

# The Kingdom of Italy: Unity or Disparity, 1860-1945

Part I: Unification

Fatta l'Italia,  
bisogna fare gli italiani.

Having made Italy,  
it is necessary to make  
Italians.



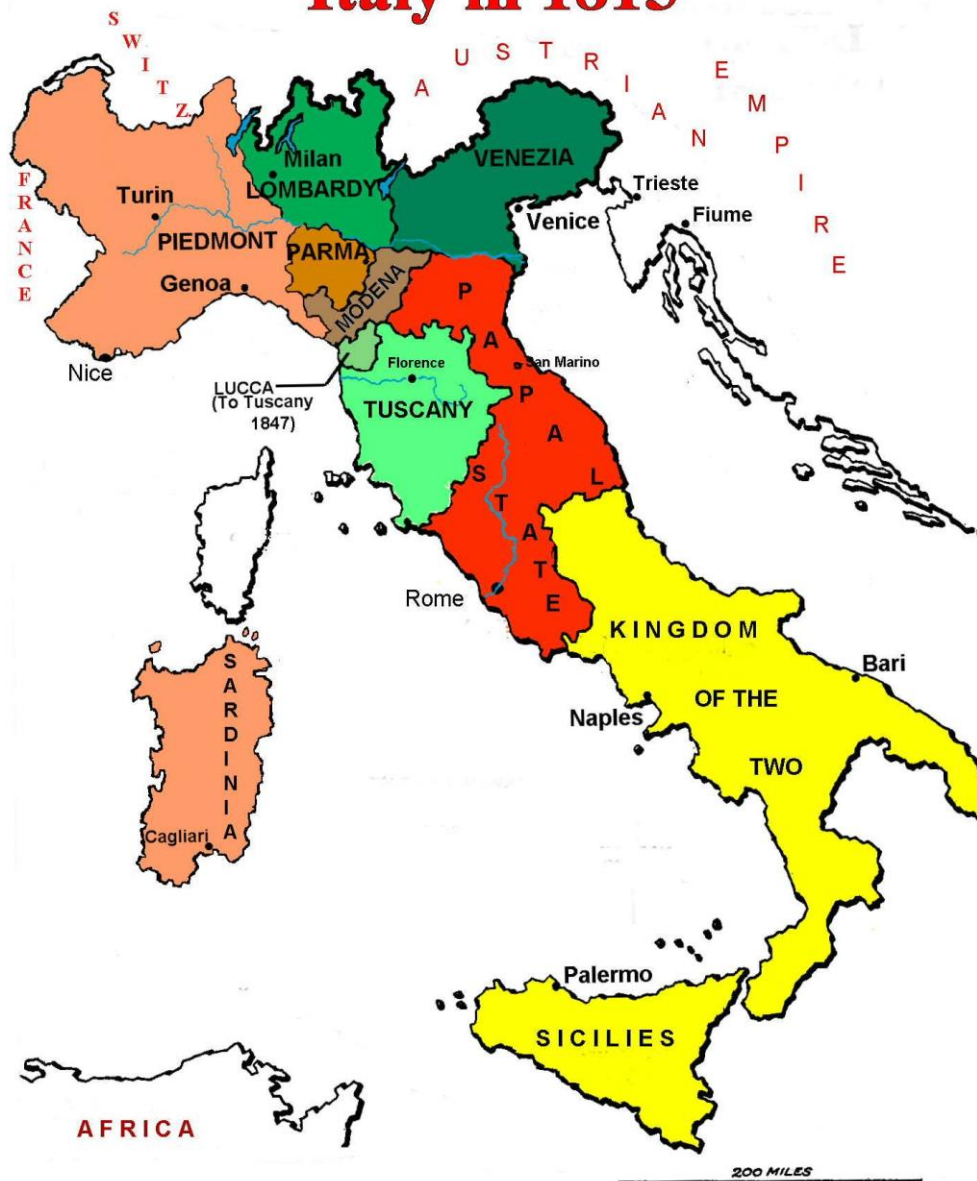
Massimo d'Azeglio  
writer, artist, prime minister  
of Sardinia-Piedmont

1861





# Italy in 1815







GIOVINE  
ITALIA











1861



# Risorgimento

- Meaning “resurgence” and implying that a formerly active entity, having fallen into decline, was again gaining strength and power
- Began with the idea of “nationalism” and of an “Italy,” ended with the declaration of the Kingdom of Italy

## Part II: The Sources of Disparity

# The Sources of Disparity

Geography

# Supporting unification

- Clearly defined natural boundaries separating “Italy” from the rest of Europe





# Hindering unification

- Some more loosely defined, more porous border areas



- The Apennines as an internal barrier



- Island territories with significant historic differences



- An incomplete territorial unification



- Topography and climate



# The Sources of Disparity

Religion

# Supporting unification

- The over 90% of “Italians” were Catholic





# Hindering unification

- A strong current of anti-clericalism, especially among those most desirous of unification



- Rome the Classical Capital or Rome the center of Catholicism



# The Sources of Disparity

Language

19<sup>th</sup> century nationalism—the ideology behind the drive for independence and unification

### Key elements

- People with a common history
- Who shared common aspirations for the future
- Who historically had inhabited a specific area
- And who spoke the same language



It is estimated by the distinguished linguist Tullio de Mauro that only about 2.5% of “Italians” spoke Italian in 1861.

About 630,000 of a population of 25,000,000, the bulk of them in Tuscany and Rome.



- At the time of the declaration of the Kingdom of Italy, nearly 80% of “Italians” were illiterate
- The illiteracy rate was notably higher in the South, especially among women of all classes.





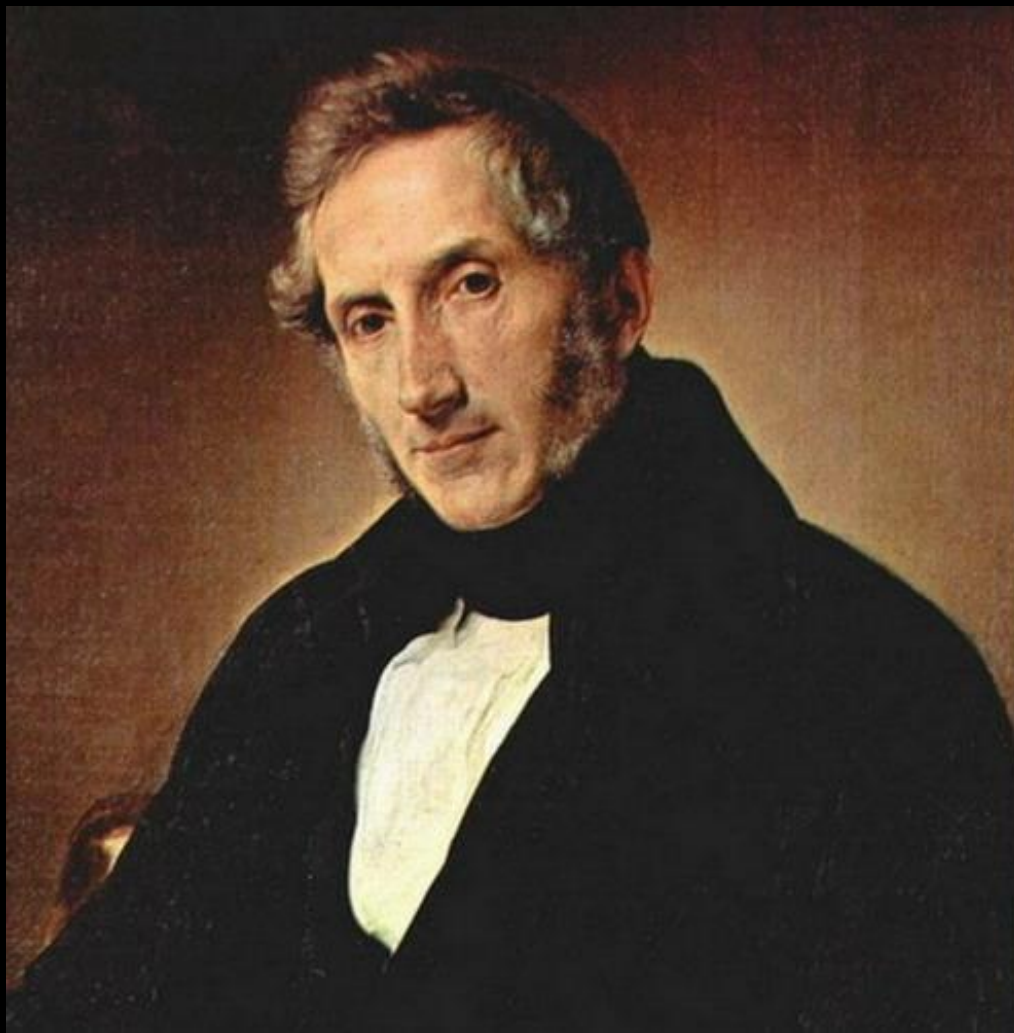
Dante Alighieri



Giovanni Boccaccio



Francesco Petrarca



# I PROMESSI SPOSI

STORIA MILANESE

DEL SECOLO XVII

SCOPERTA E RIFATTA

DA

ALESSANDRO MANZONI.

TOMO PRIMO.

MILANO

PRESSO VINCENZO FERRARIO



## A interesting and illustrative sidebar.....

- In 1951, fewer than 20% of Italians used Italian exclusively in their daily life, using dialect within the family, informal conversations with friends, neighbors, the butcher, and even in more formal business dealings with locals.
- In the same year about 13% spoke **only** dialect
- By 2012 53% of Italians were predominantly speaking Italian in the family home. Meaning that 40% and more still used dialect on a regular basis

• Source ISTAT

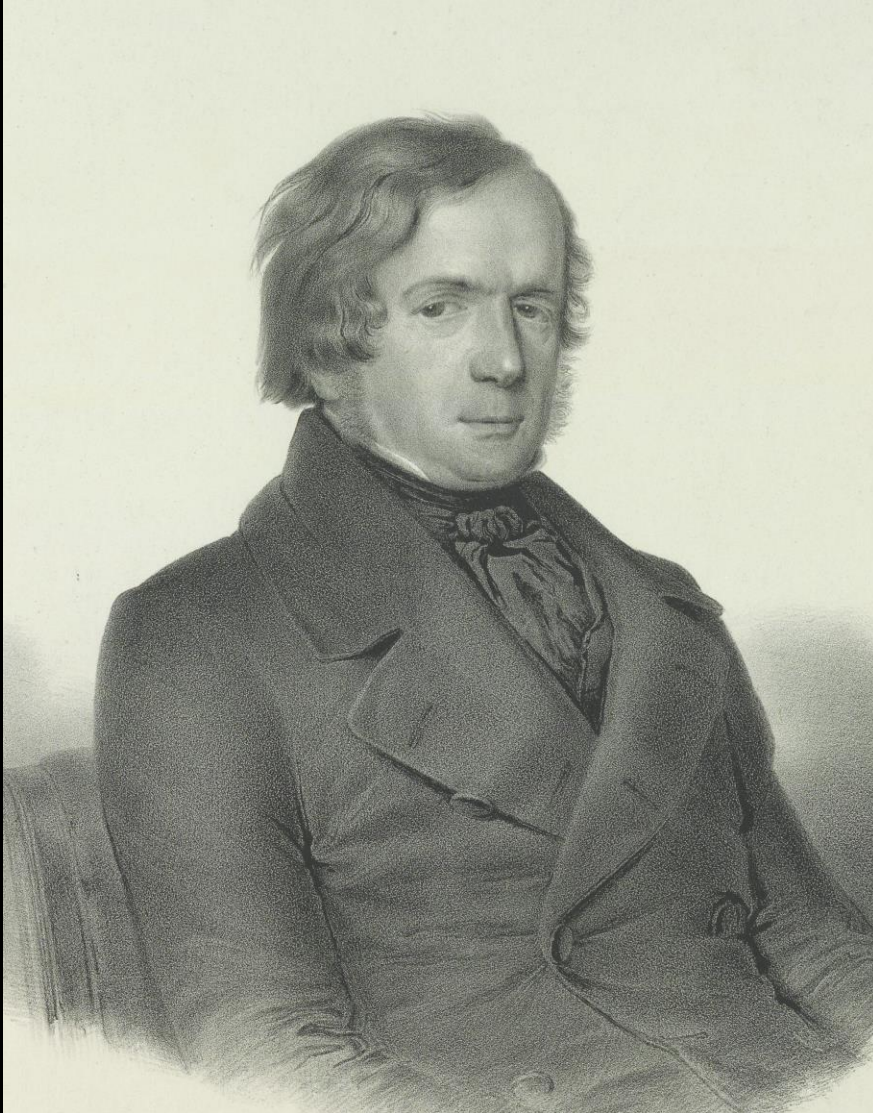
# The Sources of Disparity

Form of Government

# Three visions for a unified Italy

- Neo-guelfism
- Republicanism
- The “home-grown” king

# Neo-Guelfism



DEL PRIMATO  
**MORALE E CIVILE**

DEGLI ITALIANI

PER

**VINCENZO GIOBERTI.**

PRIMA EDIZIONE DI LOSANNA FATTA SULLA SECONDA BELGIA.

**TOMO PRIMO.**



LOSANNA  
S. BONAMICI E COMPAGNIA  
TIPOGRAFI EDITORI.

1845

# The “home-grown” king





# Republicanism—the radical solution



# The Sources of Disparity

## The North-South Split

# La questione meridionale



## Percent of households living below the poverty line in Italy in 2019 by Region

Sicily	24.3%
Calabria	23.4%
Puglia	22.0%
Campania	21.8%
Basilicata	15.8%
Molise	15.7%
Abruzzo	15.5%
Sardinia	12.8%
Veneto	10.3%
Marche	9.5%
Liguria	9.2%
Umbria	8.9%
Lazio	7.5%
Piemonte	7.5%
Lombardia	6.0%
Toscana	5.8%
Friuli-Venezia Giulia	5.3%
Alto Adige-Sud Tyrol	4.8%
Emilia-Romagna	4.2%
Val d'Aosta	4.2%

Those highlighted are all considered to be The South (frequently referred to as The South and Islands).

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/942570/incidence-rate-of-absolute-poverty-for-families-by-region-in-italy/>



## Km of rail lines in 1860

Piedmont	850 km
Lombardy-Venetia	522 km
Tuscany	257 km
Papal State	317 km (year 1870)
Kingdom of the Two Sicilies	128 km











# “Otherness”

- An attitude of superiority on the part of Northerners
- In part informed by the 19<sup>th</sup> century notions of racial stereotypes and the idea of the “fittest”
- Overt condescension and derision by some Northern leaders of the unification movement



- Fesso or Furbo

- Calabresi or Piemontesi

Piemontesizzazione

# Meridionalisti

- View unification as a colonial conquest of Southern Italy by Piedmont
- Perceive modern problems as having been created—not just exacerbated—by this process