culture, who engaged in literary and often journalistic activities while also actively participating in the struggles of the *Risorgimento*.³⁹

6.3 A Revolution within the Revolution: Sicilian Women’s Resurgence

Unexpected feminist claims, social and political activism can be found in two Sicilian journals, *La Tribuna delle Donne. Religione, Poesie, Amore* and *La Legione delle Pie sorelle. Foglio compilato dalle medesime a beneficio dell’istituzione*. Both were preceded by the founding of two associations. The condition of women and their subordination to men were the main themes addressed in the first periodical that advocated equal rights for women, including women’s suffrage. After 12 January, the day the Sicilian revolution began, women in Palermo voiced their frustrations towards men for their indifference and for not recognizing the contributions women made to the patriotic struggle. This sentiment was expressed in the first issue of the *Tribuna delle donne* in June 1848:

Generous women of Sicily! The hour of our resurrection has sounded. The 12th of January was not just for us, but for those ingrates who now despise us. Let this righteous protest serve as a glove of defiance. Tremble, wicked ones! Our voices will crush their impudent pride. Let this be the voice of the whole island. War to the oppressors!⁴⁰

The fight against Bourbon absolutism was likened to that of Sicilian women against men. A call for revolution against the ‘Empire of the Males’ was made to all Sicilian women. The establishment of an Association called *Free Woman* took place on 15 June 1848, during which ‘Beatrice Portinari’⁴¹ was elected as president.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ More on this issue, see S. Soldani, ‘Donne e nazione nella rivoluzione italiana del 1848’, *Passato e presente*, 46 (1999), 75–102; ‘Il Risorgimento delle donne’, in *Storia d’Italia. Annali* 22, 184–224; A.M. Banti, *Sublime madre nostra* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2011); M. Cepeda Fuentes, *Sorelle d’Italia. Le donne che hanno fatto il Risorgimento* (Torino: Blu edizioni, 2011); *Il Risorgimento invisibile. Patriote del mezzogiorno d’Italia*, a cura di L. Guidi, A. Russo e M. Varriale (Napoli, Comune di Napoli Edizioni, 2011).

⁴⁰ *La Tribuna delle donne*, a. 1., n. 1, 2.

⁴¹ The newspaper’s editors signed their articles with the names of well-known female figures of the past, both real and fictional, such as Beatrice Portinari, Margherita Pusterla, Beatrice Cenci, Madama Laura (?), Madama Gemma (De Virgy?), Francesca da Rimini.

The first meeting was held at the residence of Duchess Guidolfi, attended by 136 women of all ages. The Duchess set up a podium adorned with two tricolour flags, which displayed the motto: – *Religione – Poesia – Amore*.⁴² A bold declaration was made: ('MEN! You will be shamed, and you will learn that women never forget offences. We have also been wronged. Now is the time to address disbelief. [...] But today we call out your coalition, that very coalition formed for your benefit.')⁴³

Women called for a 'political and civil resurgence', especially during times of war. As emphasised in the following passage: 'Now the concept of regeneration resonates with everyone. Men continue to refer to us as the 'beautiful sex,' but while we were once oppressed by the events of December 12, we are now trampled underfoot with indifference and contempt. Our protest on June 15 marked our civil and political resurgence.'⁴⁴

The women of Palermo did not limit their remonstrance to the distribution of revolutionary proclamations; they also organised meetings and concerts to launch initiatives and promote associations. In this context, the editorial team published the Statute of the Organic Association of Sicilian Women. Some important articles are:

Title 1

Article 1 An association of women is open throughout Sicily.

Article 2 The object of this association is to assert the rights of women, as created by God with men, and to his likeness, and to ensure the exercise of these rights against the brutal force of the former.

Article 3: A central tribune is established in Palermo.⁴⁵

The purpose of the Statute was to create a network of women and associations widely spread across the island: 'We have protested and prayed in vain. Now, let us rise, armed with our noble pride. We will fight and win. To the courageous struggle of the heroic Sicilian women, let us stand united against men who oppressed them. Gather in your forums, and let us speculate, invent, and

⁴² Ibid., a. 1, n. 1, 2

⁴³ Ibid., a. 1, n. 1, 4: ('UOMINI! Sarà vostra la vergogna ed allora imparerete che femmine offese non perdonano mai. E offese fummo noi pur troppo [sic], Ora l'ora del disinganno è giunta. [...] Ma oggi abborriamo il vostro consorzio, quel consorzio che formava per voi gli ozi beati [...]').

⁴⁴ *La Tribuna delle donne*, a. 1, n. 2, (Palermo, 2 luglio 1848), 5: ('Or la parola rigenerazione suona per tutti [...] gli uomini regalandoci solo il vecchio, e noioso titolo di bel sesso, se pria del 12 gennaio ci opprimevano, ora ci calpestano con coll'obbrobrioso disprezzo dell'indifferenza. La nostra protesta del 15 giugno è stata il segnale del nostro risorgimento civile e politico.').

⁴⁵ Titolo 1

Articolo 1 In tutta la Sicilia è aperta un'associazione di donne.

Articolo 2 Lo scopo di questa associazione è affermare i diritti delle donne, creati da Dio con gli uomini e a sua somiglianza, e garantire l'esercizio di tali diritti contro la forza brutale dei primi.

Articolo 3: A Palermo viene istituita una tribuna centrale.

write.⁴⁶

Another proposal within the *Free Woman* Association was made by Mrs. Clarina Rossi, who suggested the creation of a federal league encompassing all the states of Italy and fostering unity between Sicilian women and those from Northern Italy. In this context, the members reached out to Mrs. Adele Ristori,⁴⁷ inviting her to join the Association. The political initiative was also broadened to include other nations. For instance, during another meeting, Mrs. Francesca from Rimini extended an invitation to George Sand: 'The interests of Sicilian women align with those of France, positioning us at the forefront of the European political landscape and offering valuable guidance.'⁴⁸ The monthly *Tribuna delle donne* was short-lived, with only two issues published: the first on 21 June 1848, and the second the following month. Unfortunately, the adoption of assumed names prevents the revelation of their identities.

Another Association of women was *La Legione delle Pie Sorelle*, established in Palermo in August 1848. It had a weekly of the same name, published from 21 October 1848. Thereafter, the magazine was published monthly, and it finally closed with issues 7-8 of 2 January 1849. The primary objective of this philanthropic association was to establish a structure for the reception and education of orphans. The members were therefore dedicated to other charitable works, including the expansion of childcare services and visits to patients in hospitals.

From one article we learn that the secretary of this Association, and also editor of the magazine, was Rosina Muzio Salvo. It is interesting to dwell on this Sicilian woman, who was a poet, journalist, and one of the first novelists in nineteenth-century Sicily.

Rosina Muzio Salvo (Termini Imerese, 23 December 1816 – 20 February 1866) came from noble origins. After the death of her mother, the Marquise Salvo, she was sent to a convent, where she began composing verses while still a young maiden. At under twenty years old, she married Baron Gioacchino Muzio. Canon Agostino Giuffrè taught her the art of transforming words into poetry. Her notable works include *Poesie* (1845), *Prose e poesie* (1852), and *Versi* (1869). Some of her poetry was published in the progressive magazine *La Ruota*, which was published in Palermo from January 1840 to August 1842, and featured contributions from many important Italian patriots.

Thanks to her close relationship with fellow archaeologist Baldassarre Romano, Rosina ventured into the novel genre, which was quite unusual for women of her time. Her works include *L'Adelina*

⁴⁶ Ibid., 8: ('Noi abbiamo protestato ed invano pregato. Ora insorgiam, e ci armiamo di fierezza e di nobile orgoglio. Pugn timeremo e vinceremo. [...] Alla guerra adunque o eroiche donne siciliane, alla guerra contro gli uomini. Riunite nelle vostre tribune speculate, inventate, scrivete.').

⁴⁷ Adele Ristori (Civiale del Friuli, 29 January 1822-Roma, 9 October 1906), theatre actress of great success in Italy and abroad who embraced the Italian patriotic cause.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 7: ('l'interesse delle donne siciliane vada d'accordo con quello della Francia, perché ci mette a capo dello Stato Politico Europeo e ci consigli [...]').

(1846), *Giovanni* (1852), *Le Due Contesse* (1863), *Antonio e Brigida* (1861) and *Dio ti guardi* (1862). Rosina's stories are rooted in romance; she showcases 'her talent in describing the most subtle movements of the heart and the deepest struggles of affections and passions'.⁴⁹

Rosina's literary production, which includes poems and short stories, also features some pedagogical writings, such as the *Lettere a Faustina sull'Educazione*, published in Genoa in 1862. It is a collection of eight letters in which the author advises an ideal mother on how to educate her children. A member of the Royal Peloritana Academy, she died in February 1866.

Letteria Montoro (Messina 1825-1893) was another representative of the Sicilian 'rebel' women of the nineteenth century. These writers, poets, and often journalists skilfully blended literary creation with political and social activism. Their efforts were further complicated by the 'double marginality' they faced as both women and Sicilians.⁵⁰ She was the daughter of an exile and actively participated in the Sicilian revolution of 1848, notably through her collaboration with the patriotic newspaper *L'Aquila Siciliana*. After the failure of the revolution, Letteria also faced the experience of exile: unfortunately, there is little additional information about this period.⁵¹ As Daniela Bombara noted, in the 1850s, Letteria's return to Messina marked 'a shift of focus from the realm of tangible society, where revolution is now impractical, to the virtual literary world, where commitment remains possible.'⁵² Among the best-known poems of the poet from Palermo are some published in the magazine *La Favilla*, such as *A Bellini*; *Memorie*; *A Vincenzo Baffi*; *Amore*, *All'amico Carmelo Pardi*; *Alla Luna*. Montoro's poems have been published in various magazines or journals. For example, *Ad un Giacinto* (1853), appeared in the journal *La missione delle donne*, which was directed by Olimpia Saccati; *Il pensiero dell'anima* (1853) was included in a collection edited by Ferdinando Bosio in 1865 titled *Le poesie di illustri italiani*. It was later featured in the collection by Francesco Guardione;⁵³ *La solitudine. Ottave a rima data*, published in the newspaper *Eco Peloritano*, V, s. II, fasc. 7 January 1859; *Un sospiro*, in *Strenna femminile dell'Associazione filantropica delle Donne Italiane* (1861); *Pel centenario di Dante Alighieri del secolo XIX* (1864), in *Antologia poetica siciliana del secolo XIX* (1885) di F. Guardione; *Sospiro*

⁴⁹ G. Rizzini, *Studi storici, letterari e morali del Romanzo* (Chiari: Tipografia Buffoli, 1867), 61-62: ('maestra nel descrivere i moti più occulti del cuore e le lotte più interne degli affetti e delle passioni dell'animo').

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 176.

⁵¹ For biographical information on Letteria Montoro, see G. Oliva, *Annali della Città di Messina (continuazione all'opera di Caio Domenico Gallo) con cenni biografici dei cittadini illustri della seconda metà del secolo 19*, Vol. 8 (Messina, Società Messinese di Storia Patria, 1954), 292-293.

⁵² 'Al margine dei margini: ribellione, esperienza del dolore e denuncia sociale in Letteria Montoro, donna siciliana e scrittrice del Romanticismo', in *Rivista internazionale de Culturas y Literaturas*, n. 20 (2017), 171-187 (here 173-174): ('uno slittamento di interesse dall'ambito della società reale, in cui la rivoluzione è oramai inattuabile, al mondo virtuale letterario, dove ancora è possibile l'impegno.'). <https://doi.org/10.12795/RICL.2017.i20.13>

⁵³ *Antologia poetica siciliana del secolo XIX con proemio e note* (Palermo, Tempo, 1885).

di una vergine candiota, in *Candia: scritti in prosa e in verso* (1868), a work financed by the Filellenico committee established in Messina to help the Cretan patriots in their struggle for independence.

Letteria was one of the few women in Sicily to venture into the genre of the novel, which was not widely embraced in the cultural context of her time, dominated by classicist literature. In the nineteenth century, it was common for many short stories and novels to be published in periodicals or magazines, often in episodic format. One of Letteria's most notable works is her best-known novel, *Maria Landini* (Palermo, Clamis e Roberti, 1850), which is partly autobiographical. It is worth briefly examining this novel. On one hand, it is clear that the influence of the Gothic style, particularly that of Ann Radcliffe, is present. On the other hand, the plot of the novel is modeled after *I Promessi Sposi* by Alessandro Manzoni. Additionally, both in terms of the storyline and the themes explored, the work also demonstrates a Byronian influence. The protagonist is a young woman who resists an arranged marriage to a wealthy old man. In addition to the complex and often forced love typical of Byron's oriental tales, such as, for example, *The Giaour* or *The Bride of Abydos*, the plot of Letteria's novel also features evil characters, like Summacola, the Cardinal Minister of Police, and the Pope.

As the story unfolds, the protagonist, Maria, ultimately seeks refuge with a group of brigands after her experience wandering in the woods. When considering these two moments in the narrative, we should also examine the possible influence of Vincenzo Padula,⁵⁴ a Calabrian writer, inspired by Byron, particularly in his most renowned works, *Valentino* and *Antonello capobrigante*.⁵⁵

Montoro's description of the brigands closely resembles that of the Calabrian abbot. It presents a somewhat mythologized view of these figures, portraying them as outlaws who exist on the fringes of society. They choose a life of crime as a means of defending themselves against the abuses of the powerful. Despite their violent actions, these robbers possess a 'germ of virtue'⁵⁶ that redeems them from being perceived entirely negatively. Through this portrayal, Letteria provides

⁵⁴ Vincenzo Padula (Acri, Cosenza, 1819 - 1893) was an abbot of liberal ideas. He collaborated on the literary magazine *Il Viaggiatore* (Naples, 1840), which served as a meeting point for southern patriots, including Domenico Mauro. In 1842, he composed his first novel, *Il Monastero di Sambucina*. Three years later, he published his most Byronian story, *Valentino*, featuring a protagonist who closely resembles the Byronian corsair Conrad. Padula was a collaborator with various literary journals and political newspapers, including *Il Progresso* (1861) and *Il Bruzio* (1864), the latter of which he founded. In *Il Bruzio*, he published an essay on the living conditions of Calabrian peasants titled *Dello stato delle persone in Calabria (The State of People in Calabria)*, as well as the Byronic drama *Antonello Capobrigante Calabrese* (1845). He passed away in Acri in 1884.

⁵⁵ *Il Monastero di Sambucina, novella calabrese* (1842), a cura di S. De Chiara (Nicastro, Tip. F. Bevilacqua, 1914); *Antonello, capobrigante calabrese, deamma in cinque atti* (1845), a cura di F. Gullo (Milano, Universale Economica, 1952).

⁵⁶ Montuoro, *Maria Landini*, 95: ('un germe di virtù').

insight into the living conditions of Sicilian peasants, exiles, women⁵⁷ and, importantly, the brigands themselves — those who lived on the margins of Southern society during the Risorgimento period. The aforementioned Rosina Muzio Salvo and Letteria Montoro, along with the female poets Mariannina Coffa-Caruso (Noto, 1841-1878), Ramondetta-Fileti and Laretta Li Greci (1829- 1900), both from Palermo), have become prominent figures among the Sicilian intellectual women who were considered rebels during the *Risorgimento*.

Another noteworthy poet from Messina is Giuseppina Turrisi-Colonna (1822-1848). She hailed from a noble family; her father being Baron Mauro Turrisi and her mother was Rosalia Colonna. Alongside her sister Anna, who was a painter, Giuseppina received an advanced cultural education. She studied under notable figures such as Giuseppe Borghi, Michele Amari and Francesco Paolo Perez. Still very devout, Turrisi-Colonna composed patriotic verses urging Sicilian women to revolution:

No, though time changes
The fortunes of kingdoms and nations,
They have not lost a leaf
From your beautiful crowns, O my country! [...]

[...]
For humble care and unworthy idleness
They take fire from the intellect [...] Arise,
or care, and in the homeland room For you,
return the Daring and Hope⁵⁸

As a translator, known for some works of Ovid, she garnered praise from esteemed colleagues such as T. Mamiani, G. Niccolini, G. Giusti, M. d'Azeglio, and F.D. Guerrazzi, with whom he corresponded through letters. Turrisi-Colonna, having moved away from the classicism taught by Borghi (particularly Dante), found inspiration in the figure of Lord Byron. She dedicated a trilogy to Byron, which includes *l'Addio di Lord Byron all'Italia*, *Lord Byron a Ravenna* e *Lord Byron a Missolungi*.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ For this issue, see F. Brancato, 'La donna tra Otto e Novecento in Sicilia', in *Archivio Storico Siciliano*, X (1984), 215-252.

⁵⁸ 'Alle donne siciliane', in *Liriche*, (Le Monnier, Firenze, 1846), 53-56: ('No, benché il tempo muta / La fortuna dei regni e delle genti / Non han foglia perduta / Le tue belle corone, o Patria mia! / -[...] Perché l'umile cure e l'ozio indegno / Tolgono foco all'ingegno [...] / Sorgete, o care, e nella patria stanza / Per voi torni l'ardire e la speranza'.); Turrisi Cononna, G., *Poesie edite e inedite*, (Palermo, Ruffino, 1854), si vedano anche *Il pensiero civile di Giuseppina Turrisi Colonna, a cura e con proemio di F. Guardione* (Palermo, 1922); G. Zanella, *Scritti Varii* (Firenze, Le Monnier, 1877 (370).

⁵⁹ *Lettere d'illustri italiani a Giuseppina Turrisi-Colonna e alcuni scritti della sorella Anna, con prefazione di F. Guardione* (Palermo, Tip. Editrice Del Tempo, 1884).

Below are some verses from another composition titled *Ultimo Canto di Lord Byron*:

Oh Greece! Oh glory! Of every bold theme,
I hear the noise of weapons, and the sound of trumpets;
As a Spartan stands firm behind his shield, I am free!
Awaken my spirit — Greece is awake! — Revive your fire, and your dwindling virtue! /
You stir me deeply: I charge into this endeavor with passion!⁶⁰

After a brief stay of a few months in Tuscany in 1846, the poet returned to Sicily. On the eve of the revolution, Giuseppina tragically passed away on 17 February 1848, following a difficult childbirth in which the baby did not survive.

Ideas about political renewal that, as we have shown, included contributions from women, were expressed in various ways. For instance, some of these expressions took the form of regicidal iconoclasm during the liberal and constitutional uprisings of the Age of Revolution.

6.4 Melting the Bourbon's Statues: La Farina's Decree of 19 April 1848

On 19 April 1848, the House of Commons of the Sicilian Parliament approved a decree that mandated the removal of bells from convents and confraternities that had been suppressed during the French Decade.⁶¹ Additionally, La Farina proposed melting down bronze statues of the Bourbon kings to produce cannons, with the exception of those considered valuable works of art. This decree came in response to several anti-Bourbon riots in Messina, where public outrage led to the destruction of a colossal marble statue of Ferdinando II.

A few years earlier, in 1839, the city's mayor had commissioned Pietro Tenerani to create a celebratory work, which La Farina himself praised.⁶² In Palermo, the citizens did not wait for the approval of the Chamber of Peers and immediately put the La Farina decree into action. They marched through the city streets holding torches and shouting, 'Long live the Parliament! Death to Ferdinando!'.⁶³ In the process, they pulled down many bronze and marble statues.

The press of the time included references to episodes of *Risorgimento* iconoclasm in Sicily, as

⁶⁰ 'Ultimo Canto di Lord Byron', *ibid.*, 77-78: ('Oh Grecia! oh gloria! d'ogni tema ignudo / Dell'armi ascolto, delle trombe il suono; / Come Spartano sul difeso scudo, / Libero sono / Desta o mio spirto - chè la Grecia è desta! / Desta il tuo foco, la virtù che langue! / Forte mi scuoti: a versar corro in questa Impresa il sangue!').

⁶¹ *Lettere d'illustri italiani a Giuseppina Turrise-Colonna e alcuni scritti della sorella Anna, con prefazione di F. Guardione* (Palermo, Tip. Editrice Del Tempo, 1884).

⁶² Quoted in O. Raggi, *Della vita e delle opere di Pietro Tenerani, del suo tempo e della sua scuola nella scultura*. Libri 3 (Firenze, Le Monnier, 1880), 200-201.

⁶³ *Istoria documentata della rivoluzione siciliana* [...], 171: ('Viva il Parlamento! Morte a Ferdinando!' Un corteo percorse le vie della città, e quante statue v'erano, e eran molte, di bronzo e marmo, tante ne abatté [...]).

confirmed by other sources preserved in the Municipal Library of Palermo and historical travel guides.⁶⁴

In the newspaper *La Forbice*, two incidents of rebellion are reported. The first took place on 7 September 1848, during a procession in Palermo. The participants carried a portrait of Ferdinando II, which was kept in the city's cathedral, and ultimately destroyed it. The article also mentions additional portraits displayed on the central streets of Toledo in Naples, where the Bourbon king was depicted with different appearances, such as wearing Pulcinella's cap and walking arm in arm with one or two *lazzaroni*, having a tail and nails like beasts, and having horns like Lucifer.⁶⁵

In the 9 May 1848 issue of *La Forbice*, the critique of the Bourbon monarchy was enhanced by references to local historical traditions. These references served to glorify and legitimize the revolutionary actions of the early nineteenth century. The anonymous editor notes that several Sicilian cities celebrated the day following the declaration of the Bourbon monarchy's abolition, which was proclaimed by the Sicilian Parliament in Palermo on 13 April 1848. In Palermo, a mock funeral was held to symbolize the end of Ferdinando II of Bourbon's reign and his dynasty.⁶⁶

In Catania, the statues of Francesco I and his son Ferdinando were removed from their pedestals. These events evoke the archaic epoch of Timoleone,⁶⁷ the courageous Corinthian champion in the struggle against tyranny. He insisted that 'each statue should undergo a trial: [...], debated calmly and decided with justice; thus, one after another, they were all toppled after being proven guilty and unworthy to stand before the sun and free men.'⁶⁸ In this context, the removal of the Bourbon sovereigns' statues can be seen as legitimate, as their symbols were subjected to a formal trial and the judgment of the people.

Patriotic rhetoric drew upon myths and legends, particularly in the case of Sicily, where these stories were deeply rooted in classical culture. This cultural heritage served as a source of inspiration for the nationalist struggle among educated patriots. The neoclassicism embraced by Sicilian patriots reflected their admiration for Greek heroes, such as Timoleon and Diocles, as well as great defenders of freedom like the orators Isocrates and Demosthenes. Their reverence for these figures was not merely an exhibition of erudition; it also demonstrated their desire to provide ideal

⁶⁴ *Palermo e dintorni. Guida per R. Salvo e S. Lanza* (Palermo, Stabil. Tip. Lao, 1895).

⁶⁵ 'I giornali di Napoli', *La Forbice, Gazzetta periodica di Sicilia*, a. 1, n. 72, 286.

⁶⁶ 'Le esequie di Ferdinando II e della sua dinastia', *ibid.*, a. 1, n. 1, 2.

⁶⁷ Timoleone, also known as Timoleonte (Corinth, 400 B.C. - Syracuse, 336 B.C.), was a Greek general and politician. In 345 B.C., he led the Syracusan Democrats in their struggle against the despot Dionysius II. He also fought against Carthage's attempts to dominate Sicily. Timoleone and his hoplites ultimately defeated the Carthaginians at the Battle of Cremiso (341). After conquering a Sicilian city, he established a *Simmachia*, a military alliance with other Sicilian poleis, to combat tyranny. A few years after introducing constitutional reforms, he died in Syracuse between 337 and 336 B.C.

⁶⁸ 'Le esequie di Ferdinando II e della sua dinastia', 2: ('si facesse a ciascuna [statua] il processo: [...], dibattesse con calma e si decidesse con giustizia: così una dopo l'altra furono tutte abbattute dopo che furono provate colpevoli e

models of heroism, freedom, and defence of the homeland, which would help shape a new political identity.

6.5 The Fight against Tyranny

It is worth noting that the efforts of militant Sicilian intellectuals to reconnect with ancient Greece were more significant than the desire to link with the Middle Ages, which was the cultural focus of the Italian Romanticism. The *Risorgimento* in Sicily was characterized by a surge in classical studies and a strong interest in archaeological excavations. The Sicilian patriots believed that rediscovering traces of their glorious past would help them reclaim a national identity that recent occupations had erased. For example by looking to the ‘Golden Age’ of Athens. They believed that democratic and libertarian values could be revived by following this model.

In his youth, Carlo Gemelli devoted himself to translating classical works, such as Demosthenes’ *Olintiache* (Messina, 1834), Isocrates’ *Oration to Demonico* (1835), and Lucian’s *Charon* (1836). Gemelli urged his contemporaries to study these classics:

Neglecting Greek literature by those who aspire to be learned is a significant disservice. The works of the Greeks are invaluable and offer much relevance to our current circumstances. The Greeks, who have always remained unaffected by human cowardice and the need for protection, present a unique perspective on building a society that is both free and great. Failing to study Greek literature means missing a crucial resource that could transform our understanding of how to improve our society’s morals, politics, and emotions.⁶⁹

Salvatore Chindemi published several translations from Latin, including the work of Flavio Volpisco from Syracuse, the *Vite degli Imperatori Romani* (Lives of the Roman Emperors) (Venice, 1842; Catania, 1847). Additionally, he released a volume titled *Carmi Cittadini* (Catania, 1847), which is quite rare in libraries. It is fascinating to explore some aspects addressed by Chindemi, who sought to highlight the prestige of his homeland, Syracuse, founded by Corinthian settlers — possibly led by Archia — in 734 BC. He expressed this sentiment through various verses, which we can refer to here in prose:

Do not forget that here wandered the scornful shadow of Diocle, who was guilty of his own laws

indegne di stare innanzi al sole e agli uomini liberi’).

⁶⁹ ‘To Francesco Di Paola Avolio’, in *Alcuni opuscoli di Carlo Gemelli* (Firenze, 1848), 37: (‘Ma pria intanto di por termine alle mie parole io bramo amico mio richiamarvi al pensiero quanto fallano il cammino tutti coloro i quali intendendo di professar le lettere disdegnano lo studio e una profonda conoscenza della greca letteratura stoltamente proclamando i bisogni del secolo voler altri studi ed altre lettere. Oh! s’eglino sapessero quanto le opere di que divini greci sono utili alle nostre odierne condizioni e come le sole greche lettere che nacquerò e crebbero sfuggendo sempre ogni umana protezione e viltà sono ben acconce a crear un popolo libero e grande, oh certo io dico che non griderebber tanto contro la vanità e la futilità di questi studi.’)

and left behind a legacy of blood to his kingdom, pouring out his indomitable spirit and altering [...] There, the tyrant's palace was razed to the ground. Timoleonte subsequently erected a gymnasium to strengthen the youth, who had been softened by idleness and revelry. Later, Timoleonte himself was laid to rest in a tomb. Our people honour him each year by commemorating him with poetic and athletic competitions.⁷⁰

Chindemi's poem, *L'antico foro di Acradina* (The Ancient Forum of Acradina), describes a monument once located in the central-southern part of Syracuse, extending to the island of Ortigia. This forum was frequented by many famous figures from ancient Greece, including Diocle and Timoleone. Diocle was a renowned legislator from Syracuse who established laws that imposed the death penalty on anyone who appeared in public armed. However, in an effort to control a popular uproar, he drew his weapons, which led the public to accuse him of violating his own laws. Consequently, he was judged a criminal. As a result, Diocle chose to take his own life to remain consistent with the laws of the state. Chindemi's narrative highlights the palace of the tyrant Dionysius II, located near the Forum that Timoleon had demolished. The hero of the struggle against tyranny established a gymnasium in that area, followed by the construction of a gym. Additionally, he arranged for the burial site of the first Dionysius, where he was interred. Chindemi notes that annual athletic competitions were organized to commemorate the expulsion of the tyrants and to pay homage to the heroism involved in this struggle.

7. Anti-Bourbon Criticism: La Farina and Gemelli

The nature of the Bourbons' rule has been the subject of extensive and passionate debates, which can be categorized into two main perspectives in the historiography of the Two Sicilies. The first perspective emphasizes the exceptional social, economic, and cultural backwardness of the southern Bourbon kingdom. In contrast, the second, more recent viewpoint seeks to challenge this negative portrayal by comparing the conditions of the Two Sicilies to those of other regions in Europe. This perspective also highlights the Bourbon reform efforts, particularly those of Charles III.⁷¹

⁷⁰ *Carmi cittadini* (Catania, Tip. Accademia Gioienia, 1847): 'L'antico foro di Acradina', in *Antologia poetica siciliana del secolo XIX con proemio e note di F. Guardione* (Palermo: Tip. Edit. Tempo, 1885), 110-121 (here 111, 115): ('Né ricordar che qui vagava l'ombra / Sdegnosa di Diocle allor che reo / Della sua legge e vindice lasciava / Esempio di suo sangue al bruno regno / La sua invitta versando anima altera // Ivi, al suo rasa la magion tiranna, / Timoleonte la palestra ergea / A invigorir la gioventù cui franse / Astuta signoria di ozî e bagordi / E poscia tomba avea Timoleonte / E a sovvenir del generoso ogni anno / Di ginnici certami e di armonie / Onorò sé medesimo il popol nostro //').

⁷¹ On this issue, for the most recent historiography see S.A. Granato, *Un Regno al tramonto. Lo Stato borbonico tra riforme e crisi (1858-1861)* (Roma, Carocci, 2015); Id., *Monarchie mediterranee. Ferdinando IV di Borbone tra Sicilia ed Europa (1806-1815)* (Roma, Carocci, 2017).

As already said in the opening chapter, a third revisionist and revanchist narrative has emerged from this second perspective, although professional historians do not support it. This narrative, often identified as neo-Borbonism, tends to glorify Bourbonism and results in a troubling ‘confusion between memory and history.’⁷² It promotes the idea of local ‘primacies’, claims that Savoyard forces colonized the South, and argues for the exploitation of its resources, alluding to the existence of a mythical region known as *Borbonia felix* prior to the unification of Italy.

This study moves away from revisionist anti-*Risorgimento* views, reaffirming not the exceptional conditions of the Bourbon kingdom but the distinctiveness of the pre-unification Mezzogiorno. Furthermore, the analysis of events is framed within a broader context, considering national dynamics, international policies, and the complex process of nation-building.

The following pages focus on the narratives provided by the three patriots examined, particularly concerning Bourbon politics, its key figures (such as kings, ministers, and court members), and their insights into constitutional and liberal movements. A key question arises from this examination: if, as the nostalgic Bourbons assert, the kingdom truly experienced significant progress and well-being, then why were there popular revolts in the 1820s, 1830s, and 1840s? Additionally, why have so many southern patriots written accounts that depict a frequently negative portrayal of the Two Sicilies?

A retrospective assessment of Bourbon rule can be found La Farina’s *Istoria documentata della rivoluzione siciliana, e delle sue relazioni co' governi italiani e stranieri (1848-1849)*, published in Switzerland in 1850, and Gemelli’s *Storia delle relazioni diplomatiche tra la Sicilia e la Toscana negli anni 1848-49* (Tourin, 1853) and his *Storia della siciliana rivoluzione* (Bologna, 1857). Both La Farina and Gemelli’s works on the 1848 Sicilian revolution include a brief *excursus* on Sicily’s history before and after the establishment of the Bourbon monarchy.⁷³

Let us examine a few key points arising from a thorough analysis of these works.

7.1 Before the Bourbon Conquest of the Kingdoms of Sicily and Naples

In his *La Sicilia e il suo futuro* (1860), Gemelli skilfully outlines the history of Sicily, covering its earliest Greek and Roman colonies, the Arab hegemony, the Norman conquest, and the Swabian dynasty. During Frederick II’s rule, Sicilian public law was established, and the Diet of Frankfurt proclaimed the independence of the Kingdom of Sicily. The creation of parliament is credited to Roger Norman’s rule. Historian Gemelli particularly emphasizes the Norman era, during which the constitution and the Sicilian Parliament were established. Let us focus on this issue that is central

⁷² C. Pinto, *Gli ultimi borbonici*, 62: (‘confusione tra memoria e storia’).

to the rhetoric of the Sicilian patriots. Indeed, the independence and autonomy of the island originated from the Norman presence, but this was later undermined by the successors of King Charles III of Bourbon.

7.1.1 The Mythologisation of the Norman Age

Gemelli described the Normans as a ‘temperate monarchy’⁷⁴ during which the Sicilian parliaments were established. Despite frequent conflicts between princes and barons, these local representative bodies consistently maintained ‘their rights to grant subsidies, which were referred to as donatives; to create laws; and to oppose the unjust ordinances of the prince.’⁷⁵ La Farina’s perspective aligns with Gemelli’s. He noted that:

In addition to the fundamental right of all people to claim freedom, Sicily has a historic right that is unassailable even by the court of diplomacy. Sicily enjoyed significant political privileges during the Norman rule. Under the House of Swabia, it had representation for the Commons, akin to that in England and France. In 1734, Sicily was transferred from Spanish control to the brief rule of the House of Savoy because Vittorio Amedeo violated the Sicilian Constitution, which had been imposed on him by the Treaty of Utrecht.⁷⁶

Additionally, Gemelli argued that, despite the changing dynasties and the rule of ‘foreign and distant sovereigns’⁷⁷ from 1446 to 1810, the acts of one hundred and twenty-six Sicilian Parliaments were printed. Although the first parliamentary assembly in Sicily is dated to 1240, recent research confirms the existence of some ‘curiae generales’ and ‘assisae generales’ as early as the Norman era.⁷⁸

⁷³ Ibid., 244: (‘volgeva la sua potenza ad italianizzare e secolarizzare il sapere’).

⁷⁴ Ibid., 96: (‘temperata monarchia’).

⁷⁵ Ibid., 97: (‘mantennero ognora il loro diritto di accordare i sussidi col titolo di donativi; quello di far leggi; e di contrastare sovente le ingiuste ordinanze del principe.’).

⁷⁶ *Storia della siciliana rivoluzione*, vol. I, 10: (‘[...] ma la Sicilia oltre al diritto imprescrittibile di tutti i popoli di rivendicarsi in libertà vanta un diritto storico inattaccabile anco al tribunale della diplomazia. La Sicilia era in possesso di larghe franchigie politiche fin dal tempo della dominazione normanna; sotto la casa di Svevia ebbe la rappresentanza de’ comuni prima dell’Inghilterra e della Francia e nel 1734 fu dall’Ispagna sottratta alla breve signoria di casa di Savoia sol perchè Vittorio Amedeo avea violato la Costituzione siciliana a lui imposta col trattato di Utrecht.’).

⁷⁷ Ibid., 97: (‘distanti e stranieri sovrani’).

⁷⁸ *Parlamenti del Regno di Sicilia dall’anno 1446 al 1748, con le Memorie storiche dell’antico e moderno uso del Parlamento appresso varie Nazioni ed in particolare della sua origine in Sicilia e del modo di celebrarsi di Don Antonino Mongitore, canonico decano della Santa Metropolitana Chiesa di Palermo [...]* Ristampa anastatica dell’edizione di Palermo, nella Nuova Stamperia de’ SS Apostoli, presso PietroBentivegna, 1749, a cura di D. Novarese, A. Romano, C. Torrisi (Messina, Sicania, 2002).

However, both Gemelli and La Farina's narratives appear to mythologize the existence of a 'Sicilian nation', suggesting it predated the Italian state and highlighting the unique privileges associated with its local representation and Constitution. This element, which received significant attention from the press of the time, is also found in the works of many other authors and serves to distinguish Sicily's revolutionary rhetoric from that of other pre-unification states (see Chapter Two above). Gemelli's exploration of Sicilian history also incorporates a form of celebratory rhetoric regarding the character of its inhabitants, whom he describes as 'witty, bold, passionate, moving, moderate in prosperity, and indomitable in misfortune.'⁷⁹ They fought against various powers, including France, Aragon, Provence, Naples, Spain, and Austria, while still claiming the 'large political franchises'⁸⁰ that the population had enjoyed since the Norman domination. According to the revolutionary rhetoric, these freedoms and privileges of Sicily were maintained until the conquest by the Bourbons of Spain.

After the Norman hegemony, Sicily came under the control of the Swabian House, which focused on the Italianization and secularization of knowledge. The death of Corradino marked the end of Swabian rule, leading to French dominance under the Angevins. Their rule was characterized by 'severe oppression, violence, and barbarism'⁸¹, which eventually sparked the outbreak of the War of the Vespers. Following French rule, the crown of Sicily was granted to the kings of Aragon, who restored 'the laws, administration, and customs of the Norman era.'⁸² When Aragonese King Martin I died in 1409, King Alfonso of Aragon and Sicily united the Spanish Crown with the Kingdom of Sicily and Naples in 1412.

Under the Spanish dynasty, Sicily faced the challenges of a viceroyalty, conditions that worsened under Charles V, although the island managed to retain some of its prerogatives. At the beginning of the XVIII century, Sicily came under the regency of Philip V (1700-1713), the first Spanish king from the House of Bourbon. The Treaty of Utrecht (1713), which concluded the War of Spanish Succession, resulted in Sicily passing to Victor Emmanuel II of Savoy. He implemented several improvements in trade and industry and reopened the Sicilian Parliament after seven years of closure. However, the Savoy king eventually departed, leading to Austrian rule over Sicily following the peace agreement of 1720 with Naples and Milan (Charles IV).

7.2 The Bourbon Conquest of the Kingdoms of Naples and Sicily

⁸⁰ Ibid., 10: ('larghe franchigie politiche').

⁸¹ Ibid., 246: ('l'indole della più alta oppressione, della violenza, della barbarie').

⁸² Ibid., 247: ('leggi, amministrazione, e consuetudine dell'età normanna').

The Bourbon conquest of the Kingdoms of Naples and Sicily took place in 1734 and 1735, respectively. This ambitious endeavour was led by Queen Elizabeth Farnese, the wife of King Philip V of Spain, who entrusted the challenging task to her son, the Infante Don Carlos of Bourbon. As the heir to both the Farnese and Medici dynasties, Don Carlos was noted by Gemelli for his efforts to reform legal systems and government institutions. He promoted industry and commerce, established new courts, enacted numerous laws, improved administrative functions, founded institutions and colleges, constructed impressive buildings, and issued significant pragmatic decrees and ordinances aimed at promoting the general welfare.⁸³ After successfully executing his mother's plans for conquest, Carlo III established a government that straddled the line between 'progress and barbarism.'⁸⁴ His policies for Naples and Sicily differed: he applied enlightened despotism in Naples while respecting the ancient privileges of Sicily.

Despite acknowledging Don Carlos's capabilities, Gemelli's assessment of the founder of the Bourbons in Naples is somewhat critical, as he regarded him as 'the true and wise creator of a Tyranny.'⁸⁵ In contrast, Carlo III's successor in 1759, his son Ferdinando II and his wife, the Austrian Maria Carolina, opened a long period of 'misfortunes, misery, pain, indignities, shame, betrayals, perjury, rebellion and gallows'.⁸⁶

When the Sicilian parliament convened, Ferdinando II demanded an exodus of twenty thousand onze per month. This demand was ultimately rejected; however, Sicily was still compelled to provide a slightly smaller contribution, which his successors also confirmed. Between 1806 and 1816, the Sicilian people were 'enslaved by the chains of a poorly conceived and despicable government.'⁸⁷

According to Gemelli, Sicily's independence and freedom were significantly threatened by two treaties signed by Ferdinando III with England. In these agreements, England, in exchange for a generous subsidy of four hundred thousand pounds, sought to increase its presence in the Mediterranean, including Sicily. At the same time, Queen Maria Carolina of Austria was conspiring against England. Lord Bentick, the British ambassador in Sicily, played a pivotal role 'in ending Bourbon brutality and alleviating the suffering of the Sicilian people.'⁸⁸

Meanwhile, Napoleon had conquered central and northern Italy for France and aimed to expand into the Bourbon kingdom. He dispatched his brother-in-law, Murat, to conquer Sicily but was halted by the the Sicilian resistance, which was supported by British militia at the Battle of Mili.

⁸³ Ibid., 101.

⁸⁴ Ibid.: ('progresso e barbarie').

⁸⁵ Ibid.: ('il vero e sapiente creatore di una tirranide').

⁸⁶ Ibid., 261: ('sciagure, miserie, dolori, abbiezioni, vergogne, tradimenti, spergiuri, ribellioni, patiboli').

⁸⁷ Ibid.: ('avvolto fra le catene di un abborrito e spregevole Governo').

⁸⁸ Ibid., 264-265: ('mettere fine alle sfrenatezze borboniche ed ai mali de' Siciliani').

Lord Bentick successfully orchestrated the removal of Queen Caroline from the kingdom. She fled ‘from Mazara to Constantinople but later fell ill in Vienna, where she ultimately passed away after a year.’⁸⁹ Lord Bentick compelled Ferdinando III, who was under his guardianship in Palermo, to appoint his son Francis as vicar general. He also reformed the Sicilian constitution in 1812. England committed to defend the island through further treaties with the Bourbon government. A historian from Messina expresses clear admiration for the English government during the island’s occupation, stating: ‘A great and free nation that liberates an innocent people from unjust tyranny, with such resolute purpose, loyalty, and justice, can inspire no doubt of deceit and abandonment.’⁹⁰

After Napoleon’s defeat at Waterloo, the Congress of Vienna established a new geopolitical order in Europe. On June 1815, Ferdinando of Bourbon was restored to the throne of Naples as king of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. In regard to this development, Gemelli expresses a harsh condemnation:

From that moment on, Ferdinando’s unjust actions were aimed at completely undermining the Sicilian constitution, which he had sworn to uphold twice. His goal was to destroy the independence of the Sicilian people, to ‘unite’ the two kingdoms into one, and to place Sicily under the control of Naples. A decree issued on December 8, 1816, finalized these destructive efforts, repaying the Sicilians’ hospitality, loyalty, and affection for the Bourbons with an act of ingratitude, violence, betrayal, madness, and blatant tyranny.⁹¹

With the successors of Carlo III, the conditions in the Kingdom of Sicily and Naples began to deteriorate. La Farina remarks that it was ‘a new age marked by great sorrows, generous rebellions, betrayals, cowardice, and perjury.’⁹² The unification of the two kingdoms — Naples and Sicily — occurred in 1816 as a result of the Congress of Vienna. This process could have been better managed by Ferdinando I, the first successor of Don Carlos (born in Naples in 1751 and died in Naples in 1825). Alongside his wife, Maria Carolina of Austria, who was referred to as ‘a new

⁸⁹ (‘scioglieva le vele da Mazzara per Costantinopoli, poscia si ricoverava a Vienna, ove, dopo un anno cessava di vivere’).

⁹⁰ Ibid.: (‘Una grande e libera nazione, che affranca da ingiusta tirannide con tanto risoluto proposito, con tanta lealtà e giustizia un popolo innocente, non può ispirare alcun dubbio d’inganno e di abbandono.’).

⁹¹ Ibid., 273: (‘Da quel momento la stolidità ingiustizia di Ferdinando si credè in diritto di annientare la costituzione siciliana, da lui due volte giurata, distruggere la indipendenza di quel popolo, accomunare o meglio ‘fondere’ i due reami in uno solo, assoggettare la Sicilia al napolitano reggimento. Un decreto dell’8 dicembre 1816 compiva l’opera nefanda, pagava l’ospitalità, la fedeltà e l’amore de’ Siciliani verso i Borboni con un atto d’ingratitude, di violenza, di tradimento, di stolta ed impudente tirannide.’).

⁹² Ibid., 102: (‘un’età nuova memoranda per grandi dolori, per generose ribellioni, per tradimenti, codardie e spregiuri’).

Messalina⁹³, he demonstrated an inability to grasp the political and socio-economic changes taking place, as well as the fragility of absolute monarchies.

On 11 December 1816, a royal decree ‘abolished Sicilian independence, transforming an ancient kingdom into a province subject to the despotic rule of a prince.’⁹⁴ Meanwhile, new political ideas began to take hold in Sicily. While the bourgeoisie were intrigued by the republican model proposed by France, the ‘ottimati’ — comprising the upper bourgeoisie and nobles — leaned towards the English monarchy.

The final years of Ferdinando I of Bourbon’s reign were characterized by rising anti-Bourbon feelings, culminating in the riots of June 1820. The following month, Naples also revolted. According to Gemelli, Sicily’s uprising was not aimed at adopting the Spanish constitution, but rather at regaining its own autonomy and constitution. This movement sought to maintain the monarchical unity that would allow for the coexistence of two parliaments and two statutes.⁹⁵

After the failure of the Neapolitan and Sicilian revolts in 1820, ‘freedom fell, suffering and torment followed [...] All was blood, desolation, and revenge.’⁹⁶ In 1825, when Ferdinando died, the throne of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies was inherited by his son, Francis I. Gemelli describes Francis as ‘vile, weak, and superstitious, ruling with the assistance of the cruellest priests, friars, and ministers.’⁹⁷ Under Francis I’s regency, which was marked by debauchery and cruelty, Sicily ‘became a tomb.’⁹⁸ Upon his death in 1830, he was succeeded by his son, Ferdinando II. Initially, Ferdinando II sparked sympathy and hope due to his youth and the changing times. However, the liberals soon changed their minds. Gemelli asserts that Ferdinando II exceeded his father in ‘stupid brutality and senseless tyranny’⁹⁹, making him a prime example of a degenerate ruler. In his writing, *La Sicilia e il suo futuro*, Gemelli recalls the cholera uprisings of 1837, the expedition of the Bandiera brothers in 1844, the uprisings in Cosenza, and ultimately, the Sicilian revolution that began on 12 January 1848, in Palermo.

La Farina and Gemelli shared similar views regarding the successors of Carlo III. Let us examine the idea of the three patriots concerning the Bourbon kings’ government.

⁹³ Ibid., 103: (‘novella Messalina’).cia unita ad

⁹⁴ Ibid., 110: (‘poneva fine alla libertà siciliana e trasmutava un antico regno nella condizione di provincia unita ad un altro reame soggetto alla volontà dispotica di un principe’).

⁹⁵ Ibid., 274.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 276: (‘caduta la libertà, seguirono le forche ed i supplizi [...] Tutto fu sangue, desolazione e vendetta’).

⁹⁷ Ibid., 277: (‘per mezzo de’ preti, de’ frati, e di crudelissimi ministri’).

⁹⁸ Ibid., 278: (‘divenne un sepolcro’).

⁹⁹ Ibid., 279: (‘per stupida brutalità ed insensata tirannide’).

7.2.1 An Infernal Dynasty!

One of the key areas for improvement during the unification of Sicily and Naples was the effort to standardize the laws and customs of the two kingdoms. This process negatively impacted Sicily, which was the most heavily affected region. For instance, taxes were raised, disproportionately burdening the noble classes, who were also expected to cover extraordinary war expenses.

Additionally, the mint was removed from Sicily, resulting in reduced traffic at Sicilian ports. The police department was abolished, and 'municipal freedom was extinguished.'¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, a lieutenant replaced the position of viceroy, and Sicily was placed under what amounted to a 'real military government'¹⁰¹ in a 'state of perpetual siege.'¹⁰²

Gemelli argued that, even though a king's lieutenant was present, the intendants wielded the actual power over the island. They directed the police in each Sicilian province and controlled almost all aspects of governance.¹⁰³ While the police were described as 'abominable and execrable',¹⁰⁴ the economy was struggling due to poor trade, neglected agriculture, abandoned industries, limited manufacturing, and an inefficient transportation system that made travel difficult.

The 1820 uprisings created a civil war between Naples and Sicily, which only the Austrian bayonets managed to extinguish. Supported by the Austrian militias and the advice of Canosa, King Ferdinando 'returned gloomy and implacable to resume the ancient tyranny.'¹⁰⁵ After an 'unhappy reign of sixty years'¹⁰⁶, Ferdinando I died in 1825. His successor was his son Francesco I (Naples, 1777-Naples 1830), 'weak and cowardly, also a master of trickery and deception, despot for nature and education [...]'.¹⁰⁷ Francesco surrounded himself with 'sad men',¹⁰⁸ like Del Carretto, Intonti, De Liquoro, and De Matteis. The lieutenant of King Viglia, along with his entourage of 'brewers, spies, scourgers, and scoundrels'¹⁰⁹ transformed Sicily into a land characterized by 'robberies, open injustices, public stonings, and abominable Saturnalia.'¹¹⁰

Ferdinando II (born in Palermo in 1810 and died in Caserta in 1859) succeeded his father, Francesco I, in 1830. Initially celebrated by the people as 'the unexpected repairer of their

¹⁰⁰ La Farina, *Istoria documentata della rivoluzione siciliana, e delle sue relazioni co' governi italiani e stranieri (1848-1849)* (Capolago, Tip. Elvetica, 1850), 16.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.: ('un vero governo militare').

¹⁰² Ibid.: ('uno stato d'assedio permanente').

¹⁰³ Gemelli, *Storia della siciliana rivoluzione del 1848-49*, vol. I, 155.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 58 ('abominevole ed esecrata').

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. 117: ('Ritornava cupo ed implacabile a riprendere l'antica tirann'¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 118: ('un regno infelicissimo di sessant'anni').

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.: ('fiacco e codardo, anch'egli maestro di infingimenti e d'inganni, despota pe indole ed educazione [...]').

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 119: ('tristi uomini').

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 120: ('birri, spie, piaggiatori, furfanti').

¹¹⁰ Ibid.: ('ladrerie, aperte ingiustizie, pubbliche dilapidazioni, ed abominevoli saturnali').

sufferings’¹¹¹, it did not take long for Ferdinando to reveal his ‘true character and the effects of his poor education.’¹¹²

In Gemelli’s view, Ferdinando II was endowed with only mediocre intelligence. His education prioritized martial arts over meaningful literature. The Bourbon King ‘remained on a fluctuating throne of free and peaceful blood, continuing his father’s despised policies to the detriment of Italy and its suffering people.’¹¹³ He was characterized as inept, miserly, and cruel. Additionally, due to his cowardly disposition, he became a victim of his confessor, the priest Celestino Cocle, who intimidated him with the ‘terrors of religion.’¹¹⁴ Conversely, he was also manipulated by the police minister, the ruthless Prince of Canosa, who instilled in him a persistent fear of revolts.¹¹⁵ In July 1830, the French Revolution instilled fear in King Ferdinando II, who became determined to ‘eliminate any semblance of independence and autonomy in Sicily.’¹¹⁶ By 1837, a cholera epidemic had swept through the insular part of the Bourbon kingdom, worsening existing social and economic tensions, as mentioned in Chapter 4. This turmoil led to riots in Palermo, Syracuse, Messina, Catania, and several smaller Sicilian cities. The popular uprisings fuelled a desire for independence from the Kingdom of Naples among the Sicilian people. Yellow flags, symbolizing the island’s quest for liberation, began to fly from the municipal buildings of some cities in revolt. However, the people’s excitement was short-lived as an army of about 4,000 soldiers, led by Del Carretto, was dispatched to quash the rebellion. As Gemelli noted, ‘Those who escaped the cholera plague did not escape the sentences or the burdens imposed by the Bourbons.’¹¹⁷

Ferdinando, satisfied with his minister’s assurances, intended to continue the destructive policies of his predecessors, Ferdinando I and Francesco I. This led to the promulgation of the *Legge sulla Promiscuità* (Promiscuity Decree), which aimed to increase chaos and disorder. Many southern magistrates and officials were transferred to the island to enforce the assimilation of Sicily with Naples. Gemelli comments on the situation, stating:

Ferdinando issued a decree known as the law of promiscuity. He believed that this decree would

¹¹¹ Ibid., 121: (‘inatteso riparatore delle patite sventure’).

¹¹² Ibid.: (‘tutta la bruttezza innata della sua indole, e della pessima educazione ricevuta’).

¹¹³ C. Gemelli, ‘La Sicilia e il suo avvenire’, in *Scritti letterari e politici*, F. Guardione (ed) (Roma, Torino and Firenze, Loesher, 1887), 237-308: (‘lasciato su di un trono galleggiante di sangue libero e tranquillo, a poter continuare la esecrata politica paterna a danno di Italia e de’ miseri suoi popoli.’).

¹¹⁴ Gemelli, *Storia della siciliana rivoluzione del 1848-49*, vol. I, 123: (‘i terrori della religione’).

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 124: (‘quell’apparente e vano simulacro d’indipendenza e di autonomia’).

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 140: (‘Chi scampato avea la colerica pestilenza, non isfuggiva le condanne o le persecuzioni borboniche’).

help him achieve the unification of the two parts of the kingdom, sacrificing the autonomous nature of Sicily in the process. As a result, Neapolitans took control of the judiciary, military, diplomatic corps, administration, and all other government positions on the island. This might not have significantly harmed Sicilian aspirations if the government had not consistently chosen men for these roles who were largely incompetent, ignorant, and mostly schemers who held hostile views. This law served as the first principle that set the future revolution in motion.¹¹⁸

After attempting to grant French companies Tayx and Aycard a monopoly over the sulphur trade in Sicily, which led to international backlash and hostility from England, Ferdinando II withdrew into diplomatic isolation during the 1840s. However, following the election of Pius IX on 16 June 1846, and the news of reforms being introduced in the Papal States, Tuscany, and Piedmont, Ferdinando became concerned about the reorganization of liberal forces and sought closer ties with Austria. His goal was to strengthen his kingdom's defence system, and he invested a significant portion of the state's revenue in bolstering the army and renewing the navy by purchasing steamships.

In central and northern Italy, numerous conspiracies and insurrection attempts emerged during the pre-unification era. Agreements began to form between southern liberals and Sicilians. The Bandiera brothers' expedition to Calabria in 1844 was a notable but unfortunate event. Throughout this period, Ferdinando remained steadfastly absolute in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, halting any initiatives for reforms. Gemelli describes the relentless pressure that liberal forces exerted on the weak Bourbon monarchy, which remained tied to outdated power structures:

The Bourbon dynasty's actions were in stark contrast to the needs of the Italian people, who were striving for progress and looking to the civilized nations of Europe. The patience of these people has finally run out, as despots should not be allowed to destroy nations. King Ferdinando's tyranny could not extinguish the indomitable spirit of the Sicilian people and their hopes for a prosperous future.¹¹⁹

In the summer of 1847, a pamphlet titled *La Protesta del popolo delle Due Sicilie* (The Protest of the People of the Two Sicilies) circulated widely. Its author, Luigi Settembrini, was a professor of eloquence who used vivid and engaging language designed to be accessible to people with different cultural background. Settembrini aimed to raise awareness about the dire conditions in Sicily.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 141: ('Raffazzonato un decreto, al quale dava nome di legge di promiscuità, il Borbone con questo decreto credeva dar compimento alla unificazione delle due parti del regno a danno della vita autonoma della Sicilia. In tal maniera magistratura, milizia, diplomazia, amministrazione, ogni carica insomma governativa fu da quel tempo presa ed invasa dai napoletani nell'isola. Il che veramente recato non avrebbe, crediam noi, alcun grave pregiudizio alle siciliane pretensioni, se il governo, costante e stolto nei suoi propositi, prescelto non avesse a quegli uffici uomini in gran parte faccendieri, ignoranti, e quasi tutti intrigatori ed ostili. Or questa legge fu, si può dire, il primo principio, che dava avviamento alla futura rivoluzione.').

8. The Prodrômes of the 1848 Revolution in Palermo

The pamphlet's opening statement reads as follows:

Foreigners who visit our regions, admiring the serene beauty of our sky and the fertility of our fields, reading our laws and hearing discussions about the progress of civilization and religion, may believe that the people of the Two Sicilies live in enviable happiness. However, compared to any state in Europe, including the Turks—who, at least as barbarians, understand that they have no laws—the situation here is dire. In the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, often referred to as the garden of Europe, people are dying of real hunger and are in a worse condition than animals; the only law that exists is the whim of those in power.¹²⁰

The Bourbon government of the Two Sicilies was a source of controversy, characterized by a small group of 'wicked or foolish'¹²¹ ministers and led by the Marquis of Pietracatella, who was described as 'a friend of tyranny... incapable of doing good, either doing nothing or doing evil.'¹²² Settembrini critiques various members of this government, including: the Minister of Police, the cruel Francesco Saverio del Carretto; the Minister of the Interior, Nicola Santangelo, who 'only learned to steal';¹²³ the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs, Prince Giuseppe Lanza of Trabia, whose life 'is nothing but a continuous banquet'¹²⁴ the 'vile' Lieutenant General Luigi De Maio; the 'stupid and evil' Finance Minister Ferdinando Ferri; the 'weak but excellent Latinist' Nicola Parisio, Minister of Justice,¹²⁵ and Prince Fulco Ruffo di Calabria, the 'great piece of lumpy meat' who served as Minister of Foreign Affairs.¹²⁶

Luigi Settembrini used a similar sharp tone to criticize King Ferdinando II, whom he deemed the main culprit behind poor governance:

¹¹⁹ Gemelli, *Storia della siciliana rivoluzione del 1848-49*, vol. I, 162: ('Or tale era l'opera della borbonica dinastia contro le sorti di un popolo italiano in mezzo all'odierno progresso e al cospetto dell'Europa civile. Ma la pazienza di questo popolo doveva terminare oramai dappoichè dato non è ai despotti il potere la vita delle nazioni annientare. Ed in effetto la tirannide di re Ferdinando spento non aveva l'indomita vitalità dei siculi popoli, le speranze di futura prosperità e di novello avvenire.').

¹²⁰ L. Settembrini (1847), *La Protesta del popolo delle Due Sicilie* (Napoli: Morano, 1891), 3: ('Gli stranieri che vengono nelle nostre contrade guardando la serena bellezza del nostro cielo e la fertilità dei campi leggendo il codice delle nostre leggi e udendo parlar di progresso di civiltà e di religione crederanno che gl'italiani delle Due Sicilie godono d'una felicità invidiabile. E pure nessuno stato d'Europa è in condizione peggiore della nostra, non eccettuati nemmeno i Turchi; i quali almeno son barbari, sanno che non han leggi [...] ma nel Regno delle Due Sicilie, nel paese che è detto giardino d'Europa, la gente muore di vera fame, è in istato peggiore delle bestie, sola legge è il capriccio [...]').

¹²¹ Ibid., 19: ('malvagi o stolti').

¹²² Ibid.: ('amico della tirannide ... incapace di fare bene, o non fa nulla o fa il male').

¹²³ Ibid.: ('dottissimo solo in rubare').

¹²⁴ Ibid.: ('la cui vita non è che un continuo banchetto').

¹²⁵ Ibid.: ('il debole').

¹²⁶ Ibid.: ('grosso pezzo di carne aggomitolat

The government is the sole cause of our problems, and King Ferdinando II is at the helm. This prince is a fool — arrogant, miserly, and superstitious; he is a typical Bourbon, cruelly stupid and proud. Incompetent in all matters, he insists on handling everything himself, yet he only messes things up. He scorns advice and has convinced himself that he is superior to our flawed human nature: that he alone can manage everything and knows best. He believes his subjects should be satisfied, but he will not even listen to them. In Castellammare, a man attempted to seek his attention by drawing a plea from his chest, which the king mistook for a dagger. As a result, he had the man torn apart and trampled by horses. Meanwhile, while the people cry out in distress, his ministers impose their tyranny. He remains blissfully ignorant, thinking he is wise.¹²⁷

In November 1847, news of the reforms granted in Tuscany, the Papal States, and the Kingdom of Savoy reached Sicily. As a result, the first demonstration was held in Palermo, marked by a modest and civil character, all taking place in the city's Teatro Carolino. Carlo Gemelli recalls that on the evening of 27 November, at the end of the first act of Donizetti's opera *Gemma di Vergy*, which was being performed at the Teatro Carolino in Palermo, there was a general protest from the aristocracy and the civil classes. They shouted, 'Long live the king, long live Ferdinando II, long live Pius IX, long live the Italian League, long live Sicily.'¹²⁸

Furthermore, correspondence between British Consul Goodwin and Lord Napier highlights the crucial role that the theatre played in shaping the national identity of Italy, a topic that recent historiography of the *Risorgimento* has focused on (this topic was also discussed in the section dedicated to La Farina and Gemelli's homage to Bellini). Here is what Goodwin reported about a theatrical performance held in Palermo during the revolution of 1848:

Last night, a correspondent reported that a new demonstration, more brilliant than any previous ones, took place at the Teatro Carolino, which had just reopened for the first time since the onset of the recent Revolution. The theater was packed with members of high society and was adorned with tricolored flags that draped over symbols of despotic power. For the overture of the play *Gemma di Vergy*, the national anthem was performed instead, sung with great enthusiasm. Shouts of praise erupted in honor of the Committee of Public Safety, the Patriotic Force, and the cities of Messina, Catania, and Girgenti, as well as England and America. The British Commodore and his

¹²⁷ Ibid., 12-13: ('De' nostri mali è sola cagione il governo, e del governo è capo re Ferdinando II. Questo principe è uno stolto, un presuntuoso, un avaro, un superstizioso, vero tipo de' Borboni, stupidamente crudeli e superbi. Inetto ad ogni cosa, vuol fare ogni cosa, e la guasta; sdegnasi di consigli [...] si persuase che egli è di natura superiore alla nostra povera natura umana: che può e sa far tutto da sé; che i sudditi suoi debbono essere felicissimi, e però non vuole nemmeno ascoltarli [...] In Castellammare un uomo si cavava dal petto una supplica per dargliela, ei pensò fosse un pugnale, lo fece stramazze e sfracellar dai cavalli. Mentre i popoli gridano, i ministri tiranneggiano; egli stassene in una beata stupidità, e gli pare di essere sapientissimo').

¹²⁸ *Storia della siciliana rivoluzione del 1848-49*, vol. 1, 162: ('Viva il re, viva Ferdinando II, viva Pio IX, viva la Lega italiana, viva la Sicilia.').

¹²⁹ 'Consul Goodwin to Lord Napier', Palermo, February 7, 1848, in *Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Naples and Sicily: 1848-1849* (London, Harrison and Son, 1849), 147.

Squadron were also acknowledged, all amidst cries of “Viva la Costituzione del 1812.” The duet ‘Suoni la tromba’ from *I Puritani* was performed that evening.¹²⁹

On 9 January 1848, a manifesto likely written by Francesco Bagnato was circulated in Palermo, urging residents to take up arms. Rosalino Pilo may have been involved in drafting another patriotic proclamation that was posted at the city gates a few days before the revolution broke out. An excerpt from that proclamation is provided below:

Sicilians! The time for prayers has passed without result. Ferdinando has ignored our protests, pleas, and peaceful demonstrations. We, who were born free, are now reduced to chains and suffering. Shall we continue to delay in reclaiming our rightful freedoms? It is time to take up arms, sons of Sicily. Together, we can achieve anything. Palermo will welcome all armed Sicilians who come to support our cause and help establish the reforms and institutions that are necessary for our progress. Europe, Italy, and Pius all desire these changes. We must maintain unity, order, and respect for our leaders, while also honouring all properties.¹³⁰

On the morning of 12 January, coinciding with King Ferdinando II's 38th birthday celebrations, an appointment was scheduled for dawn. On this day, the people of Palermo made sure to attend the roll call. Gemelli, who was an eyewitness and participant in the Sicilian revolution of 1848 (alongside La Farina and Chindemi), recalls the events of that day: ‘Pietro Amodeo appeared at 8 a.m., impatiently giving the first signal of the revolt. More armed men gathered on the Toledo as time passed, and the popular wave swelled. The moment was solemn, and the danger was grave.’¹³¹ The editors of *La Forbice*, the magazine ironically referred to as ‘the delight’ of King Ferdinando II and his Court, published an article that captures the atmosphere of excitement, joy, and apprehension among the masses in the squares:

On the dawn of January 12th, all the bells rang out in unison, just as they had when the people fought and the Neapolitan troops fled. Lieutenant De Majo felt the effects akin to a miraculous blessing. Soon, the streets began to fill with people, and cheers echoed throughout the city. Tri-color flags were waved enthusiastically along Toledo Street.

¹³⁰ F. Venosta, *Rosalino Pilo e la Rivoluzione siciliana* (Milano: C. Barbini., 1863), 27: (‘Siciliani! Il tempo delle preghiere inutilmente passò, inutili le proteste, le suppliche, le pacifiche dimostrazioni... Ferdinando tutto ha sprezzato, e noi Popolo nato libero, ridotto nelle catene e nella miseria, tarderemo ancora a riconquistare i nostri legittimi diritti? All’armi, figli della Sicilia: la forza di tutti è onnipossente ... Palermo accoglierà con trasporto quanti Siciliani armati si presenteranno al sostegno della causa comune, a stabilire riforme, istituzioni analoghe al progresso del secolo, volute dall’Europa, dall’Italia e da Pio. — Unione, ordine, subordinazione ai capi — rispetto a tutte le proprietà. [...]’).

¹³¹ Gemelli, *Storia della siciliana rivoluzione del 1848-49*, vol. I, 169: (‘Battevano in questo mezzo le ore otto del mattino, quando primo in questi momenti appariva un Pietro Amodeo, che dava impaziente il primo segnale della rivolta; [...] Crescevano a poco a poco gli armati sul Toledo, e l’onda popolare ingrossava. Solenne era il momento, gravissimo il pericolo’).

The main square of the Revolution, Fieravecchia, quickly became crowded with people who, intoxicated with joy, called out the name of old Palermo, directing their wishes and hopes toward him. Different groups of boys ran through the streets, urging everyone to light their balconies, and they did. In Fieravecchia and other key locations throughout the city, bands performed various musical pieces. From time to time, some bands wandered through the streets, followed by joyful crowds who shouted, "War and death to Ferdinando!" Meanwhile, other more sensitive groups, not wanting to burden the soul of the Bombardier, who had already died for Sicily, chanted, '*The Bourbon is dead! Requiem aeternam.*'¹³²

A Sicilian poet named Antonino Marotta authored a concise and popular account of the 1848 Sicilian revolution, presented in the vernacular.¹³³ The narrative features a rhythmic structure that stands out for its vividness and immediacy, reminiscent of the traditional storytelling styles and puppet shows that have been a part of Sicilian culture for centuries. Unfortunately, the English translation does not fully capture the richness and liveliness of the original language.

Here are some passages:

1.

To my magnanimous and merciful listeners,
I want to share with you, in this moment,
All the significant facts and events
That have occurred here in Palermo, known to many.
You will surely sympathize,
As you hear my extravagant verses. However, many friends have advised me
To write about what the people say. [...] ¹³⁴

6.

Palermo declared this, with great bravado. On the 27th of November,
At the theatre, at the appointed hour, They granted freedom to Sicily.
On the 28th, the curtains fell.
We celebrated with hymns and sonnets, shouting "Viva Pio and Ferdinando!"
We urged all tyrannical ministers to go away. [...] ¹³⁵

¹³² Gemelli, *Storia della siciliana rivoluzione del 1848-49*, vol. I, 169: ('Battevano in questo mezzo le ore otto del mattino, quando primo in questi momenti appariva un Pietro Amodeo, che dava impaziente il primo segnale della rivolta; [...] Crescevano a poco a poco gli armati sul Toledo, e l'onda popolare ingrossava. Solenne era il momento, gravissimo il pericolo').

¹³³ *Riassuntu pueticu di la Rivuluzioni di Palermu successa li 12 jinnaru 1848 cuntinuannu sinu a lu 1860, puesia di Antuninu Marotta* (Palermo, Stamperia di F. Spammpinatu, 1860).

¹³⁴ Ibid. 5: ('Udituri magnanimiti, e clementi / Raccuntari vi vogghiu in schistu istanti / Tutti li fatti, e granni avvenimenti / Successi ccà a Palermu noti a tanti; / Saranno vostri li cumpatimenti, / Sintennu li mei versi stravacanti, / Ma cunsigghiatu fu di tanti amici / Scriviri chiddu chi lu vulgu dici.').

¹³⁵ Ibid., 7: ('Dissi chistu Palermu, e cu bravura / In Nuvembri lu jurnu vintisetti / A lu Tiatru destinata l'ura / A la Sicilia libertati detti. / A lu vintottu poi fu la chiusura / Fistiggiannu cu inni, e cu sunetti, / Dicennu viva Piu, Firdinannu, / Fora qualunqui Ministru tirannu/.').

9.

As soon as daylight broke in two locations,
thousands of people gathered, proclaiming, "We are all the same."
They signed a petition, and this news reached a general close to
King Ferdinando, who was in charge of the police and those
infamous, deceitful officers. [...]¹³⁶

72.

Discovered everything in disarray.
An unprovided soldier had left behind a few uniforms.
When they took the road to escape,
the people felt half-discouraged by the bombs that had fallen.
However, with tricolour flags in hand,
they found the courage to stand up against the soldiers.¹³⁷

The poet Marotta dedicated his work to Giuseppe Garibaldi, referencing critical events of the 1848 Sicilian Revolution. The following section reconstructs the critical events described by La Farina, Gemelli, and Chindemi, incorporating their opinions, feelings, and criticisms about what they referred to as a 'glorious revolution.

Conclusions

Chapter 6 explores the various ways political protest was expressed in Sicily in 1848. It begins with an overview of the flourishing press, particularly in Palermo. By examining the key newspapers and periodicals of the time, the chapter seeks to trace the recurrent themes in patriotic rhetoric that recent historiography on the Italian Risorgimento has emphasized. These themes include honour, love for the country, the myth of sacrifice, the exaltation of martyrdom, and the sacredness of the homeland.

Popular discontent with the Bourbon government was also conveyed through political satire, which included unflattering portrayals of Ferdinand II and his court.

The chapter also highlights the contributions of women to the nation-building process, emphasizing their dual struggle that combined the patriotic cause with the fight for women's

¹³⁶ Ibid., 8: ('Appena ch'aggiurnau 'nta ddu locali / Migghiara di pirsuni si purtaru / Jennu dicennu (semu tutti eguali) / E a lu mumentu la carta firmaru. / Stu fattu jua all'oricchia a un ginirali, Chi lu re Ferdiannu tinia caru / Capu di pulizia, e di la sbirragghia / Vecchiu 'nfamuni, perfidu e canagghia.').

¹³⁷ Ibid., 25: ('Trasennu lu quarteri disarmatu / Truvaru di lu tuttu, e spruvvidutu, / Qualchi uniformi a la gnuni lassatu / Di quann'iddi pigghiaru lu fujutu. / Lu populu era menzu scuraggiatu / Di li bummi ch'avevanu cadutu, / Ma cu banneri poi triculurati, / S'incuraggeru contra li surdati.').

emancipation. The analysis includes two short-lived periodicals that demonstrate the presence of women's associations aimed at fostering networks and international exchanges. The final paragraphs focus on the anti-Bourbon critiques elaborated by La Farina and Gemelli. The chapter concludes with verses from Antonino Marotta's account in vernacular, leading into the next section, which centers on the narrative of the Sicilian 'Glorious Revolution' of 1848.

Figure 12

Frontispieces of Certain Newspapers from the Sicilian Risorgimento (1848)





CHAPTER 7

NARRATING THE 1848 SICILIAN REVOLUTION

7. 1848: Revolution!

Historian Giuseppe La Farina employs a striking image to illustrate the scenario of the impending 1848 revolution in Palermo:

The cannons of Castellamare announced the anniversary of King Ferdinando's birth with a resounding roar, while the atmosphere hinted at an imminent revolution. As the sun rose, the streets filled with people of all kinds, unarmed and festive, searching for news. They believed themselves to be mere spectators, unaware that they were the actors in an unfolding drama. Eagerly awaiting the conspirators, they were the conspirators themselves. Tired of waiting, a man named Buscemi raised a rifle into the air and shouted, "To arms, to arms!" Abbot Ragona descended from the Cassero, holding a crucifix and urging the crowd to rise. A young priest addressed the gathering in the Piazza de' Quattro Cantoni, while the young lawyer Paolo Paternostro spoke in the Piazza della Fieravecchia. Giuseppe La Masa tied a white cloth, a red cloth, and a green ribbon to the top of a pole, becoming the first to wave the tricolour flag.¹

La Farina's portrayal of ordinary people is significant as it effectively captures their confusion. Deeply committed to the patriotic cause, they desperately sought arms and leaders, believing that La Masa was at the forefront of the revolution when they spotted him in the streets. This belief persisted although he had recently returned to Sicily under a false name and disguised as a foreigner.

7.1 The people in arms

The people lowered rifles, sabres, and gunpowder using ropes and baskets from their homes. Some commoners armed themselves with pitchforks, axes, daggers, or sharp implements. The first armed groups began to form in the neighbourhoods of Palermo. La Farina noted that

¹ La Farina, *Storia della rivoluzione siciliana e delle sue relazioni coi governi italiani e stranieri 1848-49*, vol. 1, 28: ('I cannoni di Castellamare salutavano col loro rimbombo l'anniversario della nascita di quel re sotto il cui trono già rimbombava la imminente rivoluzione. Spuntava appena il sole e le vie erano affollatissime di gente di ogni condizione, ma inermi, e come in una festa popolare, se non che mancava delle feste la gioia: era un andare, un venire, un chiedersi a vicenda novelle: credeansi spettatori, ed erano senza saperlo attori; attendeano i congiurati, ed i congiurati erano loro. Un tal Buscemi, stanco dal lungo attendere, agita in aria un fucile gridando: "All'armi, all'armi". L'abate Ragona discende pel Cassero col crocefisso in mano esortando il popolo ad insurgere. Un altro giovine sacerdote arringava la folla nella piazza de Quattro Cantoni; il giovine avvocato Paolo Paternostro in quella della Fieravecchia [...] Giuseppe La Masa lega in vetta ad una canna una pezzuola bianca, un'altra rossa ed un nastro verde, e fa il primo sventolare i tre colori italiani.').

anyone who dares to take on a leadership role can become a leader, and that patriots ‘have no rules, orders, or designs’.²

When night fell, the rebels retreated to the Piazza della Ferravecchia, which served as their base of operations. The following day, the Sicilian rebels established a provisional government, led by Giuseppe La Masa and Rosolino Pilo. They organised a temporary committee composed of Giuseppe Oddo, Baron Andrea Bivona, the three Ciancioli brothers, Rosario Bagnasco, Leonardo Decarlo, Santoro, Antonio Jacona, Porcelli, Corteggiani, Lo Cascio, Enea, Palizzolo, Amodei, Pasquale Meloro, Pasquale Bruno, the two Carini brothers, Villafiorita, the two D’Ondes brothers, Enrico Fardella, Antonino Faia, and Rosolino Capace.³ La Farina wrote: ‘On that day, the entire city of Palermo was illuminated with festive lights. Women and children filled the terraces and windows, clapping their hands and cheering loudly for the Constitution, Italy, Sicily, freedom, and Pius IX.’⁴

On 13 January, several hundred peasants from the neighbouring towns of Parco, Boccadifalco, Bagheria, Belmonte and Misilmeri rushed to Palermo to join the conspirators, with whom they stormed the Palazzo delle Finanze (built on the site of the old Vicaria prisons, between the Palazzo Torremuzza No. 12 and Piazza Marina (No. 19 on the map). Those who lacked artillery and other military equipment made up for it in different ways, ‘by fighting from the houses’ windows, balconies, or roofs.’⁵ In response, the Bourbons launched a fierce bombardment from the Castellamare Fortress (No. 12) and the bastions of the Palazzo Reale (No. 1). Some rebels gathered near the Hospital of San Francesco Saverio. At the same time, other clashes erupted near Porta Carini (No. 20). There, a group of mounted gendarmes was forced to surrender and sought refuge in the Convent of San Francesco di Paola (No. 17). The following day, additional groups of royal militias arrived at the Palazzo delle Finanze to support the siege laid by the people. Rebel forces engaged in conflicts with royal troops at various locations throughout the city. The main battles include the Noviziato quarter (No. 4), St. Zita near Porta Felice (No. 18), the Ospedale Civile (No. 2), in front of the Palazzo Reale (No. 1), and the Monastero di Santa Elisabetta, located on the central street of the city, Via Toledo (or Cassaro, No. 11), which intersects the street of Macqueda (No. 5). The royal troops barricaded themselves on the roads leading to Porta di Castro (No. 7) and the Palazzo Reale (No. 1).

² Ibid.: (‘non han regole, ordini, disegni’).

³ *Collezione Ufficiale degli Atti del Comitato Generale di Sicilia nell’anno 1848* (Palermo, Stamperia e Libreria di Antonio Muratori Tipografo del Ministero della Giustizia, 1848), 3-4.

⁴ La Farina, *Storia della rivoluzione siciliana*, vol. I, 30: (‘Frattanto tutta la città di Palermo illuminavasi a festa tutti i terrazzini e le finestre riempivansi di donne e di fanciulli, i quali battendo le mani rimandavansi de’ clamorosi evviva alla costituzione all’Italia, alla Sicilia, alla libertà, a Pio IX’).

⁵ Gemelli, *Storia della siciliana rivoluzione del 1848-49*, vol. I, 174: (‘combattendo dalle case, finestre, balconi o dai tetti’).

The leaders of the revolt established a definitive provincial committee to replace the provisional one. They organised the committee into four sections: 1. The Annona section, led by Giuseppe Paternò, the Marquis of Spedalotto, and the Mayor of Palermo. 2. The Public Security and War section, headed by Emmanuele Bonanno, the Prince of Pantelleria. 3. The Finance section, entrusted to Francesco Starabba, the Marquis of Rudinì. 4. The Information section, akin to today's Communication, was chaired by Ruggero Settimo. Mariano Stabile was elected secretary of the Committee. In the days that followed, numerous clashes occurred between Bourbon troops and rebels at the Palazzo della Finanza, the noviziato, the Palazzo della Prefettura (which, in the nineteenth century, was located in Piazza della Vittoria in front of the Palazzo Reale), and outside Porta Macqueda.

Gemelli reports that the people took control of the Palazzo della Prefettura after a bitter conflict.⁶ When news of the revolt reached Naples, King Ferdinando II mobilised an army of five thousand men, led by the Count of Aquila, and sent warships to Sicily. The rebels received support from residents of nearby towns. La Masa, the 'warmest supporter of the noble enterprise',⁷ was seen 'running through the streets of Palermo with a commoner playing the drum and another waving the Italian flag, encouraging the people of Palermo to take up arms.'⁸ At Porta Macqueda, a fierce clash occurred between the Bourbon army, whose side had 'good weapons, numbers and discipline', and the people, motivated instead by 'hatred for the enemy, charity of country and an ardent love of freedom'.⁹

The Bourbons were struggling to control the growing anger as the city continued to suffer from a 'cruel bombardment'.¹⁰ Some commoners managed to gain ground, capturing cannons and strategic points within the city. The Count of Aquila abandoned the field, leaving the command of the royal troops to General de Sauget. King Ferdinando then decided to 'implement some reforms, but they lacked any guarantee of freedom and durability'.¹¹

The Bourbons took over the Benedettini monastery and committed atrocities against the monks and rebels who sought refuge there. The population was enraged by the brutal attack on the monastery, which led to further violence as they targeted other parts of the city. 'Bombs, grenades and rockets'¹² were relentlessly showered upon the unarmed citizens of Palermo, but

⁶ Gemelli, *Storia della siciliana rivoluzione del 1848-49*, vol. I, 176: ('dopo aspro conflitto, in potere al popolo cadeva').

⁷ Ibid., 178: ('più caldi propugnatori della nobile impresa').

⁸ Ibid., 177-178 ('correre le vie di Palermo insieme ad un popolano, che suonava il tamburo, ed altro che sventolava il vessillo d'Italia, incoraggiare gli abitanti della città, e chiamare il popolo alle armi').

⁹ Ibid.: ('le buone armi, il numero e la disciplina', 'odio verso il nemico, la carità della patria e l'amore ardentissimo della libertà').

¹⁰ Ibid.: ('crudelissimo bombardamento').

¹¹ Ibid., 181: ('raffazzonare tal sorta di riforme, nelle quali ogni sorta di guarentigia mancava di libertà e di durata').

¹² Ibid.: ('Bombe, granate e razzi').

the revolution persisted. The two military leaders, Field Marshal Pietro Vial and Lieutenant General Luigi De Majo approached the magistrate to request an armistice, but their request was denied. The rebels demanded a constitution for Sicily 'sworn by its kings and recognised by all powers'.¹³

The revolutionary committee was reorganized and divided into two sections. The Prince of Pantelleria and Baron De Riso led the War and Administration Committee, while Ignazio Calona, a lawyer, was entrusted with directing the Artillery section. The insurgents largely controlled the city of Palermo, while the royal troops, insufficient to contain the conspirators' resistance, retreated to the Quattro Venti camp. Meanwhile, from Naples came decrees containing concessions from Ferdinando, which included several reforms. One significant reform was the establishment of the Consulta di Stato. Gemelli argued that its members would likely not oppose the king's will, and accepting these decrees would mean rejecting the 1812 Constitution. Other decrees included: 1) abolishing the decree on promiscuity, which aimed to separate the civil administration of the island from that of Naples; 2) appointing the Count of Aquila as lieutenant-governor; 3) providing freedom of the press (which had been limited by preventive censorship); and 4) granting amnesty for all political offenses committed during the recent events in Sicily.¹⁴

The decrees issued by King Ferdinando were rejected, and the struggle for Sicilian independence continued. The rebels called on other Sicilian cities to join their cause, leading to the dispatch of armed men to Palermo to support the revolution. They successfully captured the headquarters of the royal forces, located between the Fonderia, the Monastero di Santa Elisabetta, and the large Ospedale Civico.

On 23 January 1848, the four sections of the Provincial Committee decided to establish a General Committee. Ruggero Settimo was appointed chairman of the General Committee, while Mariano Stabile was named Secretary General. The Sicilian patriots spent the next two days preparing to attack the Palazzo Reale and the San Giacomo district while trapping the Bourbon troops in the Cathedral (No. 3), the Badia Nuova, and the Monastero dei Sette Angeli. The Bourbon soldiers retaliated with cannons positioned in the city's three bastions and with musket fire. The cold winter weather, combined with the long and exhausting fourteen-day battle, weakened the morale of the Bourbon soldiers and their commanders. They had 'no means of subsistence, no money, no rations, no wine, and no aquavit'¹⁵ which could have revitalised

¹³ Ibid., 185: ('giurata dai suoi re, riconosciuta da tutte le potenze').

¹⁴ Ibid., 189: ('il quale beneficio era nel fatto annullato dalla censura preventiva').

¹⁵ Ibid.: ('nessun mezzo di sussistenza, nessun denaro, nessuna razione, nessun vino e acquavite').

their physical strength. As a result, ‘the Bourbon commanders began to seek ways to escape and save their lives, even if it meant doing so without honour.’¹⁶

The rebels captured Palazzo Reale, San Giacomo, and Palazzo delle Finanze, which the enemy had abandoned. Vial and De Majo departed for Naples, while General De Sauget attempted to quell the revolt that was causing widespread terror and chaos by releasing prisoners from jails. Meanwhile, the retreating royal vanguard reached Villabate, while the insurgents established a Civic Guard. They also elected the General Committee responsible for Public Defence and Security. Additionally, several officials were appointed: the Prince of Pantelleria oversaw War, the Marquis of Torrearsa was in charge of Finance, Pasquale Calvi was designated as Justice and Public Safety, and the Prince of Scordia managed Administration and Education.

It is essential to highlight that the involvement of nobility and upper-middle-class individuals significantly influenced the autonomist and federalist direction of the Sicilian revolution. Initially, the revolution had democratic roots, with groups of peasants and commoners advocating for land ownership and lower taxes. To maintain public order and protect the property rights of the bourgeoisie. Threatened by the growing democratic forces, the Civic Guard was established.

Examining Gemelli and La Farina’s ideas regarding the Civic Guards is important because it relates to the failure of the revolution, as we will explore further. Gemelli argued that the Sicilian revolutionary leaders mistakenly granted ‘too many rights, privileges, and exemptions’, effectively making the Civic Guards one of the powers of the state¹⁷ According to the Sicilian historian, the Civic Guards started as a means to maintain order and ensure public safety. However, over time, this military body ‘took control of the government and became involved in excessive and corrupt activities’, engaging in various abuses during a time when ‘the sacrifice of the homeland was sadly celebrated.’¹⁸ La Farina, who shares Gemelli’s viewpoint, identifies one of the major mistakes made by the revolutionaries as arming the Civic Guard with over 9,000 bayonet rifles, even though the regular soldiers were largely unarmed.¹⁹

The General Committee, established in Palermo, assumed the role of the provisional government of Sicily, with R. Settimo serving as president and M. Stabile as secretary. The revolutionaries dispatched envoys and proclamations to inspire people in other Sicilian cities to join the

¹⁶ Ibid., 196: (‘si studiavano a trovar la via per iscampare con fuga inonorata la vita’).

¹⁷ Gemelli, *Storia della siciliana rivoluzione del 1848-49*, vol. I, 360: (‘Fu danno altresì quello di voler dare alla guardia nazionale con questo statuto tanti diritti e privilegi ed esenzioni da farne quasi diremmo uno dei poteri dello stato’).

¹⁸ Ibid.: (‘quando il sacrificio della patria fu miseramente consumato’).

¹⁹ La Farina, *Storia della rivoluzione siciliana*, vol. I, 265: (‘mentre quei pochi soldati che v’erano quasi ne mancavano affatto [...]’).

uprising. As La Farina noted, ‘The revolution spread through bulletins and couriers rather than through the use of weapons.’²⁰ Towns such as Cefalù, Castro Giovanni, Leonforte, Caltagirone, Mazzara, Acireale, Piazza, and several others united with the rebels from Palermo. Girgenti rebelled on 22 January, followed by Catania on the 24th. Messina declared its intention to join the revolution and joined the uprising on 30 January along with Caltanissetta.²¹ On the same day, the Neapolitan bishop blessed the tricolour flag at Trapani’s town hall.²² Shortly thereafter, Syracuse and Noto joined the ‘holy Sicilian cause.’²³

The provisional government sent a memorial to Lord Napier, urging British intervention and recognition of the new Sicilian government. Napier supported the demands of the Sicilian rebels and the granting of the Statute of 1812. News of the Sicilian revolution’s victories spread to the Neapolitan, Calabrian, and Abruzzese provinces of the Kingdom, leading to insurrections. On 28 January, the people of Naples, brandishing the tricolour flag, demanded a constitution. Gemelli described the scene as follows: ‘Large crowds of young and old, both women and men, gathered at the war committee with enthusiastic voices and compassionate fervour. They filled the squares and streets, waving white linens, ringing bells, and joyfully shouting: ‘Long live Maria, long live freedom, long live Italy!’²⁴

All of this occurred amidst an extraordinary and fierce barrage of bombs, bullets, and grenades.²⁵ The following day, King Ferdinando promised to grant a constitution to Naples. On 10 February, he informed the British representative, Napier, that the statute, drafted by the moderate Bozzelli (Minister of the Interior) and inspired by the 1830 French constitution, would also be extended to Sicily. However, this new statute did not give the Sicilian rebels any hope of restoring the more democratic constitution of 1812. The 1812 constitution established a parliament separate from the government in Naples, comprising two chambers: the Chamber of Commons and the Chamber of Peers. It also mandated a ministry made up solely of Sicilians and rejected the Neapolitan militia’s presence on the island. Stabile and Settimo opposed the acceptance of the single statute for the Two Sicilies. They demanded the convocation of Parliament and the adaptation of the 1812 constitution to meet contemporary needs. Their

²⁰ Id., *Istoria documentata della rivoluzione siciliana e delle sue relazioni co’ governi italiani e stranieri*, (Capolago, Tip. Elvetica, 1850), 56: (‘La rivoluzione si diffuse attraverso bollettini e corrieri piuttosto che attraverso l’uso di armi’).

²¹ Ibid., 58.

²² Ibid., 67.

²³ Sicilian patriots, not just La Farina and Gemelli, frequently refer to the Sicilian revolution in these terms.

²⁴ Gemelli, *Storia della siciliana rivoluzione del 1848-49*, vol I, 243: (‘Turbe di uomini e donne, vecchi e giovani accorrevano con voci di giubilo, di entusiasmo e di pietoso fervore al comitato di guerra, ingombravano in un tratto le piazze e le vie, sventolavano bianchi lini, suonavano a festa le campane e gridavano tutti lieti e festosi: viva Maria, viva la libertà, viva l’Italia [...]).

²⁵ Ibid.: (‘[...] in mezzo a un grandinare straordinario e ferale di bombe, di palle e granate.’).

response to the Naples' government was as follows:

The universal vote of the entire island is that the General Parliament convened in Palermo should adapt the Constitution to the times. This Constitution, reformed under the influence of Great Britain in 1812, is a right that we have never ceased to possess. The assurances received from Lord Minto ensure that the King of Naples is prepared to recognise the ancient rights of Sicily and its 1812 Constitution.²⁶

On 4 February, a renewed rebel attack lasted for four hours, during which both sides exchanged intense gunfire. As a result, the rebels captured the Fort of Castellammare.²⁷ The following day, General Gross, the commander of Castellammare, surrendered, sparking grand celebrations in Palermo. The Archbishop of Palermo and Cardinal Pignatelli from Naples attended the celebrations, during which the flags of the victors were blessed in a ceremony that included nearly all the foreign consuls, except for the Austrian representative. Priest Ugdulena delivered a heartfelt speech in the cathedral. The city was alive with songs, music, fireworks, and illuminations, creating a vibrant atmosphere of joy and celebration. However, the belief that the war was truly over proved to be misguided.²⁸ Meanwhile, the patriots faced significant challenges in Messina. Towards the end of February, the city experienced a devastating bombardment. In response, King Ferdinando sent General Pronio to Messina to replace General Cardemona. General Pronio, loyal to the Bourbons, was eager to show his indignation and fury, disregarding any sense of humanity and justice.²⁹ The General Committee dispatched Gemelli to Palermo aboard an English ship to request arms, ammunition, and reinforcements. Furthermore, the Sicilian revolutionaries formed a war committee consisting of La Farina, Gemelli, and Piraino. Gaetano Pisano was appointed as the head of the Messina committee. In the meantime, La Farina returned to Sicily to aid the revolution.

²⁶ 'Risposta del Comitato Generale del 13 febbraio 1848', *Bullettino n.55*, containing a letter from Lord Minto on the Sicilian Constitution, and the 'Risposta del Comitato generale', in *Collezione Ufficiale degli Atti del Comitato Generale di Sicilia nell'anno 1848*, 104-106: ('Il voto universale di tutta l'isola è che il general Parlamento riunito in Palermo adatti ai tempi la Costituzione, che riformata sotto l'influenza della Gran Bretagna nel 1812, noi di diritto non abbiamo mai cessato di possedere. Le assicurazioni ricevute da Lord Minto ci fanno esser certi che il re di Napoli sia pronto a riconoscer gli antichi dritti della Sicilia, e la sua Costituzione del 1812.').

²⁷ La Farina, *Istoria documentata della rivoluzione siciliana*, 73: ('foco vivissimo dall'una e parte e dall'altra').

²⁸ Ibid., 74: ('L'indomani furono grandi e pubblici festeggiamenti nella capitale. Il cardinale Pignatelli, arcivescovo di Palermo e napoletano. benedisse le vincitrici bandiere; assistevano tutti i consoli forestieri, compreso anco quello di Russia, mancando solo l'austriaco: il sacerdote Ugdulena pronunziò in Duomo bella e caldissima orazione: canti, musiche, fochi di gioia e luminarie rallegravano la città e fu universale e fallace credenza fosse la guerra compiuta [...]').

²⁹ Gemelli, *Storia della siciliana rivoluzione del 1848-49*, vol. I, 240: ('poichè ciecamente devoto a quella dinastia volle far mostra anch'egli di sdegno e furore spregiando ogni senso di umanità e di giustizia').

The revolution in Sicily began on 15 January 1848. At that time, Giuseppe La Farina was still in exile in Tuscany. Eager to join the revolt, he left Florence to return to Sicily. Before his departure, he wrote a farewell letter to the editorial staff of the newspaper *L'Alba*, which he directed. The letter is quoted in full below:

Florence, 10 February 1848
To the Editors of L'Alba,

I am called to fulfil a sacred duty in my native land of Sicily, and thus, I must temporarily part ways with you, my colleagues in journalism. We have shared many good and bad experiences, and our common political principles, feelings, and hopes have made us feel like family. We have worked tirelessly to promote Italian freedom and independence, which form the foundation of our beliefs and actions. Although I am saddened to leave you, I cannot ignore my duty to go to Sicily without compromising my integrity. I will advocate for brotherhood and solidarity in Sicily, which are essential for Italy to regain its freedom and independence. As I fulfil my responsibility, I ask that you continue the honourable work we have started with courage and moderation. Even though we will be apart, we will always be united in our pursuit of freedom, fraternity, equality, and love for Italy—keys to its redemption and rebirth. [...].³⁰

On 24 February, news of the revolution in Paris and the declaration of the republic reached Sicily. The people of Sicily celebrated the event by illuminating their streets. According to Gemelli, the Sicilians were pleased about the French Revolution, not necessarily because they wanted to establish a republican form of government in Sicily, but because they hoped for a change in the new European political order.³¹

Cities such as Syracuse, Augusta, Noto, Marsala, Ligata, Caltagirone, and Modica followed the examples of Palermo and Messina, forcing the Bourbons to flee. The British government

³⁰ La Farina, *Epistolario*, vol. I, 300-301: ('Firenze, 10 febbraio 1848. A' Redattori dell'Alba. Un sacro dovere mi chiama in Sicilia, mia terra natale, e mi obbliga a separarmi per qualche tempo da voi, co' quali ho diviso finora le cure, i travagli, i piaceri ed i dolori della vita giornalistica. La conformità de' principi politici che professiamo, la comunanza di affetti e di speranze che sentiamo, avevano reso la nostra Redazione una famiglia, e di tante menti avevamo formata una sola mente, di tanti cuori un sol cuore. La lode o il biasimo lusingava o affliggeva l'animo di tutti noi: la coscienza di volere il bene e di far di tutto perchè trionfassero le idee di libertà ed indipendenza italiana, era l'asse comune sul quale si aggiravano tutti i nostri pensieri e le nostre opere. Staccarmi da voi è per me tal dolore, che forse pochi uguali ne ho provati nella mia vita non lieta; ma sonvi dei doveri, i quali non possono trasandare senza che l'uomo si degradi. Il mio dovere è quello di andare nella mia Sicilia, e là, per quanto le mie deboli forze lo consentano, farmi banditore di quei principi di fratellanza e di solidarietà, per i quali soli Italia potrà ridivenire una Nazione libera, grande, indipendente. Io compirò questo mio dovere; voi proseguite nell'onorata impresa, arditi senza improntitudini, moderati senza codardia. Noi anco lontani saremo uniti nella triade della libertà, della fraternità, dell'uguaglianza; e nell'amore caldissimo, intenso, disinteressato di questa divina Italia, che rompe la pietra del suo sepolcro, e risorge colla bandiera del riscatto.').

³¹ Gemelli, *Storia della siciliana rivoluzione del 1848-49*, vol. I, 244: ('lo splendido rivolgimento di Francia il quale non poteva che giovare alla siciliana rivoluzione').

aimed to build on the victories of the Sicilian rebels against what they termed the most ‘obstinate despotism.’³² Lord Minto was once again tasked with mediating.³³ A proposal was made to King Ferdinando II, possibly suggested by Lord Napier,³⁴ to grant the Sicilians a constitution separate from that of Naples. This constitution would consider the island’s interests by reopening the Sicilian parliament, allowing for greater self-government.³⁵ The proposal was disregarded by the Duke of Serracapriola, who served as the Foreign Minister and President of the Council in the Bourbon government. The Duke informed the British ambassador that King Ferdinando was committed to preserving the unity of the kingdom. He also noted that the demands of the Sicilian rebels would need to be disregarded, as they would contradict the agreements made in Vienna in 1815. On the same day, the Convocation Act of Sicily’s General Parliament was unanimously approved and signed by 84 members, including the following: R. Settimo, M. Stabile, P. Calvi, and V. Trapani. Fardella, Marquis of Torrearesa, Count G. Aceto, G. Interdonato, F. Crispi, F. Ugdulena, R. Pilo, G. La Masa, E. Amari, Baron C. Pisani, F. Ferrara, R. Bagnasco, G. Carini, V. Beltrani, V. Errante, the Deputy of Syracuse R. Lanza and the Deputy of Catania, G. Carnazza.³⁶

In March 1848, the Sicilian provisional government organised elections to restore the old guarantees and reopen the Sicilian parliament, reflecting a desire to preserve the island’s

³² Ibid., 249: (‘ostinato dispotismo’).

³³ Lord Minto, also known as Gilbert Elliot, Earl of Minto (1782-1859), had a distinguished career in British politics. He served as the British Ambassador in Berlin from August 1832 to 1834 and later held the position of Postmaster General. From September 1835 to 1841, he was the First Lord of the Admiralty. In 1847, Prime Minister Palmerston sent him to Italy, where he first visited Turin and then Florence. While in Florence, he received requests for assistance from Sicilian exiles, including figures such as Gemelli and La Farina. During his time in Rome, between 1847 and 1848, Lord Minto advised Pope Pius IX to continue his reform efforts and urged King Ferdinand II of Bourbon to grant his people a constitution. To promote reconciliation between Naples and Sicily, the British government dispatched Lord Francis Napier to the Bourbon court in Naples in February 1848. Napier suggested that King Ferdinand grant a constitution that would provide partial autonomy for Sicily from the central government in Naples. However, the Bourbon king pretended to accept this proposal while remaining committed to his vision of an absolute monarchy. Lord Minto was concerned about the potential for a republican shift among the Sicilian revolutionaries. To address this, he proposed the establishment of a Bourbon lieutenant on the island, along with a mixed junta comprising Sicilians and Neapolitans to manage common affairs. His aim was to prevent a separation from Naples. However, the Sicilian rebels rejected his proposal, as they were determined to gain greater autonomy from Naples. After his efforts failed, even after his arrival in Sicily, Lord Minto returned to England. He later received other government appointments and passed away in 1859.

³⁴ Lord Francis Napier, the 10th Lord Napier and 1st Baron Ettrick, was a Scottish diplomat and colonial administrator born on 15 September 1819. He passed away on 19 December 1898, in Florence, Italy. A gifted linguist, Napier was fluent in many languages. In 1848, he was appointed Secretary of the British delegation to Naples. During his tenure, he served as the Acting Ambassador for eighteen months. Following this role, he became the British Minister to the United States from 1857 to 1859, and then to the Netherlands from 1859 to 1860. He also held positions in Russia from 1861 to 1864 and in Prussia from 1864 to 1866. From 1866 to 1872, Napier served as the Governor of Madras and briefly acted as the Governor-General of India from February to May 1872. His contributions to diplomacy and colonial administration are still remembered today.

³⁵ *Correspondence respecting the Affairs of Italy: presented to both Houses of Parliament by command of Her Majesty. From January 2 to June 30, 1848* (London, Harrison and Son, 1849).

³⁶ *Collezione Ufficiale degli Atti del Comitato Generale di Sicilia nell'anno 1848*, 166-167.

institutional legacy. Lord Napier criticised the Bourbon government for its stalling tactics and expressed hope for a swift dissolution of the provisional government, awaiting foreign aid.³⁷ The new electoral law 'gave power to all citizens, except the illiterate, who were mainly peasants, commoners, who represented the majority of the rebels'³⁸ according to Gemelli. Ruggero Settimo, Mariano Stabile, Francesco Ferrara, Michele Amari, Vincenzo Errante, and Carmelo Pisani were elected as deputies in Palermo, while Carlo Gemelli and Giuseppe La Farina were elected in Messina.

On 6 March, Ferdinando II, alarmed by the events in France and the unrest in Sicily, signed decrees recognising the Sicilian Parliament. He also established a Ministry of Sicilian Affairs, chaired by the Sicilian G. Scovazzo, and appointed R. Settimo as the lieutenant of Sicily. These measures aimed to unify the two peoples of the kingdom under a single crown. Lord Minto, the English negotiator, departed for Palermo to deliver the decrees from the Neapolitan government. However, Ferdinando's concessions were perceived as a 'new deception.'³⁹ The Sicilian rebels ultimately rejected certain franchises offered to them because, as Gemelli noted, 'these franchises could not create an army composed of Sicilian soldiers, which would be necessary to reassure and defend the freedoms the rebels had regained.'⁴⁰ The Sicilian people regarded the concessions from King Ferdinando and his ministers as unreliable and inadequate.

The General Committee, which represented the people, acknowledged King Ferdinando II as the sovereign of Sicily but imposed certain conditions. They demanded the appointment of a Neapolitan viceroy with full executive powers, the exclusive employment of Sicilians in civil, diplomatic, military, and ecclesiastical positions, the maintenance of the civil guard, the minting of currency, the return of the Portofranco to the city of Messina, and, most importantly, the delivery of one-fourth of the fleet, arms, and war materials to Sicily, or their equivalent value in money.

Despite Lord Minto's belief that the Sicilian counterproposals would be accepted, on 22 March the Neapolitan ministers, through the Prince of Cariati, informed the Sicilian government that Naples had rejected them. They affirmed their intention to maintain the island under a regime of 'miserable. provincial slavery.'⁴¹ On 25 March, the Sicilian Parliament held its

³⁷ Gemelli, *Storia della siciliana rivoluzione del 1848-49*, vol. 1, 267.

³⁸ Ibid., 286: ('diede il potere a tutti i cittadini, eccetto gli analfabeti, che erano per lo più contadini, popolani, che rappresentavano la maggioranza dei ribelli').

³⁹ Ibid., 287: ('un novello inganno').

⁴⁰ Ibid.: ('queste franchigie delle più alte guarentigie mancavano, diciamo, della facoltà di poter creare un esercito composto da soldati siciliani, che potesse assicurare e difendere le libertà riconquistate').

⁴¹ Gemelli, *Storia della siciliana rivoluzione del 1848-49*, vol. 1, 301: ('una miserabile schiavitù provinciale').

inaugural assembly at the Church of San Domenico in Palermo, which was met with great enthusiasm from the people. A new executive committee was established, headed by President Ruggiero Settimo, who Gemelli described as ‘the guardian angel of the revolution.’⁴² Six ministers were appointed to the new government: Pietro Lanza, Prince of Scordia, became the Minister of Public Education and Public Works; lawyer Pasquale Calvi was appointed to the Interior Ministry; Baron De Riso took charge of the War Department, but he was replaced on March 27 by Baron Colonel Giuseppe Paternò; Michele Amari was appointed Minister of Finance; and lawyer Gaetano Pisano became the Minister of Justice. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade was assigned to Mariano Stabile, who Gemelli described as ‘fearless, industrious, and daring.’⁴³ However, some sources criticized him for placing too much trust in British diplomacy.

The statute of the new assembly proclaimed popular sovereignty as an untransferable and inalienable principle, representing an advancement from the 1812 statute. Angelo Grimaldi noted that the Sicilian Constitution of 1848 exhibited a ‘lame dualism’ of power, where two constitutional bodies—the parliament and the king—were almost on equal footing. This constitution is part of a broader European constitutional movement, yet it retains its unique character.⁴⁴

7.3 Chindemi’s Memoirs

Unlike other Sicilian cities, Syracuse did not initially participate in the revolution. Serafino Privitera, a parish priest, reported that Syracuse had experienced several calamities, including droughts, floods, and earthquakes. Although these events did not cause significant damage, they left the citizens ‘in a state of consternation and dismay.’⁴⁵

The day before the revolution began, yet another earthquake struck the Syracuse province, leaving the population in ‘despair, cold, and terror.’⁴⁶ The archbishop made great efforts to gather the faithful in the city’s cathedral, where they ‘prayed, purged their consciences, and listened to sacred sermons’⁴⁷ while the relics of the patron saint, Saint Lucy, were on display. News of the events in Palermo was initially scarce, uncertain, and concealed by the Bourbon

⁴² Ibid., 309: (‘angelo tutelare della rivoluzione’).

⁴³ Ibid.: (‘l’impavido, laborioso e audace’).

⁴⁴ A. Grimaldi, ‘La rivoluzione e lo statuto costituzionale siciliano del 1848’, in *Revista Mission Juridica*, 12, (17), 39-72: (‘dualismo zoppo’). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25058/1794600X.1042>:

⁴⁵ Chindemi, *Storia di Siracusa antica e moderna*, vol. II (Napoli, Tip. già del Fibreno, 1874), 387: (‘nella costernazione e nello sgomento’).

⁴⁶ Ibid., 388: (‘al disagio, il freddo e il terrore’).

⁴⁷ Ibid.: (‘pregare, a purgarsi le coscienze, a udire le sacre concioni’).

police, but it eventually reached Syracuse. According to Salvatore Chindemi, he received a parcel of information from the General Committee of Palermo.⁴⁸

On 29 January, Chindemi and other liberals established a secret committee at a villa owned by the liberal freemason and baron Emmanuele Francica Pancali (1783-1868), who had returned to Syracuse after an eleven-year exile and was elected president of the committee. They also founded a new newspaper, *L'Amico del Popolo*. A few days later, a delegation led by Raffaele Lanza and Abbot Emilio Bufardecì (recalled in Chapter Four) was tasked with informing the General Committee about Syracuse's support for the revolutionary cause. A steamer arrived in Palermo carrying a decree from King Ferdinando, promising the establishment of a constitution. General Bernardo Palma, a former brigadier in the Murattian army loyal to the Bourbons and opposed to Sicilian independence, had the decree posted on the city walls. However, the people of Syracuse refused to accept it, repeatedly tearing down the posters. Despite multiple attempts to re-post the decree, the outcome remained the same.⁴⁹

On 15 March, Syracuse elected Pancali as deputy to the Sicilian General Parliament, and on the 18th, the two district delegates, Chindemi and Stabile, were chosen. Raffaele Lanza immediately took the place of the latter. Emanuele Benedictis, secretary of the Circolo Patriottico (Patriotic Circle) established in Syracuse, reported that John Moor, the captain of the brick *Arlecchino*, who docked in the port of Syracuse, was also present that day in the theatre where the counting of votes took place:

That friendly person, Moore, received spontaneous applause from the crowd, and the chant 'Long live Great Britain' echoed repeatedly. Those were sweet days filled with even sweeter memories. They will forever remain in the hearts of those who experienced them. What flattery! The people of Syracuse found solace after their painful struggles; justice prevailed in the new era, and violence gave way to law and order. Who could doubt the imminent restoration?⁵⁰

Chindemi was passionately devoted to regaining his city's title as the provincial capital. After the riots of 1837, Del Carretto unjustly revoked this title from Syracuse in favour of Noto, causing considerable disappointment among the Syracusan patriots. However, Syracuse was eventually reinstated in its rightful position, and the people celebrated with 'a clamorous feast

⁴⁸ Chindemi, *Siracusa dal 1820 al 1860* (Siracusa, Tip. Pulejo, 1869), 216.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 221.

⁵⁰ *Siracusa sotto la mala signoria degli ultimi Borboni. Ricordi* (Torino, Unione-tipografica Editrice, 1861), 58- 59: ('Quella persona amica ebbe plausi spontanei dal popolo raccolto, e replicati evviva la Gran Bretagna. Soavi giorni, e più soavi memorie, le quali non usciranno dal cuore di chi le provò veraci. E quali lusinghe! I Siracusani rinfrancati dei patiti dolori, la giustizia dei nuovi tempi, la violenza dispersa con la barbarie. Chi potea dubitare d'una riparazione imminente!').

that lasted until dawn.’⁵¹

There was immense excitement when, on 25 March, it was announced that the General Parliament would reopen. A lavish feast and a solemn mass were held at the Cathedral of Syracuse, followed by ‘an impressive display of lights and sounds. Those who witnessed the event voted enthusiastically for a brighter future for Sicily.’⁵² The following day, six frigates arrived in Syracuse to transport the Bourbon soldiers to Naples and to disarm the city square. The entire army departed from the harbour on 13 April, as Captain Moor informed the Governor of Malta, Admiral Parker, and Lord Minto. The people of Syracuse were left in awe as they witnessed the enemy troops departing. On the same day, Sicily declared the decline of King Ferdinando and his ‘satanic lineage.’⁵³ At this juncture, Sicily needed a new form of government, yet the question remained: what would be the most suitable?

7.4 The Sicilian Legation in Rome and Tuscany: a New King for Sicily?

Gemelli’s account states that Minister Stabile, who was dedicated to the federative cause, convinced the new Sicilian government to declare the decline of the Bourbon monarchy through the decree issued on 13 April 1848. The decree was signed by the Marquis of Torrearsa, President of the Chamber of Peers; the Duke of Serradifalco, President of the Chamber of Commons; the President of the Kingdom of Sicily, Ruggiero Settimo; and the Minister of the Interior, Pasquale Calvi. Below is an excerpt from the aforementioned decree:

To all Civilized Nations, The Sicilian Parliament declares that the greatest act of justice has been accomplished. Sicily has forever dethroned Ferdinando and his dynasty. For thirty-three years, this family has violated the sacred rights of this land, reducing it from a free and independent kingdom to a subjugated province through violence and deceit. They have breached the ancient constitution of this kingdom and the treaties sworn in 1812, trampling upon every principle of human rights with an unmatched ferocity of tyranny. This family had already been anathematized before this Parliament, which solemnly declared it with its Decree of April 13, 1848, in the sight of the people and God.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Ibid., 61: (‘meravigliosa festa durata fino all’alba’).

⁵² Ibid.: (‘suoni, luminarie, dal voto entusiasta di chi vedeva la terra siciliana oramai felice’).

⁵³ Ibid., 65: (‘genia satanica’).

⁵⁴ Decreto di decadenza dei Borboni dal trono di Sicilia e Proclama (aprile 1848): (‘IL PARLAMENTO DI SICILIA A TUTTE LE NAZIONI CIVILI. Il più grande atto di giustizia è compiuto. La Sicilia ha dichiarato decaduti dal suo trono e per sempre Ferdinando Borbone e la sua dinastia. Una famiglia sistematicamente spergiura, che da trentatré anni ha manomesso i sacri dritti di questa terra che da regno libero e indipendente riducevala per violenza e per frode schiava e provincia che non paga di violare l’antichissima Costituzione di questo regno e i patti giurati nel 1812, conculcava ogni umana ragione colle ferocie d’una tirannide unica al mondo, questa famiglia non che decaduta era anatemiata al cospetto de popoli e di Dio, prima che questo Parlamento col suo Decreto del 13 aprile 1848 lo avesse solennemente dichiarato.’).

Chindemi notes, 'It was agreed that all voting Deputies should sign the decree, akin to the Declaration of Independence signed by all participants.'⁵⁵ The House of Commons declared the throne of Sicily vacant and announced that the country would establish a constitutional government led by an Italian prince. The House of Peers immediately endorsed this decision, leading to an outpouring of jubilation in the city of Palermo:

On that day, the magnificent city of Palermo, always aware of its historical significance and power, presented a remarkable spectacle filled with luxury and grandeur, almost reminiscent of the East. The streets, squares, balconies, and shops were all adorned with tapestries, fragrant flowers, and vibrant flames. This decor heightened the general excitement and joy of the people, reflecting their honest pride in the triumph achieved. The celebrations were pure and meaningful, reinforcing their faith in a bright future.⁵⁶

The Sicilian revolutionary government decided to send a delegation to several Italian states to establish alliances and seek public recognition. Before traveling to Tuscany, Gemelli arrived in Rome on 3 April 1848, aboard an English steamer named the Bulldog. On 14 April, he met with the Holy Father, where he explained the purpose of his mission and urged him to intervene to stop the bombing of Messina, which had begun on 20 January. While acknowledging the rights and suffering of the Sicilian people, the Pope committed to mediating discussions between the Sicilian rebels and King Ferdinand II. Gemelli was also received by the Secretary of State, Cardinal Antonelli, who, according to the account of Giuseppe La Masa, 'expressed a feigned sympathy for the Sicilian cause.'⁵⁷ Disappointed by the diplomatic response from the Papal States, Gemelli sought to rally support among liberal circles in Rome. However, one of the prominent groups in Rome condemned the Sicilian revolution, criticizing local governance for hindering the unification of the nation. Additionally, Sicily was perceived as a British colony. It was not until several months later, on 15 May 1848, that Pius IX officially recognized Sicily as an autonomous state separate from Naples.

The following month, Gemelli was sent to Tuscany to gain support and recognition for the new Sicilian kingdom. He believed that 'it was unrealistic to expect Pope Pius IX to intervene

⁵⁵ Chindemi, *Siracusa dal 1820 al 1860*, 233: ('Vollesì che tutti i Deputati votanti sottoscrivessero quel decreto a somiglianza della dichiarazione dell'indipendenza Americana sottoscritta da tutti coloro che vi concorsero').

⁵⁶ Gemelli, *Storia della siciliana rivoluzione del 1848-49*, vol. I, 303: ('La magnanima Palermo ricordevole ognora di sua grandezza e possanza dava in quel dì spettacolo memorando di lusso e di pompe quasi diremmo orientali. Le vie le piazze i balconi le botteghe ornate tutte di arazzi di fiori olezzanti e di vivissime fiammelle accrescevano la comune esaltazione il giubilo degli animi l'orgoglio schietto e verace del riportato trionfo la purità o santità dei festeggiamenti e la fede nell'avvenire').

⁵⁷ G. La Masa, *Documenti della rivoluzione siciliana del 1847-1849 in rapporto all'Italia* (Torino, Tip. Ferrero e Franco, 1850), 151.

on behalf of the Sicilian rebels or to wage war against the imperial power.’⁵⁸ The papal address on 29 April dashed any hopes for reconciliation between Catholicism and liberalism. In Tuscany, Gemelli was accompanied by other commissioners from the Sicilian government, including G. La Farina, E. Amari, and Baron C. Pisani. Their mission was to discuss recent events and the alliance among the Italian princes.

On 3 May 1848, the Grand Duke of Tuscany held an audience with Carlo Gemelli. As the Commissioner of the Sicilian government, the historian from Messina presented the dynamics of the Sicilian revolution, the underlying causes, and the poor governance of the Bourbons. Upon hearing the news about Sicily, Leopold II reportedly exclaimed that he had been informed that, for his brother-in-law, Ferdinand II, Sicily was a very serious burden.⁵⁹ Gemelli successfully secured the recognition of the new Sicilian government. At that time, the President of the Council, Giuseppe Montanelli, announced that the Tuscan government had officially severed communications with Naples.⁶⁰ The Tuscan government acknowledged the new Sicilian kingdom *de facto* and also promised to recognize it *de jure*. This is evidenced by the statement written by Giuseppe Montanelli:⁶¹

Florence, 11 November 1848

Having recognized the government of Sicily, I have no objection to its desire, expressed in its valuable note dated the 10th, to display the Sicilian coat of arms on the door of its residence. This will help compatriots find the Legation more easily. However, the matter of recognizing rights remains, and the Grand Ducal Government, aware of the rights of heroic Sicily, is actively addressing this issue in line with the principles of its political program. Please accept my warm regards.

(Signed) G. MONTANELLI⁶²

⁵⁸ Ibid., 340: (‘il pretendere, che un papa potesse o dovesse guerreggiare a pro dell’Italia contro l’imperiale possanza’).

⁵⁹ Ibid., 155.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 156-157.

⁶¹ Giuseppe Montanelli was an Italian patriot, writer, and politician born in Fucecchio in 1813. He collaborated with the *Antologia* di G. P. Vieusseux and became a professor of civil law at the University of Pisa in 1840. Montanelli was one of the first Italians to engage with Sansimonian theories and adhered to neo-Guelfism. Over time, he shifted towards republicanism, radicalism, and vaguely socialist utopian solutions. In 1848, Montanelli volunteered with Pisan students and was wounded and captured at Curtatone. He was later freed and elected to the Tuscan Assembly. As governor of Livorno, he proposed the idea of an Italian Constituent Assembly. In October 1848, the Grand Duke appointed him to succeed Gino Capponi as President of the Council. As a member of the Guerrazzi-Montanelli-Mazzoni triumvirate, he struggled to establish a republic, ultimately leading to the proclamation of the union with Rome due to Domenico Guerrazzi’s strong opposition. Montanelli assumed full powers from Guerrazzi and was sent to France to seek assistance. However, upon the Grand Duke’s return in July 1849, he was exiled. In Tuscany, he was sentenced to life imprisonment. Just before he passed away in 1862, he was elected to the Italian parliament.

⁶² ‘M Montanelli to the Agent of the Sicilian Provisional Government’, Florence, 11 November 1848, in *Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Naples and Sicily: 1848-1849*, 572-573: (‘Il Governo Toscano avendo di fatto riconosciuto quello di Sicilia io non ho ragione di oppormi al desiderio ch’ella mi esprimeva nella

On 15 August, disagreements within the government led by Ruggero Settimo resulted in its downfall. Consequently, a second revolutionary government was formed, which included the Marquis of Torrellas as Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Giuseppe La Farina as Minister of Education and Public Works, as well as Minister of the Interior and Salvation, and Giovanni Paternò as Minister of War and the Navy. This new government faced the difficult task of selecting a new king for the throne of Sicily. Two candidates were under consideration: the Duke of Genoa, the son of Carlo Alberto, Prince Amadeus of Savoy, who was favoured by England, and Prince Carlo of Lorraine, the son of Grand Duke Leopold II of Tuscany, who had the support of France. The intentions of these two European powers were quite evident. France was concerned that the throne of Sicily might fall to a Savoy prince, which could lead to the expansion of the Savoy Kingdom in Italy — definitely a worry for France. On the other hand, the English government would stand to benefit from the selection of the Tuscan prince, who was also backed by his mother, Grand Duchess Maria Amalia, the sister of the King of Naples. Gemelli argued that ‘the few honest Republicans and the many agitators bribed with Bourbon gold opposed this election. [...] They hoped for the establishment of a republic that would overthrow the thrones of princes, abolish the theocracy, and revive Italy’s fortunes.’⁶³ In this context, La Farina noted that the Duke of Genoa declined the crown of Sicily due to the conflicting interests of England and France.⁶⁴ He also mentioned that Carlo Alberto, the King of Sardinia, ‘would not have allowed his son to be appointed without the approval of England and France.’⁶⁵

In this regard, La Farina noted that England expedited the election of the new king, which was seen as essential for consolidating the revolution (as opposed to pursuing a republican solution) and for preparing for England’s recognition of the new Sicilian government.⁶⁶ According to the patriot from Messina, diplomatic recognition of Sicily would only occur after reforming the Statute and the election of the new king.⁶⁷ He believed that electing a prince from the House of Savoy would be detrimental to Tuscany and Rome, while choosing a Tuscan prince would create opposition

pregevole sua nota del 10 andante d’innalzare sulla porta della sua abitazione lo stemma Siciliano allo scopo di rendere più facile a suoi connazionali di rinvenire la Legazione Ferma poi rimanendo la questione del riconoscimento di diritto della quale il Governo Granducale non immemore dei diritti dell’eroica Sicilia si occupa caldamente secondo i principii del suo programma politico.

La prego & c c

Firmato G MONTANELLI’).

⁶³ Gemelli, *Storia della siciliana rivoluzione del 1848-49*, vol. 1, 376: (‘i pochi onesti repubblicani, ed i molti agitatori venduti all’oro borbonico, opponevansi tutti a questa elezione [...] speravano il nascimento di una repubblica, che avesse abbattuto i troni dei principi, annientata la teocrazia, e rinnovate le fortune d’Italia.’).

⁶⁴ La Farina, *Storia della rivoluzione siciliana*, 180.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 226.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 233.

from Lombardy, Venice, and Piedmont.⁶⁸ All the courts in Europe hoped to receive a crown from Sicily. La Farina cautioned that if the government were to grant a crown, it could turn half of Italy into adversaries.⁶⁹

On 10 July 1848, the Sicilian Parliament unanimously voted to make Alberto Amedeo, Duke of Genoa, the King of Sicily. La Farina recounted the events of that day:

It was two o'clock after midnight. Instantly, the city was illuminated in celebration. Amidst the ringing of bells, the roar of cannons, and the joyful cheers of the people, the new day broke. The English and French warships in the port of Palermo raised the Sicilian flag and saluted it with twenty-one cannon shots. Two fleets arrived, led by Admirals Parker and Baudin, accompanied by the Sicilian flag. The president of the government and the ministers of Sicily were given the customary honours typically reserved for recognized nations.⁷⁰

The revolutionary government sent a delegation to Turin to offer the Crown to the Duke of Genoa. However, the prolonged delay in his response caused irritation among the Sicilians, as reported in the newspaper *La Forbice*:

In any case, Sicily did not revolt to humbly beg a prince to accept the pitiful gift of a kingdom while kneeling. Nevertheless, what is the point of our eagerness if, even after 20 days, the Duke of Genoa has yet to speak with our Deputation? Therefore, our Parliament should address this unacceptable delay and seriously consider the current state of Sicily by decreeing that the Duke of Genoa must declare *within a specified time* whether or not he intends to accept the crown of Sicily.⁷¹

The Duke of Genoa ultimately refused the crown due to his commitment to the First War of Independence, which began on 23 March 1848. Additionally, Carlo Alberto was aware of the risks involved in facing a war against the Bourbon monarchy, which had voiced its grievances to the court in London and the Sardinian government following the election of his son as king of Sicily. As the 'Sicilian question' remained unresolved, King Ferdinando dissolved the

⁶⁸ Ibid., 246.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 249: ('Erano le due dopo mezzanotte. La città fu in un istante istante illuminata a festa: fra il suono delle campane, il rimbombo dei cannoni e le grida di gioia del popolo, spuntava il nuovo giorno. I legni da guerra inglesi e francesi che trovavansi nel porto di Palermo, inalberavano la bandiera siciliana e la salutavano con ventun colpi di cannone. Soppravvenivano le due flotte colli amiragli Parker e Baudin, e alla bandiera siciliana, ed al presidente del governo, ed a' ministri di Sicilia rendevano quelli onori soliti farsi a nazioni riconosciute').

⁷¹ *La Forbice, gazzetta periodica di Sicilia*, a. 1, n. 56 (Palermo, 18 agosto 1848), 222: ('Ad ogni modo la Sicilia non ha fatto la rivoluzione per andar pregando sommessamente e ginocchioni un principe affinché si degni accettare il meschinissimo dono di un regno [...] Ma a che pro questa nostra sollecitudine se dopo 20 giorni ancor il duca di Genova non ha nemmeno parlato colla nostra Deputazione? [...] Ripari adunque il Parlamento nostro a questo ritardo che non si sa con quel nome chiamare e prendendo in seria considerazione lo stato attuale della Sicilia decreti che il duca di Genova debba dentro un dato termine dichiarare se intende o no accettare la corona di Sicilia [...]').

parliament in Naples and withdrew the statute to restore ‘the prestige of the offended crown.’⁷²

7.5 The Bombardment of Naples

Following Sicily’s example, the Neapolitan liberals organized a revolt against the Bourbons. King Ferdinando’s response was inadequate. In May 1848, several military battalions and Swiss troops marched along Via Toledo, the main street of Naples. As Gemelli notes, Ferdinando ordered the attack at ten o’clock on the 15th of that month.⁷³ A battle ensued, and a red flag was raised from the Royal Palace, signalling the fierce bombardment of the city, which ultimately led to the insurgents’ surrender. La Farina’s narration, from which a brief passage is quoted, is poignant:

Amid the terror among the citizens and the anger of foreign mercenaries, only a few brave patriots fought a desperate battle until they ran out of ammunition. Eventually, the firing ceased, leaving the enemy victorious. From that moment on, the Swiss, the royal guard, and the naval regiments stormed through the streets, clearing away all obstacles. Everything was quickly invaded, disrupted, and destroyed by the destructive frenzy of those madmen.⁷⁴

The deputies of the Neapolitan Parliament attempted to resist this onslaught by establishing a public health committee to protect their statutes and freedoms. However, their efforts proved futile as the royal troops invaded the Parliament halls, forcing the deputies to flee, with only the gendarmes providing protection. King Ferdinando declared a state of siege and dissolved both the Civil Guard and the Parliament. Meanwhile, Bourbon troops were withdrawn from Lombardy-Veneto, where the war against Austria continued, led by Carlo Alberto and volunteer militias commanded by two generals from the Papal States, Durando and Ferrari, along with General G. Pepe. They were assisted by Giuseppe Garibaldi, who had come from Latin America to fight alongside the Italian rebels.

Gemelli’s writing strongly criticizes the moderate forces for their hesitation and delay. Supporting a genuine revolution. Gemelli argues that the attempt ‘to overlook the character of

⁷² Gemelli, *Storia della siciliana rivoluzione del 1848-49*, vol. I, 378: (‘prestigio dell’offesa corona’).

⁷³ Ibid., 384.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 385: (‘Così fra il terrore de’ cittadini, e la rabbia de’ mercenari stranieri, pochi magnanimi patrioti sostennero una battaglia ineguale, finché mancate le munizioni, e cessato il fuoco, abbandonavano al nemico la vittoria. Da quel momento gli svizzeri, la guardia reale, ed i reggimenti della marina slanciavansi, come belve, sulle vie sgombrate da ogni impedimento [...] tutto insomma fu in brev’ora invaso, sconvolto, ed annientato dal delirio distruttore di quei forsennati’).

the prince, his family's traditions, the achievements of his reign, the sadness of the court, the corruption of the common people, the negative influences of the clergy, and the overall unhealthy state of affairs in Italy'⁷⁵ were strategic errors in the struggle for independence. He states, 'There could be no pacts or oaths between a Bourbon and the redemption of a people, but only war and victory.'⁷⁶ The Messinese patriot emphasizes that failing to prepare for the revolution and simply waiting in doubt and inertia for the Bourbon reaction was a significant mistake. He adds, 'The moderates or the ambitious are not, and will never be, the saviours of a people.'⁷⁷

After Ferdinando of Bourbon re-established despotism in Naples, he aimed to reconquer Sicily. However, reports of the violent events in Naples incited resistance throughout the kingdom, leading to the formation of revolutionary groups in Abruzzo, Cilento, Basilicata, and Calabria. In response, the Sicilian Parliament voted to launch an expedition to Calabria to support the rebels. Ignazio Ribotti⁷⁸ was appointed to lead a contingent of seven hundred men, which landed in Paola, Calabria, on 14 June. Giuseppe Ricciardi, a deputy in the Neapolitan Parliament, fled to Malta following the massacre in Naples on 15 May. He crossed the Straits of Messina and travelled through Nicastro and Catanzaro before reaching Cosenza, the centre of the Calabrian insurrection, in June 1848. Ricciardi aimed to unite all revolutionary forces in Calabria to overthrow the Bourbon monarchy in Naples. However, his plan was overly ambitious and had little chance of success, as it did not account for the actual political situation in Calabria, the lack of military support, and the significant dangers involved in his actions. Gemelli notes that 'there was great disagreement and no commonality of ideas, actions, and intent among the three revolutionary committees that emerged in Calabria.'⁷⁹

The committees had little or no funding, inadequate weapons, and were plagued by spies and traitors who betrayed the brave and honourable.⁸⁰ The Calabrian movement, led by patriots such

⁷⁵ Ibid., 392: ('trascurare il carattere del principe, le tradizioni della sua famiglia, i successi del suo regno, la tristezza della corte, la corruzione del popolo comune, le influenze negative del clero e lo stato generale malsano delle cose in Italia').

⁷⁶ Ibid.: ('fra un Borbone e il riscatto di un popolo, non eravansi patti o giuramenti, ma la guerra e la vittoria').

⁷⁷ Ibid., 401: ('i moderati o gli ambiziosi. non furono, nè saranno mai i salvatori di un popolo').

⁷⁸ Ignazio Ribotti di Molières was born in Nice in November 1809. He pursued a military career in the Savoyard army and, in the 1820s, joined a secret society of Freemasons that lobbied the court for a constitutional government. In April 1831, he was arrested and imprisoned in Turin, and later exiled to France. In 1832, he became involved with the Republican mobs in Paris, which forced him to flee to England and then to Portugal. Ribotti fought alongside the liberals during the Spanish movements of the 1830s before returning to Italy in 1843. He was called upon by La Farina to contribute to the Sicilian cause. In July 1848, he led the Calabrian insurrection, but the effort failed, resulting in his imprisonment once again. After six years, he regained his freedom and moved to Malta. Following the unification of Italy, he was elected lieutenant general in the Marches. He died in Brig in September 1864.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 404: ('un grande disaccordo [...] o meglio niuna comunanza d'idee, nissuno intendimento comune nell'azione e nel fine').

⁸⁰ Ibid., 401: ('i moderati o gli ambiziosi. non furono, nè saranno mai i salvatori di un popolo').

as the Plutino brothers, Casimiro Di Lieto, Francesco Stocco, Giovanni Mosciaro, and Domenico Mauro, was quickly suppressed by royal troops sent to the region. General Nunziante commanded 4,000 men in Reggio Calabria, while General Busacca led 3,600 men in Cosenza. Faced with defeat, the leaders of the Sicilian expedition requested assistance to return to the island. They reached Tiriolo in Calabria and made their way to the port of Catanzaro, where they managed to board a ship on 7 July and set sail for Corfu. However, as they entered British territorial waters, they were deceived by the steamer *Stromboli*, which initially flew the British flag but changed to the Bourbon flag as they approached. The rebels were captured and taken to the Neapolitan prisons of Sant'Elmo and Nisita.⁸¹ Meanwhile, King Ferdinando II devised his plan to reconquer the Neapolitan kingdom.

7.6 The Bourbon reaction: the Siege of Messina

King Ferdinando II entrusted General Carlo Filangieri, Prince of Satriano, with the supreme command of the expedition to Sicily after suppressing the revolution in Naples. The expedition consisted of three large sailing ships, six war steamers, four steamers, twenty gunboats, numerous transport ships, and two corvettes. Two Swiss regiments, the general staff, four companies of Carabinieri, the militia stationed in Calabria, and the garrisons housed in the Real Cittadella (a pentagonal fortress built in the 17th century by the Spanish, located on the isthmus that cuts through the natural harbour of Messina) were also part of the expedition.⁸²

In anticipation of the royal expedition, the gazette *La Forbice* proclaimed the Sicilians to be ready to fight:

Sicilians to arms!

Yesterday, the Minister of Foreign Affairs announced to the House of Commons that King Bomba is about to send his army to Sicily. The army consists of up to 20,000 soldiers, including two regiments of Swiss troops. This news was obtained from the embarkation of troops in Naples on 29 August onboard seven warships and a frigate. [...] The enthusiastic and loud applause that followed this announcement demonstrates how much the people of Sicily desire to get rid of the cowardly minions of the crowned henchman. Sicilians will rise en masse to overthrow the last head of this hydra that vainly tries to poison the freedom of this brave land. [...] Let us show the same Sicilians of 12 January. Down with competition, down with private claims, down with disputes: unity, and Sicily will be victorious! Sicilians, to arms!⁸³

⁸¹ 'Lord Napier to Viscount Palmerston', Naples, 1 August 1848', in *Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Naples and Sicily: 1848-1849* (London, Harrison and Son, 1849), 412-413.

⁸² R. Santoro, *Storia delle sedizioni cangiamenti di stato e fatti d'arme del Regno delle Due Sicilie nel 1848-1849* (Napoli, Tip. G. Guerrera, 1849), 244.

⁸³ *La Forbice*, a. 1, n. 68 (Palermo, 1 September 1848), 269-270: ('Siciliani all'armi! Jeri il ministro degli Affari Esteri annunziò finalmente alla camera dei Comuni che re Bomba è sul punto di spedire la sua truppa in Sicilia, truppa che non può al massimo ascendere se non al numero di ventimila, compresi due reggimenti di Svizzeri.

In a letter dated 1 September 1848, addressed to Vincenzo Gallina, La Farina shared his reaction to the news of an imminent Bourbon expedition against Sicily. He had just arrived in Palermo from Florence. The Messina patriot's enthusiasm and confidence in the rebels' victory may seem surprising, considering Sicily's poor financial and military conditions. Nevertheless, he wrote:

We have just received news that nine warships carrying troops are being moved from Naples to launch an offensive in Sicily, with Filangieri commanding the expedition. We went to the Chambers to announce this news and were met with immense applause. Palermo is rejoicing as if it is celebrating a party. We wonder how the rest of Sicily is responding to this announcement. Tomorrow, we will review our forces. Tonight, the city will be illuminated. We have already sent all the necessary orders via telegraph and will not be caught off guard. Although it may seem like madness, I find myself rejoicing because I am confident of victory.⁸⁴

In a subsequent letter dated 2 October, La Farina, who had already been appointed Minister of War and the Navy, requested rifles, gunpowder, cloth uniforms, and coats. The Sicilian historian sent this request to his friend Vincenzo Gallina, emphasizing the need for coats since 'the soldiers were still wearing their summer jackets and the temperature was dropping.'⁸⁵

On 31 August 1848, the Bourbon ships arrived at Bagnara, a small Calabrian town near Reggio Calabria. This town was strategically located across from the Messina Citadel, making it ideal for landing. According to Gemelli, the leaders of the Sicilian forces did not comprehend Filangieri's strategy. They assumed the attack would come from Milazzo or Palermo, so they left the city's southern defences weakened.

With a critical perspective, Gemelli acknowledged that nothing was done 'to enhance the chances of success for the defence of Messina.'⁸⁶ The fate of Messina, indeed, 'was entrusted to inexperienced individuals who were jealous and distrustful of each other's rights and

Questa notizia era ricavata da un imbarco di truppa che si esegui in Napoli il giorno 29 agosto soprasette vapori da guerra, ed una fregata. [...] L'entusiasmo, gli strepitosissimi applausi e l'ebbrezza con cui fu ricevuto siffatto annunzio, addimostrano chiaramente quanto desiato sia in Sicilia il momento di sperdere i vili satelliti di quello sgherro coronato. La Sicilia si leverà in massa per abbattere l'ultima testa di quell'idra che invano tenta gli ultimi sforzi per avvelenare la libertà di questa terra valorosa [...] Mostriamoci quei medesimi Siciliani del dodici gennaro. Giù le gare, giù le private pretese, giù i dissidii: unione, e Sicilia sarà vittoriosa! Siciliani all'armi!').

⁸³ 'Letter to V. Gallina', Palermo, 1 September 1848, in *Epistolario*, vol. I, 321: ('In questo momento ci è giunta la nuova che in giornata muoveranno da Napoli 9 legni di guerra con truppa per tentare un colpo di mano sulla Sicilia. Filangieri comanda la spedizione. Noi siamo andati alle Camere ad annunziarla. Siamo stati accolti con immensi applausi. Palermo si è rallegrato come all'invito di una festa. Cosa sarà in tutta Sicilia! Domani passeremo rivista. Questa sera la città sarà illuminata. Già col telegrafo abbiamo dati tutti gli ordini opportuni, e non ci coglieranno alla sprovvista. Io non so perchè sarà forse una pazzia - ma io tripudio di gioia, perché son sicuro della vittoria.')

⁸⁵ Letter of La Farina to V. Gallina', Palermo, 2 October 1848, *ibid*, 322: ('i nostri poveri soldati sono in giacchettina d'estate').

⁸⁶ Gemelli, *Storia della siciliana rivoluzione del 1848-49*, vol. II, 55.

responsibilities, despite their capabilities.’⁸⁷

General Filangieri divided the regular troops of the Bourbon army into two divisions, commanded by Generals Pronio and Nunziante. They were instructed to cooperate effectively. In contrast, the insurgents ‘lacked an experienced military leader and suffered from poor organization, trust issues, and inadequate protection.’⁸⁸ The rebel troops were led by Antonio Pracanica, who was described as ‘noble in heart but lacking military education.’⁸⁹

The artillery was commanded by Colonel Orsini, a Bourbon officer who had joined the patriotic cause. Pracanica developed a defence strategy that involved reinforcing the port of Milazzo and establishing batteries at several locations, including Noviziato (No. 11), Torre Vittoria (No. 13), the Moselle (No. 12), and the shoreline in front of Forte Real Basso. Additionally, the Rocca Guelfonia and the ‘de’ Pizzillari’ quarter were fortified and turned into strongholds where women, including lace and embroidery producer Rosa Donato, fought from the barricades. These women were among many who contributed to the anti-Bourbon revolt.

Gemelli observes that ‘the infantry forces were poorly armed and not very numerous [...] The naval forces were also scarce and ineffective; only sixteen small gunboats were deployed to prevent the enemy from landing, which was insufficient to provide any significant advantage. [...] Furthermore, the efforts of the town guard were largely ineffectual [...]’⁹⁰

Jealousies and differences of opinion between the government and the Council of Defence, chaired by Pracanica, the poor state of the kingdom’s finances contributed to the defeat.⁹¹ During the night of 2 and 3 September, the frigate *Regina*, along with four warships and about twenty smaller vessels (No. 8 on the map), arrived at the coast of Messina. They positioned themselves in front of the Moselle Gardens (No. 12). On the morning of 3 September, a heavy bombardment began from the sea, supported by lightships and Fort Don Blasco (No. 2), while troops started to land on the city beach (landing point No. 10). The landing forces were shielded from enemy fire, and additional battalions emerged from the Citadel (No. 1).

The Bourbon armies that had arrived in Calabria were preparing to advance to the Sicilian coast. In response, the insurgents launched energetic attacks on the royal troops, employing

⁸⁷ Ibid., 64: (‘ad uomini non privi di valore ma inesperti gelosi e diffidenti l’un altro per diritti e competenze’).

⁸⁸ Ibid., 81: (‘di capi militari esperti od atti a saper condurre quella guerra, non ordinamento, nè fiducia né difensori.’).

⁸⁹ Gemelli, *Storia della siciliana rivoluzione del 1848-49*, vol. II, 22: (‘non educato nelle arti della guerra, ma di nobile cuore’).

⁹⁰ Ibid., 21: (‘Non bene armate, nè molto numerose erano le forze di fanteria [...] Povere ed inutili erano le forze di mare. Conciossiachè tutto il navilio, che impedir doveva un sbarco al nemico, non oltrepassava il novero di sedici piccole cannoniere [...] poco o niun giovamento si poteva dall’opera della guardia cittadina ricavare [...]’).

⁹¹ Ibid., 30, 33.

bayonet charges and cannon fire from the hills surrounding the city. Their primary targets were the Caserme (No. 9) and the Portofranco (No. 3), which forced the Bourbons to retreat into the Citadel.

There was a significant disparity in weaponry between the two sides. Many insurgents lacked rifles and had to fight with knives and other makeshift weapons. This imbalance extended to artillery as well; the Bourbons had 450 cannons, while the insurgents had only 112.⁹²

Gemelli noted that the Sicilian revolution was a people's war, in which the leaders 'grew distrustful, suspicious, and fostered military anarchy.'⁹³ Besides, the resources and means utilized by the insurgents were not comparable to those of a regular army commanded by a competent general. The Sicilians defended their homes, city walls, church bell towers, and streets. On 7 September, a telegram sent from Messina reported that the enemy 'had occupied all the batteries, and flames consumed the city.'⁹⁴ La Farina commented on this situation as follows:

At the same time, artillery from both sides began a general bombardment that would last for five days. Filangieri realized that to occupy Messina, it had to be destroyed, and he employed every available means of destruction to achieve this. It was not only grenades, bombs, and bullets that rained down on our troops; incendiary balls and rockets also fell, creating the effect of a volcano erupting over the city.⁹⁵

The Bourbon army burned and razed entire districts of the city, while Swiss troops, followed by Neapolitan forces, stormed the monastery of La Maddalena (No. 4), where the rebels had taken refuge and conquered it. Even the Forte dei Gonzaga (No. 5), which had been left defenceless, was taken, and there was a great massacre of civilians whose houses were conquered one by one. No mercy was shown, even towards the sick and wounded in hospitals. Historian La Farina recounts the well-known episode involving Rosa Donato, a woman who set fire to an ammunition chest, causing an explosion that killed several soldiers. Despite being bayoneted, she was thrown from the city walls.⁹⁶

⁹² For figures on the resources of the armies that confronted each other during the Sicilian revolution, see P. Pieri *Storia militare del Risorgimento* (Torino, Einaudi, 1962).

⁹³ Gemelli, *Storia della siciliana rivoluzione del 1848-49*, vol. II, 66: ('guerra di Popolo, eroica quanto disordinata'); ('la sfidanza, i sospetti e la militare anarchia').

⁹⁴ La Farina, *Storia della rivoluzione siciliana*, vol. I, 344: ('Tutte le batterie sono occupate dai nemici. La città si consuma nelle fiamme').

⁹⁵ Ibid., 346: ('Nel medesimo tempo dall'una parte e dall'altra cominciava quel foco generale di tutte le artiglierie, il quale dovea durare cinque giorni. Filangieri avea compreso che, per occupare Messina, bisognava disfarla, e per conseguire l'intento non vi fu mezzo distruttivo ch'ei non adoprassse. Non erano più le sole palle, le granate e le bombe che molestavano i nostri; ma palle incendiarie, ma razzi: un vulcano, insomma, che faceva eruzione su di una città [...]').

⁹⁶ Ibid., 356: ('mise foco al cassone della munizione, il quale esplose ed uccise parecchi soldati, mentre l'intrepida donna, a colpi di baionetta, era gittata giù da' muri della città').

During the war, enemy troops committed acts of theft, looting, and rape. Once the people of Messina ceased their resistance, General Filangieri ordered the city to be bombarded continuously for five days. The brutal massacre in Messina prompted a reaction from British and French naval officers, who observed the Neapolitan forces from their ships stationed off the Sicilian coast. Diplomats Lord Napier, representing Great Britain, and M. De Raynaval from France, wrote to King Ferdinando requesting an armistice. However, the Neapolitan government refused to comply with their request. Instead, King Ferdinando's ministers asked the two foreign nations to remain neutral so as not to encourage or support the rebellion in Messina.⁹⁷

Many complaints were exchanged between General Filangieri, Prince of Cariati, and the British Foreign Minister, Lord Palmerston. The Russian diplomatic envoys also added their objections. Below is one of the messages that Lord Napier sent to Vice-Admiral Parker after receiving communications from Captain Robb aboard the British frigate *Gladiator*, which was present in the waters off Sicily:

*Lord Napier to Vice-Admiral Sir W. Parker
Naples, 10 September 1848.*

Sir,

I am honoured to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated today. Enclosed is a copy of the despatches from Captain Robb of Her Majesty's steam frigate, *Gladiator*, which describe the horrors of the recent capture of Messina by the Neapolitan troops.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my complete agreement with your views on this matter and with the course of action you proposed in the event that the Neapolitan government refuses to halt hostilities and establish a truce until Her Majesty's Government has made its decision.

I have attached a copy of your letter to Prince Cariati along with the accompanying note, which reflects the essence of your communication. I have, etc.

(Signed) NAPIER⁹⁸

The revolutionary leaders needed to prepare militarily, but the Sicilian government made strategic errors. Additionally, there was a significant resource disparity between the two sides; the Neapolitan army comprised approximately 25,000 men, while the revolutionary army had only 6,000. Besides, neighbouring cities were not able to assist on time. Palermo's support arrived late, as the Minister of War, Paternò, feared that the Bourbons would also attack their city. Because of these factors, the royal army was able to reconquer Messina.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 17.

⁹⁸ *Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Naples and Sicily: 1848-1849*, 515.

Both La Farina and Gemelli agreed that the revolutionary leaders needed to prepare militarily, noting that the Sicilian government made strategic errors. Furthermore, there was a significant disparity in resources between the two sides. The Neapolitan army comprised approximately 25,000 men, while the revolutionary army had only 6,000. Additionally, neighbouring cities were unable to provide timely support. Palermo's assistance arrived late because the Minister of War, Paternò, feared that the Bourbons would also attack their city. Due to these factors, the royal army was able to reconquer Messina.

Although the resistance was heroic, after eight months of continuous bombardment, the city fell on 8 September. La Farina reported Messina's capitulation to the Chambers, officially stating that 'Messina had sworn to let itself be undone, rather than surrender, and it has kept its oath. Messina was incinerated, not defeated! At this price, a people makes itself worthy of freedom.'⁹⁹

7.7 La Farina's Appeal to the Sicilians and the Resumption of the Anti-Borbonic Struggle

After the fall of his city, La Farina appealed to the Sicilian people to continue fighting against the Bourbons. He urged them 'to wage a desperate, merciless, and exterminating war, stating that striking a deal with the Bourbons before the destruction of Messina would have been an error and a shame. Following the sacrifice of Messina, it would be seen as treason and infamy.'¹⁰⁰ Yet Gemelli recalls that the enthusiasm among the people was indescribable. Within days, they created formidable fortifications, including trenches and ditches, which demonstrated the incredible strength and determination of a people united against tyranny.¹⁰¹

Diplomatic efforts by France and England were inadequate; on 24 March, the Sicilian Parliament formally rejected the conditions of the ultimatum issued by General Filangieri on 28 February 1849. The Sicilians remained resolute in their resistance against the Bourbon forces, still clinging to hope for the revolution's survival. When the truce ended on 28 March, hostilities resumed. Instead of attacking Sicily from Palermo, Filangieri opted to launch his offensive from Messina. The responsibility for defending the Sicilian revolution was handed

⁹⁹ La Farina, *Storia della rivoluzione siciliana*, vol. 1, 3: ('Messina avea giurato di lasciarsi disfare, anziché cedere, ed ha mantenuto il suo giuramento. Messina è stata incenerita, non vinta! A questo prezzo un popolo si rende degno della libertà').

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.: ('esortai a guerra disperata, impietosa, sterminatrice e conclusi: «Pria della ruina di Messina venire a' patti co' Borboni sarebbe stato errore e vergogna; dopo il sacrificio di Messina sarebbe tradimento ed infamia»).¹⁰¹ Gemelli, *Storia della siciliana rivoluzione del 1848-49*, vol. II, 250.

over to two foreign generals, Mieroslawski¹⁰² and De Trobiand¹⁰³, after command at Paternò was revoked. The memoirs published by the Palermo City Council on the fiftieth anniversary of 12 January 1848, noted: ‘It is not to say that even between Mieroslaski and De Trobriand, the usual jealousies of prominence and command were kindled’.¹⁰⁴ The Bourbon troops managed to conquer Taormina, Catania and Augusta, leaving only Palermo in the hands of the rebels. After losing Messina, the insurgents ‘lost faith in victory’.¹⁰⁵ They led to the inevitable end of the Sicilian ‘glorious revolution’.¹⁰⁶

In 1849, there was a request for peace in Palermo, supported by the population, the government, and the reactionary forces aligned with the Bourbons. All members of the Chamber of Peers, with only two exceptions, also supported this request. The French admiral Baudin was assigned to negotiate with the Bourbon government on 4 April 1849. As a result, the new Palermo government committed itself ‘to dismantling and suppressing any existing order, work, force, or vestige of freedom and revolution’.¹⁰⁷

The Bourbon fleet was present in the harbour of Palermo, and Ruggero Settimo had left Sicily. The people of Palermo ‘woke up angry and powerful; they saw the betrayal and deception, the wasted forces, the lost revolution; the enemy was near, the offences were not doubtful, and the revenge was terrible.’¹⁰⁸

8. The end of the ‘Glorious Revolution’

In his memoirs, William Dickinson (1808-1851), an Irish Consul who lived for thirty years in Palermo, wrote about the desire for redemption among the Sicilian people. He expressed his solidarity with them and mentioned La Farina as the head of the belligerent party. Dickinson

¹⁰² Ludwik Mieroslawski (1814-1878) was a Polish general, writer, poet, historian, and political activist. He played a significant role in several European revolutionary uprisings. Notably, during the Sicilian uprisings, he fought in Sicily from December 1848 to April 1849, where he was wounded in a battle in Catania. Mieroslawski also fought alongside Garibaldi and led the Polish uprising against the Russian Empire from 1863 to 1864.

¹⁰³ Philippe Régis Denis de Keredern de Trobriand was a French nobleman and general who lived from 1816 to 1897. In 1849, the Sicilian rebels invited him to lead their revolutionary army. However, upon arriving in Sicily and evaluating the available resources—such as manpower, weapons, and supplies—he realized that the rebellion had little chance of success. Consequently, he returned to France. Later, he moved to the United States and fought in the Civil War.

¹⁰⁴ *Memorie della rivoluzione siciliana dell’anno MDCCCXLVIII* (Palermo, Consiglio comunale, Tip. cooperativa fra gli operai, 1898), 193: (‘Non è a dire che anche fra Mieroslaski e De Trobriand si accesero le solite gelosie di preminenza e di comando’).

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.: (‘la fede nella vittoria’).

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 339: (‘la gloriosa rivoluzione’).

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 293-294: (‘scomporre, dissolvere, ad abbattere l’ordine esistente, ogni opera, ogni forza, ogni vestigio di libertà e di rivoluzione’).

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 295: (‘ridestavasi adirato e potente; vide la slealtà e l’inganno, vide sperperate le forze, perdita la rivoluzione: vicino il nemico, non dubbie le offese, e terribili le vendette.’).

also noted that Stabile, Di Marco, Amari, and other patriots were very vocal in their support for war and the defence of Palermo. Dickinson notes the divisions within the Sicilian Parliament:

14 April 1849 – Sunday

The French steamer *Caton* arrived in 20 hours, bringing dispatches and an offer of mediation from the French and English admirals. This caused an extra assembly of Parliament to decide on the mediation. In the commons, the votes were 31 for war and 72 for mediation; in the peers, the votes were unanimous. A schooner arrived from Malta with arms.¹⁰⁹

However, the supporters of war were eventually overruled by the firmness of the Consiglio Civico and the Civic Guard, who declared in favour of peace.¹¹⁰ After re-arming themselves with arquebuses and cannons, the people of Palermo tried to overthrow the government and prepare their defence. Meanwhile, the Bourbon Generals Filangieri, Nunziante, and Pronio attempted to surround Palermo. The Bourbons agreed with the leaders of the workers, the citizen militias, and the foreign legion to control the people's anger. The first clashes between rebels and Bourbon forces began on 7 May, but the news of general amnesty convinced the people to stop resisting. As a result, Dickinson writes, 'On 10 May 1849, in the afternoon, an official notice of the amnesty was posted in the city and received with more confidence by the people,'¹¹¹ while the number of Neapolitan warships increased.¹¹² On 15 May, the Royal soldiers advanced towards Palermo. The Neapolitan forces 'arrived around 10:00 AM, gradually occupied the forts and barracks [...], and blocked¹¹³ the coasts.'

The 'glorious revolution' was over.

Dickinson bitterly reflects on the Sicilian revolution's end. He notes that 'a group of drunken and dirty individuals was seen carrying a white flag, which was the Bourbon banner. They danced around the flag as if they were mad, and the entire scene resembled more of a Bacchanalian feast than an act of loyalty.'¹¹⁴

In this context, it is of interest to know what were the reflections of our three patriots at the end of the war about the political climate? Moreover, what were the possible errors of the people and the choices of the revolution's leaders? Would the Sicilian Revolution have had a chance of success?

¹⁰⁹ Dickinson, 'Diario della rivoluzione siciliana dal 9 gennaio 1848 al 2 giugno 1849', in *Memorie della rivoluzione siciliana dell'anno MDCCCXLVIII*, 1-270 (242-243).

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 245.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 255.

¹¹² Ibid., 256.

¹¹³ Ibid., 260.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 262.

Before addressing these issues, the modalities of the Bourbon counter-revolution in Sicily will be analyzed in the following chapter.

Conclusions

This chapter reconstructs the 1848 Sicilian revolution by analysing the three patriot's accounts. These croniques were compelling because all three were eyewitnesses, even if in different times, and actively participated, playing significant roles in the revolutionary governments.

The pivotal phase of the Sicilian revolution unfold in succession, beginning with the establishment of the General Committee in the city of Palermo. This Committee would evolve into the provisional government under the leadership of Ruggiero Settimo, to whom Sicilian patriots looked at the father of Sicily. A cry for support resonated from the island, leading to the intervention requests directed to Lord Napier and Lord Minto. On 25 March 1848, after thirty years, was reopened. Just weeks later, on April 13th, a historical declaration marked the downfall of the Bourbon dynasty: Sicily sought to crown a new king. A diplomatic mission, composed by La Farina, Gemelli, and Emerico Amari was ensued to the papal seat and the Tuscan government, weaving alliances in a landscape rife with uncertainty. The revolution's tumult reached a fever pitch with the bombardment of Naples, a fierce prelude to the shuttering of Parliament, where the echoes of dissent clashed with Bourbon authority. In response to this uprising, the Bourbon reaction unfolded, with General Filangieri orchestrating a military expedition to Sicily, descending upon the land. This military expedition culminated in the intense siege of Messina. Two historical maps illustrate the critical battles between the rebels and the royal forces. The first map captures the fierce confrontations that raged across the streets of Palermo, revealing the strategic movements and clashes that marked the city's struggle for freedom. The second map depicts the relentless siege of Messina, which was subjected to a brutal bombing.

The air crackled with tension as Messina endured a relentless bombardment on 7 September 1848. In the wake of this assault, La Farina rallied the people with a call for desperate resistance, urging them to stand united against their oppressors.

A very critical phase for the rebels, inferior in number and weapons to the regular Neapolitan army, was faced with the call of two foreign generals, Mieroslawski and De Trobiand, who were tasked with the great responsibility of defending the Sicilian revolution. Anyway, in April 1849, the revolutionary government surrendered, resulting in the entry of royal troops into Palermo

in May 1849, followed by mediation efforts by France and England with the Neapolitan government.

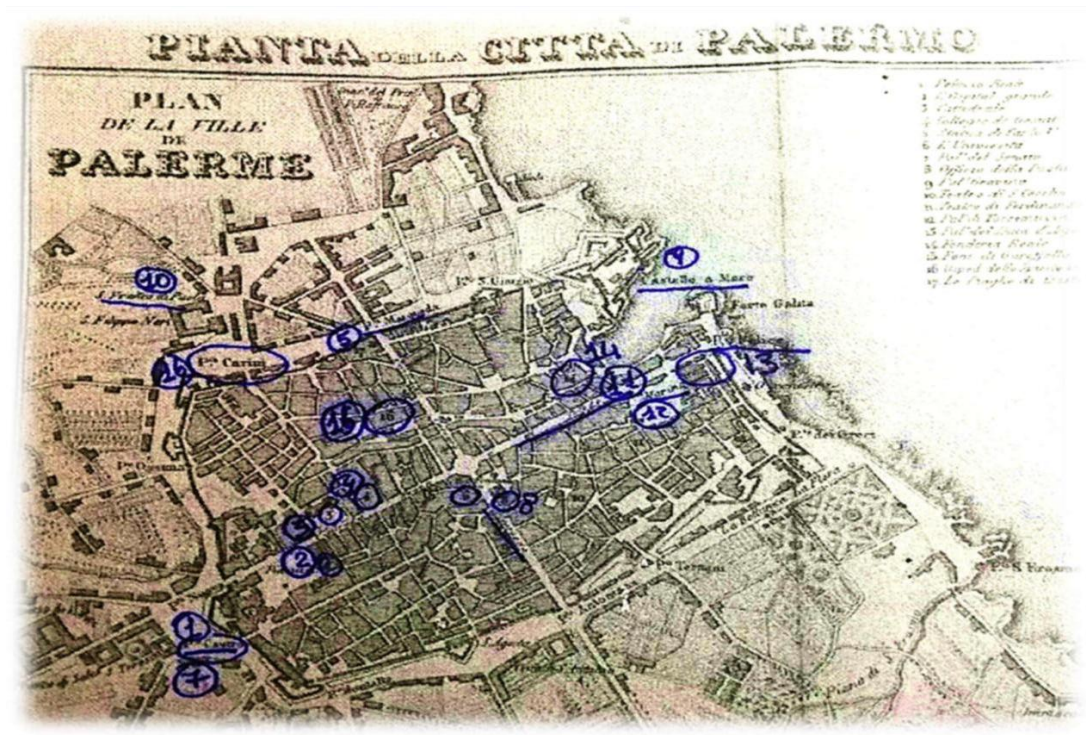


Figure 12

Piazza del Palazzo Reale in Palermo on 1 January 1848. Taken from Il Mondo Illustrato Magazine, a. II, n. 4 (9 Gennaio 1848), 49.

MAP OF PALERMO

Taken from the *Nuovissima guida dei Viaggiatori in Italia* (Milano, Artaria e Figlio, 1839), 406.



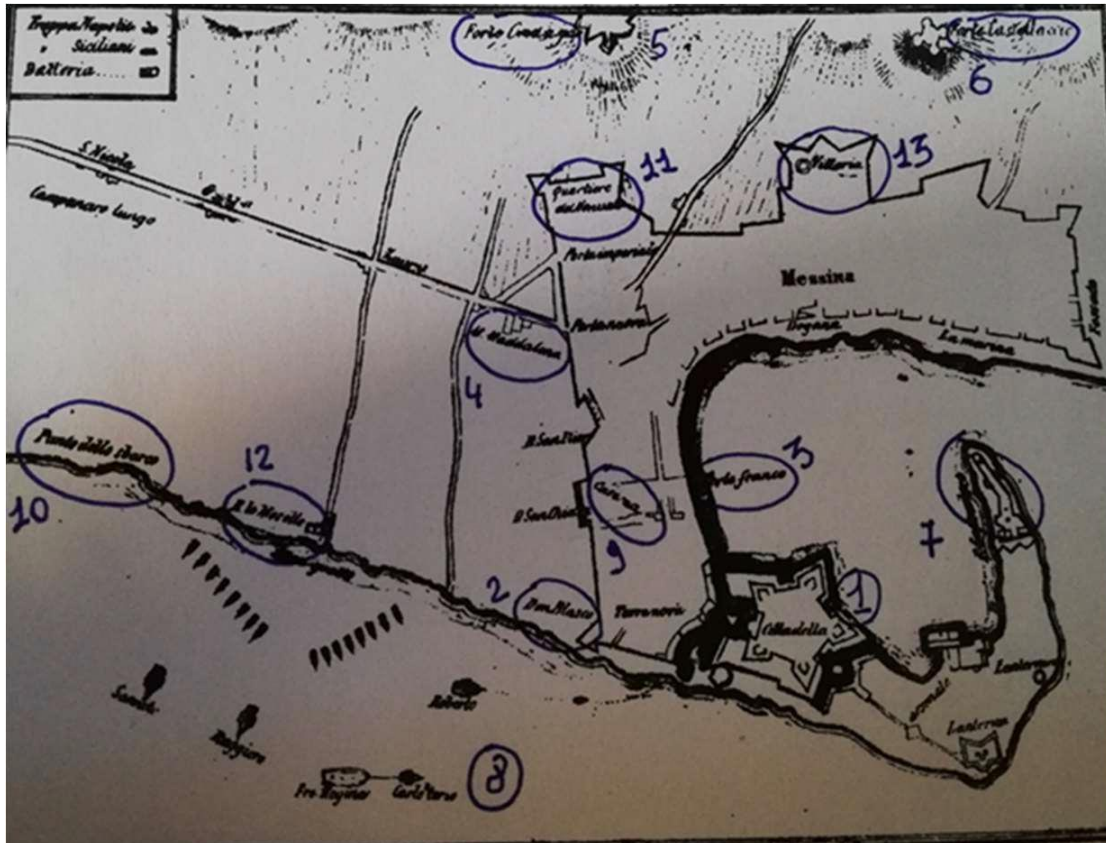
LEGENDA

1. PALAZZO REALE
2. OSPITALE GRANDE (OR E CIVILE, LOCATED IN PALAZZO SCLAFANI)
3. CATTEDRALE
4. NOVIZIATO DEI GESUITI
5. PORTA E VIA MACQUEDA
6. UNIVERSITÀ
7. PORTA CASTRO
8. UFFICIO DELLE POSTE E TEATRO CAROLINO
9. FORTE CASTELLAMMARE
10. S. FRANCESCO DI PAOLA
11. VIA TOLEDO (O CASSARO)
12. PORTA TORREMUZZA
13. QUARTIERE SANTA ZITA
14. FONDERIA REALE
15. OSPEDALE DELLO SPIRITO SANTO
16. PORTA CARINI
17. SAN FRANCESCO DI PAOLA
18. PORTA FELICE
19. PORTA MARINA

MAP OF MESSINA

Siege of Messina (September 1848)

Taken from R. Santoro, *Storia delle sedizioni, cangiamenti di stato e fatti d'arme del Regno delle Due Sicilie nel 1848-1849* (Napoli, Guerrera, 1852), 244.



LEGENDA

1. REAL CITTADELLA
2. FORTE DON BLASCO
3. PORTO FRANCO
4. MONASTERO M. MADDALENA
5. FORTE GONZAGA
6. FORTE CASTELLACCIO
7. FORTE SAN SALVATORE
8. FLOTTA DI S.M. RE FERDINANDO DI BORBONE
9. CASERME
10. PUNTO DELLO SBARCO
11. NOVIZIATO
12. LE MOSELLE
13. TORRE VITTORIA

Capitolo 8

PATRIOTS IN MOTION AFTER 1848

8. New Political Balances in the Mediterranean after 1848

Before discussing the experiences of exile of the three protagonists after 1848, it is crucial to analyse the new European framework, international strategies, and the emergence of conservative reaction following the failure of democratic revolutions.

The European counter-revolution started in Sicily where it took on more violent tones. This might seem contradictory, but in fact it is not, when we consider that the reasons behind the 'glorious revolution' were the same as those that caused its failure: Bourbon despotism. Despite the efforts of reformist and progressive groups within southern society, the Bourbon government managed to build resilience through alliances with the common people and the Catholic Church. This approach, along with the Bourbons' policies, ultimately helped them succeed against the revolution. A plausible hypothesis is that the Bourbons of Naples never genuinely believed in liberal principles, but merely claimed to, waiting for the most advantageous moment to recover lost ground.

It is worth noting, however, that beyond these internal factors, a wider shift has been influencing the power balance in the Euro-Mediterranean region. For example, the foreign policies of France and England played a significant role in the post-1848 European geopolitical equilibrium.

In the intricate diplomatic strategies of 1848, the two European powers did not have significant differences regarding the Sicilian question. Although for different reasons, neither intended to support the formation of a republic on the island: France feared that this move would further strengthen the English influence, and Britain was worried that a republican government in Sicily would motivate the other Italian states to follow suit, thereby favouring the dominance of the French Republic. A significant shift in political affairs occurred with the rise of the reactionary government in Paris under Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte, who became President of the Republic in December 1848 and led the coup of 1851 that crowned him Emperor of the French, adopting the title Napoleon III. The military interventions of General Cavaignac resulted in the fall of the Roman Republic on 4 July 1849 and, indirectly, also contributed to the defeat of the Sicilian rebels. As Francesco Crispi notes: ('Louis Bonaparte did not forbid in Sicily to his ally [Ferdinand II] what he allowed to his generals in

Rome').¹

Even the foreign policy of the Cabinet of Saint James was influenced by the fear of the aristocratic classes regarding the progress of democracy in Europe. As observed by Aurelio Saffi, these efforts were directed 'to stop the revolution by removing wood from the general fire [...] to prevent a radical change in the conditions of the States of Europe.'² Additionally, it is hard to imagine that the concert of European powers would have accepted the overthrow of the monarchy in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies and the possible establishment of a republic. From September 1848, after the capture of Messina, the Sicilian question has been at the centre of European diplomatic debates. While Prussia, Austria, and Russia supported the principle of legitimacy of the Bourbon monarchy of Naples, France and England adopted a policy that some patriots, including Gemelli, La Masa, and La Farina, considered ambiguous. On the contrary, in a speech to the English Parliament in 1850, Lord Palmerston said that the policy of the British government was 'not aimed at stirring up revolutions and therefore abandoning disappointed victims', but it was of 'improvement and peace',³ to avoid civil war. Meanwhile, King Ferdinando deftly exploited the rivalries between France and England, creating divisions among the rebels.

The Sicilian autonomy, which was strongly supported by the local aristocracy, and its independence, for the most radical patriots, were therefore interdependent on the international situation. As is known, the negotiations aimed at achieving a peaceful resolution to the Sicilian question involved France and England, as well as the Spanish and Russian ambassadors, since their respective governments were obliged to uphold the agreements established in the Treaties of 1815 and to ensure the integrity of the monarchy in the Two Sicilies.

The most divisive issue that led the General Committee of Palermo to reject the proposals from Naples was the unity of the Kingdom, which conflicted with the demands of the Sicilians seeking a separate Parliament distinct from that of Naples, grounded in the ancient rights of Sicily and the Constitution of 1812. Furthermore, another significant point was the prohibition against mobilising an army composed of Sicilians on the island, a factor that posed a threat to the stability of the Bourbon monarchy.

¹ F. Crispi, *Scritti e discorsi politici, 1849-1890* (Roma: Unione Cooperativa Editrice, 1890), 35: ('Luigi Bonaparte non vietò in Sicilia al suo alleato [Ferdinando II] ciò che permise ai suoi generali a Roma').

² *Ricordi e scritti: 1846-1849, pubblicati a cura del Comune di Forlì*, vol. III (Firenze, Barbera, 1898), 29: ('togliendo legna al generale incendio [...] per prevenire radicali cambiamenti nelle condizioni degli Stati d'Europa').

³ *Speech of Viscount Palmerston in the House of Commons, on Tuesday, the 25th of June, 1850, on Mr. Roebuck's Motion on the Foreign policy of the Government* (London, Olliver, 1850), 58-59.

The shifts in the European political landscape proved disastrous for the Sicilian revolution. Let us examine some thoughts on the ‘Glorious Revolution’ more closely, along with the ways that counterrevolution manifested in Sicily.

8.1 Reflections on the Failure of the ‘Glorious Revolution’

Fabrizio La Manna argues that La Farina’s works have a significant impact on contemporary 1848 memorialist literature.⁴ The latter is regarded as a ‘great polyphonic text,’⁵ made up of various political and military figures presenting their versions of events. These memories are often disputed, reflecting the partisanship of the involved protagonists, and may even reveal personal beliefs, omissions, alterations of events, rivalries, and grievances.

In La Farina and Gemelli’s accounts, several points of alignment emerge. Notably, both express their views on the nature of the Sicilian revolution. La Farina argues that this revolution was distinct from those in other pre-unitary states. Indeed, while other Italian states fought for reforms modelled after France, Sicily sought not new freedoms but the restoration of its ancient rights.⁶ Gemelli also highlights the uniqueness of the Sicilian revolution, observing that it was ‘an event created by the law of popular sovereignty.’⁷

Having different natures and principles often leads to the promotion of varied goals. Both patriots observe a strong desire for independence among the Sicilian people, whose roots, as previously discussed, go back to ancient times. In La Farina’s words:

The enthusiasm displayed yesterday by the entire city of Palermo is the most substantial proof of the passion these people have for the cause of freedom and independence, which remains alive and vibrant, just as it was on the first day of our glorious revolution. Similarly, the news we receive from all parts of Sicily reflects this sentiment; the Sicilians, from Pachino to Lilibeo and from Lilibeo to the Lighthouse, share an ordinary mind, heart, and strength. They are united in their love for the homeland and their hatred and contempt for a tyrant like Nero, a fool like Caligula — an oppressor of peoples, a betrayer of Italian princes, an enemy of every civilisation, an enemy of all progress. This is a race that thrives on gold and blood.⁸

⁴ ‘La memoria della rivoluzione fallita e gli scritti di G. La Farina’, in *Convegno di studi su Giuseppe La Farina* (Messina, 21-22 maggio), Pasquale Crupi (ed.), Marina di Patti, 1989, 155-173.

⁵ Ibid.: (‘un grande testo polifonico’).

⁶ *Storia della rivoluzione siciliana*, vol. I, 340: (‘non chiedea per nuove riforme, ma le sue antiche libertà’).

⁷ *Storia della siciliana rivoluzione del 1848-49*, vol. II, 311: (‘Imperochè la siciliana rivoluzione era un fatto creato dal diritto della sovranità popolare’).

⁸ *Storia della rivoluzione siciliana*, vol. I, 339: (‘L’entusiasmo manifestato jeri da tutta Palermo è la più sicura prova l’ardore di questo popolo per la causa della libertà e della indipendenza esser vivo e desto come nel primo giorno della nostra gloriosa rivoluzione. Nè dissimili sono le notizie che ci giungono da ogni parte della Sicilia, perchè i Siciliani da Pachino a Lilibeo, da Lilibeo al Faro, non hanno che una mente, un cuore, un braccio, fratelli nell’amore per la patria, fratelli nell’odio e nel disprezzo contro un tiranno feroce come Nerone, stolto come Caligola, oppressore de’ popoli, traditore de’ principi italiani, nemico di ogni civiltà, nemico d’ogni progresso, stirpe aborrita e maledetta che vive d’oro e di sangue [...]’).

Gemelli contends that many external observers found it difficult to comprehend the nature of the revolution and Sicily's future. Some believed Sicily would establish a republic, following France's example. However, Gemelli considers this unlikely, as it would clash with the island's traditions. He states: 'Meanwhile, the republican side did not have, so to speak, great support, organisation, or strength [...] Laws, customs, traditions, and history all indicate that Sicilians could not long for or love the republican regime, which has never truly existed in that culture.'⁹ Consequently, Sicilian republicans, despite claiming democratic principles, ultimately accepted a 'temperate monarchy.'¹⁰ The Sicilian journalist and historian also argues that many of these predictions about Sicily's future were misguided, as they failed to recognise that 'universal suffrage, deeply embedded in the life and heart of every Sicilian, was in favour of independence and a longed-for return to past liberties.'¹¹

Both historians concurred that another significant miscalculation was the hope of revolutionary governments for assistance from foreign powers. During a critical moment in the revolution, when Parliament declared the fall of the Bourbon monarchy, La Farina commented that the Sicilian government relied too heavily on 'English or French friendship.'¹² This fact led to a 'weak, uncertain policy of expectation'¹³ regarding the election of a new king. At that moment, Gemelli notes, once news spread that the Duke of Genoa had rejected the throne, fears and insecurities began to escalate throughout Sicily. Thus, he writes:

As a result, discouragement and mistrust increased, along with the perils and duties of government. People no longer spoke with remorse; instead, they loudly declared that the government had failed in its final task of rebuilding the state. The damage inflicted by this disaster was immeasurable, and the expected benefits from the undeniable arrival of the prince had disappeared. The interim government had to be extended, leaving the future of the homeland uncertain. The government was unable to restore finances, organise the army, establish peace, or protect property and lives. It could not win the favour of the great powers, nor could it build a free and strong kingdom.¹⁴

⁹ *Storia della siciliana rivoluzione del 1848-49*, vol. II, 275 ('Intanto la parte repubblicana non aveva, si può dire, grandi aderenze, ordinamento, o forza... Leggi, costumi, trazioni, storia, ogni cosa attestava, non potere i siciliani vagheggiare od amare il repubblicano reggimento, il quale non ebbe mai un periodo di vita in quel popolo.').

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 176: ('una temperata monarchia').

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 277: ('Il voto unanime concorde universale e quasi diremmo incarnato nella vita e nel cuore di ogni siciliano era l'indipendenza e il vagheggiato ritorno alle passate franchigie.').

¹² *Ibid.*, 123: ('nell'amicizia inglese o francese').

¹³ *Ibid.*: ('politica di aspettazione, debole, incerta').

¹⁴ *Storia della siciliana rivoluzione del 1848-49*, vol. II, 46: ('Crescevano per tal guisa ogni di molto più lo sconforto e la sfiducia, crescevano i pericoli e la responsabilità del governo. Da ogni parte non più rimessamente, ma ad alta voce gridavasi: avere il governo fallito nell'opera definitiva della ricostituzione dello stato inestimabile i danni di questa sciagura; perduti i beni sperati dalla non dubbia venuta del principe; dovere prolungare la durata di un temporaneo governo; dovere rimanere in un'ansia angosciosa su i destini della patria;').

Many errors in defending the revolution can be attributed to military leaders, who ‘often demonstrated inexperience through delays, sluggishness, and a lack of obedience,’¹⁵ as Gemelli remarks. The responsibility for the course of the revolution also fell on specific individuals. For instance, Gemelli notes that certain decisions made by Sicilian leaders had disastrous consequences. Among them was General Paternò, who was elected as Minister of War in the new Sicilian government on 27 March 1848. Gemelli remarks, ‘Paternò’s confirmation in the new ministry was unwelcome as he did not inspire confidence in his ability to lead military actions effectively.’¹⁶ La Farina’s memoirs corroborate this, indicating that General Paternò lacked support in the Chambers and was unpopular throughout Sicily.¹⁷

Another recognised error was to place the confidence of an Italic war in the arms of Ferdinand II as if the grandson of old Ferdinand and Maria Carolina could be changed in a day’s thoughts and affections; as if the fear which imposed on him the lie of a constitution and the no less impudent lie of the Lombardy expedition were no more reason why he hated more fiercely the freedom and independence of Italy.¹⁸

The course of the Sicilian revolution was therefore influenced by various factors, including rivalries between political factions, a lack of order among the civic guards, often led by ambitious and incompetent individuals, as well as partisan hatred and jealousy among the revolution’s leaders. For example, two ministers of the Sicilian revolutionary government, Pasquale Calvi and Mariano Stabile, who led the democratic and moderate forces, respectively, had a notable enmity.¹⁹ Gemelli tells us that Stabile was accused of relying too much on England and received many calumnies. This one, that of having betrayed the fatherland and of having sold it to the England.²⁰

According to Christopher Clark, one of the main reasons for the failure of the 1848 revolutions was the alienation of the people from the revolutionary movement. This alienation was caused by mistrust and manipulation by bourgeois-aristocratic moderate liberals, the monarchy, and

non poter dare assettamento alle finanze; comporre l’esercito; ripristinare la quiete; guarentire la roba e la vita; acquistar l’amicizia de’ grandi potentati; fondare infine un reame libero e forte’).

¹⁵ Ibid., 281: (‘spesso dimostrarono la loro imperizia, con i ritardi, le lentezze, la poca obbedienza delle truppe’).

¹⁶ Ibid., 47: (‘Sgradita era la conferma del Paternò nel nuovo ministero, poichè neppur egli infondeva speranza a saper condurre in buon termine l’armamento e la guerra’).

¹⁷ *Storia della siciliana rivoluzione del 1848-49*, vol. I, 27.

¹⁸ *Storia della rivoluzione siciliana*, vol. I, 339: (‘Il secondo errore fu riporre fidanza per la guerra italia nelle armi di Ferdinando II come se il nipote del vecchio Ferdinando e di Maria Carolina potesse essere mutato in un giorno nei pensieri e nelli affetti, come se la paura la quale gl’impose la menzogna di una costituzione e la menzogna non meno impudente della spedizione di Lombardia non fossero ragioni di più perch’egli odiasse più fieramente la libertà e la indipendenza d’Italia.’).

¹⁹ Ibid., 345.

²⁰ Ibid., vol. II, 312.

the Catholic Church.²¹ The end of the Sicilian revolution also had an impact on other European countries. As Clark noted, the withdrawal of the aid sent by King Ferdinand II to the rebels in Lombardy-Veneto caused considerable consternation, as the Bourbon fleet was the only one outfitted with steamships.²²

These issues, along with the previously mentioned factors, caused divisions within the revolutionary front. Additionally, the developments of other European revolutions further intensified these divisions, ultimately leading to the collapse of the Sicilian revolution and the onset of the Bourbon reaction.

Gemelli's remarks on the conclusion of the Sicilian revolution echo the same bitter tone as English consul Dickinson (see above,): 'The tricolour of freedom was replaced by the white flag of tyranny, and from Tronto to Lilybaeum, ten million Italians closed with political life and fell back into barbaric and foolish slavery.'²³

8.2 The Bourbon Counterrevolution in Sicily: Criticisms and Memories

Clark followed the counter-revolution in Naples, Northern Italy, Prague, Vienna, Paris, Berlin, the Ionian Islands, and then the second wave in Rome, Saxony, Frankfurt, Baden, Moldavia, Wallachia, and Hungary. This analysis revealed that the conservative reaction took various forms. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify a common element: the revolutions of 1848 sparked a process of popular mobilisation. In particular, radical leaders seized new physical spaces for expressing political dissent, bringing political debates to caf  s, clubs, salons, and especially the streets, with impromptu protests reminiscent of today's flash mobs. What Clark mentioned is also true for Sicily: Rosario Salvo di Pietraganzili, the brother of Rosina Salvo, recalls that the headquarters for all matters in Palermo was the Caff   d'Europa, 'where there was significant interest in all the events related to Sicily's uprising.'²⁴

As already mentioned, Clark argues that one of the causes leading to the end of the Sicilian revolution was the increasing division between the people and the revolution. However, opinions on this matter are divided. On the one hand, some authors, including contemporary

²¹ *Revolutionary Spring*, especially chapters 8 and 9.

²² *Ibid.*, 180.

²³ *Storia della siciliana rivoluzione del 1848-49*, vol. I, 306: ('il tricolore della libert   fu sostituito dal bianco vessillo della tirannide, e dal Tronto al Lilibeo, dieci milioni d'italiani finivano la vita politica esotto un barbaro e stolido servaggio ricadevano [...]').

²⁴ *Rivoluzioni siciliane, 1848-1860: Cose proprie e cose degli altri. Contributo alla storia del Risorgimento italiano*, vol. I (Palermo, Bondi & C., 1898), 141: ('dove si prendeva grande interesse a tutti gli atti della Sicilia insorta').

figures such as Francesco Crispi, reject this interpretation, he remarks: ‘Due to the fatal causes that led to the Novara accident and the assassination of the Roman Republic, the freedoms in Sicily were extinguished, and the absolute regime was restored, not from a lack of strength or citizen discouragement.’²⁵ Moreover, Crispi notes that the people were unable to recognise the changes that occurred within the Sicilian government in 1849. Nevertheless, they remained prepared to continue the struggle against the Bourbons. Additionally, Crispi highlights that the people were betrayed by the middle classes and moderates, who ‘feared the victory of the people more than that of the Bourbon troops’.²⁶ On the other hand, some historians and chroniclers support Clark’s view, such as an officer from Filangier’s general staff. The anonymous reporter writes that as the royal troops advanced towards the capital, Palermo.

All the people in the provinces through which we have passed — either in person, through deputations, or via written manifestos — have expressed, in the most moving manner, their attachment and devotion to the king, as well as their aversion to those wicked rebels. The streets were filled with crowds, and in every region, people celebrated the arrival of the soldiers they had assisted. The public sought protection and defence.²⁷

From this perspective, the populace’s support for the revolution appears to be primarily influenced by the propaganda of the revolutionary leaders, rather than stemming from a deeply rooted anti-monarchist sentiment. Numerous pleas were made to the prince of Satriano: the citizens of Termini Imerese sought assistance from the royal army to prevent the entrance of the ‘Sicilian bands’ [the rebels] that aimed to resist.²⁸

Another essential aspect of analysing the 1848 revolution in Sicily is the relationship between the Catholic Church and both the revolution and the counterrevolution.

Many members of both the lower and upper clergy actively engaged in liberal movements during this period. A notable example is Father Gioacchino Ventura (Palermo 1792 - Versailles 1861). He was a philosopher, politician, and Teatine priest who adopted liberal ideas. In 1848,

²⁵ *Scritti e discorsi politici, 1849-1890*, 4: (‘Per le cause fatali che portarono all’incidente di Novara e all’assassinio della Repubblica Romana, le libertà in Sicilia furono estinte e il regime assoluto fu ripristinato, non per mancanza di forza o per scoraggiamento dei cittadini

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 13: ‘temevano più la vittoria del popolo che quella delle truppe borboniche’.

²⁷ *Memorie istoriche per servire alla storia della rivoluzione siciliana del 1848-49* (Italia, 1853), 301: (‘tutte le popolazioni delle province per le quali abbiamo transitato [...], sia in presenza, sia per mezzo di Deputazioni e di manifesti in iscritto, nel modo più commovente esprimevano il loro attaccamento, la loro devozione al re, la loro avversione per quei malvagi [i ribelli] [...] le popolazioni si accalcavano sulle vie e in tutti i paesi festeggiavano l’arrivo dei soldati cui prestavano soccorso; il popolo domandava ‘protezione e difesa’.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 305.

Ventura recognised the Roman Republic and found himself in conflict with Pope Pius IX, who accused him of apostasy. He served as an envoy for the revolutionary Sicilian government in Rome that same year. In August 1849, Father Ventura declared that liberty was a child of Catholicism and the Church. In his booklet addressing the Sicilian issue, he argued that love for one's country was not incompatible with religion. This work was dedicated to Ruggero Settimo, recognised as the father of the Sicilian nation, who described him as a hero and a faithful Christian.

Historical accounts have shown that revolutionary marches often reached the cathedrals of Sicilian cities, where participants would seek the blessing of their weapons from religious authorities while waving the tricolour flag.

According to La Farina and Gemelli, the role of the Catholic Church was a hindrance to the revolution's victory. La Farina considers it a grave error to believe that the Bourbon king Ferdinand II would have waged an 'Italic war' for freedom after the election of Pius IX in 1846. He observes that:

I was firmly convinced that Italy will not attain freedom and nationality as long as the damage and shame of the temporal power of the popes persist within her, and this is not due to the fault or malice of any particular pope but because of the vice and disorder of the institution itself, which wields such immense power that even the best intentions can lead only to evil. [...] In Christianity, a pope symbolises the principle of authority and faith, rather than freedom and free enquiry. Likewise, Italy's absolute monarchy and its principle of territorial division are incompatible with democracy and national unity. Therefore, these conflicting principles cannot coexist.²⁹

Gemelli also expresses scepticism towards a liberal Church, arguing that 'it was misguided to regard Pius IX as a saviour for Italy. He maintains that it was unrealistic to expect him to oppose the empire [Austria] or believe that both princes and the Holy Pope could safeguard revolutions.'³⁰

Regarding the role of the Catholic Church in the post-1848 counter-revolution, Clark noted that the Jesuit order became a symbol of obscurantism and absolutism. Francesco Crispi states that the Jesuit-clerical sect wielded significant influence during the Bourbon restoration, which was

²⁹ Ibid., 338: ('io fui intimamente convinto non avrà libertà e nazionalità l'Italia finchè duri in seno a lei il danno e la vergogna della potestà temporale dei papi. [...] Un papa nel mondo cristiano non può altro personificare in sè che il principio dell'autorità e della fede in opposizione a quello della libertà e del libero esame, e nell'Italia il principio della monarchia assoluta e della divisione territoriale in opposizione a quello della democrazia e dell'unità nazionale è dunque impossibile.').

³⁰ *Storia della siciliana rivoluzione del 1848-49*, vol. I, 38: ('esser vana illusione voler fare di Pio IX il salvatore d'Italia pretendere che ei possa o debba combattere l'impero e credere insomma che i principi e il santo padre possano o debbano proteggere le rivoluzioni.').

‘quick, and seemed a mystery’. It was under the protection of Ferdinando Troja, brother of the liberal historian Carlo, who led the Council of Ministers in Naples. Crispi identifies the true centre of the counter-revolution within the Neapolitan government as the particular Secretariat of King Ferdinand II: the reaction – which ‘had furies that remembered Silla’³¹ – served as an instrument of the Bozzelli, who presided over the Bourbon Royal Society. The Society’s organ was the newspaper *La Civiltà Cattolica*. Notably, among the initial decrees issued by Satriano, to whom Ferdinand II entrusted the expedition in Sicily, was the decree on the reintegration of Church property and the return of the Jesuits and Liguorini to Sicily. Furthermore, Crispi writes that, in particular, the thesis of the Jesuit-clerical faction had significant influence during the Bourbon restoration.³²

Some of the papers presented here support the thesis proposed by Crispi. Below is a document written on 4 May 1849 by a college of parish priests, praising obedience, fidelity, and subordination to authority:

The health of the people must be linked to the honour of religion. It conveys the truth, and if the people heed its message, they will find salvation. In these critical moments for our country, religion signifies a deep sense of unity and loyalty to the leaders you have elected to govern you. A single act driven by rash impulses can jeopardise the country’s salvation and the glory that awaits it. Therefore, let us praise the Municipal Magistrate Senate, the well-deserving National Guard, and the Consuls of the workers. The people must stay loyal to their guidance and follow their instructions; only then will the country experience good fortune and the glory of God.³³

La Farina, in his writings, discusses the Church of Rome’s stance on the Sicilian revolution, highlighting the duplicity of its actions. In an article published in the French newspaper *La Tribune des peuples* after the defeat of the rebels, the historian from Messina reflects on his meeting with Pope Pius IX, which occurred in Rome in April 1848. La Farina, along with Michele Amari and Carmelo Pisani, was part of a delegation tasked with securing recognition from the new Sicilian government. The Pope welcomed them warmly, expressing

³¹ *Scritti e discorsi politici, 1849-1890*, 11: (‘furori che ricordarono Silla’).

³² *Ibid.*, 3.

³³ La salute dei popoli non va disgiunta dalla gloria della Religione. Essa parla la parola della verità e se il popolo è docile alla sua voce il popolo sarà salvo. In questi momenti supremi per la patria nostra la Religione v’intima unione, fedeltà, subordinazione ai Capi che vi governano e che voi stessi avete prescelti. Un atto solo che proceda dall’impeto di sconsigliata passione compromette la salvezza della patria, la gloria che l’aspetta. Lode dunque al Senato Magistrato Municipale, lode alla benemeritissima Guardia nazionale, lode ai signori Consoli delle maestranze. Il popolo non si allontani dai loro consigli, ubbidisca alle loro prescrizioni, e sicuro sarà il bene per la patria, la gloria di Dio.

4 maggio 1849

I Parrochi, Rizzotto, Vasques, Spedale, Scasso, Sineri, Lello, Faija, Milana, Mantegna, D’Angelo.

understanding towards Sicily and calling the revolution ‘legitimate and necessary.’ However, just a few days later, on 24 April, the papal encyclical was issued, marking a shift in the Church’s political stance. During a subsequent audience, the Pontiff explained that he could not abdicate his role as the head of the Church and therefore could not support a war between Catholic nations like Austria. The historian from Messina concludes his article with the observation that ‘the Sicilian revolution, deemed holy in April 1848, became ‘criminal’ in April 1849.’³⁴

Faced with the hesitancy of the Sicilian rebels, re Ferdinando adopted a firm stance. This was evident when he disregarded appeals from foreign powers to halt the bombing of Messina, allowing General Filangieri, the Prince of Satriano and commander-in-chief of the royal troops in Sicily, to continue the island’s reconquest unimpeded. Ferdinando also enacted extraordinary laws to maintain public order and security. Among the initial measures taken were the closure of the Sicilian General Parliament in March 1849, the reintroduction of preventive censorship on the press, and retaliatory actions against the rebels. The harsh repression launched by the Bourbon government after 1848 intensified the culture of exile.

From an ideological perspective, Hegelian philosophy became the basis for a debate on the form of state to be achieved through unity in Europe.³⁵ The counter-revolution created a rift between the intellectual class and the Bourbon monarchy, which widened following the publication of letters by Lord Gladstone, on 7 April 1851. These letters criticised the repressive methods of the Bourbon government and highlighted the arrest of notable Neapolitan liberals, including Carlo Poerio, in July 1849. The end of the Sicilian revolution and the Bourbon reaction led to a new exile for the three patriots, as follows.

La Farina was one of the last patriots to leave Sicily on 22 April 1849, and he embarked on the frigate *L’Indipendenza*, which was headed for Marseilles before reaching Paris on 1 June 1849. Chindemi went into exile in Malta for two years. Gemelli wandered between Germany, England, and France before eventually facing his second and third exile (the first was in Tuscany) in Malta and Belgium. He had arrived in Malta before the Sicilian revolution broke out in January 1848.

9. Malta, the British Empire and the Italian Risorgimento: the *Legione Italica*

³⁴ La Farina, *Epistolario*, vol. I, 153: (‘la rivoluzione siciliana, santa nell’aprile del 1848, divenne ‘criminale’ nell’aprile del 1849’’).

³⁵ For this argument see especially F. Gallo, *Dalla patria alla Stato. Bertrando Spaventa, una biografia intellettuale* (Laterza, 2013) [From Patria to the State: an Intellectual Biography of Bertrando Spaventa]; Hegel and Italian Political Thought: *The Practice of Ideas, 1832-1900* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2024).

Gemelli was not the only Sicilian patriot to choose Malta as their destination. Due to its proximity, the island became a preferred destination for Italian political exiles after the failure of the first liberal and constitutional uprisings of 1820-21 and 1848.³⁶ Thanks to its strategic position, the small island at the heart of the Mediterranean has become a highly active political laboratory. Chiara Maria Pulvirenti notes that the southern bourgeois classes ‘completed their apprenticeship to politics and, taking advantage of the ‘gymnasium’ of publishing activities, conspiratorial committees, and national movement associations, imagined revolution. [...]’.³⁷

The British colony was a hub for spreading

libertarian ideals and reflected the liberal values, as Pulvirenti has remarked.³⁸

The study of political exile sheds light on the politics of British imperial power in the Mediterranean can be described as ambivalent. Although the British also sought to export their parliamentary model to the colonies, including Malta, it was in their interest to ensure that those same ideals did not fuel nationalist movements to the detriment of the Empire.³⁹

It is known that the presence of Italian political exiles, such as Francesco Crispi, played a significant role in the development of national consciousness, as well as in the formation of national literature and political groups, both of which were key elements of the Maltese Risorgimento process.⁴⁰

The British disappointed the expectations of the Maltese Liberals by initiating timid reformism on the island, directed mainly to support the interests of British merchants in Valletta, especially during the continental blockade years.⁴¹ Relations between Malta and the British Crown were strained, particularly when Maltese liberals asked the British government for freedom of the press. The British governors consistently rejected requests to grant the Maltese people local autonomy. Freedom of the press was not given until much later, on 15 March 1839, forty years

³⁶ On Italian exiles in Malta, see E. Schiavone, ‘Esuli italiani a Malta durante il Risorgimento’, in V. Bonello, B. Fiorentini, E. Schiavone (a cura di), *Echi del Risorgimento a Malta* (Torino: 1982), 179-219; E. Librino, ‘Malta nel Risorgimento italiano dai carteggi degli Archivi di Stato di Palermo’, in *Archivio Storico di Malta*, 3-4 (1939), 257-266; B. Fiorentini, *Malta, rifugio di esuli e focolare ardente di cospirazione durante il Risorgimento italiano* (Malta: 1966); O. Friggieri, ‘L’attività di autori esuli italiani a Malta durante il Risorgimento’, in *Forum italicum* 50/3 (2016), 1070–1098; S. Portelli, (2021), ‘Identità e nazionalismo nella stampa italoфона a Malta dal 1870 al 1900’, in A. Campisi, & M. Dhouib (eds.), *Mediterraneo: Tunisi 2017-2019*, 987-998.

³⁷ ‘La rivoluzione immaginata. Gli esuli a Malta e l’iniziativa meridionale per il Risorgimento italiano’, in *Meridiana*, 81 (2014), [Crolli Borbonici], (2014), 169-188 (174): (‘completarono il loro apprendistato alla politica e, sfruttando la palestra dell’attività editoriale, dei comitati cospirativi e delle associazioni del movimento nazionale, immaginarono la rivoluzione [...]’).

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ G. Mangion, *Governo inglese, Risorgimento italiano ed opinione pubblica a Malta, 1848-1851* (Malta, Casa S. Giuseppe, 1970).

⁴⁰ For the influence of Italian culture on the Maltese resurgence, see O. Friggieri, ‘Il romanticismo Italiano e l’inizio della poesia Maltese’, in *Otto/Novecento*, 1 (gennaio/febbraio 1982), 5-40.

⁴¹ For this subject, see M. d’Angelo, *Mercanti inglesi a Malta: 1800-1825* (Milano, FrancoAngeli, 1990).

after the British Crown had taken control of the island and transformed it into a protectorate in 1801.

On the other hand, Southern Italian exiles in Malta benefited greatly from the opportunity to have greater freedom of expression, something they did not have in the Bourbon kingdom. As a result, they could print pamphlets, chronicles, and newspapers (although there were very few between 1800 and 1838) to express their dissent against the monarchy of the Two Sicilies.⁴² The role of the Italian press in Malta was pivotal for the development of intense revolutionary propaganda, especially that of Mazzini.

The contact networks between liberals in Malta and Sicily were very intense. Although La Farina never set foot on the island, he maintained close contact, especially with Ruggiero Settimo, Giuseppe Oddo, and Matteo Raeli. In 1830, he established the *Democratic Committee*, directed by the jurist C. Pisano, including C. Gemelli, G. Grano from Messina (a member of a wealthy merchant family), the Maltese merchant A. Catania, the magistrates F. Jeni and G. Aspa, V. Capialdi, D. Piraino, A. Pracanica. Salvatore Chindemi was the point of contact of the Democratic Committee for the city of

Syracuse, while La Farina referred to Pietro Marano and Salvatore Barbagallo-Pittà in Catania; the *Democratic Committee* was also able to count on numerous referents in many countries of the Mediterranean area (Marseille, Genoa, Livorno, Corfu, Tunis, the Ionian Islands, Alessandria). The Democratic Committee approached the *Legione Italiana* (Italian Legion), based in Malta and founded by Nicola Fabrizi⁴³ and Tommaso Zauli-Sajani from Forlì in 1839.⁴⁴

⁴² S. Portelli, *La stampa periodica in italiano a Malta* (Malta: University Press, 2010); Id., 'La stampa maltese come strumento di lotta politica nel Risorgimento italiano', in S. Mercieca (ed.), *Malta and Mazzini. Proceedings of History Week 2005* (Malta, Malta Historical Society, 2007), 157-165.

⁴³ Nicola Fabrizi was born in Modena in 1804 and died in Rome in 1885. He was named one of the conspirators of the Menotti and arrested on February 3, 1831, along with his brothers Luigi (1812-1865) and Paolo (1805-1859). However, he was released two days later, after the revolution was successful in Modena. He was appointed as the captain of the civic guard. He fled to France after the failure of the revolution, where he joined the Giovine Italia. After the unfortunate expedition of Savoy (1834), in which he participated, he went to fight against the Carlists in Spain. He settled in Corfu in 1837 and then in Malta. Here, in 1839, created the Italian Legion, causing a temporary conflict with G. Mazzini. In 1849, Nicola Fabrizi participated in the defense of Rome in 1849. After returning to Malta, he resumed his life as a conspirator until 1860, during which he contributed to preparing the expedition of Carlo Pisacane. After annexing the Mezzogiorno, he assisted Cialdini in the repression of brigandage. He was arrested in 1862 for aiding Garibaldi and was involved in Garibaldi's campaigns in 1866 and 1867. He served on the left as a deputy from the 8th legislature (1861-65).

⁴⁴ Tommaso Zauli-Sajani was a writer and playwright born in Forlì in 1802 and died. He authored several tragedies, such as *Marco Botzari*, *Farinata degli Uberti*, and *Il duca Valentino*. In 1831, he was involved in the Modena uprisings and was exiled to Malta in 1836. On 1 August 1838, he founded a new newspaper called *Il Mediterraneo*. He co-founded it with Carlo Cicognani, also in exile. The periodical became a platform for Italian patriots and was printed in English and Italian. He also directed *La Speranza*, a newspaper that became the spokesperson for Italian exiles with neo-Guelph tendencies. He was involved in the 1848 uprisings, fighting in Veneto and for the Roman Republic. In 1850, he first sought refuge in Tuscany, where he dedicated himself to theatre, and later in Piedmont, where he taught history and geography at a college in Saluzzo. He continued working as a teacher and school principal after returning to Rome in 1860. He died in Forlì on 22 July 1872.

The *Legione Italica* was a clandestine revolutionary organisation that aimed to raise a peasant insurrection in southern Italy by implementing guerrilla units. This goal was supported by La Farina, Gemelli, and Chindemi but not by Mazzini, who had no faith in the revolutionary potential of southern Italy.

9.1. Gemelli's Exile in Malta: August 1847-February 1848

Carlo Gemelli arrived in Malta after riots in Reggio Calabria and Messina in August 1847 had failed. The riots had involved, among others, Domenico Romeo, the Plutino brothers, Casimiro Di Lieto, and the canon Paolo Pellicano. The plans for the Calabria uprising were made in Gemelli's Naples home, where the patriots of Messina met with the Poerio brothers, Carlo and Alessandro.

The battle of Reggio Calabria on September 25, 1847, resulted in the death of Domenico Romeo, while the Plutino brothers managed to escape by taking refuge in Malta. Gemelli hid in the house of his brother-in-law, Roberto Barker, in Palermo. The betrayal of Carrozza, whom Gemelli had negotiated with at the end of August 1847, forced Gemelli to flee.

Disguised as a sailor, he paid 50 pounds along with two young patriots, Cotroneo and the painter Donato, to embark on an English schooner. Upon their arrival in Malta, the group of exiles were refused permission to land by the English Governor. They were forced to remain closed in "an unpleasant warehouse for eight days without beds or furniture and were only comforted by the affection of their fellow companions in misfortune, including Nicola Fabrizi and Giorgio Tamajo, among others."⁴⁵ Finally, when they were allowed to land, the Sicilian patriot was moved to see the the Italian flag and received homage from the exiles already on the island.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, Gemelli's exile in Malta 'was much sadder than his arrival.'⁴⁷ This fact was due to the Maltese people's generally bad welcoming of Italian exiles who, according to F. Guardione, did not oppose the English presence because the latter brought wealth to the island.⁴⁸ And yet Guardione adds, 'During those mournful times, the exiles who flocked to Malta were neither respected nor pitied for their misfortune. A life without affection, sympathy, or comfort

⁴⁵ Carlo Gemelli, *Una risposta prima ed ultima alla Gazzetta di Palermo* (Bologna, Tip. G. Vitali, 1871), 9: ('restando chiusi, come belve, in un abbominevole magazzino [sic], senza letti, senza mobili, e confortati solo dall'affetto di un Nicola Fabrizi, di un Giorgio Tamajo, e di molti altri compagni di sventura [...]').

⁴⁶ Guardione, *Carlo Gemelli*, 69.

⁴⁷ Ibid.: ('La dimora in Malta fu cosa assai più trista dell'arrivo').

⁴⁸ Ibid.

must have also greatly saddened them and Gemelli.⁴⁹

Luigi Zuppetta⁵⁰ testifies that the living conditions of Italian exiles in Malta were difficult, primarily because of the decisions of the English authorities. British governors feared that Italian exiles might create instability and foment a demand for independence in the Maltese people. Frequent were, for example, the attempts of Malta's governor O'Farrel, who, in agreement with the Neapolitan government, repeatedly intimated the patriot to leave the island, even enacting reprisals against the Maltese citizens who had welcomed them as guests in their homes. In his autobiography, Zuppetta reveals:

Professor Zuppetta arrived in Malta on 26 April 1849, and retired to his friend Carlo Brincat's home in the nearby countryside of Casal Lia, where he usually stayed whenever he went to Malta. Upon Zuppetta's arrival, the Governor of Malta and the Consul of Naples showed signs of great concern. On 28 April, the Governor summoned Zuppetta to the police office to demand that he provide the necessary guarantee immediately. Zuppetta provided the guarantee at the exact moment. On 30 April Carlo Brincat was reprimanded for welcoming Professor Zuppetta into his home and was urged to expel him.⁵¹

The Sicilian patriot Carlo Gemelli fell ill on the island and stayed in his house for five months. He found solace in the company of some friends who were also exiled. Luigi Settembrini, a Neapolitan patriot and man of letters, who arrived in Malta in January 1848 aboard the English ship *Odin*, witnessed Gemelli's poor health. Settembrini tells us that he met and got to know all the Italian exiles in Malta, including Agostino and Antonino Plutino from Reggio.⁵²

⁴⁹ Ibid., 70: ('Gli esuli che affluirono a Malta in quei momenti luttuosi non ebbero alcun riguardo, né furono compatiti per la loro disgrazia. E una vita condotta senza affetto, simpatia o conforto deve averli rattristati, e ha rattristato molto Gemelli.').

⁵⁰ Luigi Zuppetta (Castelnuovo della Daunia 1810-Naples 1889). He was an Apulian law professor and Mazzinian who, after 1843, was in Malta. Between 1845 and 1847, he directed two democratically oriented newspapers on the island, *Giù la Tirranide!* and *Il Vagheggiatore delle Scienze e delle Lettere*. In 1848 he gave to print his *Raccolta de' migliori articoli legali e letterari* which also contained the *Metafisica della scienza delle leggi penali*. On the island, he was not always well-received. Due to his dangerous influence on the thinking of the Maltese people, he was forced by local authorities to leave the country in August 1846. He found refuge in London, where Mazzini welcomed him, but in 1847, he managed to return to Malta. He also stayed as an exile in Corsica and Marseille. Luigi Zuppetta was a member of the Parliament of Naples in 1848 and, with the Unification of Italy, was part of the first Italian Parliament. He was an honorary professor of comparative criminal law at the University of Naples. He died in Portici on 8 May 1889.

⁵¹ *Raccolta di alcuni articoli politici del professore Luigi Zuppetta per servire di giunta alla raccolta degli articoli dello stesso Autore pubblicata in Malta nel 1848*, per tipi di G. Greech e Co (Malta, G. Greech and C., 1848), 22: ('Il professor Zuppetta arrivò a Malta il 26 aprile 1849. Lo stesso giorno si ritirò dall'amico Carlo Brincat nella vicina campagna di Casal Lia, dove era solito soggiornare ogni volta che si recava a Malta. All'arrivo di Zuppetta il Governatore di Malta e il Console di Napoli diedero segni del più profondo orgasmo. Il 28 aprile il Governatore convocò Zuppetta nell'ufficio di polizia per obbligarlo a dare subito la dovuta garanzia. [...] Il 30 aprile Carlo Brincat fu analogamente rimproverato per aver accolto in casa sua il professor Zuppetta e fu istigato ad espellerlo.').

⁵² L. Settembrini, *Ricordanze della mia vita* (Napoli, Morano, 1879), vol. I, 248: ('Subito mi trovai in mezzo agli esuli e li conobbi tutti. Agostino ed Antonino Plutino di Reggio, Carlo Gemelli di Messina con altri messinesi [...]').

He remembers that ‘at times he used to visit Gemelli, a cultured and kind man of letters, who was bedridden due to illness. Other Sicilians gathered around him and passionately discussed the revolution in Palermo and the necessity to return to Messina. They shouted as if obsessed, and their conversation was quite stormy.’⁵³

Gemelli stayed in Malta until February 1848, after which he returned to Messina and actively participated in the revolution. He was then sent to Palermo to request ‘men, weapons and money.’⁵⁴ However, after end of the revolution, Gemelli and ‘many of his honest and generous comrades endured a ten-year exile from 1849 to 1859.’ On 28 April 1849, La Farina wrote a letter stating that he was about to leave Tuscany:

My dearest friend,

By now, you must be aware of everything that has happened, and therefore, I do not mind sharing the painful story that I could only briefly mention. However, I would prefer to discuss it another time. I had plans to visit Tuscany, but due to the uncertainty of things, I had to cancel the trip. I wondered if I could find a quiet place in the Tuscan countryside to concentrate on my literary works. It would be greatly appreciated if you could provide me with precise news. Please send your letters to Paris, as I may leave tomorrow. I was looking forward to hearing from you soon.⁵⁵

In the spring of 1849, while Gemelli had already departed Malta, La Farina was in Paris.

10. La Farina’s Exile in France: 1849-1854

In a letter from France in the spring of 1849, La Farina expressed his regret to his friend Marquis De Gregorio about the abandonment he had experienced in the last few months. He discussed the failure of the Sicilian revolution and identified some of its ‘remote and powerful causes.’⁵⁶ Among them, for instance, ‘the dissolving action of foreign diplomacy’ (mainly French);⁵⁷ the ‘ambition of the few who aspired to power’;⁵⁸ the calumnies aimed at the government’s ‘son of

⁵³ Ibid., 249: (‘Talora andava dal Gemelli che era un colto e gentile uomo di lettere, ed era in letto per malattia, e gli venivano intorno gli altri siciliani che gridavano come ossessi e tempestavano parlando della rivoluzione di Palermo, e della necessità di tornare a Messina.’).

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ ‘Letter to Vincenzo Gallina’, Marseille, 28 April 1849, in *Epistolario*, vol. I, 323-324: (‘Carissimo Amico, saprai tutto a quest’ora; per lo che mi dispenso di narrarti la storia dolorosa, che per altro non potrei che accennarti per sommi capi. Ad altro tempo adunque. Sarei venuto in Toscana, ma mi trattenne l’incertezza delle cose costà. Posso io star tranquillo ed occupato dei miei lavori letterari in qualche campagna toscana? Ecco ciò di cui ti priego darmi notizia certa e precisa. Indirizzerai le tue lettere a Parigi, per dove partirò forse nella giornata di domani.’).

⁵⁶ ‘Letter to Marquis De Gregorio’, Paris, 6 June 1849, *ibid.*, 328: (‘cause remote e potentissime’).

⁵⁷ Ibid.: (‘l’azione dissolvente della diplomazia estera’).

⁵⁸ Ibid., 329: (‘l’ambizione di pochi che aspiravano al potere’).

the revolution’;⁵⁹ the ‘inexperience, and perhaps even the over-generosity of some men’;⁶⁰ ‘the misfortunes of Italy’;⁶¹ and the ‘unparalleled cowardice of the Palermo aristocracy.’⁶²

La Farina blames the aristocratic classes for the fall of the Torrearsa ministry and the ultimate failure of the revolution. In his view, the aristocrats occupied the highest ranks of the civic guard and had no interest in the revolution but only cared about preserving their wealth and power (‘to preserve the palace and the shop’).⁶³

In the same letter, La Farina provides an account of the size of the revolutionary forces. The forces the Sicilian rebels at their disposal were three line battalions, one of which was excellent. They also had a cavalry regiment, a thousand navy men, a battalion of young guards, two country batteries, half a square artillery brigade, four hundred municipals and three hundred devils from the university legion, which he had brought back by force to Palermo from Vallelunga, where he was. At Castrogiovanni, they still had two thousand men of regular troops. At Trapani, there was the 4th line. Besides, La Farina believed that the Sicilian rebels could resist the Bourbon troops in an “honourable and beautiful” way with the strength of their units.⁶⁴ After leaving Marseilles quickly, ‘to avoid being in bad company,’⁶⁵ the Sicilian historian moved to Paris and stayed there for a long time. He confided in his friend Vincenzo Gallina about his financial difficulties and the lack of help from his family, who were still in Palermo and unable to communicate with him. He said, ‘I have been missing from Palermo for fortysix days, and I still have not been able to receive any news or letters from my parents! If you ever have any news, please do me the favour of communicating it. The same for Tuscan things.’⁶⁶ La Farina struggled to make a living by selling his books and found comfort in the letters he received from friends during his time as a refugee. While in exile in Paris, he considered writing a history of the Sicilian revolution and entrusting it to the Milanese publisher M. Guigoni. In his letters, he stated that his work would reveal ‘all that is just and useful’⁶⁷ providing an accurate account of the events, people involved, laws, decrees, financial regulations, and negotiations with foreign countries. He knew his account would provoke ‘a thousand cries and

⁵⁹ Ibid.: (‘figlio della rivoluzione).

⁶⁰ Ibid., 330: (‘l’inesperienza, e forse anco la troppa generosità di alcuni uomini’).

⁶¹ Ibid.: (‘la viltà senza pari dell’aristocrazia palermitana’).

⁶² Ibid.: (‘le sventure d’Italia’).

⁶³ Ibid.: (‘per interesse di conservare il palazzo e la bottega’).

⁶⁴ Ibid.: (‘un’onorevole e bella resistenza’).

⁶⁵ Ibid., 332: (‘di volo per non trovarmi in quella compagnia malvagia e scempia’).

⁶⁶ Letter to V. Gallina’, 6 June 1849, in *Epistolario*, vol. I, 333: (‘Sono quarantasei giorni che manco da Palermo, ed ancora non ho potuto ricevere una notizia, una lettera dai miei! Se mai potesti avere notizie, fammi piacere di comunicarmele, così ancora per le cose toscane.’).

⁶⁷ ‘Letter to V. Gallina’, 27 July 1849, *ibid.*, 334: (‘tutto ciò che è giusto e utile’).

complaints,⁶⁸ but he did not care.

In La Farina's letters, we find evidence of the network of support established by Italian patriots during the Risorgimento period. This is demonstrated in the following letter:

My dearest friend,

It is not easy to express the extent of my gratitude for your generous offers. Your kindness profoundly touches me, and I feel truly blessed to have your support. If the need arises, I know I can rely on you, my father, and my brother. However, there is no such need [...] Please convey my heartfelt thanks to your wonderful wife, and do write to me often, as your letters are a great source of comfort. With warm regards.⁶⁹

The Sicilian patriot and his wife, Luisa, led a secluded life in Paris. He was wholly devoted to his work and 'waging war with the pen to Ferdinando II.'⁷⁰ Even in 1850, the patriot was worried about the high cost of living in Paris. He complained that "a firewood costs five soldi (five coins)."⁷¹

La Farina wrote several letters from Paris that convey feelings of isolation and bitterness. In a letter to his friend Giuseppe Ricciardi, he shared that the persecution by the Neapolitan government had gone beyond him and affected his father, brother, and even distant relatives. He concluded by saying, 'Let it be. Time runs, and time is a great gentleman who does not imprison, strip, or shoot.'⁷²

In another letter addressed to Ernesta Fumagalli Torti, he confides that he was disappointed by friends who were not loyal and turned out to be 'foolish, envious or false.'⁷³

By the end of 1850, La Farina received a letter from Giuseppe Mazzini, addressed as 'Brother,' while he was still in Paris. The founder of Giovine Italia invited him to join a press commission along with M. Amari, G. Mazzoni, and others. This commission was responsible for publishing articles about the Italian cause in various English newspapers. Mazzini emphasised the necessity of democratic unity and urged them to preach this message courageously. He stressed the importance of showing unity, sacrificing for the country, and avoiding division and quarrels,

⁶⁸ Ibid.: ('mille grida e mille reclami: ma non m'importa!').

⁶⁹ Ibid.: ('Carissimo Amico, Rispondo alle due tue ultime. Dire quale impressione m'abbiano fatte le tue generose offerte è inutile sarebbe vano son cose che possono sentirsi e non esprimersi. Il miglior modo di ringraziarti mi par quello di dirti se il bisogno si presentasse io non mi indirizzerei che a te e conterei sul tuo affetto come potrei contare su quello di mio padre e di mio fratello. Tuttavia, non ce n'è bisogno [...] Vi prego di esprimere i miei più sentiti ringraziamenti alla tua meravigliosa moglie, e scrivimi spesso, perché le tue lettere sono una grande fonte di conforto. I più affettuosi saluti [...]').

⁷⁰ 'Letter to E. Fumagalli Torti', *ibid.*, 16 December 1849, 340: ('dichiarare guerra colla [sic] penna a Ferdinando II').

⁷¹ 'Letter to M. Guigoni', Paris, 4 January 1850, *ibid.*, 344: ('un pezzo di legno per i fuochi costa 5 soldi').

⁷² 'Letter to G. Ricciardi', Paris, 23 March 1850, *ibid.*, 351: ("Faccian pure il tempo corre ed il tempo è un gran galantuomo che non s'imprigiona non si spoglia e non si fucila").

⁷³ 'Letter to E. Fumagalli Torti', Paris, 12 April 1850, *ibid.*, 354: ('stolti, invidi o finti').

especially after the heroic acts of the people in 1848 and 1849.⁶⁴⁵ In Mazzini's subsequent letter, La Farina received an invitation to reconstitute a Parisian Revolutionary Committee (Committee of the National Association), with precise indications as to its composition and the need to involve dissidents in the initiative:

You know there are dissidents in Paris, which is not necessarily bad because they won't affect the National Committee's cooperation. However, it is still scandalous and disappointing that some of the best individuals are separated and inactive as the crucial moment approaches. [...] We need you to inform Montanelli, Cernuschi, and others who disagree with us of the dissolution of the Parisian meeting and our intention to form another one. [...] To work with us, we must accept the National Manifesto of our association and maintain regular contact. The committee will be responsible for coordinating all work in France. It will report to our agents in Marseille and other locations and maintain contact with neighbouring countries such as Spain and Switzerland.⁷⁴

La Farina used an opportunity to clarify his political beliefs in his letter from Paris to Mazzini, dated 3 June 1851. He stated he was 'a unitary and republican, just as in 1848 and 1849 1849. I believe that the two issues of unity and republicanism could not be divided today'⁷⁵ He also emphasised that the primary requirement of Italy was to be unitary and explained why he had retreated to France, which kept him away from the disagreements that had arisen between Mazzini and the other Italian exiles. Additionally, the patriot from Messina ensured that Mazzini was aware of his opinions on managing revolutionary activity and its potential institutional outlets.

He agreed to collaborate with Mazzini but set some conditions, such as requiring less secrecy about the National Committee's programs, greater freedom of expression, and specific requirements for the composition of the Paris Committee: 'Let the Paris Committee be composed entirely of men who fully consent to these principles – national unity, republic, universal suffrage, exclusion of the papacy, and the creation of a single army from the

⁷⁴ Letter to G. La Farina', London, 24 May 1851, *ibid.*, 412-413: ('Sapete pure ch'esistono alcuni dissidenti da noi in Parigi; ed è male non perchè tolgano o possano togliere al Comitato Nazionale la cooperazione [...] ma perchè è scandalo e appiglio a tristi che alcuni fra i migliori si stiano separati ed inerti sull'avvicinarsi dell'ora suprema [...] Or noi vi preghiamo di vedere Montanelli, Cernuschi, ed altri che dissentano da noi; e comunicando loro lo scioglimento del comizio parigino e l'intenzione nostra di formarne un altro, [...] Il comitato dovrebbe essere di tre individui, di cinque al più; meglio se di tre, con alcuni capi di commissioni speciali al di sotto. L'accettazione del Manifesto nazionale, delle basi dell'associazione e del contatto regolare con noi, sono le condizioni. Il comitato sarebbe centrale per tutti i lavori fatti e da farsi in Francia, e avrebbe subalterni tutti i nostri agenti in Marsiglia ed altrove, e contatto coi paesi vicini Spagna, Svizzera ecc. [...]').

⁷⁵ 'Letter to G. Mazzini', Paris, 3 June 1851, *ibid.*, 415-417: ('qual fui nel '48 e nel '49, unitario e repubblicano. Non credo che oggi le due questioni si possan dividere ma in ogni caso io sono unitario innanzi tutto perchè per me primo bisogno d'Italia è essere').

beginning.’⁷⁶

Significant criticism was directed towards Mazzini regarding the revolution’s direction. The hierarchical nature of the movement and the dismissal of dissenters were two primary concerns raised. It was felt that no one appreciated the dictatorship of a few leaders and that there was not even a single person in the entire emigration from Paris who shared the National Committee’s opinion: ‘Now it seems to us that no dictatorship is possible without the idolatry of a name or a mighty and obedient army [...]’.⁷⁷

During his exile in Paris, La Farina suggested to M. Guigoni the publication of his treatise, *Unità e la Federazione d’Italia*.⁷⁸ The treatise was well advanced in October 1851 and completed in November of the same year.⁷⁹ In this treatise, La Farina concludes that revolutions may start with minorities but ultimately fail if they are not accepted and supported by majorities.⁸⁰ As for his reluctance to establish connections with the Parisians, likely due to security concerns, the Sicilian historian continued to correspond with other exiles, including G. Ricciardi, to whom he recommended to ‘take weapons and rifles’⁸¹ and the Tuscan patriot A. Vannucci, who was also exiled to Paris after 1849.

In 1852, two painful events marked La Farina’s life: the arrest of his brother Silvestro in Messina – ‘a new cup of wormwood’⁸² – and the loss of his father Carmelo – ‘a terrible and unexpected stroke’–.⁸³ In May 1853, the patriot decided to leave the expensive and harsh climate of the French capital and settle in the province. He chose to live in Tours and adapted by teaching Italian language lessons after his friendship with the publisher Guigoni had broken. However, after a short break, he later renewed his contacts with Guigoni, who had resumed his editorial activity. He wrote two essays on the history of relations between the State and the Church of Rome,⁸⁴ discussing his ideas against temporal authority and the papacy.

Driven by his anticlerical spirit, he wrote the historical novel *Gli Albigesi*. The Ponthenier

⁷⁶ Ibid.: (‘Che il Comitato di Parigi sia composto tutto di uomini che consentano pienamente in questi principj, cioè unità nazionale, repubblica, suffragio universale, esclusione del papato, ordinamento di esercito unico sin da principio.’).

⁷⁷ Letter written on behalf of the Paris Committee, undated, *Epistolario*, vol. I, 418-425 (here 420): (‘la dittatura di poche persone è antipatica a tutti. Noi non abbiamo trovato in tutta l’emigrazione di Parigi un solo che sia dell’avviso del Comitato Nazionale. [...] Ora a noi pare che non ci sia dittatura possibile senza o l’idolatria di un nome o un esercito potentissimo e ubbidiente. [...]’).

⁷⁸ Ibid., 429.

⁷⁹ ‘Letter to M. Guigoni’, Paris, 22 October 1851, *ibid.*, 432.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 422: (‘Vero egli è che le rivoluzioni sono iniziate dalle minoranze, ma le rivoluzioni cadono miseramente se non sono accettate e ordinate dalle maggioranze.’).

⁸¹ ‘Letter to G. Ricciardi’, Tours, undated, *ibid.*, 433: (‘ci vogliono fucili e cannoni’).

⁸² Letter to E. Fumagalli Torti, Paris, 27 May 1852, *ibid.*, 457: (‘una nuova tazza d’assenzio’).

⁸³ Letter to E. Fumagalli Torti, Paris, 28 December 1852, *ibid.*, 474: (‘colpo terribile ed inaspettato’).

⁸⁴ *Storia delle contenzioni tra la podestà ecclesiastica e la civile dai tempi di Gregorio VIII ai nostri* (Torino, Guigoni, 1853); Id., *La nazione è l’unica e vera proprietaria dei beni ecclesiastici* (Torino, Guigoni, 1854).

publishing house published the book in six volumes in Genoa in 1855. Here, La Farina vividly portrays the brutal crusades of Catholics led by Count Simon de Monfort, Bishop of Toulouse and Archbishop of Narbonne, against the Albigensians, a group of heretics who inhabited the southern lands of France.

The Albigensians were ultimately exterminated. La Farina also published his *Compendio della storia d'Italia raccontata ai ragazzi*, and completed the *Storia d'Italia dal 1815 al 1850* (Società Editrice Italiana, 1851-52), which Guigoni reprinted in three volumes from 1860 to 1861 and, as I said, his friend L. Zini continued from 1850 to 1866.

In his correspondence, La Farina shares some personal and heartfelt thoughts about his everyday life. For example, he tells his friend Vincenzo Gallina about the joy of baking bread with beer yeast at the local mill. Another example is his letter to his longtime friend Ernestina Fumagalli about a curious incident near Easter called the 'massacre of the poor cockerels.'⁸⁵

Despite experiencing some carefree moments in Tours, La Farina was still plagued by economic concerns and strong doubts about his profession as a writer and historian. He confided in his Turin friend G. Ventura that he had contemplated becoming a carver several times and had already acquired the necessary tools.⁸⁶

In June 1854, La Farina left France for Piedmont at the invitation of his publisher, Guigoni. He planned to settle there and possibly teach history and start a newspaper.

10.1 La Farina's Return to Italy

On 21 August 1849, La Farina arrived in Turin. Once he arrived, he continued his prior work, which included editing his *Rivista Enciclopedica Italiana* (Italian Encyclopedic Magazine). He sent the editorial plan to his friend Michele Amari, who was exiled in Paris. Most of the contributions to the magazine were signed by A. Vannucci, P. Thouar, G. Montanelli, G. Mazzoni, and P. Emiliani Giudici.

La Farina's editorial work was hindered due to municipalism and distrust towards Piedmontese cultural circles. Besides, he believed that Piedmontese publishers lacked initiative and the market was saturated.⁸⁷

He worked in 'complete isolation',⁸⁸ and to supplement his modest earnings as an essayist and journalist, he had the idea of establishing a small Sicilian food business. He planned to sell dried

⁸⁵ 'Letter to E. Fumagalli Torti', Tours, 28 March 1854, in *Epistolario*, vol. I, 473.

⁸⁶ 'Letter to G. Ventura', Tours, 24 May 1854, *ibid.*, 501.

⁸⁷ 'Letter to G. Ricciardi', Turin, 26 January 1855, *ibid.*, 527.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*: ('in completo isolamento').

figs, olives, almonds, pistachios, and salted anchovies. Unfortunately, this venture also proved unprofitable due to the high duties and taxes that doubled the costs, as he disclosed this information to his close friend, Ernestina.⁸⁹

The Messina patriot continued his conspiratorial activities despite his usual financial difficulties. He intensified his contact with other exiles in Malta, like G. Oddo, M. Raeli, R. Settimo, and V. Natoli. Ruggero Settimo expressed his opposition to La Farina about the planned revolution for the spring of 1859. He and other Sicilian exiles had promoted this political project. In Settimo's own words:

I appreciate what you have written about the Sicily plan. This plan offers many benefits, which align with what we hoped to achieve during our negotiations with Lord Minto. However, we disagree with promoting a revolution in Sicily based on promises of secret aid. Any assistance should be factual, positive, and transparent.⁹⁰

In August 1856, La Farina informed his friend G. Ricciardi that he had stopped publishing his *Rivista Enciclopedica*. This was because it had cost him a considerable amount of money, equivalent to his 'poor savings of seven years's work,'⁹¹ which were about 4800 lire. Instead of the *Rivista*, La Farina began publishing the *Piccolo Corriere d'Italia* in June of the same year, initially weekly. The magazine contained instructions for the Società Nazionale Committees scattered throughout Italy. The *Rivista* was later converted into the *Bollettino Settimanale della Società Nazionale Italiana* (Weekly Bulletin of the Italian National Society), which shut down after its dissolution in April 1859. This new periodical was instrumental in spreading political news abroad, even reaching Malta, where some copies were sent to La Farina's acquaintance, Baron Giuseppe Oddo, who was advised to avoid 'Mazzinian enterprises'.⁹² And instead, push 'with all our revolution strength'.⁹³

La Farina's *Bollettino* had agreed to Cavour's unitary solution, which involved cooperation between the national movement and the Savoy Crown.

⁸⁹ 'Letter to E. Fumagalli Torti', Turin, 5 February 1855, *ibid.*, 530.

⁹⁰ 'Letter to Giuseppe La Farina', Malta, 21 May 1856, in *Epistolario*, vol. II, 14: ('Relativamente al disegno dell'avvenire per la Sicilia, non potendosi sperare di meglio, applaudo a quanto me ne avete scritto, essendovi molto da guadagnare sotto tutti gli aspetti, e coincide per altro nella sostanza a quanto noi saremmo contentati dietro le trattative con lord Minto. Epperò non siamo d'accordo in quanto al principio di promuovere la rivoluzione in Sicilia sulle promesse d'aiuti segreti, mentre questi a mio credere dovrebbero essere reali, positivi e palesi [...].')

⁹¹ 'Letter to Giuseppe Ricciardi', Turin, 6 August 1856, *ibid.*, 17-18: ('ai miei poveri risparmi di sette anni di lavoro').

⁹² 'Letter to Giuseppe Oddo', Turin, 20 October 1856, *ibid.*, 24: ('delle imprese alla mazziniana').

⁹³ 'Letter to Giuseppe Oddo', Turin, 8 September 1856, *ibid.*, 21: ('con ogni nostra forza alla rivoluzione').

Cavour had initiated a friendship with La Farina by expressing his desire to meet him on 12 September 1856, thanking him for supporting the Piedmontese intervention at the Congress of Paris. According to historians, this intervention humiliated Austria and caused them to be opposed by France and England. On his side, La Farina asked Cavour to oppose Murat's solution⁹⁴ clearly and decisively: 'I am addressing Your Excellency, the Count of Cavour, and I request that you tell me honestly whether you will support or oppose Prince Murat. If you remain neutral, I only ask for one favour – a passport to Paris. As a fellow knight, I appeal to your sense of loyalty, and I trust that I will receive a response fitting that of a knight.'⁹⁵

La Farina expressed his thoughts on the Italian cause in the correspondence exchange with Prof. Ferrara, the editor of the newspaper *Italia e Popolo*. Ferrara accused La Farina of treason and taking advantage of his political positions.

Ferrara was not the only one to criticise La Farina's stance on supporting Cavour's united program despite claiming to be a Republican. This is why he was somewhat ostracised from the left historiography of the postunitary period that tended to consider La Farina's political conversion as an act of betrayal of democratic ideals. Instead, it was only a realistic decision on the impossibility of putting those ideals into practice. For example, Agostino Bertani⁹⁶ targeted him after his friend Ausonio Franchi published La Farina's correspondence. Bertani claimed:

Towards the end of his political career, Giuseppe La Farina developed an intense passion, which could even be considered an unhealthy obsession, to impose Count of Cavour's political ideology on the entire Italy. According to him, all the political parties should remain silent, conflicts should end, immediate and unconditional annexations should occur, and the country should embrace absolute centralisation. He envisioned an infallible and unchangeable Pontificate of Cavour for the entire Italy.⁹⁷

However, La Farina explained well his political conversion in his letter to the *Italia e Popolo*

⁹⁴ Luciano Napoleone Murat was a French noble and politician. He was the second son of Joachim Murat and Caroline Bonaparte. He was born on May 16, 1803 in Milan and died on April 10, 1878 in Paris. After becoming a senator following the December 2, 1851 coup led by his cousin and elected President Louis-Napoléon, he was granted the title of Prince by the same person who had become emperor in 1853. He became the Grand Master of the Freemasonry, a position he held from 1852 to 1861. According to the Plombières Agreement, discussed by his cousin Napoleon III and Camillo Benso, Count of Cavour, the idea of entrusting him with the Crown of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies had been put forward in case of victory. Due to war's outcome, the project envisioned by Napoleon III was never realised and was fiercely opposed by many Italian patriots.

⁹⁵ 'Letter to Count of Cavour', undated (but probably written in September 1856), in *Epistolario*, vol. II, 23: ('Io mi rivolgo quindi alla S. V. come al Conte di Cavour, e le chiedo ch'Ella lealmente voglia dirmi: Noi non contrarieremo, e non daremo favore al principe Murat; ovvero il contrario. In questo caso a me personalmente non rimarrebbe che un favore da chiederle, quello di un passaporto per Parigi. Mi rivolgo ad un cavaliere, fo appello alla sua lealtà, e sono persuaso che riceverò risposta quale da un cavaliere si deve attendere.').

⁹⁶ Agostino Bertani (Milano 1812–Roma 1886). He was a patriotic doctor, who fought with Garibaldi, close to the extreme left and a member of the Partito d'Azione (Action Party).

⁹⁷ Id., *L'epistolario di Giuseppe La Farina ire politiche d'oltre tomba* (Firenze, Polizzi, 1869), 121.

newspaper, where he acknowledged his change of mind but considered it a pragmatic political choice: 'If I now believe that a republic is impossible, can I honestly consider any other solution than a national principality? In practical politics, I believe that pursuing the impossible is immoral. Shedding tears and blood for an unachievable goal does not serve the fatherland and is not an honourable or justifiable course of action.'⁹⁸

Cavour adopted a strategy that involved diplomatic efforts, such as establishing the Società Nazionale and an open dialogue with democrats, especially Mazzini and Garibaldi, through La Farina. This approach allowed Cavour to monitor insurrectional activities. La Farina supported Cavour's political program and believed in the necessity of an insurrection in Sicily.

10.2 The Società Nazionale: La Farina's Disagreements with General Garibaldi

In 1857, the Società Nazionale was founded with a Central Committee based in Turin. Its presidency was entrusted to Daniele Manin, the creator and the secretariat to La Farina. Thanks to local newspapers and provincial committees, it spread throughout Italy, being public in Piedmont and secret in other states. The organisation received the support of Garibaldi, who became its vice-president, and some women, including the Marquise Pallavicino, his wife Luisa, and a few ladies from Turin and other parts of Italy.

However, as can be seen from a letter to Mr Clericetti, the Society was not very successful in Naples, unlike Sicily, where there was a fair amount of discouragement among patriots. La Farina confided that Clericetti from Brighton would undertake to publicise the Società Nazionale through the English press, such as the Examiner newspaper.⁹⁹

In early July of that year, the Sicilian patriot was enthusiastic about its rapid spread among Italians living in Switzerland (where a committee operated), the United States of America and Egypt. An emissary also made contact with Hungary.

Once again struggling with financial difficulties, this time due to the arrest of his main publisher, Guigoni, in March 1857, and left without a source of income, La Farina fell back on the purchase of a small printing house, owned by the same Turin publisher, which cost him 4800 francs, 'a magnificent bargain'¹⁰⁰ that he managed to complete thanks to a loan offered by

⁹⁸ 'Letter to the *Italia e Popolo* journal', Geona, in *Epistolario*, vol. II, 5 October 1856 (the letter was published on 10 October), 566: ('E se credo la repubblica impossibile, posso credere onesta ed onorevole altra soluzione che quella di un principato nazionale? In politica pratica, secondo me, l'impossibile è immorale; perché è immorale fare versar lagrime e sangue [...] senza probabile utilità della patria.').

⁹⁹ 'Letter to Mr. C. A. Clericetti', Turin, 28 October 1857, *ibid.*, 40-41.

¹⁰⁰ 'Letter to V. Gallina', Turin, 12 March 1858, *ibid.*, 48: ('un magnifico affare').

his friend Vincenzo Gallina. With the new printing house, he published a few works, such as the Turin newspaper *Il Patriota*, a zoological work and a weekly sheet, which enabled him to get by for a while.

If the unitary programme met with the favour of some Sicilian exiles (including R. Settimo, M. Amari, M. Raeli), while other patriots, such as V. d'Ondes, F. Ferrara, E. Amari, and F. P. Perez, remained attached to the idea of an independence and anti-Napolitan movement, La Farina lamented the fact that Mazzini, on the other hand, worked to 'untidy our apparatuses.'¹⁰¹ Contacts with the committees of the Società Nazionale of Northern and Central Italy (in particular Sarzana, Livorno, Genoa, Lerici, and Bologna) became more frequent from 1858 onwards when a war against Austria and an insurrection in Massa Carrara were being considered should also have involved the Papal Legations, a plan agreed with Cavour. In this regard, La Farina published his *Piemonte e Italia* (Turin, 10 December 1857), *La Rivoluzione, la Dittatura e le Alleanze* (Turin, 29 May 1858), both on behalf of the Società Nazionale, and *Le forze liberatrici d'Italia nella probabilità della prossima guerra* (Turin, 14 November 1858). The three essays and other writings were used as propaganda to promote the program. They aimed to promote unity among liberals ('to the unity of ideas, intentions and affections'),¹⁰² encourage the states to rally around Piedmont ('here are free arms, free laws, free government'),¹⁰³ and lead the Risorgimento of Italy. In doing so, it also needed the 'moderation and active cooperation of the entire nation.'¹⁰⁴

For La Farina, the Italian revolution resulted from 'the people's unmet moral, intellectual, and material needs'¹⁰⁵ and was close to breaking out. La Farina's narrative contains self-congratulatory elements, such as when he emphasises his ability to mediate between opposite factions and solve problems around Italy: 'I often rushed to different places wherever my friends called me, to prevent scandal, resolve chaos, or uplift the disheartened spirits.'¹⁰⁶

The Sicilian patriot got in touch with Giuseppe Garibaldi, with whom he had a relationship of mutual esteem but was also uneasy, even if some letters addressed to Ausonio Franchi provide

¹⁰¹ 'Letter to Dott. Ottavio Mazzi', Acqui, 16 August 1858, *ibid.*, 74: ('Disordinare i nostri apparati').

¹⁰² 'Piemonte e Italia', in *Scritti politici di G. La Farina, raccolti e pubblicati da A. Franchi*, vol. II (Milan, Tip. D. Salvi, 1870), 114-131 (123): ('all'accomunamento d'idee, di propositi e d'affetti').

¹⁰³ 'Letter to A. Franchi', Turin, 23 November 1859, *ibid.*, 237: ('Al momento di ripigliare le armi Garibaldi sarà con noi: Vittorio Emanuele glielo ha promesso. Il re e Garibaldi sono sempre in buonissimi termini fra di lor [...]').

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 126: ('qui sono libere armi, libere leggi, libero governo').

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*: ('contenimento e attiva cooperazione di tutta la Nazione').

¹⁰⁶ 'La Rivoluzione, la Dittatura e le Alleanze', in *Scritti politici di G. La Farina, raccolti e pubblicati da A. Franchi*, 132-147 (132): ('bisogni morali, intellettuali e materiali non soddisfatti del popolo').

¹⁰⁷ 'Letter to Francesco Terasona', Turin, 15 September 1859, in *Epistolario*, vol. II, 208: ('Io mi precipito qua e là, dove gli amici mi hanno chiamato per impedire qualche scandalo, porre fine a qualche disordine, risollevarli gli spiriti scoraggiati').

insight into the Messina patriot's thoughts on the General, describing him as 'very nice and modest.'¹⁰⁷ As the result of the discussions with La Farina was the formation of the Cacciatori delle Alpi armed corps. Garibaldi promised to support the united initiative of the House of Savoy and joined forces with La Farina.

La Farina believed that Garibaldi and the king always agreed with each other: 'When we take up arms again, Garibaldi will be with us: Vittorio Emanuele has promised it to him. The king and Garibaldi are always on good terms'.¹⁰⁸ However, this was not entirely true. In reality, the king was afraid of Garibaldi's unpredictable nature. On the other hand, Garibaldi possibly found it hard to submit to the king's political and military authority, though he respected it just like he did to Theano.

In April 1859, Cavour sought a reason for war with Austria, which was eventually provided by Austria's ultimatum. This provoked a reaction from the Piedmontese government. The French-Piedmontese alliance, which was desired with the Plombières agreements, cracked after the victories of Solferino and San Martino. This was because Napoleon III decided to end the war against Austria by asking Franz Joseph I for an armistice.

10.3 Did Garibaldi Challenge the King and Cavour?

On 11 July 1859, the Armistice of Villafranca was signed by Napoleon III, Vittorio Emanuele II of Savoy, and Emperor Franz Joseph I. The agreement caused Cavour to resign, as he disagreed with the terms set by France and Austria, which the Piedmontese king had accepted. Piedmont managed to annex Parma, Modena, Tuscany, and Romagna through the plebiscites of 15 and 16 April. In exchange, Nice and Savoy were ceded to France. Cavour desired the annexation and the referenda, which led to the possibility of volunteers supporting an insurrection in Sicily. La Farina, Nino Bixio and Francesco Crispi controlled this operation.¹⁰⁹

In a letter addressed to his friend Pietro Sbarbaro, La Farina reports his version of the Quarto expedition. He defines his relationship with Garibaldi and their first rupture, which occurred after the peace of Villafranca. At that moment, Garibaldi, contrary to the assurances given to La Farina, decided to lead an armed insurrection in central Italy. However, La Farina, Farini, and

¹⁰⁷ 'Letter to Ausonio Franchi', Turin, 24 September 1859, *ibid.*, 210: ('buonissimo e modestissimo').

¹⁰⁸ 'Letter to A. Franchi', Turin, 23 November 1859, *ibid.*, 237: ('Al momento di ripigliare le armi Garibaldi sarà con noi: Vittorio Emanuele glielo ha promesso. Il re e Garibaldi sono sempre in buonissimi termini fra di lor [...]').

¹⁰⁹ See C. Duggan, *Francesco Crispi, 1818-1901. From Nation to Nationalism* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002).

Fanti promptly stopped it, which outraged Garibaldi. He resigned the presidency of the Società Nazionale and attempted the foundation of the Nazione Armata (Armed Nation), as we shall see later.

Despite the Bologna break-up, Garibaldi contacted La Farina and asked him to join his volunteers in the aftermath of the Expedition of the Thousand.¹¹⁰ La Farina agreed, offering his full support for an endeavour that Garibaldi and some of his companions viewed as ‘insanity.’¹¹¹ According to La Farina’s correspondence and meetings with Garibaldi, it seems unlikely that ‘Garibaldi had challenged Cavour and the king’¹¹² by leading the Expedition of the Thousand. It should be stressed that Garibaldi had requested La Farina’s support, as the Messina patriot’s recalls in his memoirs. It seems more likely that Cavour’s objective was to counter the social revolution pursued by the radical democrats while, at the same time, unofficially agreeing to the expedition of Garibaldi and his volunteers to the south. Cavour was aware of the expedition and secretly followed it through La Farina. He tried not to harm relations with Napoleon III’s France, thus postponing the Roman question to a later date. On the contrary, upon landing in Sicily, Garibaldi had plans to address the issue immediately.

La Farina mentions an event that is not widely known, namely that the expedition was initially threatened by the Liberi Comizii, a military group likely created by Urbano Rattazzi¹¹³ and led by Garibaldi in an anti-Cavourian role. Thus, he explained this in detail:

The Liberi Comizii, which later became the Nazione Armata, attempted a reprehensible action to prevent Cavour’s return, demolishing Farini, Ricasoli and the Società Nazionale and gaining the popular support of the current ministry. They took advantage of Garibaldi’s resentment towards the governments of central Italy, separated him from me, flattered and blinded him, and induced him to assume the presidency of the Nazione Armata. However, Rattazzi assures me he had no part in all this, although no one believes him [...].¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ ‘Letter to Pietro Sbarbaro’, Turin, October (undated), 1860, in *Epistolario*, vol. II, 432.

¹¹¹ Ibid.: (‘una follia’).

¹¹² L. Riall, *Garibaldi. Invention of a Hero* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2007), 2. There is an extensive literature available on Garibaldi, of which a selection is provided: G. Guerzoni, *Garibaldi* (Firenze, Barbèra, 1882); J. White Mario, *Giuseppe Garibaldi e i suoi tempi* (Milan, 1884); G.M. Trevelyan, *Garibaldi e la difesa della Repubblica romana* (Bologna, Zanichelli, 1909); Id., *Garibaldi e i Mille* (Bologna, Zanichelli, 1910); Id., *Garibaldi e la formazione dell’Italia* (Bologna, Zanichelli, 1913); Curatulo, Giacomo Emilio, *Garibaldi, Vittorio Emanuele e Cavour nei fasti della patria* (Bologna, 1911); D. Mack Smith, *Garibaldi: A great life in brief* (London, 1957); F. della Peruta, ‘Garibaldi fra mito e politica’, *Studi Storici*, 23/1, 1982, 5–22; A. Scirocco, *Garibaldi. Battaglie, amori, ideali di un cittadino del mondo* (Roma; Bari, Laterza, 2001).

¹¹³ Urbano Rattazzi (Alessandria 1808-Frosinone 1873). As a representative of the Left in Piedmont, in 1852, he formed an alliance in parliament with Cavour, the famous ‘connubio’. He served as Minister of Grace and Justice (1853) and Minister of the Interior (1855) in the Kingdom of Sardinia. After unification, he served as Minister of the Interior (1859-1860) alongside Alfonso Lamarmora and as Prime Minister in 1862 and 1867. Rattazzi prevented Garibaldi’s military action in Aspromonte aimed at conquering Rome.

¹¹⁴ ‘Letter to Maurizio Ghisalberty’, Turin, 5 January 1860, in *Epistolario*, vol. II, 271: (‘I Liberi Comizii, trasformati poi in Nazione Armata, hanno tentato opera bruttissima. Loro scopo evidente era impedire il ritorno

According to La Farina, the Liberi Comizii's initiative had no consequences. He claimed the Nazione Armata 'fell not because of diplomatic efforts, but due to universal disapproval.'¹¹⁵ La Farina convinced Cavour that an armed insurrection in Sicily was necessary. Still, the Neapolitan separatists and Murattians rejected that plan and instead worked to sabotage the unity goal, which La Farina referred to as an act of 'imbeciles and scoundrels.'¹¹⁶ Thanks to Cav. Vegezzi-Ruscalla, the Messina patriot maintained close relations with the liberal forces of Germany, Sweden, Serbia, the Danubian Principalities, Malta, Spain, and Portugal. He worked tirelessly to collect weapons, ammunition, and subscriptions for the money collection opened by the newspaper *Piccolo Corriere*.

10.4 The Expedition of the Thousand: La Farina's Involvement

On the evening of 5 May 1860, on the beach in front of Quarto, the port of Genoa, shining brightly in the clear sky, illuminated the fate-deciding enterprise of Italy. Luigi Rigoni, one of the Thousand, describes the departure of the Thousand as follows:

The full moon extended a wide silver zone over the trembling sea. The sky's blue was prominent, but few stars could be seen. There was no wind, and all was calm, silent, and serene. The Thousand embarked, dressed in simple bourgeois clothes, wearing wide-brimmed hats and shoulder bags as if they were about to embark on a long journey. There was no singing or triumph; only a few trustworthy men accompanied them [...].¹¹⁷

Luigi Rigoni also tells us that Giuseppe La Farina was one of the few trusted men. The Sicilia patriot wrote about his experience to his friend Mario Rizzari from Tuscany:

I returned from Genoa yesterday after witnessing the expedition the previous night [...] I did my best to contribute, but I require support. A subscription is currently open [...], so please collect funds and send them promptly. Please do not send volunteers without our invitation. We

di Cavour, demolire Farini, Ricasoli, e la Società Nazionale, procurare il favore popolare all'attuale ministero. Per questo profittarono del risentimento di Garibaldi contro i governi dell'Italia centrale, lo staccarono da me, lo accecarono con le adulazioni, e lo indussero a pigliare la presidenza della Nazione Armata [...] Rattazzi assicura a me che in tutto questo egli non ci ha parte; ma nessuno lo crede [...].')

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 272: ('la Nazione Armata è caduta, non sotto i colpi della diplomazia (come dicono per darsi arie divittime, ma sotto la riprovazione universale').

¹¹⁶ 'Letter to Giuseppe Vergara', Turin, 5 April 1860, in *Epistolario*, vol. II, 309: ('imbecilli e birbanti').

¹¹⁷ L. Rigoni, *La spedizione di Garibaldi da Genova a Palermo* (Treviso, Tip. Andreola-Trevisin, 1876), 6: ('[...] la luna, nella pienezza del suo disco, distendeva sulla tremula marina una larga zona d'argento. L'azzurro del cielo eralimpidissimo. Poche stelle vincevano quell'albore col vivido scintillare dei fuochi del diamante. Non un'ala di vento, non un rumore; tutto calma, tutto silenzio, serenità. A corpi, a gruppi, vestiti in semplice abito da borghese, con tutta indifferenza, i Mille s'imbarcavano. Quasi tutti portavano cappelli a larghe tese e borse ad armacollo come chi sta per intraprendere un lungo viaggio. Niun canto, niun evviva, pochi e fidati uomini li accompagnavano [...].').

already have numerous individuals here who, through their presence and recklessness, put the government in a difficult position with no benefits for Sicily. We concur with Garibaldi in preferring the delivery of arms and ammunition over that of individuals. If we receive news of the successful landing, I will travel to Sicily, but the Secretary will remain here.¹¹⁸

A week later, La Farina expressed his disappointment to his friend Carlo Gemelli that Garibaldi wanted to land in the Papal States and then moved to Abruzzi. He feared the possibility of failure in Sicily due to desertions and the activities of papal and Austrian emissaries.¹¹⁹

A thousand volunteers, likely with the military help of the British, landed at Marsala on 11 May after stopping at Talamone and Santo Stefano aboard the two steamships Piemonte and Lombardo. La Masa and Crispi worked to reassure the population that the disembarked volunteers were not loyalists in disguise. Garibaldi's troops entered Palermo on 27 May after proclaiming the dictatorship in the name of King Vittorio Emanuele II at Salemi on 14 May and claiming one of their first victories against the Bourbon troops at Calatafimi on 15 May.

10.5 La Farina's Missions in Sicily: his Critique of Garibaldi's Action and 'Fourth Exile'

Cavour¹²⁰ had great admiration and respect for Garibaldi, but he was also worried that Garibaldi might act irresponsibly. Therefore, he sent La Farina to Sicily to assess the situation on the island.¹²¹ After arriving in Palermo, La Farina's first impression was a combination of 'wonder and horror.'¹²² He observed that many city districts had been destroyed, leaving only a few streets fenced off and filled with beggars. In the following days, he had the chance to evaluate Garibaldi's actions, who was busy responding to the massacres carried out by the population against men loyal to the Bourbons. La Farina noticed that despite the population's gratitude towards the dictator, they were 'unwilling to tolerate a government that negated all

¹¹⁸ 'Letter to Mario Rizzari', Turin, 7 May 1860, in *Epistolario*, vol. II, 314: ("Sono ritornato ieri da Genova, dopo aver assistito alla spedizione. Io ho fatto quanto ho potuto; ma ho bisogno d'essere aiutato. Una sottoscrizione è aperta [...] Raccogliete danari, e spedite senza indugio. Non mandate volontari senza nostro invito: qui ne abbiamo già moltissimi, che colla loro presenza e colle loro imprudenze compromettono il governo, senza alcuna utilità della Sicilia. Siamo d'accordo con Garibaldi di preferire l'invio d'armi e di munizioni all'invio di gente. Se giunge notizie del felice sbarco, io parto per Sicilia; ma qui rimane il segretario").

¹¹⁹ 'Letter to Carlo Gemelli', Turin, 12 May 1860, in *Epistolario*, vol. II, 320. See also letters in his *Epistolario*, vol. II, 316-320, send to G. Manfredi, V. Gallina, D. Morchio, G. Vergara.

¹²⁰ For a comprehensive biography of the Piedmontese statesman, his work, and his relations with La Farina and Garibaldi, see the fundamental essay R. Romeo, *Cavour e il suo tempo* (Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1984).

¹²¹ On the relations between Cavour and Garibaldi, see also D. Mack Smith, *Cavour and Garibaldi 1860: a study in political conflict* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1954; 1985; it. trans. Torino 1958).

¹²² 'Letter to Count Cavour', Palermo, 10 June 1860, in *Epistolario*, vol. II, 324: ('misto di meraviglia e di orrore').

government,¹²³ and Sicily was in violent chaos.¹²⁴

La Farina strongly criticised the Sicilian provisional government, specifically Crispi, who was the least liked among the new rulers due to issuing numerous inappropriate decrees as Secretary of State for the Interior.¹²⁵ These decrees included employing men from the previous government in public administration, which was not appreciated by the Sicilian people, abolishing the millstone duty, and enacting a conscription law that caused numerous popular uprisings. La Farina warned Count Cavour that the cause of Italy was in serious jeopardy due to the presence of two agendas – one of Garibaldi and the other of the country – and that the risk of a severe crisis was genuine.¹²⁶ Nevertheless, La Farina also made some political strategy mistakes, first and foremost that of wanting to accelerate the process of annexing Sicily to the Kingdom of Sardinia, coming into sharp conflict with Garibaldi, who wanted first to obtain the liberation of the whole of Italy (even by force), including Rome, Venice and Nice. These tensions led the local democratic press (especially the pro-Mazzini *Giornale Officiale* of Palermo) to consider La Farina as an agent of Cavour, prompting the Dictator to decide for his removal from the island, which took place on 7 July: ‘I was banished from Sicily in half an hour by order of General Garibaldi. It is my fourth exile’¹²⁷ wrote La Farina on his return to Turin on 14 July 1860.

The Sicilian historian embittered because of his expulsion from Sicily by the Dictator (Garibaldi), who, in his view, was under Crispi’s influence and surrounded by a ‘mixed group of incorrigible Mazzinians and vituperative Bourbons’¹²⁸ who were likened to a ‘horde of drunken savages.’¹²⁹

The relationship between General Garibaldi and La Farina changed drastically after their encounter in Sicily. The Sicilian patriot confided to his friend Ausonio Franchi, who published his epistolary after La Farina’s death that he would never have thought he was ‘such a fake person.’¹³⁰ The split between La Farina and Garibaldi was accompanied by decreased public

¹²³ Ibid., 326: (‘nessuno è disposto a tollerare un governo ch’è la negazione di ogni governo’).

¹²⁴ Ibid., 328.

¹²⁵ For further insights into the dictatorship of Garibaldi in Sicily, see Mack Smith, *Cavour e il suo tempo*; A. Scirocco, *I democratici italiani da Sapri a Porta Pia* (Napoli, Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1969); G Giarrizzo, ‘La Sicilia nel 1860: un bilancio’, in *Archivio Storico per la Sicilia Orientale*, 1960, 34-52. For the impact of the new Italian state’s policy on the peasant masses in Sicily and its effect on the region’s governability, see L. Riall, *Sicily and the Unification of Italy. Liberal Policy and Local Power* (1859-1866), (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1998).

¹²⁶ ‘Letter to Count Cavour’, Palermo, 25 June 1860, *Epistolario*, vol. II, 339.

¹²⁷ ‘Letter to A. Franchi’, Turin, July 17, 1860, *ibid.*, 359.

¹²⁸ ‘Letter to Avv. Giuseppe Manfredi’, Turin, 14 July 1860, *ibid.*, 623: (‘bandito dalla Sicilia in mezz’ora per ordine del Generale Garibaldi. È il quarto mio esilio’).

¹²⁹ Ibid.: (‘un’orda di selvaggi ubriachi’).

¹³⁰ 701 Ibid.: (‘una persona così falsa’).

approval of the General: ‘You cannot imagine the change here of the public opinion about Garibaldi.’¹³¹

La Farina disapproved of the provisional government of Sicily, which lacked public order and rejected civil courts and parliamentary assemblies. He believed dishonest and cowardly Bourbon men occupied the government posts. Furthermore, he thought Garibaldi’s plan to drive the French troops out of Rome was an attempt to extend a ‘demagogic dictatorial government.’¹³²

After Sicily’s liberation from the Bourbons, Cavour appointed Agostino Depretis, a moderate left member, Pro-Dictator. Meanwhile, Garibaldi sailed up the peninsula to march towards Rome. However, his triumphant march was halted at Teano, where he handed over the southern kingdom to the Savoy King Vittorio Emanuele on 26 October. A few days before, the provinces of the former Bourbon kingdom had already been annexed by plebiscites to the Kingdom of Sardinia on 21 October, which was authorised by Garibaldi. The Savoy King Vittorio Emanuele II and Garibaldi entered Naples together on 7 November. Unexpectedly, two days later, Garibaldi, with his act of ‘abdication of power’¹³³ sailed back to his beloved island of Caprera, located near the northern coast of Sardinia

In December 1860, the historian from Messina returned to Sicily after being appointed as the State Councillor for Security and Internal Affairs of the Lieutenancy established on the island by King Vittorio Emanuele I. The Lieutenancy was headed by the Piedmontese Marquis of Montezemolo, a post of lieutenant that Garibaldi had requested for himself but was refused by the Savoy king.¹³⁴

Once again, he did not fail to register the moods and conditions of Sicily, highlighting what he called the absence of a ‘moral annexation.’ This was due to ignorance of Sicilian history, laws and politics. Even Lieutenant Mordini’s government (appointed in place of Montezemolo) appeared weak to La Farina as discord reigned among the councillors.

10.6 La Farina’s Last Years in Piedmont

Along with his friends M. Raeli and F. Cordova, the Sicilian historian was appointed to the Council of Lieutenancy. However, he resigned in January 1861 and entrusted the Marquis of

¹³¹ ‘Letter to Giuseppe Morelli’, Turin, 26 September 1860, *ibid.*, 423: (‘Non potete immaginarvi che cambiamento è [sic] qui seguito nella opinione pubblica sul conto di Garibaldi. L’Italia n’è stanca e stufa e vuol finirla’).

¹³² ‘Letter to Ausonio Franchi’, Turin, 17 July 1860, *ibid.*, 360: (‘un governo demagogico dittatoriale’).

¹³³ *Invention of a Hero*, 224.

¹³⁴ ‘Letter to V. Gallina’, Naples, 16 November 1860, *ibid.*, 440.

Torrearsa to create a new executive. La Farina's resignation was caused by the difficult conditions he faced, such as the lack of military personnel loyal to the king (two thousand Garibaldini were stationed in Palermo and were not yet dismissed), hostility from the Bourbons' supporters, Mazzinians, Crispiani, Mordinians, and autonomists. La Farina's decision to change governors and intendants in Palermo, Messina, and Catania also caused discontent and animosity towards him.

After his painful but necessary departure from Sicily, La Farina had no choice but to return to Piedmont, where he had spent many years. On 1 February 1861, he was in Turin and elected as a deputy to the National Parliament by presenting at the College of Messina. He also played an active role in reorganising the Società Nazionale and reviving the newspaper *Piccolo Corriere*. Yet, La Farina was appointed vice-president of the elective Chamber and supported several political battles as a parliamentarian. For instance, he intervened on the Roman question, helping the Cavourian principle of 'a free Church in a free State', as his article below shows:

We want a patriotic and liberal clergy, but in this sense, who watches over religious things, preaches the simple morality of the Gospel, obeys the laws, loves the country, and does not mix temporal things, neither for us nor against us. Politics is entirely secular: we want to go to Rome and accomplish the great work of Italian unity by national law, not canon law.¹³⁵

He also intervened to the debate regarding the administrative organization of the new state, opposing the model of regional organisation suggested by Marco Minghetti, representative of the Destra Storica (Historical Right), which was influenced by administrative decentralisation. In a speech to the Chamber of Deputies of Turin on 10 October 1860, he also addressed the events in Bronte in August 1860,¹³⁶ arguing that the civil war was not caused by abolishing feudal rights, as it was shared reading, since they had already been suppressed in Sicily in 1810. In his view, Bronte's massacre was provoked by a decree that allowed patriots to claim a portion of municipal property, and they called themselves 'fighters for the fatherland'.¹³⁷ This decree led to the reaction of the previous owners and instigated the start of a civil war. As is known,

¹³⁵ 'I teologi della politica', *Piccolo Corriere d'Italia*, a. IX, n. 35 (5 November 1861, in *Scritti politici e letterari di G. La Farina*, vol. II, 440-441: ('Vogliamo un clero patriottico e liberale, ma in questo senso, che vegli sulle cose religiose, predichi la semplice moralità del Vangelo, obbedisca alle leggi, ami la patria e non mescoli cose temporali, né per noi né contro di noi. La politica è del tutto laica: vogliamo andare a Roma e realizzare la grande opera dell'unità italiana attraverso il diritto nazionale, non attraverso il diritto canonico.').

¹³⁶ For a detailed account of the facts in Bronte, see L. Riall, *Under the Volcano. Revolution in a Sicilian Town* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013).

¹³⁷ 'Su l'annessione della Sicilia', in *Scritti politici e letterari di G. La Farina*, vol. II pp. 525-534 (526): ('combattenti per la patria').

the peasant revolt was quashed by Nino Bixio.¹³⁸

Later, La Farina also discussed the annexation of Sicily. He stated that the people of Sicily wanted a constitutional monarchy with King Vittorio Emanuele, saying, 'The idea of a republic in Sicily was ridiculous because in Sicily, believe me, there are not ten republicans.'¹³⁹

The Sicilian historian shared his views about the brigandage, which he believed had its roots in Rome and was fed by the money of the Church of Rome. La Farina suggested that 'the government, along with the nation's representatives, the press, and the inhabitants of the troubled provinces, could work together to eradicate this evil.'¹⁴⁰

Cavour's unexpected death came as a great shock to La Farina. He portrayed Cavour as follows: 'A Piedmontese statesman, known for his vast intelligence and the great heart he had [...] He was the one who gave the Royal House of Savoia the Crown of Italy and gave the Italians a free, independent, and almost unified homeland!'¹⁴¹

After Cavour's death, La Farina returned to Sicily to spend time with his mother and close friends. However, he left the island forever and went back to Turin. Unfortunately, he suffered a stroke of apoplexy on 5 September 1863, which proved to be fatal. He passed away at the age of forty-eight.

11. Gemelli's Third Exile: 1850-1851

After the end of the Sicilian Revolution Carlo Gemelli was forced to leave Tuscany for the third time and go into exile. After travelling to Germany, England, and Prussia, he reached Nice in 1849. Eventually, he spent two years in Flanders before moving on.

Little information is available about Gemelli's time in exile in Belgium, but during this period,

¹³⁸ Gerolamo Bixio, also known as Nino Bixio, was born in Genoa in 1821 and died in Sumatra in 1873. He began his career in the Sardinian Navy but left the royal service to travel to Sumatra with two friends. However, Bixio was captured by the commander and taken to New York. He later met Mazzini in Paris in 1847. He joined the Garibaldians, fought for the Roman Republic, and took part in the landing of the Mille, where he played an active role at the head of the steamship Lombardo. He was sent to Bronte to quell peasant revolts. Later, he moved to Calabria and gave a passionate speech at the place where the brothers Bandiera had fallen (Vallone del Rovito). Bixio was also involved in the battles of Volturno (1860) and Custoza (1866), where he fought alongside Garibaldi. After the unification, he was appointed senator. In 1870, he participated in the battle to capture Rome and entered the city victoriously with General Cadorna. Discharged from the army, he reached the island of Sumatra, where he passed away on 16 December 1873.

¹³⁹ Su l'annessione della Sicilia', 531: ('Il parlar poi di repubblica in Sicilia è cosa da far ridere; perché in Sicilia, credete a me, non vi sono dieci repubblicani').

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 460: ('quella dei rappresentanti della nazione, della stampa, e massime degli abitanti di quelle provincie, che più sono travagliate da quel male.').

¹⁴¹ 'Il Conte di Cavour', in *Piccolo Corriere d'Italia*, a. IX, n. 4 (6 giugno 1861), in *Scritti politici e letterari di G. La Farina*, 368-370 (369): ('Una vasta intelligenza si è spenta; un gran cuore ha cessato di battere: [...]. È morto colui che alla Real Casa di Savoia ha dato la Corona d'Italia, colui che agli Italiani ha dato una patria libera, indipendente e quasi unificata!').

he produced a work called *La Rivoluzione Belgica*. The book was published in Turin in 1858 by the Tipografia Letteraria and was dedicated to his wife, Virginia Viola, from Trieste, who married in 1849. Gemelli and Virginia had two daughters named Antonietta and Ioannina.

Gemelli's work was well received and was later translated into French and German. It was also adopted as a national history text in Belgian schools. In *La Rivoluzione Belgica*, Gemelli expressed his views on tyranny, liberty, fatherland, nation, democracy, and the positive effects of revolutions for oppressed peoples. He also discussed the potential benefits of revolution for Italy.

In the preface, the author expressed his love for freedom and the free life of hardworking, honest, frugal, and happy people. He was driven to study 'that adventurous revolution that gave rise to the noble autonomy of the Belgians in Europe'¹⁴² because he wanted to lighten somehow the burden of 'the sad and lonely days'¹⁴³ that every exile experiences.

Like many romantic writers, he indirectly referred to the history of Italy, which is like that of Belgium since both are 'histories of people oppressed by foreign rule.'¹⁴⁴ He appreciated the 'magnanimous courage, enduring virtues, and sacrifices made by these people to free themselves from underserved slavery and reclaim their freedom and independence.'¹⁴⁵

The historical reconstruction of Gemelli started with the Congress of Vienna, which 'aimed to prevent any future upheavals.'¹⁴⁶ The international assembly formed the Kingdom of the Netherlands, which united Belgium and Holland. This decision was 'an offence to the customs and beliefs of both peoples.'¹⁴⁷ The Kingdom was under the rule of King William VI of Orange-Nassau (1815-1840), also known as William I, who led the armed forces sent against Belgium. He later became the Grand Duke of Luxembourg. On 24 August 1815, King William granted the Statute to Holland. This latter was believed to be 'the miserable work of unwise policy, not following the interests of the two peoples [...] on which depend all the evils that have afflicted Belgium for three decades.'¹⁴⁸ In reality, the Statute would have led to the subjugation of the Flemish to the Dutch, resulting in the forced cohabitation of two peoples with different cultures and customs.

¹⁴² C. Gemelli, 'Prefazione': *Storia della rivoluzione belgica dell'anno 1830* (Torino, Tipografia letteraria, 1858), XI-XXXVII: ('quell'avventurosa rivoluzione che diede origine alla nobile autonomia dei Belgi in Europa').

¹⁴³ Ibid.: ('i giorni tristi e solitari')

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.: ('storie di popoli oppressi da un'egemonia straniera').

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.: ('magnanimo coraggio, sopportando le virtù e sacrifici fatti da queste persone per liberarsi dalla schiavitù immeritata e reclamare la loro libertà e indipendenza').

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 2: ('spegnere ogni seme dei futuri rivolgimenti').

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 3: ('consuetudini de' due popoli e le loro credenze').

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. 14: ('sciagurata opera d'imprudente politica [...] da cui dipesero tutti i mali che per lo spazio di tre lustri travagliarono il Belgio').

It is easy to see the parallelism with the situation of the Kingdom of Sicily, which was annexed to the Kingdom of Naples due to political decisions.

One of the primary reasons for discord between the Flemish and Dutch was religion, as the Protestants, including King William, opposed the Belgian Catholic side. However, the main disagreements arose because the King of the House of Orange aimed to rule ‘for the sake and interest of Holland.’¹⁴⁹ Several laws were enacted during the reign of King William II. Some of these laws led to the persecution of Catholics, including bishops, teachers, authors, journalists, and lawyers.

This, in turn, resulted in increased discontent among the Flemish people. The new laws also made Dutch the national language and banned the use of French and Flemish. The king was of German and Burgundian origin and wished to change the electoral laws. He also subjected Flemish schools and universities to the use of the Dutch government. Additionally, he passed a new and higher tax on milled flour and some repressive regulations on the press, which limited the powers of the States General. Despite the oppression, industry and trade grew, and the large cities in the country's south flourished.

The Belgian Revolution against the Netherlands was triggered by the French Revolution in 1830. The clergy, liberals, and people supported the revolution. King William tried to make some compromises, but it was too late, as the people had already decided to end the Nassau dynasty. France intervened in the conflict, and the Armée d’Orange had to withdraw. Belgium was later declared independent. Gemelli wrote that The Flemish people’s demand for independence and freedom showed that ‘the kings’ will, violent aggregations and disregard for nationalities’¹⁵⁰ could lead to the people’s awareness and the war for freedom and independence.

In 1853, after spending two years in Flanders and facing severe economic difficulties, Gemelli moved to Piedmont, a popular destination for many Sicilian patriots, including his friend La Farina, as we said.

11.1 Gemelli’s Return to Italy: his Last Works in Piedmont and Romagna

La Farina assisted Gemelli in obtaining a pension from the Subalpine Parliament. Nevertheless, it seems that this subsidy was not enough to provide Gemelli with a decent life. In 1853, the

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 16: (‘nel vantaggio ed interesse dell’Olanda’).

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 294: (‘le violente aggregazioni, il dispregio alle nazionalità, e il volere del re’).

Sicilian historian published his *Storia delle Relazioni Diplomatiche tra la Sicilia e la Toscana negli anni 1848-1849*. It contains the historical-diplomatic correspondence of the Sicilian revolution and does not recount the events. This is because, as G. De Pasquali noted in the foreword, Gemelli believed biases

and emotions can easily cloud authors' judgment and influence how they portray facts in reconstructing recent events.¹⁵¹

Gemelli resided in Piedmont for five years, precisely between 1853 and 1858. In those years, he was constantly struggling with poverty. As Guardione's biography shows, he had to sell his household items daily to meet ends. However, thanks to his friends, he landed a job as a history teacher at a boarding school in Ivrea.

After the Thousand's landing, Gemelli wished to return to Sicily. However, the anarchy on the island and La Farina's expulsion made him apprehensive. As a result, he decided to continue living in Piedmont. As discussed in previous chapters, he dedicated himself to writing his *La Sicilia e il suo futuro* (1860). In this essay, he also expressed his concerns for the future of his homeland, Sicily. In the author's opinion, Sicily had to accept the unitary solution of the House of Savoy, rejecting the separatist thesis that he (and La Farina, too) promoted initially

Gemelli worked as a teacher in Ivrea before becoming the superintendent of studies in Ancona. In 1866, he returned to Bologna and was appointed vice librarian and later the librarian of the city's university, a position he held until 1883. It was around that time he embraced socialist theories. In 1874, he delivered a speech to workers at the League for the Education of the People. A few years later, he gave three lectures on communism and ancient and modern socialism at the same venue. In these lectures, he underlined the difference between communism and socialism, comparing it 'to the distinction between imagination and reality, theory and practice.'¹⁵² The roots of communism were traced back to Plato's *Republic*, T. Moro's *Utopia*, T. Campanella's *Città del Sole*, and numerous modern preachers, such as Diderot, Rousseau, Elvezio, Necker, Babeuf, Morelly, Mably, Condorcet, and the Italian Filippo Buonarroti (although Marx and Engels are not mentioned!). While admiring communism's idealism, Gemelli does not share its abstractionism. As for socialism, Gemelli believes that its origins can be traced back to ancient Rome and the struggle between patricians and plebeians. In modern times, socialist theories were theorised by Owen, Saint-Simon, and Fourier. The patriot emphasises the progress made throughout Europe by humanitarian socialism, such as

¹⁵¹ C. Gemelli, *Storia delle Relazioni Diplomatiche tra la Sicilia e la Toscana negli anni 1848-49* (Torino, Società Editrice della Biblioteca, 1855), iv.

¹⁵² C. Gemelli, 'Lezione terza. Il comunismo moderno' (1876), in *Scritti letterari e politici*, 411-429 (413): ('alla distinzione tra immaginazione e realtà, teoria e pratica').

improving conditions for the proletarian classes, the education of the poorer classes, savings banks, and cooperative societies. The Sicilian patriot was a left-wing theorist but was simultaneously concerned about defending the family, property, and personal freedom, which he believed were in danger due to Plato's communism. However, he also believed that society needed to undergo a profound regeneration that would be inspired by social and cultural progress.

In 1883, Gemelli left the library in Bologna and moved to the Biblioteca Estense in Modena before eventually relocating to the Biblioteca Braidense in Milan.

He passed away on 1 April 1886.

12. Chindemi's Exile in Malta

Before reaching Malta in 1852, Salvatore Chindemi spent a few more years in his homeland, Syracuse. In the early days of January 1849, General Filangieri arrived in Syracuse on a ship from the port of Messina. Emmanuele De Benedictis wrote that despite this, 'the people of Syracuse did not lose heart and continued their life of warlike order with even greater enthusiasm. This was because several cannons and a good quantity of powder had been brought from Malta to aid their cause.'¹⁵³ Chindemi also continued tirelessly with his conspiratorial activities

12.1 The Patriotic Circle and the Fortezza Trial

For instance, he established a Patriotic Circle in Syracuse on 6 January 1849. It was headed by 'men renowned for virtue, honesty and charity of the country'¹⁵⁴ chaired by Emmanuele Daniele, the Marquis of Bagni. Vice-president was Lorenzo Spagna, a soldier who experienced the French Republican Army and the 1820 insurrection in Sicily. Emmanuele De Benedictis and Emmanuele Giaracà were among the other members.

The goals pursued were listed in Chindemi's opening speech, which Secretary E. De Benedictis reported in part in his essay:

¹⁵³ *Siracusa sotto la mala signoria degli ultimi Borboni* ((Torino, Stamperia dell'unione tipografico-editrice, 1861), 87: ('non ne fu sgomentata: continuò la sua vita di ordinamento guerresco con più alacrità, molto più che da Malta erano stati portati alquanti cannoni e buona quantità di polvere').

¹⁵⁴ Chindemi, *Siracusa dal 1820 al 1860*, 259: ('e furono messi a capo uomini reputati per virtù, onestà, carità di patria;').

We are Sicilians and cherish our liberty and independence, which are the fruits of our people's heroism. However, our freedom is threatened by the war waged by the brutish Lazzarone [Ferdinando II]. The Bourbon is planning to launch a brutal war against us using means of extermination, which is proof of his guilty conscience and desperate brutality. Our objectives are clear – we aim to achieve three things: a nation (as Italians), a state (as Sicilians), and a Municipio (as Syracusans) [...] We will deal with things rather than people, and we will discuss principles rather than passions. We intend to strive for principles, freedom, fraternity, public good, and legality.¹⁵⁵

On 12 January 1849, Syracuse celebrated the first anniversary of the Sicilian Revolution with great splendour. Renowned personalities such as magistrates, clergy members, officials, the National Guard, and the people assembled in Syracuse's cathedral to express their gratitude to the Almighty for the grace of liberation. The grand festivities were concluded with a splendid performance at the theatre, where 'luxurious ladies and militia pageantry'¹⁵⁶ added to the occasion's magnificence. Chindemi composed a hymn for the occasion, set to music by fellow citizen Maestro Vincenzo Moscuza (as recalled in Chapter Six) and sung enthusiastically. The crowd 'burst into applause, brandishing swords and expressing their unrestrained joy.'¹⁵⁷

Chindemi and his Circle were concerned about the municipal rivalries between Noto and Syracuse. These rivalries arose from the issue of capital, which threatened to break the unity between the liberal forces. On February 4th, 1849, Chindemi requested the Circle to vote for the brotherhood of the Syracusan people to that of Noto. Then, on 6 February, a delegation was sent to Noto with a flag bearing the motto: 'Syracuse to the brothers of Noto'.

The Patriotic Circle was involved in some philanthropic projects, such as establishing a religious institution for young orphans, supporting Syracuse women in their hospital efforts, and encouraging bishops to promote citizenship duties and the principles of political and religious freedom to local priests.

Chindemi's *Patriotic Circle* was accused of organising a counter-revolution plotted by a few compatriots who fled to Naples to convince the king to support their counter-revolution in Syracuse. Despite being only ten in number, disheartened and needy, – ¹⁵⁸ the Circle stood firm and prevented the conspiracy from succeeding. The conspirators reached out to other cities,

¹⁵⁵ *Siracusa sotto la mala signoria degli ultimi Borboni*, 89-90: ('Noi siamo Siciliani: abbiamo libertà e indipendenza, frutto dell'eroismo del popolo, ma minacciati dalla guerra del bestiale lazzarone [...] Il Borbone ci minaccia di una guerra brutale con mezzi di estermio, prova di sua rea coscienza, di sua disperata brutalità [...] Risulta dunque che i nostri scopi sono tre, di Nazione (come Italiani), di Stato (come Siciliani), di Municipio (come Siracusani). [...] Noi tratteremo di cose e non di persone: discuteremo principii, non passioni. Uno è l'intento, l'amore ai principii, libertà, fraternità, bene pubblico, e legalità.').

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 88: ('[...] gran pompa al teatro, e lusso di dame e sfarzo di milizie').

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*: ('La folla 'scoppiò in un applauso, brandendo spade ed esprimendo la sua gioia sfrenata.').

¹⁵⁸ *Siracusa dal 1820 al 1860*, 260: (tutti una diecina [sic], sfiduciati e senza mezzi').

such as Palermo and Augusta, to request large sums of money from the Neapolitan government to carry out their plan. One of the conspirators accused the Circle of being involved in the plan when speaking to the Marquis of Torreaarsa, the Sicilian Foreign Minister. When Diego Arangio, the commissioner of the Syracuse government, learned of this news, he was stunned. He contacted Chindemi for more information. Here is Chindemi's response:

I stated that the conspiracy formed in the Circle was impossible, as its members were well-known. However, I promised to investigate and find out more details. Later, I met one of the most active members of the Circle and confided in him, saying that everything was just slander. He replied that there was some truth to it, and he intended to denounce it as soon as he discovered the true secrets of the conspirators. While in Palermo, I came across Father X, who informed me about my assignment in Naples. I pretended to meet him in Syracuse and request companions, but upon arrival, I did nothing. I wrote to him claiming that I had important matters to handle, but I neither received any money nor heard from other conspirators. Additionally, there were two adherents, one in Syracuse and the other outside [...].¹⁵⁹

Chindemi met the priest Tommaso Fortezza, one of the most zealous members of his Circle, who had been accused of being part of a conspiracy. In the following days, Chindemi brought him to Palermo, where he was arrested along with Cav. Pericontale from Augusta and other citizens allegedly involved in the anti-revolutionary plan. The Council of State decided to hold a trial entrusted to the lawyer F. Crispi from Genoa. The trial documents and defendants' testimonies revealed that the conspirators intended to 'scrounge money [for the Bourbons] rather than to sow disorder.'¹⁶⁰

On 29 March 1849 the trial against Father Tommaso Fortezza, the main defendant, began. Forteza shared his version of events. He claimed that Mr Michele Cassola, who lived in Naples, had approached and informed him of a conspiracy. He admitted that he knew about the conspiracy but pretended to be interested in it to obtain more information. He also confessed to having contacts with Chindemi and Gioachino Majelli, an artillery officer from Syracuse. Majelli was the head of a secret sect in Syracuse called 'The Pia'.¹⁶¹ According to Chindemi, this sect had many young associates. Still, it was essentially 'an association of thinkers rather

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.: ('Io dissi impossibile congiura di questa fatta nel Circolo, abbastanza conosciuti i suoi componenti; pur promisi indagare e scovire. Dopo m'intoppai in uno de' più fervorosi del circolo, a cui apersi l'animo mio, dichiarando tutto calunnia; e quegli: Non tutto, c'è qualche cosa di vero e mio intento è stato di denunciarla non appena fossi penetrato negli arcani veri dei congiurati. Stando in Palermo m'incontrai con P. X. che mi manifestò l'incarico avuto in Napoli, io finsi d'aderire per Siracusa, e cercar compagni, ma venuto in Siracusa nulla feci, gli scriveva ch'avea in mano grandi cose, ma non vedea nè danari, nè notizie d'altri congiurali, e tutti gli aderenti furon due, uno in Siracusa, altro fuori [...]').

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 261: ('scroccar danaro [ai Borbone] piuttosto che a seminare il disordine').

¹⁶¹ 'Piazza di Palermo. Consiglio di Guerra. Processo Tommaso Fortezza e compagni', in G. La Masa, *Aggiunta ai documenti della rivoluzione siciliana del 1847-49, in rapporto all'Italia* (Torino, Tip. Ferrero, 1851), III-LXXII (III).

than doers, keeping up with the events unfolding [...] rather than subverting public order.’¹⁶² Many questions regarding the actual sequence of event remained unanswered during the trial, and the judges released most of the defendants. The most significant consequence, Chindemi claimed later, was the wrongful accusation of treason on the whole city. In reality, only a few Syracusan citizens were involved.

12.2 The Surrender of Syracuse

After Messina and Catania fell, Syracuse was left with a reduced population and a closed square unsuitable for resisting a siege.¹⁶³ Commander Buez and Sir Hey, at the helm of the French steamship Descartes and the Bulldog, respectively, arrived at Syracuse to represent foreign diplomacy. They announced the arrival of the Neapolitan fleet and asked the Civic Council, as the people’s representative, whether they wished to continue the war or begin peace negotiations. Although the Syracuse City Council was not unanimous in its decision, Senator Alagano proposed an honourable peace for the city, which was decided on 9 April 1849.

After the fall of Syracuse, a cannon shot from a French steamer announced the arrival of Neapolitan troops into the port. Among the Bourbon officers who disembarked was Armenio, Captain of General Filangieri. He ordered that everything be restored to how it was before 12 January 1848.

According to G. Mulè Bertolo’s account,¹⁶⁴ Chindemi was one of some Syracusan patriots who could not benefit from the general amnesty granted by the Bourbon government (which excluded forty-three proscribed patriots, such as G. La Farina, F. Cordova, P. Calvi, the brothers G. and A. Ondes and G. La Masa, among others). Syracuse parish priest Serafino Privitera (1822-1877) recalls this event from his contact with Chindemi’s nephew, Emanuele Giaracà: ‘There were several people who were exiled in Malta, including Ruggiero Settimo, Cav. Raffaele Lanza, Baron Pancali, and Prof. Salvatore Chindemi. This latter disguised himself as a peasant and sought refuge with a friendly family in Aidone. Unfortunately, someone denounced him, and ultimately he moved from Sicily to Malta.’¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² *Siracusa dal 1820 al 1860*, 264.: (‘una associazione di pensatori che d’operatori, che tenevan dietro agli avvenimenti che si maturavano [...] anziché di sovvertir l’ordine pubblico’).

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ G. Mulè Bertolo, *La rivoluzione del 1848 e la Provincia di Caltanissetta. Cronaca* (Caltanissetta, Tip. dell’Ospizio Prov. di Beneficenza, 1898), 236.

¹⁶⁵ *Storia di Siracusa antica e moderna del parroco Serafino Privitera* (Napoli, Pignatelli, 1878), vol. II, 423: (‘Fra il detto numero dei proscritti, a capo Ruggiero Settimo, eranvi tre Siracusani: il cav. Raffaele Lanza, che tra i primi esulò in Malta: il barone Pancali [...] e il prof. Salvatore Chindemi, che affidatosi alla tutela di famiglia amica ed ospitale nella remota Aidone, sotto la mentita veste di bifolco pareva la durasse sconosciuto e sicuro; ma

The Syracusan professor and the other two patriots mentioned escaping police persecution thanks to their comrades' protection. Chindemi recalls this in his letter to Filippo Ranfaldi, who had hidden him during his escape:

I have continuously repeated, and I repeat now, that the greatest and noblest comfort I have experienced in my exile is the enduring love I have received from these generous people and you, who have been among the first to show me kindness. I hope to relive soon, near and present, the sweet days of sorrow we spent together in this generous land.¹⁶⁶

After two years of wanderings, the Syracuse patriot embarked for Malta in February 1852. Unfortunately, no documents are available on this period of exile. However, we learn from Privitera's memories that Chindemi composed some plays, including *Il conte di Modica*, *Vespro Siciliano*, *Andrea Chenier*, and *Alaimo da Lentini*, while he was away from Sicily. These novels validate his adherence to romantic themes. He spent almost two years in Malta, and then Chindemi moved to Turin, where he composed some patriotic lyrics, including his *Italia, Italia*. In 1860, he returned to Sicily, and on 3 November of the same year, he was appointed professor of ancient and modern history at the University of Palermo. After retiring to study privately, suffering from paralysis, Chindemi passed away on 3 February 1874.

Conclusions

This chapter explored the methods of the Bourbon counter-revolution in Sicily, focusing on internal factors while considering the evolving geopolitical dynamics in the Euro-Mediterranean region. Additionally, it establishes a comparative framework between the Sicilian experience and the events in other European countries, as analyzed by Christopher Clark in his recent essay on the European revolutions of 1848. This comparison helps illuminate the intricate relationship between the populace, the monarchy, and the revolution. Clark posits that one significant factor in the decline of the 1848 revolution was the growing disconnect between the people and the Liberal leaders. While this perspective presents an interesting viewpoint, it stands in contrast to the memoirs of Francesco Crispi and Giuseppe La Farina and Salvatore Chindemi which offer different insights into this issue. Furthermore, as Clark has

denunziato, come si disse, da persona, a cui la denuncia o il sospetto costò la vita, avvertito, fuggì dalla Sicilia, e riparò anch'egli in Malta.').

¹⁶⁶ 'Letter to Filippo Ranfaldi', quoted in Mulè Bertolo, *La rivoluzione del 1848 e la Provincia di Caltanissetta*, 236: ('Lungi nel mio esilio ho sempre ripetuto e ripeto che il più grande, il più nobile de' conforti fu il lungo amore, onde mi beneficiò cotesto popolo magnanimo e voi che foste fra' primi... Spero fra breve, vicini e di presenza, potere riandare i giorni soavi nel dolore, che avemmo insieme in cotesta terra generosa').

indicated regarding other nations, the Sicilian counter-revolution also displayed numerous instances of supplications and appeals for forgiveness directed towards the king or Filangieri, reflecting a complex interplay of loyalty and dissent during this transformative period.

Another critical aspect is the role of the Catholic Church in shaping conservative reaction. La Farina and Gemelli compellingly argue that the Church's temporal authority was a significant barrier to achieving true national cohesion. La Farina poignantly recalled the confusion surrounding the Pope's actions during the Sicilian delegation meeting in Rome in April 1848, a moment ripe with potential for change. Moreover, a thorough examination of Lord Palmerston's parliamentary speeches, alongside correspondence from notable figures such as the Earl of Minto, Viscount Palmerston, Vice-Admiral Parker, Knight Temple, Filangieri (Prince of Satriano), and Gennaro Spinelli (Prince of Cariati), has deepened our understanding of the English government's stance on Sicilian issues. La Farina and Gemelli assert with conviction that both England and France ultimately turned their backs on the Sicilian cause, effectively abandoning a struggle for freedom and unity.

The theme of exile following the Sicilian revolution of 1848 reveals a powerful narrative that resonates across Europe. Among those forced to leave Sicily were notable figures such as La Farina, Gemelli, and Chindemi. Seeking refuge, Gemelli and Chindemi arrived in Malta, where La Farina's proactive *Democratic Committee* forged a robust network of connections among the existing exiles on the island.

Gemelli's memories reveal the harsh realities that Italian exiles faced. Living under the watchful eye of British authorities, they were perceived as potential disruptors, their very presence seen as a catalyst for the spread of nationalist sentiments that could jeopardize British control. Luigi Zuppetta, another Italian exile, echoed Gemelli's experiences, highlighting the profound challenges they encountered.

La Farina's journey led him to France—specifically Marseille, Paris, and Tours—where he remained for five challenging years. Through an analysis of his correspondence, we gain insight into the lessons learned during this tumultuous period. His exile became a critical moment of reflection, allowing him to confront the shortcomings of the 1848 revolution, including the missteps of Sicilian leaders and the stark imbalance in resources between the insurgents and the Neapolitan government. Moreover, La Farina's emotional struggles during his exile tell a compelling story of resilience. Faced with financial hardships, he contemplated new paths, considering ventures like selling Sicilian products or even opening a carpentry shop. His experiences were marked by feelings of abandonment, disillusionment at the betrayal of friends, and a profound isolation stemming from the secrecy that surrounded his plight.

CONCLUSIONS

This research aimed to investigate the Risorgimento in Sicily through the biographies of three Sicilian patriots: Giuseppe La Farina, Carlo Gemelli, and Salvatore Chindemi. They have previously not received adequate attention in historical studies, which have often marginalised their contributions to the nation-building process. This has led to a perception that the South of Italy played a secondary role, viewed as an appendix to the Italian nation and regarded as a source of anti-unification and reactionary forces.

The study employed an interdisciplinary approach, combining global microhistory methodology with the tools of cultural transnationalism and the history of emotions. Furthermore, Mediterranean studies provided an additional framework for investigation, enhancing our understanding of the geopolitical and cultural space by focusing on the interconnections within the Euro-Mediterranean region. Sicily, the insular part of the Bourbon kingdom of the Two Sicilies, reunited in 1816, holds social, economic, cultural, and political features that are unique yet not entirely exceptional compared to other pre-unitary states. Therefore, the primary aim of this research was to reconcile the island's uniqueness with a broader context that transcends methodological nationalism.

The global microhistory approach has enabled me to achieve the research goals set. By analysing the individual biographies of the three mentioned patriots, several global and transnational historical dynamics were explored. The following key themes emerged: 1. The 'island strategy' of the British Empire and the debates surrounding Mediterranean constitutionalism. 2. The efforts of urban classes in the first half of the nineteenth century to oppose absolute monarchies. 3. The impact of transnational cultural movements, such as Romanticism, on the formation of Sicilian patriots. 4. The cholera outbreak, which spread from Asia and North-Central Europe to Sicily in 1837, along with the social and economic tensions that led to cholera riots. 5. The conflicts between the major powers of France and England, whose diplomatic strategies significantly influenced the Sicilian revolution of 1848. 6. The patriotic rhetoric aimed at politically mobilising the masses in 1848, and the counter-revolution, which took on a more violent character in Sicily. 7. The theme of exile. These arguments provide a comprehensive understanding of the historical context surrounding the three patriots and their actions. In the early nineteenth century, while much of the Italian peninsula was under French control, Sicily was under British protection. This situation led to

considerable interference from the English Crown in Sicilian affairs.

Additionally, it influenced the constitutional debates occurring on the island.

Liberal ideas were embraced by Sicilian local elites who sought to oppose the centralising policies of the Bourbons of Naples, which were inherited from French dominance. It is important to note that the 'sovereignty crisis' (Isabella, 2023) occurred in the Mediterranean, along with the ongoing demand for administrative and political autonomy, which persisted in the Two Sicilies until the 1840s. The lengthy and heated debate among local elites focused on demands for freedoms and privileges reminiscent of earlier eras, such as the Norman period. La Farina and Gemelli's political writings share a common theme: emphasising the legislative work carried out by the Norman rulers, an idea that other Sicilian patriots, including Michele Amari, also championed.

Key figures in this debate included Abbot Paolo Balsamo, the Prince of Belmonte (Giuseppe Ventimiglia Cottone), the Prince of Castelnovo (Carlo Cottone), and Giovanni Aceto. The discussions centred around three constitutional models: English, French, and Spanish. The writings of La Farina helped clarify the divisions within the Sicilian constitutional party. Many nobles, including the Prince of Belmonte and the Prince of Cassaro, supported the English model, while the populace, represented by the Prince of Aci and the Prince of Pantelleria, favoured the Cádiz model. Ultimately, the Sicilian Constitution of 1812 was established through pressure from Lord Bentick on the Bourbon government in exile in Palermo. This constitution resulted from a compromise between traditional Sicilian laws and the English constitution, creating a hybrid model largely shaped by the contributions of Abbot Paolo Balsamo. According to historians Gemelli and La Farina, the decline of the constitutional movement in Sicily can be traced to a split within the constitutionalist party, particularly between two major leaders, the Prince of Belmonte and the Prince of Castelnovo, regarding the most democratic reforms needed in Sicily.

Municipalism played a vital role in shaping the choices of Sicilian patriots. However, the three main figures prioritised national unity over rivalries between cities. In contrast, the Bourbon monarchy sought to exploit these municipal divisions to create conflicts among liberal forces. This study adopts a cultural approach that emphasises the link between regionalism and religion, particularly evident in the revolutionary propaganda of 1820. During that period, the provisional government chose to utilise a sacred symbol: the patron saint of Palermo, Santa Rosalia. Her effigy was featured on a commemorative civic badge. This decision reflects the Sicilian patriots' desire to incorporate religious symbols into their rhetoric, aiming to broaden their support base. The methodological tools of transnationalism were employed to examine the cultural landscape

of the island during the 1830s and 1840s. Notably, the adherence to the Romantic movement—particularly in the case of La Farina, to Byronism—was highlighted, showcasing a connection to the national-patriotic discourse and the Risorgimento canon identified by Alberto M. Banti. The analysis of literary and political production reveals some differences compared to other pre-unification states, especially the presence of a dual political and cultural identity that is both Sicilian and national. This twofold identity has influenced the struggles of the Sicilian patriots. The hypothesis of ideological transnationalism has been supported by various factors, including the influence of European Masonic circles in Sicily, the presence of Carbonari sects, contact networks among exiles, clubs, and associations, as well as support for the Sicilian cause from abroad. This study argued that transnationalism can exist without the physical crossing of territorial borders, manifesting instead in the exchange of ideas, goals, projects, strategies, and participation in political debates. Furthermore, the press and correspondence facilitated long-distance dialogue and theoretical debates.

In the case of the three Sicilian patriots, ideological transnationalism arose from numerous networks of contacts across various regions, including North Africa (Lebanon, Algeria, and Egypt), Malta, Spain, Greece, the Ionian Islands (such as Corfu), France, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, and England. Furthermore, connections extended to the Middle East (Lebanon), the East (Constantinople), Russia, and the United States. An example is provided by La Farina's networks. It is known that although he intended to, the Sicilian historian never set foot on the island of Malta. However, he was often in contact with exiled patriots, including Matteo Raeli, Ruggero Settimo, and Giovanni Grano. He is believed to have always been aware of events in other European countries through a network of friends and acquaintances. Similarly, although he had never been to Germany, as the director of the newspaper *L'Alba*, published in Florence immediately after the grand ducal grant of press freedom, the Sicilian patriot came into contact with Karl Marx, who proposed collaboration with him. Communications with Giuseppe Mazzini also occurred exclusively via letter correspondence. This perspective departs from the stereotypical image of southern Italy as static and resistant to change. Instead, it reveals a more vibrant society shaped by social, cultural, and political shifts, which ultimately led to its annexation by the Kingdom of Savoy and the subsequent creation of the Kingdom of Italy, declared on 17 March 1861.

Another intersection between macrohistory and microhistory is the experience of the 1837 cholera epidemic and riots. The aim was to analyse how a global event may have influenced both individual and collective levels. For this section, an emotional approach was adopted,

mainly using ego-documents. The patriots' memories reveal their feelings of uncertainty and, as in the case of La Farina, who was in exile in Tuscany, concerns for the family he left behind in his homeland. Additionally, we can gain insight into their thoughts about the nature of the disease. According to La Farina, cholera had an epidemic nature, and his belief, likely formed during his stay in Florence, was accompanied by economic considerations. For example, sanitary cordons had heavily penalised trade and also affected supplies. Furthermore, La Farina's writings allow us to compare the measures taken in Tuscany with those of the Bourbon government. Ultimately, writings on cholera illustrated the interaction between cultural and political factors that led to cholera riots, mainly in Sicily, related to myths of poisoning. In particular, Chindemi's memories shed light on a very complex period in Sicily during the 1830s. At that time, the spread of cholera caused panic and false beliefs among the population. It was widely believed that the disease resulted from an attempt at poisoning by the Bourbons of Naples aimed at suppressing the liberal revolution. As Gemelli affirms, the lower classes supported this theory, but initially, it was also considered credible by Chindemi and other intellectuals. Some Sicilian cities, such as Syracuse, Chindemi's hometown, revolted against Naples, exasperated by misery and swayed by conspiracy theories. Gemelli also left his reflections on the period of Bourbon repression of popular revolts with the sending of his alter-ego Del Carretto.

The period between the 1830s and 1847 is understood as preparatory for the 1848 Sicilian revolution. Following the failure of the cholera riots that broke out in several Sicilian cities, such as Catania, Palermo, and Syracuse, the three patriots were forced into exile due to Bourbon's government brutal repression. La Farina fled to Tuscany, spending time in Florence from 1837 to 1838 and again from 1841 to 1847 before returning to Sicily for the 'glorious revolution.'

During his first year in exile, he had the opportunity to reflect on the administrative and political organization of the Grand Duchy governed by Leopold II, whom he greatly admired. This study focuses on the reinterpretation of the myth of Leopoldine reformism in the ideas of the historian from Messina, as well as his connections with the liberal circle founded by G.P. Viesseux.

After a brief return to Sicily, where La Farina attempted to recreate the libertarian and cultural atmosphere of the Viesseux Cabinet, the historian from Messina was compelled to return to Tuscany. His second period of exile in Florence lasted from 1841 to 1847 is documented by unpublished archival sources held in the National Archives of Florence. Police reports indicate that his movements and activities were closely monitored, as La Farina was known for his

reputation as an ‘ardent liberal.’ The analysis also included the Florentine exile of Gemelli, who joined his friend from Messina in 1837. Additionally, Gemelli was sent back to Tuscany in 1848 as a representative of the revolutionary government based in Palermo. Although there are no documents confirming personal meetings between the two patriots in the Tuscan capital, it is highly likely, especially since both historians became members of the Viesseux Cabinet.

La Farina’s second period of exile was marked by vigorous literary and journalistic activity. He held meetings with three Florentine publishers—Fabris, Bardi, and Fumagalli—which led to the creation of some of his most significant works. His friendship with the poet and playwright G.B. Niccolini inspired him to write two historical novels: *Matteo Palizzi* (1845), published by Fumagalli, and *L’Abbandono di un Popolo*, which was never published. Both novels contain elements of the national- patriotic discourse, including themes of honor, the sacred bond between the homeland and its citizens, and the myth of martyrdom. *Matteo Palizzi* was also successfully staged in two Tuscan theaters.

The granting of freedom of the press in the Grand Duchy allowed many exiles to engage in journalistic activities. On 14 June 1847, La Farina embarked on a new publishing venture with the launch of the Democratic-Republican-oriented newspaper, *L’Alba*. This newspaper played a significant role in promoting the propaganda of the Sicilian rebels.

The emphasis on political dissent falls again in the field of cultural history. Patriotic rhetoric has been analysed through various means, including the press, political satire, and the sounds of the revolution, such as hymns and war songs. The study has also explored the contributions of women to the Sicilian cause. Additionally, the investigation has focused on the use of legendary and heroic figures, like Timoleon, who are rooted in Ancient Greece, as well as the mythologization of the Norman era—an age that Sicilian patriots regarded as the origin of the ‘Sicilian nation.’ Furthermore, political protest has been examined through the writings of La Farina and Gemelli, which critique Bourbon misgovernment and continue to be a subject of active historiographical debate.

The 1848 Sicilian Revolution holds a central role in this research and is mainly examined through the accounts of three patriots. These narratives were of interest because all three were eyewitnesses and actively participated, acquiring prominent roles in the revolutionary governments. Two historical maps have been utilized to illustrate the key battles between the rebels and the royal forces: one detailing the battles in Palermo and the other showing the siege of royal troops in Messina. The main phases of the revolution are outlined as follows: the formation of a General Committee based in Palermo, which became the revolutionary provisional

government led by Ruggiero Settimo; the request for intervention by Lord Napier and Lord Minto; the reopening of the Sicilian Parliament on 25 March 1848; the declaration of the decline of the Bourbon dynasty on 13 April 1848, and the search for a new king for Sicily; a diplomatic mission led by La Farina, Gemelli, and Amari to the papal seat and the Tuscan government; the bombardment of Naples and the closure of Parliament; the Bourbon reaction and General Filangieri's expedition to Sicily, culminating in the siege of Messina; the bombardment of Messina on 7 September 1848; La Farina's call for desperate resistance; the revocation of Pracanica; and the involvement of two foreign generals, Mieroslawski and De Trobiand, entrusurrendered in April 1849, leading to the entry of royal troops into Palermo in May 1849, and subsequent mediation efforts by France and England with the Neapolitan government.

Before addressing these topics, the modalities of the Bourbon counter-revolution in Sicily were explored, analysing internal factors, also in the light of the new geopolitical equilibria in the Euro-Mediterranean area. This dissertation also proposed a comparison between the Sicilian case and events in other European countries examined by Christopher Clark in his recent essay on the 1848 European revolutions. This comparison revealed a controversial relationship among the people, the monarchy, and revolution. According to Clark, one factor that contributed to the end of the 1848 revolution was the gradual distancing of the people from the liberals. However, this thesis contradicts Francesco Crispi and Giuseppe La Farina's memoirs. Nonetheless, also in Sicily, as Clark noted for other countries, the counter-revolution was characterized by numerous instances of supplications and requests for forgiveness directed toward the king or Filangieri.

Another crucial factor examined was the Catholic Church's position regarding conservative reactions. La Farina and Gemelli argued that the Church's temporal power significantly impeded the process of national unity. La Farina emphasized the ambiguities in the Pope's actions, recounting the meeting of the Sicilian delegation, of which he was a member, in Rome in April 1848. Additionally, an analysis of the parliamentary speeches of Lord Palmerston, along with the correspondence of the Earl of Minto, Viscount Palmerston, Vice-Admiral Parker, Chevalier Temple, Filangieri (Prince of Satriano), and Gennaro Spinelli (Prince of Cariati), has enhanced our understanding of the English government's stance on Sicilian affairs. La Farina and Gemelli agree that England, along with France, ultimately betrayed the Sicilian cause.

The final topic concerns exile after the end of the 1848 Sicilian revolution, which was expected of all European states. La Farina, Gemelli, and Chindemi were compelled to leave Sicily. Gemelli and Chindemi chose Malta as their first destination, where the vigorous activity of the

Democratic Committee led by La Farina established a dense network of contacts among the exiles already on the island. From examining Gemelli's memories, the living conditions of the Italian exiles became clear. They were under the supervision of the English authorities, who were worried about their presence and regarded them as a disruptive element on the island, as it encouraged the spread of nationalist ideas that could threaten the British protectorate. Another Italian exile, Luigi Zuppetta, confirmed Gemelli's account.

La Farina reached France (Marseille, Paris, and Tours), where he remained for five years. Through the analysis of his correspondence, some elements emerged. For instance, the exile served as a lucid retrospective examination of the failure of the 1848 revolution, which did not exclude errors by the Sicilian leaders and a significant disparity in resources, including men and weapons, between the rebels and the Neapolitan government.

In addition, the study has also analysed the emotional aspects of La Farina's exile, his material difficulties, which led him to consider changing his profession, such as starting a business selling Sicilian products or even opening a carpentry shop. There are also feelings of abandonment, disappointment for the betrayal of some friends, and isolation due to secrecy.

Gemelli moved to Belgium. Something about his encounter with a foreign culture was evident in how the patriot viewed the Flemish people, whom he appreciated for their courage and virtues. Attention has been focused on the consequences of Gemelli's exile, specifically the writing of a work that presents numerous analogies between the history of the Belgian people's struggles for independence and that of the Sicilian people.

Salvatore Chindemi's name was included in the Bourbon list of 43 non-ministerialists. Before reaching Malta, Chindemi merged the *Patriotic Circle* in Syracuse with the intent of coordinating liberal forces in and out of Sicily. After 21 months in hiding in Aidone, he reached Malta on 13 February 1852 on an English ship. He remained there for about two years. His few memoirs refer to the presence in Malta of divisions and resentments among emigrants, most of whom were of republican faith.

In June 1853 Chindemi set sail from Malta for Genoa, where he found the same divisions between moderates and republicans that he had found in Malta. This stay was followed by a short one in Turin and a return to Sicily in 1860, where, in November of the same year, he obtained the professorship at the University of Palermo.

For Gemelli and La Farina, the exile in Piedmont proved crucial for their political conversion to the moderate solution. Both were convinced republicans, but after 1848, they had to put their ideals aside in light of the conditions in Sicily and other pre-unification states. Anyway, their conversion happened more out of resignation than conviction. It cannot be ruled out that La

Farina's friendship with the Piedmontese statesman Cavour was decisive in his adherence to the moderate liberal program.

It should be said that La Farina received numerous criticisms, particularly from democratic circles, which considered him uncomfortable due to his renunciation of the republican project. Despite this, he wrote newspaper articles, speeches, letters, and essays that aided in shaping Italian public opinion. He played a crucial role in the capillary organisation of Società Nazionale and helped collect funds and weapons. He acted as a mediator between Cavour and Garibaldi and drew up a plan for an expedition to Sicily, which was to be led by La Masa and Ribotti. That plan failed, but it was preparatory in planning the Expedition of the Thousand. La Farina's evaluation after the end of the Risorgimento process is significant, even though the annexation of Veneto and Rome was still pending. In a letter to his friend Pietro Sbarbaro in Turin in October 1860, the Sicilian historian confidently stated: 'Without us, the Expedition would not have been made'⁹ and circumstances enable us to think that reason was on his side.

To conclude, the findings of this study suggest should be reserved more significant attention to Sicily, as well as the South of Italy, recognising its contribute in the history of the Italian Risorgimento and viewed within a broader Euro-Mediterranean framework. Historiography has often overlooked Southern patriots, so further research is needed to study them. Future studies could also look into other dimensions, such as affective ones, for example, their memories, the relationships between communities in exile, their homelands, and host countries beyond the shared feelings of isolation, discomfort and alienation, which this study has only briefly touched upon. The Kingdom of the Two Sicilies still offers room for works adopting a cultural approach, potentially providing valuable insights into the Bourbon monarchy, the French Decade, anti-Borbonic rhetoric, epidemics, and political and literary production.

¹ 'Letter to Pietro Sbarbaro', Turin, October 1860, *Epistolario*, vol. 2, 432: ('senza di noi la spedizione non si sarebbe fatta').

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