Re-imagining Democracy in the Mediterranean, 1780–1860

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Preface and Acknowledgements

We began to build the network that made possible the writing of this book by drawing on contacts we had made while working on our previous book, *Re-imagining Democracy in the Age of Revolutions: America, France, Britain, and Ireland*. We are grateful to François Jarrige for introducing us to Gilles Pécout and Geneviève Verdo, and for their help in suggesting names to us and facilitating introductions. They pointed us to Fátima Sá in Lisbon and to Stéphane Michonneau in Madrid. John Elliot and Gabriel Paquette also made helpful suggestions. We were delighted to run into Javier Fernández-Sebastián when he was in Oxford for other reasons, and for the long, stimulating discussion we were able to have with him in the early stages of our project. Mauro Lenci in Pisa was already known to us and has been unfailingly helpful. Mark Mazower pointed us towards Paschalis Kitromilides in Athens. At a first meeting in Paris, Marc Aymes and Olivier Bouquet told us we really needed to think harder about whether and how the Ottoman world related to our story. James McDougall met us over lunch in the King's Arms, Oxford, and made initial reading suggestions.

The Oxford History Faculty helped us put together an application to the Leverhulme Trust for an International Network grant. John A. Davis and John Dunn kindly supported our application. The grant (IN-084) financed three years of meetings across southern Europe, also in Paris, New York, and Oxford. (We greatly regret that Leverhulme has decided to cease offering this kind of funding, without which we could not have undertaken this very rewarding project.) Joanna Innes was Principal Investigator on the project: Mark Philp and Maurizio Isabella served as 'advisers', though the term does not adequately convey their intellectual and practical contribution. Eduardo Posada served as network facilitator (and much more).

We are grateful to those who served as our official partners in the network: Fátima Sá in Lisbon, Stéphane Michonneau in Madrid, Pietro Finelli and Mauro Lenci in Pisa, Paschalis Kitromilides in Athens, Victoria de Grazia in New York, and Christophe Charle in Paris. We also received vital practical assistance from Eleni Calligas in Athens, from ISCTE in Lisbon, from Florencia Peyrou in Madrid, from Lily Glenn in New York, and from Gilles Pécout and Julien Vincent in Paris.

In order to build our knowledge and understanding of the Ottoman and Arab world, we organized for two years an 'Ottoman and Arab reading group' in Oxford, with some financial support from TORCH (the Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities) and from the Maison Française d'Oxford (for which thanks especially to Anne Simonin).

We had a wonderful time meeting dozens of people across all these venues, learning from them, and arguing with them. We learned a lot about different academic cultures and made many good friends. We are also extremely grateful to all those

who took part, for their generosity, critical engagement, and good company. At the end of the book, we provide a list of participants' names.

The book is in truth the work of many hands other than just those of its named authors.

Peter Hill—whom we encountered as a first-year doctoral student, giving a talk about the concept of 'civilization' in the literature of the Arab *Nahda* (literary revival), who went on to be a valued member of the reading group, and attender at some of our international meetings—has also helped with editorial work for the book. Thanks also to Kiran Mehta for her help with the index.

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1796–9	triennio: Bonaparte and successors as commander-in-chief of the Army of Italy redraw the political map. Constitutions of Cispadane, Cisalpine, Ligurian, and Roman Republics sanctioned by popular suffrage. Flight of King from Naples allows creation of Neapolitan Republic, soon overthrown by counter-revolutionary forces.
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1805, 1808	Napoleon crowned king of Italy in Milan; French reconquer south; Murat named King of Naples.
1814–15	Napoleonic Kingdom of Italy overturned by journée 20 April in Milan; Murat fails to keep his throne; Italian and allied forces overthrow Napoleonic regimes.
1820–1	Pepe and *carbonari* lead *pronunciamento* in Kingdom of the Two Sicilies; elections according to forms of Cadiz constitution; Austrians restore royal power; Turin rising repressed after abdication of king.
1831	Revolutions in Papal States (Romagna, Marches, and Umbria) and in Duchies of Parma and Modena establish short-lived Government of the United Provinces, which abolishes Pope's temporal power.
1848–9	First War of Independence against Austria; in Venice, Rome, and Florence, popular representative assemblies elected by manhood suffrage. Roman Republic, last bastion of revolution, overthrown by French troops. New Piedmont constitution survives revolution.
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1

Democracy in Italy
From Egalitarian Republicanism to Plebiscitarian Monarchy

Gian Luca Fruci

In the first half of the eighteenth century, the Italian peninsula was divided into eight larger states, and a scattering of small city republics, such as Genoa, Lucca, and San Marino. The north of the peninsula was under Austrian influence (and many rulers were scions of the Austrian Habsburg dynasty); the Kingdom of Naples to the south remained closely tied to Spain (drawing its rulers from the Spanish Bourbon dynasty). However, states in the peninsula had recently acquired more autonomy than they had enjoyed previously, and only Lombardy was ruled from elsewhere, as a province of the Habsburg monarchy. Italy retained a special place in the European imagination, and attracted many European travellers, Grand Tourists and others; this provided some context for intellectual exchange. This was the setting in which an 'Italian enlightenment' flourished, in interaction with broader European thinking, but also with its own peculiar character, concerns, and debates.

In this setting, interest in 'democracy' developed precociously. After the great enthusiasm shown in the late Italian enlightenment and its gazettes for the nascent American 'representative democracy', the appearance of French armies in the peninsula in the 1790s and geopolitical upheaval stimulated further (more or less voluntary) institutional experimentation. French ideas interacted with existing Italian ideas to produce a ferment of interest in democratization and its implications, perhaps to a greater extent than anywhere else in Europe, including France itself. But this ferment of thought and practical experimentation did not found a continuous tradition of thought and activity conceptualized in terms of 'democracy'. It was broken by the consolidation of the military republics promoted by Bonaparte during the so-called *triennio* (1796–9) and the subsequent formation of the Napoleonic empire with its Italian satellites. The restoration in 1815 of seven ancient states directly (as in the case of what was now Lombardy–Venetia) or indirectly

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under Austrian control also helped to ensure that there was marked discontinuity between patterns of thought and action in the 1790s and in the 1820s–1840s, when interest in democracy revived.

Italian experimentation with not only the language but also the practice of democracy was notable but took different forms at different times. In the republican *triennio*, and subsequently during the succession of revolutionary episodes that marked the peninsula in the course of the nineteenth century, the various Italian states provided a theatre for repeated experiments in popular participation that were among the most significant of their era, notably in 1820–1 and 1848–9, during which the word *democrazia* and its cognates acquired new relevance and meaning. Italy saw four major phases of political mobilization and electoral democratization: (1) in the context of the Bonapartist 'sister republics', when what was in question was a personal, military, and acclamatory form of democracy, ultimately imperial in character (1797–1805); (2) in the context of revolution in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies in the late summer of 1820, when what was in question was an indirect electoral form, involving successive choices of representatives at three different levels, according to the model of the 1812 constitution of Cadiz (this was also how the radicals of the 1830s imagined that an Italian republic would function); (3) in the context of the first European experiments with *direct* universal *male* suffrage, which occurred in Venice, in the former Papal States, and in Tuscany between June 1848 and August 1849, paralleling similar experiments in the French Second Republic and in the Swiss Confederation; (4) in the context of plebiscites over national unification, on the basis of universal male suffrage, but also with the informal participation of many women and minors (1860, 1866, 1870).

This chapter will first explore the emergence of the discursive constellation around *democrazia* in Italian political language, focusing on the extraordinary flourishing of democratic imaginaries during 1796–1802. It will then explore (with some continuing attention to language) the four major episodes just identified of experimentation with popular participation, in practice or purely at the level of imagination, with a view to establishing what were the basic characteristics of the Italian experience of constructing popular participatory space. Italian efforts were marked, on the one hand, by inclusive, participatory, and choral characteristics, and, on the other hand, by consensual, anti-pluralistic, and unanimist features, associated with strongly vertical and personalized forms of power. Personalization was a recurrent theme, linking otherwise diverse leader figures, military, royal, and civic: from the soldier–king Napoleon Bonaparte to the king–soldier Vittorio Emanuele II; from General Guglielmo Pepe, the international icon of the 1820 Neapolitan revolution, to his ideological heir Giuseppe Garibaldi, media star and political hero of Italian unification; from King Carlo Alberto, first constitutional king of the Kingdom of Sardinia, the 'sword of Italy', to Giuseppe Montanelli, a resurgent veteran of earlier struggles, who was the leading proponent of a national constituent assembly during the liberation wars of 1848–9.

THE SUCCESS OF THE WORD *DEMOCRAZIA* IN THE ERA OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

The word *democrazia* and its cognates (the noun and adjective *democratico* and the adverb *democraticamente*) functioned as keywords in the political vocabulary of republican patriots in Italy in the 1790s, and in revolutionary Italy (1796–1802). *Democrazia* was preferred to *repubblica* as a name for the political regimes founded or refounded on the basis of popular sovereignty by French military state-makers between 1796 and 1799 (following the model set by Napoleon Bonaparte): that is, by Louis-Alexandre Berthier in Rome, Guillaume-Marie-Anne Brune in Milan, Catherine-Barthélemy Joubert in Turin, Jean-Mathieu-Philibert Sérurier in Lucca, and Jean-Etienne Championnet in Naples. It must be stressed that this cluster of words was polysemic; even when they were used only to positive effect, they could carry a variety of meanings; they represented a range of political principles and ethical values associated with the drive to establish a government founded in some fashion on the people. They might denote the totality of democrats—that is to say, supporters of popular government or of the ideas that suggested the need for such a government—or they might denote associated modes of being, thinking, or understanding.[1] One often encounters the expression *repubblica democratica*, in which the adjective *democratico* was used to enrich the noun not just in terms of theory but also emotionally. *Repubblica* was an old and familiar term in Italian political language, which needed to be qualified by an adjective to weaken its association with the aristocratic republics of the Italian *ancien régime*, and to refit it for new political use. 'Democracy' also needed to be freed from historic associations. In revolutionary discourse, the ancients' 'pure', 'brutish', and 'absolute' democracy was commonly contrasted with the moderns' *democrazia rappresentata* or *rappresentativa* (represented or representative democracy), or, in an alternative formulation, *democrazia convenzionale* (established by convention, or agreement); these modern forms were conceptualized and exalted as the only true forms of democracy.[2] The interventions of a self-consciously Christian minority, who obsessively argued that the Christian religion was by nature not just supportive, but passionately supportive of democracy, were also prominent in public debate, helping to legitimize use of the democratic lexicon in Catholic circles that were open to revolutionary change, as well as more generally in popular usage.[3] The concept of democracy was equally important in the revolutionary and counter-revolutionary iconography of the period, when it was represented as a feminine allegorical figure. During the nineteenth century, that personification would disappear, being replaced by

[1] Erasmo Leso, *Lingua e rivoluzione: Ricerche sul vocabolario politico italiano del triennio rivoluzionario 1796–1799* (Venice, 1991), 43–55, and Andrea Dardi, *'La forza delle parole': In margine a un libro recente su lingua e rivoluzione* (Florence, 1995), 19–24.

[2] Luciano Guerci, *Istruire nelle verità repubblicane: La letteratura politica per il popolo nell'Italia in rivoluzione (1796–1799)* (Bologna, 1999), 177–222, 279–362.

[3] Vittorio Emanuele Giuntella, *La Religione amica della Democrazia: I cattolici democratici del Triennio rivoluzionario (1796–1799)* (Rome, 1990).

a different set of images related to the nation, the homeland, liberty, the republic, the constitution, and the constituent assembly.[4]

Italian political spokesmen were in the avant-garde of a wider European and American process of relegitimizing 'democracy' for positive use during the second half of the 1790s. Until this time, democracy, conceived along ancient lines as denoting unmediated self-government by the people, had primarily negative connotations, being equated with demagogy or anarchy. Italian repurposing of the term is comparable only with what happened in the United States in the era of 'democratic societies' and Jeffersonian 'democracy'; by contrast, French neo-Jacobins advocating 'representative democracy' in the same period seem to have been much more isolated and less able to find a public platform.[5]

The rapid propagation of democratic language in Italy represents a subject worthy of research in its own right. Here we can only make a start by noting that the ground was laid by the interest in popular constitutionalism and in a 'republicanism of the moderns', during the late Italian enlightenment; this intellectual nexus has only recently attracted the interest of Italian historians.[6] Transatlantic influence played a part: in these circles, there was much admiration for American colonial rebels, while keen attention was paid to the novel spectacle of constitutional debate and to the American experiment in institutionally fashioning republicanism to operate in a large territory. This interest was fed by a well-informed transatlantic press, by an outpouring of pamphlets (above all from France), and by politicized travel literature.[7]

THE AMERICAN IMPACT ON THE LATE ITALIAN ENLIGHTENMENT

The Neapolitan jurist and philosopher Gaetano Filangieri was a Freemason, and a correspondent of Benjamin Franklin—who in 1783 sent him an account of new American state constitutions (in French): *Constitutions des treizes États Unis de l'Amérique*. Filangieri was a passionate partisan of the Pennsylvania constitution of 1776, with its emphatic declaration of the people's rights, and attribution of extensive powers to a single elective chamber, chosen by a broad electorate. More generally, his constitutional imagination, which developed through the seven volumes of his monumental work, *La Scienza della legislazione* (1780–91), owed much to the rebellious Americans' critique of British despotism, their innovations in practices

[4] Christian-Marc Bosséno, Christophe Doyen, and Michel Vovelle (eds), *Immagini della libertà: L'Italia in rivoluzione 1789–1799* (Rome, 1988), 173, 190–1, 288–9, 292–5, 304–5.

[5] François Dupuis-Déri, *La Peur du peuple: Agoraphobie et agoraphilie politiques* (Montreal, 2016), 18–28, and *Démocratie: Histoire politique d'un mot aux États-Unis et en France* (Montreal, 2013), 195–303.

[6] Carlo Capra, 'Repubblicanesimo dei moderni e costituzionalismo illuministico: Riflessioni sull'uso di nuove categorie storiografiche', *Società e storia*, 100–1 (2003), 355–71; Vincenzo Ferrone, 'Risposta a Carlo Capra', *Società e storia*, 104 (2004), 400–7.

[7] Janet Polasky, *Revolutions without Borders: The Call to Liberty in the Atlantic World* (New Haven, 2015), 17–137.

of political participation, and their identification of 'representative government' as a viable modern analogue of flawed ancient democracy.[8] From as early as the 1770s, Filangieri showed enthusiasm for these American experiments in government.[9] The *Scienza della legislazione* was an immediate publishing success, becoming a veritable bestseller across Europe towards the end of the eighteenth century; its warm reception in radical circles (in England, its translator William Kendall used Filangieri's arguments to advance the cause of parliamentary reform) makes plausible the hypothesis that it played an important part in disseminating ideas about the rights of man and political equality characteristic of the late enlightenment and its revolutionary epigones across Europe and in South America.[10] Neapolitan patriots of the 1790s were particularly inclined to pantheonize their countryman Filangieri, seeing him as the herald of their political project and as the grandmaster of democratic constitutionalism. His close friend Mario Pagano claimed to have drawn upon his teaching when he was asked to draft a constitution for the Neapolitan Republic in 1799.[11] This constitution differed from the French Thermidorian constitution of 1795 in several respects, notably in adding two new elective institutions, a *Tribunale di Censura* (Censorial Tribunal) in each canton, and at the national level a *corpo degli Efori* (body of Ephors). The Tribunals, which were to be elected each year from among citizens aged more than 50 years, were charged with introducing a moral dimension into citizenship by assessing how far manners and morals (private as well as public) corresponded to what at the time was called 'spirito democratico';[12] as such, they supported a larger drive to supply civic and political education to the people. The body of Ephors was to be elected by departments and was to meet for no more than fifteen days a year; its role was above all to safeguard, though also to revise the constitution; it was charged with evaluating the constitutional legitimacy of laws adopted by the Legislature. It did not resemble the constitutional jury, which the Abbé Sieyès had proposed in the context of Thermidorian debates (1795), and was more probably inspired by the Pennsylvanian Council of Censors.[13]

In gazettes, pamphlets, and travel writings undertaken for the purpose of exploring the new American political world, we can find enthusiastic or critical testimony from such observers as the Milanese patrician Luigi Castiglioni, nephew of the philosopher and historian Pietro Verri, who, on his return from a kind of educational Grand Tour in the United States, published in 1790 in Milan a travel

[8] Vincenzo Ferrone, *The Politics of Enlightenment: Republicanism, Constitutionalism, and the Rights of Man in Gaetano Filangieri* (London, 2012), 13–27.

[9] Francesco Berti, '"Repubblica" e "democrazia" nella *Scienza della legislazione* di Gaetano Filangieri', in Antonio Trampus (ed.), *Il linguaggio del tardo Illuminismo: Politica, diritto e società civile* (Rome, 2011), 139–59.

[10] Antonio Trampus (ed.), *Diritti e costituzione: L'opera di Gaetano Filangieri e la sua fortuna europea* (Bologna, 2005), and Federica Morelli, 'Filangieri e l'"altra America": Storia di una ricezione', *Rivista storica italiana*, 119 (2007), 88–105.

[11] Antonio Trampus, *La Naissance du langage politique moderne: L'Héritage des lumières de Filangieri à Constant* (Paris, 2017), 96–106.

[12] Leso, *Lingua e rivoluzione*, 52, 838.

[13] Antonio Trampus, *Storia del costituzionalismo italiano nell'età dei Lumi* (Rome, 2009), 282–6.

account in two volumes that became a key reference tool for a generation of patriots (*Viaggio negli Stati Uniti dell'America settentrionale fatto negli anni 1785, 1786 e 1787*). Sometimes we hear in these pages the voices of emigrants, minor personages such as Carlo Bellini, professor of modern languages at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, or of more significant figures, like the Florentine merchant and patriot Fillippo Mazzei. Mazzei was naturalized as an American in Virginia, but returned to Europe in 1779; he was a great personal and political friend of Thomas Jefferson. Throughout his life, until his death in Pisa in 1816, he was an important intermediary between the political culture of America and, initially, the radical enlightenment, subsequently French revolutionary, Italian, and more generally European revolutionary imaginaries.[14]

During the 1780s, Mazzei moved in Parisian intellectual and political circles, where the American political experiment was regarded with admiration; members gravitated around Condorcet and Jefferson (who was US ambassador in France 1785–9). Mazzei's account of his historical and political research into the United States—*Recherches historiques et politiques sur les États-Unis de l'Amérique septentrionale où l'on traite des établissemens des treize colonies…par un citoyen de Virginie*, published in four volumes in Paris in 1788—not only sought to correct Raynal's and Mably's interpretations of the American revolution but also functioned as in effect a political manifesto in favour of representative government. Mazzei favoured a universal (masculine) electorate including what had previously been distinguished as active and passive citizens; annual elections, and the collective and constantly repeated exercise of the right of petition. He attached great importance to maintaining confidence and communication between electors and elected; to that end, deputies were to rotate frequently, while the right of petition was interpreted dynamically, as the basis for a form of surveillance, allowing citizens to approve or reject laws voted by elective assemblies.[15]

The syntagm *démocratie représentative*, not apparently in common use in America in this time, though once used in print by Hamilton in 1777 (and also by Mazzei in his militant writings of that decade, in a much more radical sense than Hamilton's) appeared—for one of the first times in Europe—in an appendix to book 1 of the *Recherches*, entitled *Quatre lettres d'un bourgeois de New-He[a]ven sur l'unité de la législation*. Though in this context their author was not identified, these *Quatres lettres* had been written by Condorcet in 1787; they took the form of a dialogue between himself and Mazzei (in his guise as *citoyen de Virginie*). The *Recherches* was not in truth a single-authored work, but rather a collective project, synthesizing debates among a group of Parisian politically engaged intellectuals, cosmopolitan and pro-American in orientation. Among their number, as well as Jefferson, Mazzei, and Condorcet, were figures such as Thomas Paine, Morellet, Dupont de Nemours, the Florentine abbé Scipione Piattoli, Cabanis, and finally Jean-Antoine Gauvin

[14] Franco Venturi, *Settecento riformatore* (5 vols; Turin, 1969–90), iv, pt I, 3–145, and Axel Körner, *America in Italy: The United States in the Political Thought and Imagination of the Risorgimento, 1763–1865* (Princeton, 2017), 81–5.

[15] David Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture: Printing, Petitions, and the Public Sphere in Early-Modern England* (Princeton, 2000), 217–64.

Gallois, the French translator of Filangieri and correspondent of the *Gazette de Leyde* (who had been appointed to that position by Mazzei's intervention).[16]

In the person of Gauvin Gallois we can discern not only intellectual and political but also personal links between Filangieri, who died very young, the year before the outbreak of the French revolution, and his great admirer Mazzei. It was not by chance that Mazzei, at the start of the nineteenth century, encouraged the publication in Livorno of one of the numerous editions of *La scienza della legislazione*, with a special dedication to Jefferson (1807); an earlier edition, appearing in 1799, had been dedicated to Washington. Several months after that earlier edition appeared, during the brief restoration of monarchical rule in the Italian peninsula, in the second half of 1799, Mazzei, then almost 70 years old, was hauled before the police magistrate in Pisa and accused of being 'too much a friend to democracy'. During his interrogation, this old friend of Jefferson referred to the preceding years 1796–9, the years of sister republics and revolutionary municipalities, as 'years of democracy'.[17] Subjected to legal proceedings in their turn, other political friends of Mazzei publicly refuted the charge of being *giacobini*, instead proudly claiming for themselves the name *democratici*.[18] This episode not only demonstrates continuing attachment to a positive understanding of democracy after the end of the *triennio*, but suggests the centrality of this democratic identity, in a period normally termed the republican or patriotic or revolutionary *triennio*, but that could perhaps equally justly be called the democratic *triennio*. The material presented here suggests that their self-perception had roots in their understanding of the United States, as well as of France. The American example served better than the French to legitimate the democracy of the moderns.

DEMOCRACY BETWEEN PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Frequent reference to democracy in defining new regimes and manners introduced into the peninsula by the 'happy revolution' brought by French armies can be explained in two further ways. The noun *repubblica* and adjective *repubblicano* evoked for Italians the aristocracies and patriciates that had long monopolized power in some Italian states and in almost all Italian cities. Adding the adjective 'democratic' distinguished the regenerated or new republics founded by Bonaparte and other generals. The story was not only about innovation: dominant narratives presented the democratization of Venice, Genoa, and Lucca, but also of smaller towns in Lombardy and Venetia, and in the kingdoms of Sardinia and of Naples, as constituting a happy return to the past, to a mythic past that had preceded the intensification of oligarchy (in 1297 in Venice, 1528 in Genoa, 1556 in Lucca), to

[16] Edoardo Tortarolo, *Illuminismo e rivoluzioni: Biografia politica di Filippo Mazzei* (Milan, 1986), 104–6.

[17] Mario Montorzi, 'I processi contro Filippo Mazzei e i liberali pisani del 1799', *Quaderni fiorentini per la storia del pensiero giuridico moderno*, 10 (1981), 71.

[18] Sara Tognetti Burigana, *Tra riformismo illuminato e dispotismo napoleonico: Esperienze del 'cittadino americano' Filippo Mazzei con appendice di documenti e testi* (Rome, 1965), 15.

a time that had been characterized by political equality and popular government.[19] A peaceful revolution—in this account—had restored a mythic past, reassuringly embodied in the name *democrazia*. Patriotic elites in the peninsula understood the term to connote above all the rejection of aristocracy. Between the spring of 1796 and the autumn of 1797, they emerged as the protagonists less of passive or imitative revolutions than of true municipal regenerations: thus in Alba, Reggio, Bologna, Bergamo, Brescia, Crema, Padua, Asti, and Ancona. In effect, these francophile elites set their sights on the future while keeping an eye on the past; they aspired as much to restore as to democratize ancient forms of local self-government, while directing their ire against the oligarchic or princely states that had subsumed them, often using democratic language and invoking the Italian nation. In this fashion, Italian patriots paid homage to the conquering and liberating *Grande Nation*, which they thanked for having given the peninsula regenerated political institutions without civil conflict. Paradoxically, they simultaneously saw in the other side of the Atlantic a foretaste of the future and invoked antique traditions of free government that were for the most part mythical and invented.

In this conceptual framework, which was generally anti-aristocratic, in ways that drew upon the political culture of the radical enlightenment, the idea of representative democracy had the potential to take root and spread.[20] Consider the case of Giuseppe Compagnoni, a former abbé, editor of the Venetian gazette *Notizie dal mondo*, enthusiast for the American revolution, whose history he wrote, and erstwhile member of the Cispadane Constituent Assembly, centred in Bologna.[21] The Directory of its successor, the enlarged Cisalpine Republic, appointed Compagnoni to a new chair of constitutional law, the first in Europe, at the University of Ferrara. In his 1797 treatise on democratic constitutional law, *Elementi di diritto costituzionale democratico ossia principj di giuspubblico universale*, Compagnoni praised the practice of establishing all political offices on the basis of election and re-election, and also, in the name of anti-oligarchic principles, two-level, indirect voting.[22] As in this instance, the political creativity characteristic especially of the early years of France's liberating conquest sometimes took the form of republican constitutionalism coloured by the imperative of political inclusion and enlargement of civic rights. In this vein contemporaries could also read or hear pleas for the political emancipation of women, whether from the pen of intellectuals such as Girolamo Bocalosi, Giovanni Fantoni, and Matteo Angelo Galdi, or from the patriotic women who enjoyed free access to the various 'constitutional circles' and 'societies of public instruction', such as the Milanese Giuseppa Porro or, above all, the Venetian Annetta Vadori, anonymous author, in 1797, of a

[19] Venturi, *Settecento riformatore*, v, pt 2, 449–61, and Giuseppe Recuperati (ed.), *Quando San Secondo diventò giacobino: Asti e la repubblica del luglio 1797* (Alessandria, 1999), and Giorgio Tori (ed.), *Lucca giacobina: Primo governo democratico della Repubblica lucchese (1799)* (2 vols; Rome, 2000), and Angelantonio Spagnoletti, *Uomini e luoghi del 1799 in Terra di Bari* (Bari, 2000).

[20] Jonathan I. Israel, *Democratic Enlightenment: Philosophy, Revolution, and Human Rights 1750–1790* (Oxford, 2012), 815.

[21] Körner, *America in Italy*, 66–73.

[22] Giuseppe Compagnoni, *Elementi di diritto costituzionale democratico ossia principj di giuspubblico universale* (Venice, 1797), 246.

thundering emancipationist text *La causa delle donna*;[23] she was married to the ultra-democratic patriot Giovanni Rasori, Italian translator of Thomas Paine's *The Decline and Fall of the English System of Finance* (1796).[24]

In reading though the hundreds of pamphlets published above all during the *triennio* 1796–9, one comes to realize that sometimes for Italian patriots *democrazia rappresentativa* meant more than elective aristocracy or representative republic—its meaning for most Thermidorians. Instead it was complex, open, dynamic, and relational, as in Mazzei's conception, or as elaborated in Condorcet's constitutional plan of February 1793—that is to say, it was a political form in which representation was not 'an expedient or second best', but instead 'primed to expand democratic participation and in fact... essential to democracy'.[25] In brief, it was conceived as a political process, which produced, and rested upon, a continual flow of influence, control, and communication between citizens and representatives. And, in contrast to the monistic way in which revolutionaries usually imagined sovereignty, it was considered as itself complex and as operating over several temporalities: Condorcet contemplated establishing within the constitution legal means for citizens to intervene in the legislative process to criticize the texts of laws.[26]

French constitutional debate probably helped to fuel Italian experimentation. In early 1793, *démocratie représentative* had played a central part in that debate but fell from use with the Jacobins' seizure of power, regaining some vogue only after Thermidor. Revolutionary Italy appeared to offer an ideal space in which to resume exploration of its wider possibilities. Between 1796 and 1802, Italian patriots' political inventiveness was directed towards envisaging mechanisms that, within the constitutional framework of the sister republics, modelled after the fundamental Thermidorian law of the year III, might make it possible to establish continual interaction between the people and its representatives.

Compagnoni most effectively synthesized this participatory version of *democrazia rappresentativa* in his *Elementi*, devoting an entire chapter to it. The two channels of communication between electors and elected that he especially emphasized were annual election, to secure the continuous renovation of representative bodies, and the right of petition. Compagnoni proposed a collective rather than individual version of the right to petition; furthermore, he conceived of it not solely as a means of appeal to representatives, but rather as a form of sanction that might mandate the rejection of legislation that had been approved by the deputies. Significantly, he cited as an effective model for this juridical mechanism the collection of signatures, in which he had taken part in Ferrara, to demand the union of the Cispadane with the new Cisalpine Republic.[27] Similarly, in his pamphlet

[23] Elisa Strumia, *Rivoluzionare il bel sesso: Donne e politica nel Triennio repubblicano* (Naples, 2011), 83–145.

[24] Liana Elda Funaro, '"Un governo avaro e mercantile": Tre edizioni italiane di un'opera di Tom Paine', *Studi storici*, 31 (1990), 481–510.

[25] Nadia Urbinati, *Representative Democracy: Principles and Genealogy* (Chicago, 2006), 4.

[26] Pierre Rosanvallon, *La Légitimité démocratique: Impartialité, réflexivité, proximité* (Paris, 2008), 203–5.

[27] Compagnoni, *Elementi di diritto costituzionale democratico*, 240.

Arte del popolo, which appeared in Modena in 1798, Ferdinando Gabardi proposed to the Cisalpine legislative body the adoption of an elaborate normative mechanism to secure and extend the right to petition in practice, as envisaged by article 365 of its July 1797 constitution, in recognition of the virtuous complementarity between representative democracy and expressions of the popular will in relation to the acts of freely elected assemblies.[28] Yet another positive valuation of the right to petition 'as a means to annul a law pernicious to the republic or not completely satisfying to the people'[29] can be found in Angelo Gazzetti's text instructing youth in the principles of representative democracy, *Il giovane istruito ne' principj della democrazia rappresentativa e ne' doveri di cittadino*, published at Iesi in 1799, under the Roman Republic. A similar insistence on the continuous connection between represented and representatives can be found in the writings of Vincenzo Cuoco, composed when he had fled from counter-revolutionary Naples, though admittedly in the context of a highly critical evaluation of revolutionary constitutionalism, and therefore standing in a very different relationship to the Condorcetian moment. In the first edition of his account of the revolution, *Saggio storico sulla rivoluzione di Napoli* (Milan, 1801), Cuoco, in the name of the historical specificities of this nation, imagined 'combining the direct democracy of the municipalities with a national system of representation, nonetheless appropriately controlled by the electors'.[30]

Yet, for all the political inventiveness displayed in the course of the democratic *triennio*, there remained a notable gap between discourses and practices. Practice was dominated by anti-pluralistic constitutional referenda, taking the form of military–democratic acclamation, associated with the personalistic mode by which the revolutionary political order had been introduced into the peninsula, in which French generals, and notably Napoleon Bonaparte, played an essential role.

MILITARY AND PERSONALISTIC DEMOCRACY BY ACCLAMATION

Bonaparte was the charismatic, constitutive demiurge, towards whom the generality of patriotic and republican Italians always looked with confidence, from the right as much as from the left, moderates as much as radicals—as can be seen from what was in effect a whole literary genre taking the form of public letters in the form of verse or prose addressed to Bonaparte as general in chief, first consul, king, or emperor,

[28] Vittorio Criscuolo, 'L' "Arte del popolo" di Ferdinando Gabardi', in *Dall'origine dei Lumi alla Rivoluzione*, in Donatella Balani, Dino Carpanetto, and Marina Roggero (eds), *Scritti in onore di Luciano Guerci e Giuseppe Ricuperati* (Rome, 2008), 165–86.

[29] Quoted by Luciano Guerci, *'Mente, cuore, coraggio, virtù repubblicane': Educare il popolo nell'Italia in rivoluzione (1796–1799)* (Turin, 1992), 423.

[30] Antonino De Francesco, 'Una difficile modernità italiana: Immagini e significati del "Saggio storico" di Vincenzo Cuoco nella cultura politica nazionale', in Vincenzo Cuoco, *Saggio storico sulla rivoluzione di Napoli*, ed. Antonino De Francesco (Rome and Bari, 2014), p. lii.

by the most eminent Italian democrats, including the most advanced. Among those advanced democrats, the best known are two poets; the Ionian-island-born Venetian Ugo Foscolo, who had joined those challenging the restored oligarchy after the fall of the Venetian Republic, and Giovanni Fantoni, whose career had taken him through several Italian states, who had been touched by enlightenment currents in Naples, and later participated in the political life of several of the revolutionary republics, joining in the defence of Genoa against Austrian and British forces.[31] These letters were seen by their authors as attempts to promote what was in the language of the time called *democratica rigenerazione*;[32] they constantly called for Bonaparte's intervention in Italian political processes, while exalting the role he and his generals had played in founding the Italian sister republics, whose foundation had been ritually associated with large public gatherings acclaiming sister constitutions.

The practice of giving approval, yea or nay, on the basis of universal male suffrage initiated by Bonaparte, through what we in retrospect term plebiscites, inaugurated a long tradition in the Italian peninsula; these experiences socialized Italians into certain conceptions of what a democratic electoral process might consist in at the very dawn of the *Risorgimento*. Between the spring of 1797 and the autumn of 1798, in the Italian republics instituted or revived by the French army, hundreds of thousands of citizens—sometimes including a small number of women and minors—participated in primary assemblies (the first level of the electoral process), or in Festivals of Federation, which sometimes replaced these, in order to ratify the sister constitutions more or less closely following the Thermidorian model of the year III. These procedures—which followed the French example of popular consultation on the constitutions of 1793 and 1795, and like them were termed 'free votes of acceptance or ratification'—operated to three different effects. In the Cispadane, Ligurian, Cisalpine, and Roman republics, they legitimized at one and the same time the existence of a particular territorial state, its constitution, and the vesting of power in certain people: in effect, they engaged both public and international law. They were understood, on the one hand, as solemnly instituting 'military republics'; on the other hand, as vehicles for the bestowal of democratic approval on the persons and actions of the French founding generals, who were recognized as the true fathers of these new political entities. Furthermore, they approved the nomination by these same generals of certain Italian patriots to hold executive office. In fact, Bonaparte overshadowed the electoral space, playing a pivotal role in political discussion accompanying these exercises in 1797, before he had come to occupy the same position in France; in 1798, his general Brune, his faithful imitator, and a future marshal of the empire, played a similar role. Bonaparte was explicitly the central figure in the Cisalpine ceremony of federation on 9 July 1797, and, though *in absentia*, with General Berthier he challenged the

[31] Umberto Carpi, *Patrioti e napoleonici: Alle origini dell'identità nazionale* (Pisa, 2013), 271–321, and Lauro Rossi, *Ideale nazionale e democrazia in Italia: Da Foscolo a Garibaldi* (Rome, 2013), 93–105.

[32] Leso, *Lingua e rivoluzione*, 52, 153, 435.

commander of the French army in Rome, Claude Dallemagne, for the leading role on the occasion of the Roman Festival of Federation, on 20 March 1798.[33]

The military character of the sister republics of the *triennio* is underlined by certain parts of their constitutions, which departed from the Thermidorian model of the year III. Article 18 of the constitution of the Cisalpine Republic envisaged that three years after coming into effect 'young men would not be allowed to be added to the civic register... if they have not learned how to take part in military exercises, and do not possess an appropriate gun and cartridge pouch'.[34] In the *Rapporto del comitato di legislazione al governo provvisorio*, the committee report that accompanied the draft constitution for the Neapolitan republic drawn up by the jurist (and former student of Filangieri) Mario Pagano, one reads that 'liberty can be conquered only by arms, and can be maintained only by courage'. Accordingly, article 23 or *Dichiarazione dei diritti e doveri dell'uomo, del popolo e de' suoi rappresentanti* declared solemnly that 'every citizen must be soldierly'; article 295 of Title X (*Della istruzione ed educazione pubblica*) similarly directed that 'in every commune, there will be public places, gymnasia and exercise grounds, dedicated to gymnastic and military exercises'.[35]

The 'free votes' of 1797–8 had certain features that became standard elements of plebiscites. They were acts of retrospective ratification; were non-deliberative; 'monosyllabic' (yea or nay), and, in fact, offered no scope for choice. Their success was measured not by their outcomes, which were predetermined, but according to the scale of mobilization, in turn dependent partly on the scale of publicity given to modes of accessing ballot boxes or subscription registers. They were above all anti-pluralistic and manipulative, having as their primary aim giving effect to aspirations for unanimity that were a common feature of the political imaginary of the era, and indeed of much of the long history of modern voting practice.[36] These were opaque participatory practices, characterized by unending oscillation between efforts to acculturate the people to holistic forms of democracy, and experimentation with the control of voting, or indeed retrospective correction of results, when the wishes of republican authorities proved not to coincide with the expressed will of citizens. These plebiscitary practices accordingly were situated not just chronologically but also genealogically between the much freer votes allowed under the Jacobin and Thermidorian constitutions and the disciplining of popular suffrage under the Consular constitution of the year VIII. They drew inspiration from practice in 1793 and 1795, but prefigured that of 1799, preparing the way for Napoleonic forms of appeal to the people that, during the summer of 1804, were extended to the island of Elba and to the Piedmontese departments annexed to

[33] Gian Luca Fruci, 'Un laboratoire pour les pratiques plébiscitaires contemporaines: Les Libres votes constitutionnels et les «appels au silence» dans l'Italie révolutionnaire et napoléonienne (1797–1805)', in Marc Ortolani and Bruno Berthier (eds), *Consentement des populations, plébiscites et changements de souveraineté* (Nice, 2013), 65–78.

[34] Enzo Fimiani and Massimo Togna (eds), *Le costituzioni italiane 1796–1948* (L'Aquila, 2015), 295–6.

[35] Federica Morelli and Antonio Trampus (eds), *Progetto di costituzione della Repubblica napoletana presentato al governo provvisorio dal comitato di legislazione* (Venice, 2008), 128, 165.

[36] Olivier Christin, *Vox populi: Une histoire du vote avant le suffrage universel* (Paris, 2014).

France, in the context of the vote on the inheritability of the imperial dignity within the Bonaparte family. Thereafter, appeals to the people became less common in Italy, though it was in this period that the ancient word *plebiscito* came into use to denote the text of the proposal presented for popular endorsement. Further instances took place between May and June 1805, when citizens of the former republics of Genoa and Lucca—which had undergone regeneration and then *brumairisation*—were called upon to give their approval, by public subscription, individual or collective, or via 'silent assent', to the union of the first to the French empire, and the transformation of the second into a princely vassal state under Napoleon's sister Elise and her husband Felice Baciocchi. These subscriptions were presented as acts of devotion to the person of Napoleon I, ritual enactments of gratitude to the king–emperor.[37]

These 'free votes' and appeals to the people invoked popular sovereignty, which they represented as the sole source of political legitimacy, even while reifying it. The ideal, moreover, was to extend the limits of the sovereign populace as far as possible, even sometimes to the extent of including—if exceptionally or extra-juridically and unofficially—subjects who did not legally possess the right to vote, such as servants, minors, and women. This aspiration was captured in phrases that caught on in Italy as in France at this time: the expressions *votazione universale*/*votation universelle, voto universale*/*vote universel, suffragio universale*/*suffrage universel* entered into the political lexicon in the last years of the eighteenth and first years of the nineteenth centuries alongside and with reference to these procedural experiments. From its earliest days, the French and Italian history of democratized voting was thus tightly linked to plebiscitary practices, even before these practices acquired the name of 'plebiscite'.[38]

DEMOCRACY IN ECLIPSE

The extraordinary efflorescence of the semantic constellation around democracy in the 1790s was followed by its rapid eclipse, even from the start of the nineteenth century: soon it was only the counter-revolutionaries and the Bonapartists who talked—negatively—about democracy. The first condemned it without chance of appeal: the paradigmatic text is the 'philosophical democratic' wordlist, *Nuovo vocabolario filosofico-democratico indispensabile per chiunque brama intendere la nuova lingua rivoluzionaria*, published by the Swedish Jesuit Lorenzo Ignazio Thjulen in Venice in 1799, then republished in almost identical form between 1849 and 1850, but there were numerous other anonymous works in the same vein with very aggressive titles (*La democrazia combattuta coll'esperienza di tutti i secoli*

[37] G. L. Fruci, 'Alle origini del momento plebiscitario risorgimentale: I liberi voti di ratifica costituzionale e gli appelli al popolo nell'Italia rivoluzionaria e napoleonica (1797–1805)', in Enzo Fimiani (ed.), *Vox populi? Pratiche plebiscitarie in Francia, Italia e Germania (XVIII–XX secolo)* (Bologna, 2010), 87–143.

[38] Enzo Fimiani, *'L'unanimità più uno': Plebisciti e potere, una storia europea (secoli XVIII–XX)* (Florence, 2017), 25–35.

(Venice, 1800); *Riflessioni sui mali prodotti in Italia dalla democrazia e su i mezzi per ristabilirvi l'ordine sociale. Ad un amico romano* (Bologna, 1800)). Bonapartists, for their part, criticized revolutionary democratic constitutionalism in the name of political realism and the long history of the nation (Vincenzo Cuoco, *Saggio storico sulla rivoluzione di Napoli* (2nd edn, Milan, 1806) or by contrasting it with Napoleon's new constitutional despotism (Alberto De Simoni, *Del diritto pubblico di convenienza politica nello spirito del governo civile* (Como, 1807)). Democracy was at best relocated within an almost mythological tradition—for example, in the little republic of San Marino (*Memorie storiche della Repubblica di San Marino raccolte dal cav. Melchiorre Delfico, cittadino della medesima* (Milan, 1804)) or was again, as during the decades 1770–90, recognized only in 'the democracy of others', notably of the Americans and the Swiss, as one can see from gazettes and travel accounts.

From the Napoleonic era, the couplet 'liberal/liberals' instead dominated the political language and the self-representation of those who battled against the restoration of the *ancien régime*—whether in the form of Bonapartist notions of *idées libérales* proclaimed at the start (18 Brumaire 1799) and the end (the Hundred Days) of the Napoleonic era, or as associated with Spanish constitutionalist resistance to Napoleon at Cadiz (1810–12), in which context it was contrasted with the epithets *servile/serviles.*[39] This semantic and political configuration endured through the 1820s and 1830s: the *carbonari* defined themselves as liberals and almost never spoke of democracy, though they did use other formulae associated with ancient ideals and practices, such as 'popular government' and 'free government'.[40] Guglielmo Pepe and Santorre di Santarosa, the great political and military leaders of the ill-fated revolutions of 1820–1 in Naples and Turin, called themselves liberals or ultra-liberals; Italian exiles in the post-Napoleonic period aspired to join a kind of 'liberal international'.[41] In 1830–1, the protagonists of the constitutionalist, municipal, and Bonapartist insurrections in central Italy preferred the language of liberty, sometimes to signal the limits of democracy, which they understood in archaic and agorophile terms, on the basis of historical (and to some extent imaginary) ideas about the pasts of Athens and Rome.[42] It was no accident that in Naples, in 1820–1, almost no one invoked democracy—though one exception was a broadside favourable to the revolution in which it was stated that what the patriots wished to establish was 'a form of government that, more than any other, resembles Democracy'.[43]

[39] Jörn Leonhard, 'Linguaggio ideologico e linguaggio politico: All'origine del termine "liberale" in Europa', *Ricerche di storia politica*, 1 (2004), 25–57.

[40] Luca Di Mauro, 'Le Secret ou Polichinelle: Cultures et pratiques de la clandestinité politique à Naples au début du XIXe siècle (1799–1821)', unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Paris I—Panthéon Sorbonne, 2015, 371–4.

[41] Maurizio Isabella, *Risorgimento in Exile: Italian Émigrés and the Liberal International in the Post-Napoleonic Era* (Oxford, 2009).

[42] Riccardo Piccioni, *'Penne filantropiche': Stampa e politica nella rivolta del 1831 nello Stato pontificio* (Macerata, 2015), 190–6.

[43] Rome, Biblioteca di storia moderna e contemporanea, Fondo bandi e fogli volanti, FFVV 4/6, *Ai Liberatori della Patria*, Naples, 18 July 1820.

POPULAR GOVERNMENT ON THE SPANISH MODEL

The *pronunciamento* of July 1820—which the liberal and patriotic discourse of the era presented as a peaceful 'political regeneration' of the Neapolitan nation—found in the figure of General Guglielmo Pepe, who first made a name for himself in the revolutionary and Napoleonic periods, not only its 'supreme commander' but also and above all a kind of lord protector. He was celebrated as a new and disinterested George Washington, or as the alter ego of Rafael del Riego (protagonist of the mutiny that had touched off the Spanish revolution), not only within the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies but also in Spain, whence he received much public correspondence and numerous addresses, widely reported, from patriotic and constitutional societies.[44] In a political context, Pepe worked to marginalize civil, voluntary, and radical elements associated with the secret-society network, the *Carboneria*, in favour of military elements, and more especially what he called in his first proclamations 'the constitutional army', imagined not only as the principal actor in the revolution, but also as a pivot for the regeneration of the nation.

Having tried to establish immediately direct political representation for the new national and constitutional army, by demanding—in vain—on 7 July 1820 that the hereditary prince should form a 'provisional plenary junta to represent the nation', which would have consisted of thirty-six members (thirty elected by the provinces and six by the army), Pepe pursued in effect the fusion of army and nation. On the morning of 9 July 1820, the entry into the city of Naples and the parade down the Via Toledo (a major north–south artery) of soldiers, members of the territorial army and armed villagers who had just arrived from revolutionary provinces, presented a raw image of this idealized community, whose members came together in a great assembly on the Campo Marzio, where a gigantic banquet was staged to enable patriotic fraternization with the citizens and citizenesses of the capital, in the presence—if at some remove—of the vicar general of the kingdom, the king's authorized deputy, his oldest son Francesco di Borbone, and his wife.[45]

The apotheosis of the fraternization between the new constitutional army and the nation was symbolized by the activation of a complex multi-tiered, indirect electoral process. Pepe and his troops made themselves guarantors of a regular and peaceful 'chain of elections' in the mainland provinces of the kingdom, until the first meeting of the parliament, which took place in October 1820. At that point, the 'supreme commander' officially surrendered his mandate, renouncing all duties, and welcoming the 'unanimous vote of the nation which, buttressed by the conduct of the army and militia, and supported from the heart by the sovereign and all the royal family, has known how to bring about so much good'. The citizen general had refused in advance his otherwise almost inevitable nomination as a deputy, though such a proposal was conveyed to him by his brother, Giovanni Battista.

[44] *La Minerva napolitana* (3 vols; 1820–1), i. 294, and Pierre-Marie Delpu, 'Fraternités libérales et insurrections nationales: Naples et l'Espagne, 1820–1821', *Revue d'histoire du XIXe siècle*, 2 (2014), 202–4.

[45] Richard Stites, *The Four Horsemen: Riding to Liberty in Post-Napoleonic Europe* (Oxford, 2014), 149–50.

Yet he celebrated proudly the active political role—surpassing mere guardianship—played in the electoral assemblies by those soldiers 'who were electors of the first degree, and who therefore played a large part and exercised a very strong influence on the election of representatives'.[46]

Astonishingly, Italian historiography has never directed the attention that it deserves towards the popular electoral experience in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies on the 20 and 27 August, and 3 September 1820, which resulted in the nomination of seventy-four deputies from the mainland and fifteen from Sicily (nine representatives from the provinces of Palermo and Girgenti, then still in revolt, were returned at a later point, but never validated). The decree convening the elections, signed by the vicar general of the kingdom on 22 July 1820, exceptionally recognized the right to vote at parish level of all male citizens aged at least 21 years, including secular clergy (who had been excluded from the active citizenry in certain constitutions of the French revolutionary era), but excluding domestic servants and indigents 'without employment, trade or profession, or known means of existence'.[47] Voting procedure was drawn directly from the Cadiz constitution of 1812, flagship text of the liberal and radical international during the first half of the nineteenth century, revived in Spain during the *trienio liberal* 1820–3. The meeting of an electoral assembly (usually in a church) was always preceded by celebration of the mass and followed by the *Te Deum*. The three-level indirect electoral process (the three levels being parish, district, province) was in effect a four-level system, because the nomination of one elector for every two hundred heads of families to represent the parish at district level was assigned to eleven *compromessari* (delegates), who were themselves chosen by citizens gathered together in parish assemblies. By the standards of the post-revolutionary era, this was a major attempt to put into effect a form of pyramidal electoral participation, combining number and reason.[48] Matteo Angelo Galdi, a former democratic republican who had converted to Muratism (supporting the claim of the Napoleonic king, Marshal Joachim Murat, to continue presiding over liberated Italy), who served as president of the new parliament, stated at its opening that these procedures had assured 'a choice of national representatives, over which religion had always presided and in which universal voting had played as large a part as possible'.[49]

This Spanish moment is worth probing further, since some of its aspects would have lasting significance in relation to the broader history of highly participatory electoral practices. It deserves emphasis that the Spanish 'Cadiz' constitution of 1812, adopted as the basis for the Neapolitan constitution of 1820, established an electoral system that provided not only for public voting (within the context of a religious ceremony, as explained), but also at each level for the drawing of lots if votes remained equally divided between two candidates after two rounds of voting.

[46] *Rapporto al Parlamento*, October 2nd, 1820, in Ruggero Moscati (ed.), *Guglielemo Pepe* (Rome, 1938), 112, 151.
[47] *Collezione delle leggi e de' decreti reali del Regno delle Due Sicilie, Anno 1820* (Naples, 1820), 132.
[48] Patrice Gueniffey, *Le Nombre et la raison: La Révolution française et les élections* (Paris, 1993).
[49] Vincenzo Fontanarosa (ed.), *Il parlamento nazionale napoletano per gli anni 1820 e 1821: Memorie e documenti* (Rome, 1900), 41.

The ideals of unanimity and objectivity that characterized these 'well calculated elections', as Galdi called them in his inaugural discourse, was perfectly reflected in these mechanisms, not least in the survival of a lottery element, considered in a long tradition from Aristotle through to Montesquieu and Rousseau as the true mark of a democratic as opposed to an aristocratic electoral regime.[50]

Initial archival soundings, reported here, alongside media accounts of long electoral sessions, carefully organized by preparatory commissions that often included the principal protagonists of the revolution (thus, the former priest Luigi Minichini played this role in Terra di Lavoro, Lieutenant-Colonel Lorenzo de Conciliis at Avellino, and Gerardo Mazziotti at Salerno), confirm that what was put in place was a broadly participatory process of nation-building, involving the formation of a new, regenerated political community (notably in Naples),[51] designed to bestow unanimous legitimacy on the new representative and constitutional regime, one that, 'more than any other, resembles *Democracy*'.[52]

FROM PYRAMIDAL PARTICIPATION TO ELECTORAL 'DEMOCRACY'

This filtered, consensual approach to broad electoral participation was common during these years and was generally favoured by republicans and radicals. Before openly declaring himself in favour of election by direct male universal suffrage at the end of the 1830s, when this was the goal of the newly formed Chartist movement in Britain, where he lived from 1837, Giuseppe Mazzini himself favoured indirect universal suffrage, filtered through several levels, or, as it was then expressed, at several degrees. In the *Annotazione* D of the constitutional project for a free Italy, *Progetto di costituzione per l'Italia fatta libera ed indipendente all'anno 1835*, published in 1832 by Luigi Mussi (dissident former member of the group led by the neo-Jacobin Filippo Buonarroti), in the context of the ephemeral pact between the *Veri italiani* (True Italians) and *Giovine Italia* (Young Italy), Mazzini commented favourably on the system of universal voting at five degrees set out in this text. Taking the form of a catechism, the book was published and distributed in 3,000 copies, with the object of popularizing the revolutionary aim of founding an Italian republic. As conceived here, a very large base of four million electors (heads of household, on the assumption that the average household contained five people), convened in *Comizj nazionali*, would reduce in pyramidal fashion to 800,000 representing parishes, 350,000 representing communes, 70,000 representing municipalities, and finally 20,000 at provincial level; these 20,000 would choose the 350 members of the national legislative assembly from among citizens aged at least 30. Mazzini's habit of scattering his comments across the texts he edited

[50] Bernard Manin, *Principes du gouvernement représentatif* (Paris, 1996), 62–124.
[51] Archivio di Stato di Napoli, Ministero della Polizia generale, seconda numerazione (1820–1860), *Carte del Parlamento nazionale*, 31, 35, 36, 40, 41, 42.
[52] Text and n. 43 above for this phrase.

allowed him to express his own ideas on these matters. In this case, they reflected the debate that had developed after the French revolution of 1830 on the rival merits of direct and indirect voting (the text was dated 29 July 1832, to honour the successful completion of that revolution two years before). Anxious to underline the inclusive character of the *Progetto*, Mazzini wrote:

> The method of election which I propose will, if I do not deceive myself, have the appreciable advantage of entrusting the various powers to citizens who enjoy universal confidence, and who are endowed with the necessary capacities, so as to escape from the very grave inconvenience of tumultuous meetings, and to avoid, something of the greatest value, making the election the work of a small number of citizens who, however political and juridical fiction might construe it, only rarely express the will of the Nation, but almost always the exclusive will of the class who has the right or privilege of voting.[53]

Whatever their ideas about voting may have been, during the 1830s, the Mazzinian 'little conspirators' of *Giovine Italia*—a political association directed from afar by a monocratic, charismatic leader—called themselves not democrats but republicans (though they sometimes termed the republic they favoured a 'democratic republic', as in the *Progetto*).[54] In 1835, Mazzini himself advised against using the lemma *democrazia* in the pamphlet *Foi et avenir*, favouring instead *repubblica*, the latter having been rehabilitated by Jean-Charles-Léonard Simonde de Sismondi in the many volumes of his monumental and romantic history of medieval Italian republics, *Histoire des républiques italiennes du moyen âge* (Paris, 1807–18).

At the end of the 1830s, everything changed with the beginnings of large-scale mobilization in support of the enlargement of political citizenship, in France as well as in Britain. 'Democracy' became synonymous with popular sovereignty exercised by direct universal manhood suffrage, as is suggested by the entry *Suffrage universel*, which appeared in the *Dictionnaire politique: Encyclopédie du langage et de la science politique*, which its republican editor Laurent-Antoine Pagnerre published in Paris in 1842. That stated: 'Universal suffrage is the sovereignty of the people put into practice. It is by this means that it is exercised; it is by this means that democracy is seriously applied.' During the 1840s, now in London, Mazzini began to speak and write in terms of democracy, notably about representative democracy, as we see, for instance, in a series of eight articles published between summer 1846 and spring 1847 in the *People's Journal*, later collected under the title *Thoughts upon Democracy in Europe*.[55]

Syntagms involving democracy were also given considerable space in Italian political dictionaries against the background of revolution in 1848. The entry *Democrazia* in the educational political dictionary *Dizionario politico nuovamente compilato ad uso della gioventù* maintained that 'true democracy' consists in 'the

[53] Maria Grazia Melchionni, *Uno statuto per l'Italia nella strategia rivoluzionaria degli esuli (1831–1833)* (Pisa, 1991), 134.

[54] Arianna Arisi Rota, *I piccoli cospiratori: Politica ed emozioni nei primi mazziniani* (Bologna, 2010). For 'democratica repubblica', *Progetto*, 3, 7, 11, 13.

[55] Giuseppe Mazzini, *Pensieri sulla democrazia in Europa*, ed. Salvo Mastellone (Milan, 2005).

election by universal suffrage of supreme magistrates, always on a temporary basis'. The identification of democracy with popular voting is reinforced by the entry *Elezione*, where one can read that 'democracy is all about elections' and that 'direct elections by universal suffrage constitute pure democracy'.[56] Analogously, in the entry *Democrazia* in the *Dizionario politico popolare*, published in Turin in 1851 and distributed in thousands of copies, democratic government is described as a political regime under which all citizens are both electors and eligible for office, and democrats as 'an immense party of men who strive to secure the triumph of the idea of establishing a regime based on civil equality, and consequently on universal suffrage'.[57]

UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE AND PERSONIFYING THE NATION

In the spring of 1848 and then in the winter 1848–9, the exercise of universal suffrage was understood in the Italian peninsula as a consequence of the proclamation, widely celebrated and almost uncontested, of the principle of popular sovereignty, which was in turn associated with the revival of the medieval adage *Vox Populi Vox Dei*. In the wake of the *journées* that followed the revolutions in Venice, Milan, Rome, and Florence, the prevailing idea was that the people had won universal suffrage by their exemplary conduct in returning peacefully to civil life after the insurrections. In sum, it was understood that the people had reclaimed sovereignty and shown itself worthy of exercising it. The sense of urgency that provisional governments displayed in quickly convening democratic elections represented a homage to popular sovereignty, but also an attempt to direct popular power into legal channels and to legitimate the revolutions a posteriori by means of electoral procedures.

During the years 1848–9, after the popular votes that marked the republican democratic experience of Venice (June 1848, January and August 1849), the Roman states (January 1849), and Tuscany (March 1849), universal manhood suffrage was reconfigured in Italy in plebiscitary mode, usually entailing the subscription of open public registers in municipalities and parishes, after the fashion of the *liberi voti* or appeals to the people of the revolutionary and Napoleonic eras. Between the months of April and May 1848, 'national votes' were held—the word *plebiscito* was not used at this juncture—to sanction union with the Kingdom of Sardinia(–Piedmont), on the initiative of provisional governments favourable to Piedmont: those of the duchies of Modena and Parma, of Lombardy, and of the four provinces of Venetia (Padua, Vicenza, Treviso, Rovigo). They anticipated the formation of a constitutional kingdom of northern Italy under King Carlo Alberto of Savoy, which in the event was not completed at this time.[58] In the spring of

[56] *Dizionario politico nuovamente compilato ad uso della gioventù* (Turin, 1849), 241, 278.

[57] Pietro Trifone (ed.), *Dizionario politico popolare* (Rome, 1984), 86.

[58] Elisa Mongiano, *Il "voto della Nazione": I plebisciti nella formazione del Regno d'Italia (1848–60)* (Turin, 2003), 75–138.

1848, when the decision was taken to proceed by *liberi voti* to legitimize these fusions or *dedizioni* (commitments—following the *ancien régime* terminology that was revived at this time) and to postpone the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, a great debate was stimulated, which became entwined with discussion about what electoral mechanisms could best secure a true consultation with the 'voice of the people'. In central-north Italy, the question divided proponents of fusion with monarchical Piedmont from proponents of a republic who were opposed to fusion, but developed into a debate about electoral technology, which saw those favourable to (public) subscriptions oppose those favouring (secret) ballots. What took shape was a bitter argument about how to think about universal suffrage in the context of shared endorsement of democratic principles and popular sovereignty. The partisans of the rival approaches—liberal constitutionalists, on the one hand, democratic republicans, on the other—each presented their procedural solution as the only authentic means of giving effect to 'true universal suffrage' and accused their adversaries of planning to deform the sincere expression of the general will. However, analysis of the discourse and representations of universal suffrage developed by the liberals and radicals shows that, if we abstract from the political struggles of the moment and differences about procedure, the two political groupings in fact shared a collective and monistic conception of democratic voting, which both parties imagined above all as a form of ritualized celebration of national unity, reflected, in the political language of the time, in expressions such as 'the vote of the nation' or 'national suffrage'.[59]

For the radicals and republicans, the principal vehicle for the self-manifestation of the suffrage-bearing nation was the mobilizing myth or dream of an Italian Constituent Assembly, an old dream that at this point once more appeared in the collective imaginary of the *Risorgimento*. It was originally conjured into life in various analyses and propositions regarding the Italian political situation by French democratic republicans and Italian patriotic exiles during the summer of 1799, in schemes then presented by the parliamentary leader of the neo-Jacobins, Pierre-Joseph Briot, to the French Legislative Body. The object now was to convene it either in Florence or in Rome, as much to make war on the enemies of the revolution as to build an Italian republic. From the strand of Italian radical politics that passed through Filippo Buonarroti and Mazzini, the revolutionaries of 1848 inherited two conceptions of the role of such an assembly, one bellicose, one pacific—though the name and concept, by contrast with *liberi voti* (a contentious concept, as we have seen), attracted little explicit debate, instead being accepted as representing a way to embody the desired link between electoral democracy and national regeneration: the *Risorgimento*. As Mazzini had envisaged it, a war of liberation should be concluded before the convocation of a constituent assembly—but now this scheme was reversed. Instead, national representation was re-imagined as the basis

[59] G. L. Fruci, 'Il "suffragio nazionale": Discorsi e rappresentazioni del voto universale nel 1848 italiano', *Contemporanea*, 4 (2005), 597–620.

for a centre for the direction of a war of independence.[60] In this context, the discourse on the national constituent assembly delivered at Livorno on 8 October 1848 by the democratic patriot and former professor of the University of Pisa, Giuseppe Montanelli, made a great impact throughout Italy.[61]

The *Costituente* was thereafter personified and represented with an initial capital letter. The name became a 'magic word', a 'cry', and a 'banner', as well as an enchanting image. Montanelli's programme did not in fact offer a political or constitutional plan, did not concern itself with the form of the state or the organization of its powers. Instead, he spoke about the edifying effect that national independence would have upon the people, and offered the *Costituente* as a symbolic instrument, through which to summon the people to unitary action. The name became a fighting word, endowed with extraordinary power to arouse and mobilize, not only for republicans, but also for many liberal constitutionalists, who found it impossible to disclaim—among them the Piedmontese Catholic monarchist Vincenzo Gioberti, who in December 1848 became President of the Council in Turin, proclaimed himself favourable to a 'royal democracy', and evoked the image of the *Costituente*, though, beneath the camouflage provided by this novel lexicon, he in fact continued to pursue his preferred federative solution to the Italian problem.[62] Media coverage helped Montanelli's discourse to make a significant impact on Italian public opinion, culminating in the formation of a 'democratic government' in Tuscany; thereafter, the idea of an Italian Constituent Assembly played a fundamental role as a personification of the national community in Italian political discourse during the autumn and winter 1848–9.[63]

Montanelli's contribution was fundamental not only at the beginning but also at the end of the iconographic parabola traced by the *Costituente*, usually represented in feminine terms: his masculine image accompanied and facilitated her success. At the end of the summer of 1848, when he returned to Italy from his captivity in Austria, after having been found apparently dead on the battlefield in Lombardy, Montanelli was seen not just as a survivor, but as a kind of epic personage, returned from the very frontiers of death, a nineteenth-century Italian Thermopolyte (the battle of Curtatone and Montanara standing in for Thermopylae) or a revenant from a Balzacian romance, like *Le Colonel Chabert* (1832). The iconography of the former combatant, either in uniform or in civilian clothing, but wounded, with his arm in a sling, was so widely diffused and prominent that it

[60] Alberto Mario Banti in collaboration with Pietro Finelli, G. L. Fruci, Alessio Petrizzo, and Angelica Zazzeri (eds), *Nel nome dell'Italia: Il Risorgimento nelle testimonianze, nei documenti e nelle immagini* (Rome and Bari, 2010), 209–10.

[61] Antonio Chiavistelli, *Dallo stato alla nazione: Costituzione e sfera pubblica in Toscana dal 1814 al 1849* (Rome, 2006), 320–2.

[62] Maurizio Isabella, 'The Political Thought of a New Constitutional Monarchy: Piedmont after 1848', in Gareth Stedman Jones and Douglas Moggach (eds), *The 1848 Revolutions and European Political Thought* (Cambridge, 2018), 383–403.

[63] Enrico Francia, *1848 La rivoluzione del Risorgimento* (Bologna, 2012), 300–8.

insinuated itself even into the classic lithography portraying the 'Tuscan democratic minister' as he presided in the autumn of 1848.[64]

The check to the constituent project in practice did not affect its life in the media, carried and increasingly supported as that was by a vast production of pamphlets aimed at popular audiences and by a series of images with great visual and emotional impact. The summoning of state-level constituent assemblies in Rome (January 1849) and Florence (March 1849) contributed to the success of the idealized project, the more so after the elections had brought into being these nuclei of a larger organism. Moreover, all the actors during the events of 1848–9 considered elections as expressions of the national will, even if also as consensual processes, in which votes sanctioned political reconciliation and the moral union of the fatherland. The democratic legitimization conferred by universal suffrage was seen by all the 'great parties' of the *Risorgimento* as opening the way to an inclusive form of nationhood, characterized by civil harmony and by condemnation of political divisions in the name of a holistic conception of the Italian community. This conception achieved its apotheosis during what I call the 'great plebiscitary moment'—that is, during the long series of votes, on the basis of universal manhood suffrage, which touched altogether more than three million citizens between 1860 and 1870 (along with thousands of women and minors unofficially mobilized), in the course of legitimizing the progressive construction of the constitutional Kingdom of Italy under the house of Savoy.

THE GREAT PLEBISCITARY MOMENT AND ITS LEGACY

Despite their non-deliberative character, failure to present a choice, and exposure to direct or indirect control by liberal–monarchist elites, the consultations undertaken on the issue of unification in 1860, 1866, and 1870 represented for the popular classes a significant opportunity to advance their political apprenticeship, and, in a wider view, a significant step in the construction of the unificatory process as a 'mass movement', as it is depicted by the new historiography of the *Risorgimento*, whether in its classic or its critical version.[65]

The *comizi nazionali*, organized in the course of the *annus mirabilis* 1860 in Tuscany, Emilia, and Romagna (11–12 March), in the Neapolitan provinces and in Sicily (21 October), and in the Marches and in Umbria (4–5 November), proceeded by means of handwritten or printed ballot papers offering the choice Yes or No—the same procedure that had been used in France in December 1851 to justify the *coup d'état* by the Prince-President Louis Bonaparte, and the foundation

[64] G. L. Fruci, 'Una Marianna italiana: L'imagerie della Costituente nel 1848–49', paper presented to study day *Maurice Agulhon e la storia d'Italia*, École française de Rome, 16 February 2015.

[65] Alberto Mario Banti and Paul Ginsborg, 'Per una nuova storiografia del Risorgimento', in idd. (eds), *Storia d'Italia Einaudi, Annali 22: Il Risorgimento* (Turin, 2007), pp. xxiii–xxiv, and Eva Cecchinato, 'Quadro degli avvenimenti', in Mario Isnenghi and Eva Cecchinato (eds), *Fare l'Italia: Unità e disunità nel Risorgimento* (Turin, 2008), 23.

in November 1852 of the Second Empire.[66] The same procedures were used to complete the process of unification, in 1866 in Mantua and Venetia (21–2 October) and in 1870 in Rome and the surrounding province of Latium (2 October). We have a great deal of information about the voters, but indicators of the success of these consultations also included their joyful character and the scenography of the festivals—part engineered, part spontaneous—amid which elections took place. These plebiscitary exercises were set within a larger cycle of national and patriotic demonstrations and displays, involving not only electors (all adult men of at least 21 years), but the whole of society, including, through a variety of unofficial and extra-legal means, all those excluded from the formal process of voting, such as women, minors, exiles, foreigners who had fought for the cause of unification, or citizens of former Italian states living outside their regions of origin. The mobilization of women was particularly intense and general, and encouraged by the provisional governments so long as it reinforced the national and patriotic impression. Nonetheless, this mobilization provoked awkward criticisms even from leading statesmen in certain contexts, when patriotic women used uncontrolled spaces to speak openly about the 'national vote' and to lay their own claim to political rights, denied to them by the constitutional and legislative arrangements of the state under construction.[67]

Like the 'free votes' of Italy in revolution, unification plebiscites were procedures undertaken under both public and international law, which ratified at one and the same time personal power, a territorial state, and its fundamental law. In effect, electors were convened to give their consent to the Kingdom of Italy, to its 'Statuto Albertino', and its warrior king (Vittorio Emanuele II), and his descendants. Based directly or indirectly on the Thermidorian political model, the plebiscitary practices of the *Risorgimento* appealed to democratic sovereignty, and, exceptionally, constructed universal and inclusive electoral bodies, in order to validate an institutional system whose own premise was, contrastingly, that political citizenship was a function reserved for those equipped to exercise it widely—that is to say, those possessed of independence and personal 'capacity' (economic and cultural). The Statuto Albertino of 1848, thereafter accepted as fundamental law in Piedmont, which was sanctioned by these plebiscites, envisaged a state ruled by a 'monarchical representative government', under which the right to vote for the elective chamber would be regulated by ordinary legislation. After the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861, what was provided by law was a double mechanism, taking into account both tax contributions and evidence of 'capacity', including a literacy requirement; political citizenship rights were accorded only to 7 per cent of men aged 25 upwards.[68]

[66] Frédéric Bluche (ed.), *Le Prince, le peuple et le droit: Autour des plébiscites de 1851 et 1852* (Paris, 2000).

[67] G. L. Fruci, 'Cittadine senza cittadinanza: La mobilitazione femminile nei plebisciti del *Risorgimento* (1848–1870)', *Genesis*, 5 (2006), 21–56.

[68] Raffaele Romanelli, *Importare la democrazia: Sulla costituzione liberale italiana* (Soveria Mannelli, 2009), 149–60.

Though they shared certain basic characteristics, the plebiscites of 1848–70 differed from the 'free votes' of 1797–8 in that they were marked less by pressure on electors and manipulation of results than by an understanding of participation as expressing the principle 'one nation, one voice': the primary object was to celebrate national belonging, not to gauge popular will, following the example of the April 1860 vote endorsing the annexation of Nice and Savoy by France.[69] Plebiscitary *comizi* were conceived, on the one hand, as sites for sacraments of national unanimity, and, on the other hand, notably by moderate liberals and democratic constitutionalists, as the collective consecration of the king, the head of the national community, whose name figured prominently in the formulae presented for the approval of the people and whose role in the exercise was pivotal. In the plebiscitary scene staged in the former Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, which had been liberated and conquered by the redshirts, a privileged place was also occupied by the figure of Giuseppe Garibaldi, personifying the role of combatant, a universal celebrity in the new Italy.[70] The political actors of the day saw in popular consultations the culmination of the *Risorgimento*: electoral *comizi* hosted a jubilee of the reawakened national community, evoked in what at the time was semantically very rich terminology, such as 'national suffrage' and vote or vow/wish of the nation.

During the brief moment of the plebiscite, as universal suffrage glissaded into universal joy, time was in effect suspended, as it catalysed an egalitarian community, in which the imperative of harmony prevailed over all divisions of party, class, sex, and age. It is within this emotional framework that we should set the acts of 'paradoxical citizenship' undertaken by women and minors, and also the conduct of the numerous militant republicans who not only turned up to vote, but also participated actively in securing the success of the plebiscites, if appreciating them more as national patriotic rituals than as monarchical celebrations. What happened, in brief, from 1848, and most notably between 1860 and 1870, was that a liberal patriotic plebiscitary model was developed, characterized by limited attention to formal procedures of voting, but without manipulation of the vote, exploiting choral and unanimistic elements typical of electoral practices in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, yet offering relative freedom from constraint, and opening up unregulated spaces for popular participation, making possible unexpected expressions of female and juvenile emancipation. The particularity of the plebiscitary moment of the *Risorgimento* consisted in its introducing an anti-pluralist institution forged in a Bonapartist matrix into the framework of liberal representation.[71]

The exceptional success that the iconography of plebiscites enjoyed in the peninsula constituted in itself a considerable historical fact, meriting attention as an index of the power and broad diffusion of the plebiscitary imaginary. Testimony to

[69] Pierre Rosanvallon, *La Démocratie inachevée: Histoire de la souveraineté du peuple en France* (Paris, 2000), 200–1.

[70] Lucy Riall, *Garibaldi: Invention of a Hero* (New Haven and London, 2007).

[71] G. L. Fruci, 'Il sacramento dell'unità nazionale: Linguaggi, iconografia e pratiche dei plebisciti risorgimentali (1848–1870)', in Banti and Ginsborg (eds), *Il Risorgimento*, 567–605.

its pervasiveness is supplied not only by the flood of prints and images published in Italian and other (notably French and British) illustrated magazines, but also in the development of a significant tradition of sculptural, pictorial, and graphic representations, both official and semi-official, sometimes employing allegory, sometimes realism, sometimes from the time, sometimes long after (even until the late twentieth century), always fixing pictorially the rituals of the act of collective voting, the solemn proclamation of the results, the figure of the 'elected king', and the memory of this sacrament of national unity. It is no accident that, whereas in Britain the iconography of voting developed between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries followed the lead of William Hogarth in portraying the election of MPs as spectacular and tumultuous, in Italy this genre developed on a significant scale only from the second half of the nineteenth century, in response to a demand for images of plebiscites, in association with the foundation of a new liberal–monarchical order that had drawn its legitimacy from them, but also in response to the emergence of a large and varied national–patriotic public, which had participated directly or indirectly in these events.[72]

The pervasiveness of the consensual plebiscitary imaginary is equally demonstrated by the broad and largely neutral if not positive acceptance of the word *plebiscito* and its lexical variants in the political language of post-unification Italy—presenting a contrast with Third Republic France, where the *plébiscite* had and has today a pejorative ring, serving as a negative symbol of the illiberal democracy of Napoleon III. In unified Italy, the word and the thing were associated with languages and practices of devotion towards the royal family, and with displays of patriotic solidarity in the context of festivals, mourning, and national catastrophes (the birth and death of kings; earthquakes)—which came to be termed 'plebiscites of sorrow', 'plebiscites of love', 'plebiscites of joy', 'plebiscites of mourning'. Furthermore, the phrase 'plebiscite of marble' came to denote Victor Emmanuel II's statuomania—as exhibited above all in the *Vittoriano*, built in the centre of Rome and inaugurated in 1911 following thirty years of preparatory works—one of the most gigantic and imposing monuments ever dedicated to a sovereign in the modern era.[73]

In conclusion, it is necessary to remember that, in post-unification Italy, the plebiscite, understood as part of the mythic democratic foundation of the national community, was employed largely as a mobilizing device in the context of political conflict. Liberal constitutionalists continued to assign positive value to this foundational act, instituting executive power and legitimizing the monarchical regime; whereas, to radicals and republicans, it signified 'democracy'; moreover, as the revolutionaries of the *triennio* 1796–9 had once done, republicans and radicals now again represented themselves and their political constellation as 'the Italian

[72] G. L. Fruci, 'Votare per immagini: Il momento elettorale nella cultura visuale europea fra Sette e Ottocento', in Vinzia Fiorino, G. L. Fruci, and Alessio Petrizzo (eds), *Il lungo ottocento e le sue immagini: Politica, media, spettacolo* (Pisa, 2013), 23–30, 46–8 (figures: <http://lungo800.it/?p=43>).

[73] Catherine Brice, *Monarchie et identité nationale en Italie (1861–1900)* (Paris, 2010), 166–70, 233–50.

Democracy'.[74] The radical left underlined the cohesive dimension of plebiscites, whether understood as expressions of nationality, or as events that had the potential to re-imagine and extend the limits of citizenship; especially from the mid-1870s they invoked them in an attempt to keep alive the cause of universal suffrage—if now sometimes conjoined with the movement to emancipate women. The example of past plebiscites enabled them to present their claims as efforts to restore an ancient right, already possessed and exercised in the context of unification.

But, if not another story, that would at the very least require another chapter.

[74] Emma Mana, 'La "democrazia" italiana: Forme e linguaggi della propaganda politica tra Ottocento e Novecento', in Maurizio Ridolfi (ed.), *Propaganda e comunicazione politica: Storia e trasformazioni nell'età contemporanea* (Milan, 2004), 147–64.