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# A Concise History of ITALY 意大利简史

Christopher Duggan

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CHRISTOPHER DUGGAN



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跨入21世纪后，全球一体化的发展趋势使世界各国的联系愈来愈密切，不同国家、不同民族之间的交往比以往任何时候都更加频繁和便捷。人们除了了解自己周围或自己国家的事情外，越来越多地把目光投向整个世界，关注其他国家和民族的发展与人们的生活。要了解一个国家、一个民族的现状，我们需要了解它的历史和发展沿革。由此，上海外语教育出版社（简称“外教社”）从英国剑桥大学出版社引进了这套“剑桥国别简史丛书”（*Cambridge Concise Histories*），奉献给我国广大读者，尤其是我国英语专业本科生、研究生以及具有一定英语基础并对世界历史感兴趣的读者。

“剑桥国别简史丛书”是剑桥大学出版社自上世纪八九十年代开始陆续推出的一套插图版国别简史丛书。丛书为一个开放系列，目前已经出版的品种涉及16个国家。作为第一批，我们从中挑选了英国、法国、德国、澳大利亚、希腊、印度、意大利、墨西哥、葡萄牙和南非等10个国家的简史图书，其中既有有关英语国家的，也有非英语国家的。

由于作者都是来自英国、美国、澳大利亚等国的历史学教授和知名专家，所以该丛书具有很高的学术价值和较强的权威性；作者又能采用浅显通俗的语言描述这些国家的政治、经济、文化、社会和历史，丛书信息量大、可读性强。该丛书在英国出版以后，深受读者欢迎，有的品种已重印多达10余次。

我们衷心希望该丛书的引进对我国读者学习、研究历史，了解世界有所帮助和参考作用，对掌握更多的历史文化知识有所裨益。

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## PREFACE

A history of Italy on this scale can make no claims to originality or to comprehensiveness. My intention has been to provide a succinct, and hopefully clear, survey of some of the principal developments in the peninsula since the time of the Romans. I lean heavily on the work of others, above all in the early chapters and towards the end: I hope the authors concerned will exercise forbearance, and accept, collectively, my warm thanks. Perhaps inevitably, given limitations on space, my focus is primarily on political issues (in the event, though, rather more than originally intended). However, I have tried to weave in, at certain points, discussion of economic, social, and cultural matters; and in the introduction I have looked briefly at how Italy's location in Europe, its soil, climate, mineral resources, and physical geography have influenced its history.

The main problem with a work such as this is to find a thematic thread. In the case of Italy this is particularly difficult: the country has only been in existence since 1861, and strictly speaking 'its' history starts then, not before. Prior to that date the peninsula was a patchwork of states, each with its own history and traditions. One solution occasionally adopted is to abandon political narrative and instead to consider 'Italy' as essentially a 'geographical expression', a unit of territory whose history can be given coherence by focusing on broad socio-economic and cultural themes. This is not altogether satisfactory, however, since the unit of territory is still the national-political one, and for the most part bears little obvious or natural relationship to any such themes.



In so far as a single thematic thread exists in this book, it is that of the problem of 'nation building'. Italy came into being in 1859-60 as much by accident as by design. Only a tiny minority of people before 1860 seriously believed that Italy was a nation, and that it should form a unitary state; and even they had to admit that there was little, on the face of it, to justify their belief: neither history nor language, for example, really supported their case. The result was that after unity was achieved, Italy's rulers faced the difficult task of creating a sense of collective identity, and binding the peninsula's population to the new national institutions. They alternated between 'materialist' and 'idealist' solutions, but on the whole failed to come up with a satisfactory formula.

The first two chapters of the book are intended mainly to give some idea of the obstacles – natural and historical – that made the task of building a nation in Italy after 1860 so difficult. They do little more than provide an introduction to the main part of the book, which is concerned with the last two hundred years. As a result, the sections on the Middle Ages and the Renaissance are extremely cursory. I start with the fall of the Roman Empire, as it was then that the political fragmentation of the peninsula began. The final chapter comes right down to the present: however, Italy is currently undergoing a profound moral and political crisis, and this makes any conclusion or verdict more than usually risky. I may have been too pessimistic.

A number of people have been kind enough to look at drafts of this book. I am particularly grateful to Professor Adrian Lyttelton for reading the entire text, and commenting very perceptively on it. Denis Mack Smith, Professor Donald Matthew, and Professor John A. Davis read individual chapters, and made many extremely valuable suggestions. Dr Shirley Vinall, Professor Percy Allum, Dr Jonathan Morris, and Dr Patricia Morison, also read specific chapters, and offered much useful advice. Professor Giulio Lepschy indicated a number of improvements to the first section, and also helped with the map of Italian dialects and the table of dialect examples. My thanks to all concerned. I naturally take full responsibility for any errors that remain.

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# Introduction

In the late spring of 1860 Giuseppe Garibaldi, a flamboyant irregular soldier, who had spent much of his life abroad fighting as a guerrilla leader, set sail for Sicily from a port near Genoa. On board his two small ships was a motley collection of students and adventurers, many of them barely out of their teens. Their mission was to unify Italy. The prospects for success seemed limited: the group was ill-armed, and few among them had any experience in warfare or administration. Moreover, they did not constitute a promising advertisement for the nation-to-be. Among the thousand or so volunteers were Hungarians and Poles, and the Italian contingent included a disproportionate number from the small northern city of Bergamo. However, in the space of a few months they succeeded in conquering Sicily and the mainland South from the Bourbons; and in March 1861 Victor Emmanuel II, King of Piedmont-Sardinia, became the first king of united Italy.

The success of Garibaldi and his 'Thousand' was both remarkable and unexpected; and when the euphoria had died down, many sober observers wondered whether the Italian state could survive. France and Austria, the two greatest continental powers of the day, both threatened to invade the new kingdom, break it up, and reconstitute the Papal States, which had been annexed by Victor Emmanuel in the course of unification. A much more insidious long-term threat, however, to the survival of the new state, was the absence of any real sense of commitment or loyalty to the kingdom among all except a tiny minority of the population. The country's new rulers justified

their demands for heavy taxes and military service, the often harsh repressive measures, and the unfamiliar institutions, by appealing to the sanctity and inviolability of the Italian 'nation': but for the overwhelming mass of Italians, the 'Italian nation', indeed 'Italy' itself, meant nothing.

The lack of loyalty to the new state haunted the country's intellectuals for many years after 1860. Initially, there was some hope that the introduction of liberal institutions and free trade would unleash the pent up talents and energies of a people who had given the world the civilisation of ancient Rome and the Renaissance; and the new prosperity, it was imagined, would generate support for the liberal order and its leaders. This soon proved illusory. By the late 1870s socio-economic unrest had begun to erode the old certainties. Disillusionment grew; and other less liberal political ideas surfaced that claimed to solve the problem of how to generate in Italians feelings of commitment to the state. These ideas culminated in the fascist experiment of the 1920s and 1930s. Ironically, though, it was the failure rather than the success of fascism that gave Italy its most cohesive set of values since 1860, the values of anti-fascism.

If the task of forging a collective 'national identity' proved so difficult, one reason was the absence of any political substance to the idea of a unified Italy prior to the nineteenth century. Patriotic historians and propagandists claimed to discern a national consciousness in the struggles of the medieval cities (or 'communes') against the Holy Roman Emperors, or in Machiavelli's appeal for the expulsion of the 'barbarian' invaders in the early sixteenth century; but such interpretations were strained. The history of the peninsula after the fall of the Roman Empire was one of confusion and division, a 'hurly-burly of peoples, states, and institutions', according to the philosopher Giuseppe Ferrari in 1858. The historian Arnold Toynbee observed that there were more independent states in central Italy in the fourteenth century than in the entire world in 1934. Given this tradition of political fragmentation, it is hardly surprising that so many Italians found it hard to identify with the unified kingdom after 1860.

This is not to say that the idea of Italy was wholly without political meaning before the nineteenth century. The papacy from the time of Gregory VII in the later eleventh century had urged 'all



Italians' to resist the claims of the German emperors to sovereignty in the peninsula; and in the thirteenth century the Hohenstaufen ruler of Sicily, Manfred, had used 'Italy' as a stick to beat his French opponents. However, the concept was not very widely employed, and its primary appeal was to writers and poets, not politicians. The Renaissance humanists were especially fond of it, though much of their enthusiasm for the term *Italia* derived from the fact that it had been widely used by the Latin authors they wanted to emulate. During the *Risorgimento* – the movement of national revival in the early to mid-nineteenth century – many famous patriots were, like Alessandro Manzoni, professional writers, or else had very strong literary leanings, like Massimo d'Azeglio or Giuseppe Mazzini. A remarkable number of Garibaldi's 'Thousand' produced accounts of their exploits in 1860. Garibaldi himself wrote poetry.

If the idea of Italy flourished strongly among men of letters, it owed much, too, in the Middle Ages and later, to the thoughts of expatriates and exiles. Probably no other region of Europe has produced so many emigrants over the centuries, partly because the population of the peninsula always tended to outstrip the available resources, and partly also because banishment was for a long time a standard punishment for political troublemakers. Under the influence of nostalgia, and thrown together perhaps for the first time, Neapolitans and Sicilians, Piedmontese and Venetians, could forget their differences and summon up an imaginary community to which they all belonged. It was while in exile that the thirteenth-century Florentine rhetorician Brunetto Latini came to the conclusion that 'Italy is a better country than France'; Petrarch discovered his great love for 'Italy' during his time in Avignon; and Mazzini's devotion to the cause of Italian unity was sustained during thirty years in the London suburbs.

If a sense of being 'Italian' often arose through contact with the outside world, it also rested on certain real cultural premises, at least from the Middle Ages. Dante complained that Italy had over a thousand different languages in his day; but the fact remains that merchants, mercenaries, artisans, friars, and beggars criss-crossed the peninsula and presumably made themselves understood without too much difficulty. The development of a common literary language from the fourteenth century, based on written Tuscan, helped draw