A Cruise on the Mediterranean with Garibaldi

Gilles Pecout, Ecole Normale Superieure, Paris
(translated by Stephen Marth)

[Translation of "Una Crociera nel mediterraneo con Garibaldi," by Gilles Pécout, Introduction to the volume: Alexandre Dumas, *Viva Garibaldi! : Un'odissea nel 1860*, ed. by Claude Schopp, Gilles Pécout and Margherita Botto, Torino: Giulio Einaudi editore, 2004].

In France it was Victor Hugo who first dreamed of being Garibaldi's biographer. His long life did not leave him time. But the life which his friend and contemporary Hugo did not write, was personally lived in part by Alexandre Dumas, albeit more briefly, recounting it as though he had personally partook in its most glorious hours. When Dumas finally reaches Hugo in the Panthéon, in Paris, on November 30, 2002, the president of the French Republic will pay homage to the "historiographer of Garibaldi […], [that] red-shirted Bonaparte"[1].

Actually, Dumas wrote various lives of Garibaldi for his contemporaries. All comprised, his writings make a heterogeneous group divisible in up of four principle sections. In the order of publication: *Montevideo ou une nouvelle Troie* from 1850[2], in which, as he recalled with pride, he recounted, for the first time in France, the actions of Garibaldi in South America; the *Mémoires* of Garibaldi, which he translated in 1860; *Les Garibaldiens. Révolution de Sicile et de Naples,*1861; and lastly, in 1862 in "Monte-Cristo", an integrated *corpus* which brought together various hitherto published texts, and from which *Viva Garibaldi. Un'odissea nel 1860* was born. The "odissey" refers to Dumas's travels from the spring to the autumn of 1860. During this period, having departed on a cruise in the Mediterranean, the author met and accompanied Garibaldi and his *Mille*, from Sicily to Naples.

We owe this last text to the erudite and literary rediscovery of Claude Schopp. Those readers who are unable to resist the temptation of immediately beginning the work, and thus wish to skip an analysis of its genesis, will note the unity which is conferred on the book by the adjacent progression of two principle adventures, the peregrinations of Dumas in the Mediterranean and the military expedition of Garibaldi in Sicily. On the other hand, those curious readers who are by nature a bit unsatisfied, and who understand the necessity of erudition, will be obliged to admit the hybrid nature of the book: a quality which makes the work genial, but which also leaves us with a literary monster, an image of its author. Both of these observations are merited. One of the strengths of *Viva Garibaldi* is its resistance to classifications which are too simple or drastic: it is neither solely an autobiographic narrative nor a fictional account, neither a first-hand account nor

---

[1] Cited from the speech pronounced in Paris by the president of the French Republic Jacques Chirac on the occasion of the in the Panthéon of the spoils of Alexandre Dumas, November 30, 2002.

[2] *Montevideo ou une nouvelle Troie*, Chaix, Paris 1850; *Mémoires de Garibaldi traduites sur le manuscrit original*, Michel Lévy Frères, Paris 1860, 2 vol.; *Les Garibaldiens. Révolution de Sicile et de Naples*, Michel Lévy Frères, Paris 1861.

a piece of journalistic correspondence; it is instead all of these. It has a composite quality, which is perhaps evidence of Dumas's search for a formula characteristic of the romantic artist: writer-prophet, always itinerant, who simultaneously dreams of being witness to and friend of the hero of the people, but also of being an indispensable agent and historian of his epoch.

It is true that Dumas is increasingly unable to distinguish the various lives of Garibaldi from his own. He is primarily drawn to recount them because he is a writer. As Benedetto Croce suggests, the hero permits Dumas to "translate into everyday life the ideal of his novels and dramas"[3]. The aesthetic sublimation, it should be understood, prevails. However, a contemporary of Dumas', Pierre Larousse, a great pedagogue of the 19th century, gives another explanation: Dumas, finding a more pleasing image of himself through Garibaldi, turns the writing into a sort of auto-celebration. A merciless criticism to which others subscribe enthusiastically, in particular Italians who upon encountering Dumas found him encumbering, such as the Garibaldian Cesare Bandi. The sentiment anticipates or draws on that proposed by the *Grand Dictionnaire universel du XIX siècle* under the entry dedicated to *Les Garibaldiens* a couple of years after its publication.

> The protagonist of the book is the author himself, furthermore well known for his modesty. He single handedly conquered the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies; yes, of course, there was here and there a red shirt to be seen, but really only as a background. As recompense for his glorious endeavors, Garibaldi appointed him to the position of artistic director, in Naples, and put the regal palace of Chiatamone at his disposition. All true; but why didn't the brilliant novelist invert the roles. In his place we would have nominated Garibaldi the artistic director; it was the least that he could do for an official of his merit, who had carried out a few favors for him as camp assistant…[4]

Above and beyond the satiric description of Dumas, Larousse's less than flattering sketch allows us to formulate some fundamental questions provoked by the text: questions in regard to the relationship between story and historical reality, which highlight the relationship between the narrator and his hero, all that which concerns the reserved reception of contemporaries to writings aimed at publicizing a political battle.

If we admit that *Viva Garibaldi* has a rich significance which arises directly from its complex and literary hybrid nature, we must retrace it by reconstructing the political an factual encounter between the hero and the writer: in order to ask how in this narrative Dumas addresses the asymmetry of such a relationship, without ceasing to place himself, as a writer, at the service of Garibaldi. Only by doing so will it be possible to discover what may be produced in terms of myth and knowledge through an intelligent interweaving of the two forms: not only what the text represented for Dumas's contemporaries but also for today's readers who have recently commemorated the bicentennial anniversary of the birth of both Dumas (1802) and Garibaldi (1807).

Chronicle of an announced encounter

---

[3] B. Croce, *Uomini e cose della vecchia Italia.* Seconda serie, Laterza, Bari 1927, p.340.
[4] P.Larousse, *Grand Dictionnaire universal di XIXe siècle,* Administration du Grand Dictionnaire, Paris 1865, vol. VIII, s.v. "Les Garibaldiens", p.1040.

It is not my intent that of meticulously recreating the origin and the nature of this text. It will suffice to remind the reader that *Viva Garibaldi* is the only attempt made by Dumas to bring together most of the various texts written by him about the intensely lived summer of 1860. Published between January and October of 1862 in the second version of his journal "Le MonteCristo", *Viva Garibaldi* is a confluence of three textual genres: articles and travel logs, already published in the journal "Le Monte Cristo" (the first version) or left unpublished in French; detailed reportage on the military operations from May to September of 1860 (this was as well meant to be immediately published in the Italian and French press); entire passages taken from old writings which had already reappeared on numerous occasions, such as *Montevideo ou une nouvelle Troie*, or even whole texts which Dumas had recently published (beginning in particular with his wartime correspondence) such as *Les Garibaldiens*.

Upon initial investigation, the text belongs to a literary trend which falls under the category of travel memoirs, in particular of travel via cruise ship. As its powerful subtitle states, *An Odyssey in 1860*, the Mediterranean and its ports seem to govern the autobiographical narration. As is noted, Alexandre is not on a maiden Mediterranean voyage: in the autumn of 1834 he promots a trip from Corsica to Spain, passing by the Italian coasts as well a those of the Ottoman Empire of Europe, Asia and Africa. The endeavor is undertaken with economic incentives; an editorial assignment. But it would be a bit simplistic to forget that his historical, geographical and anthropological ambitions are reflective of the trend of the "Invention of the Mediterranean"[5] which within a few years – we are in the years between two scientific and military expeditions, that of Morea (1829-1831) and that of Algeria (1839-1842) – would transform the geographical area into a privileged environment for scientific experimentation, for both experts and amateurs. Dumas's grand cruise program was not completely realized: he limits his circumnavigations to the seas which lap the coast of Italy. From this voyage he is able to produce two wonderful volumes of travel impressions from Naples and Sicily, *Le Corricolo* and *Le speronare*. He would come to know Greece and the other coasts of the Ottonman Empire not long after, and would returned there after a trip to the northern and western most parts of Russia and Georgia. In 1860, just after returning from this trip, Dumas again proposes a script which was very similar to the one from 1834: it proposes a long periplus in the Mediterranean, all the way to the Orient. The proposed voyage is never completed because of a lack of resources and because along the way he meets Garibaldi.

A unity of action, time and place is conferred on the narrative by the maritime adventure. An important section of the 56 chapters is dedicated to the travel preparations, the departure, the stops, the deviations and the coming and going of the crew.

The description of the misadventures encountered during the construction and the arming of his first schooner at Siro allows the author to take part in the anti-hellenism of the period which shows the Greeks as dishonest fitter-outs. Having been able to procure a ship after various happenings, *L'Emma*, Dumas describes his departure from Marseilles

---

[5] For an understanding of the context of this scientific discovery of the Mediterranean at the time of Dumas's first circumnavigation, cf. M.-N. Bourget, B. Lepetit, D. Nordman and M. Sinarellis, *L'invention scientifique de la Méditerranée, Égypte-Moreé-Algérie*, Editions de l'EHESS, Paris 1998.

on May 9 1860, just a few days after that of the Garibaldians from Quarto. He embarks on the *Emma* with around twenty others: eight members of the crew and eleven passengers, among them his lover, the young actress Émilie Cordier, disguised as an aspiring mariner and portrayed in the story as "the admiral", which Dumas evokes with even more discretion and indifference than that adopted by the Count of Montecristo in order to make his invitees forget about his much protected Haydée. The other travel companions are friends and children of friends, in particular artists, among them a painter, as in 1834, and a photographer, Le Gray, who was responsible for one of the most beautiful and celebrated portraits of Garibaldi, executed in Palermo. The portrait shows the general with his sword by his side; his gaze, sustained by a smile of superiority, losses itself, most probably, in the horizon of the Italian coastline.[6]

The time of the story is principally delineated by the description of the stops and calls: for example Marseille and Nice, illustrate two ways of recounting things. Nice is a mundane stop, one which recalls the recent past. After a somewhat forced exaltation of the benefits of the solitude provided by the countryside of Var: "Being alone is perhaps the only ambition which I was never able to realize. Certain situations exclude solitude"[7], in Nice Dumas emerges himself in the world. There he finds his Parisian friends, reunited by his friend and neighbor in the resort of the queen mother of Russia, the journalist and polemic figure Alphonse Karr. The interrupted serenity of Nice – recently disturbed by the annexation of Garibaldi's birth city to France. – contrasts with the portrayal of Marseilles, the city of all departures. Celebrated as the "second city of France", under the influence of Dumas's pen Marseilles becomes the symbolic image of the successful encounter between the past – the eastern legacy in the West – and the future, thanks to the "great works" and the unprecedented development of the port. Marseilles, the "concrete city" of progress and of commerce, also represents an important stage in the life of Alexander Dumas. We need only remember that the writer consecrates his only glory here, choosing it as the setting for his celebrated novel *The Count of Monte-Cristo*, earning himself – as he recalls with no modesty – the gratitude of Marseille's commoners and the bourgeoisie, who grant him honorary citizenship. It is also here that Dumas would earn his stripes as a Garibaldian sympathizer, collecting money in August of 1860.

For all of its ups and downs the voyage of Dumas is first and foremost a well-recounted adventure at sea. While reading *Viva Garibaldi*, one is reminded of some of the most wonderful pages of the *Count of Monte Cristo*, whose hero -- Edmond Dantès, turned "Simbad the mariner" – rediscovers freedom, finds wealth and resuscitate love at the end of the novel, in a small angle of the Mediterranean, between a rocky island and a luxurious yacht.

We are still in the Italian leg of a much a longer cruise, already planned out by January of 1860 and including a tour of the principle cities of Northern Italy: Genoa, Livorno, Turin, Venice and Milan. The following are the stages of Dumas's Mediterranean trip. Departure May 9 from Marseilles, transit to Nice on the May 14, stay in Genoa from May 18 to May 31, then the coast line of Corsica, the arrival in Sardegna on June 14, before turning towards Sicily where the *Emma* would arrive on June 10. Dumas remains in Sicily until July, dividing his time between the coastline and the

---

[6] Cf. illustration n.6 in the central insert.

[7] Cf. *infra*, p.95.

inland. From July 8 to July 14 he makes a trip to Malta. From there he again returns to Sicily, specifically, Catania. Only at the end of the month does he set off again for Naples, stopping shortly at Cittavecchia before reaching Marseille on August 4 and staying there until the August 10. On August 13 he is in the bay of Naples, and on the 14th in Messina. From August until mid-September he made two trips: first there and back from Sicily to Campania (Salerno, Castellmmare and Naples), then from Sicily to Capri. In the end he would leave Messina definitively for Naples once Garibaldi, already at siege in the capital city of the Bourbons, entreated him to join him in mid-September.

How exactly is it that this tourist's peregrination, which has no want of hunting stories – with wild boars and quails – nor of outings into the country, even in Sicily, whilst the battles rage, comes together with Garibaldi and the story of Italian unity?

In the first place we must give the Dumas due credit for having thought of Garibaldi from the very beginning of his cruise – in Nice, in Genoa. Some of Dumas's stops at sea outline a sort of political tourism tied to the person of Garibaldi: June 4 he is in Sardinia, June 5 he admires the island of Caprera, which he called "Garibaldi's island" without however daring to "make a pilgrimage to the house" for fear of being indiscrete after having recognized the silhouette of a woman.[8] The idea of taking advantage of the Italian route in order to complete the biography of Garibaldi which he has begun with his translation of *Le memorie* comes to mind immediately. In fact, he would offer his correspondence and his reportage for journals such as "Le Constitutionnel" or "La Presse".

But how does he go about informing himself during his voyage at sea? Above all, by collecting testimonies from Garibaldi and his Garibaldians. Nevertheless one can imagine that he never forgets any of those events. Before embarking he has already met Garibaldi in Turin; but after the departure of the expedition of the Mille it is not until June 11 in Palermo that the two men meet again during the voyage. Shortly there after they leave each other and meet again at sea a month later on July 19, off the coast of Milazzo, and then at Messina at the end of the month. In the meantime it is also true that Dumas has the opportunity of embracing Menotti, one of Garibaldi's son.

In other words, even if Dumas's trip becomes Garibaldian in nature starting in June, that does not mean that this happens in the company of the hero. It should be noted that Dumas knows the figure of his interest even before actually meeting him in 1860. *Viva Garibaldi* may only be fully understood by considering the literary and political relationships which precedes the encounter on the Mediterranean coast by more than a decade.

Garibaldi makes his first appearance in the writings of Dumas when the author is already a celebrity in the worldly and literary circles of Paris. In 1850, when *Montevideo ou une nouvelle Troie* appears for the first time in "Le Mois", and then a volume published by the house Napoléon Chaix, Dumas has already published hundreds of works, among them *Antony, Les trios musqueraires, le comte de Monte-Cristo, La reine Margot.* Although the Théâtre Historique, of which Dumas has recently become director, would ends the year in bankruptcy, no one will ever forget that, for a short period, the Parisian theater was able to prolong its existence thanks to the fame of Dumas and the

[8] Cf. *infra*, p.186

success of *Collier de la reine*, a theatrical work dedicated to the epic story of his musketeers.

Dumas, a distinguished man, is a public figure was capable of using his pen in the service of noble political causes. Such was the case when he is moved to write by the actions of the defenders of Montevideo against the armies of the Argentinean dictator Rosas. Dumas explains how General Pacheco, one of the components of the Uruguayan defense, pleads him to help with the resistance by "bringing fame to the heroes of the Montevideo's independence"[9]. As he would later write in the first issue of the journal he founds in Naples in October of 1860, Dumas, true to his practices, receives Pacheco in his home: "It is customary for me to receive the defenders of every freedom"[10]. In this way he comes to know Garibaldi through a third party.

> It is important that I tell you how I came to know of Garibaldi and how from the very beginning we considered each other friends, and afterwards brothers. It was 1848 […] He told me the particulars of the siege which lasted nine years like the siege of Troy and of that man who was at once Achilles, Diomedes, Ajax of his own epic. This man, whom you do not yet know and whose name had only just been pronounced in Italy, was Giuseppe Garibaldi[11].

The account of his virtual encounter with Garibaldi is in line with two common places which characterize the importance of a hero who is still exotic but already mythic: one, a hero is becomes known thanks to the testimonies of others (Pacheco y Obez, he too an epic character); and two, a hero must be connected to a heroic genealogy (in this case, the ancient demigods). Here, Dumas who almost confuses this third party testimony for an authentic encounter, credits himself with having informed both the Italian and French Public about the role carried out by Garibaldi as head of his Italian legion, from the summer of 1842 until 1844. To claim to have informed the Italians is obviously a rather excessive. He reaches the point of claiming, without total conviction, to have single handedly discovered if not created the hero. Meanwhile, 1850 is the year in which the first Italian biography of Garibaldi appears, written by Batttista Cuneo[12]. Faithful to a principle of writing which we find throughout *Viva Garibaldi*, the author mixes various degrees of testimonies to which he attributes an equal level of authenticity, at times giving a second hand testimony the status of a first hand account of an autobiographical nature. Many of General Garibaldi's characteristics as head the Italian volunteers at Montevideo – on land and at sea – return in Dumas's account of the Sicilian expedition.

The moment in which Dumas first writes of Garibaldi is also the moment in which the hero from Nice begins re-editing his own *Memorie*, taking advantage of an imposed break after his retreat into private life in 1849, and with the intent of earning a little money for his family, a detail which demonstrates how by the end of the 1840s the popularity of Garibaldi could already consider itself a marketable asset. From that moment the story of the *Memorie* itself becomes a complex adventure, repeating the common place which states that for mythical heroes is it difficult to procure just one original autobiography. Dumas is one of the traces of this multiple tradition. Five texts

---

[9] Cf. *infra*, p.20.
[10] "L'Indipendente", October 11, 1860, "Appendice".
[11] Ivi.
[12] G.B. Cuneo, *Biografia di Giuseppe Garibaldi*, Fory e Dalmazzo, Torino 1850.

are considered to be publications which reference Garibaldi's own *Memorie*. Two in Italian: that of Francesco Carrano, one of his fellow combatants, published in 1888, as an appendix to his account of the 1859 campaign, on the basis of the original manuscript, and Garibaldi's own version which was revised and completed in 1872. It was published in 1888 and would later be used as the base text for the official edition of 1932[13]. The other three versions are in English, French, and German and were printed respectively in 1859, 1860, and 1861. The author himself, Garibaldi, is at the origin of such a mass diffusion: Garibaldi had drafted an initial version of his autobiography as early as 1849, but he did not publish it himself. In 1850 he entrusted it to the American Theodore Dwight. The American was therefore the first. Anticipating even the Italians he put the autobiography on the Anglophone market in 1859. Alexandre Dumas published his translation in 1860[14], followed by that of Garibaldi's German companion, Speranza von Schwarz, who translated the manuscript of her illustrious lover in 1861, using the pseudonym Elpis Melena. All three: Dwight, Melena and Dumas offer adapted and translated versions of the canonical text, which Garibaldi will use again as a base when he decides to take up where he left off on the Italian version of his draft, adding events from 1849 to 1871.

What can the form and the content of the Dumas's intervention as a translator teach us? In the first place, Dumas knows, as always, how to utilize the existing *corpus*. He worked on the versions of Dwight and Carrano, from which he would actually copy entire pages later. His translation of Garibaldi's *Memorie* is thus already a many layered text. Not only; according to specialists, his version has the most variations, additions; and is the most disputable and far-fetched according a tradition of critical reading which goes from the British historian Trevelyan to the Italian specialist Romano Ugolini. Therefore, The translator Dumas aims to be interpreter and a writer. A fact which should not surprise anyone who makes the effort to imagine themselves in the 19th century where the scientific and professional demands of translation have nothing in common with the positivist deontology or with the ethics associated with translating which we would come to know later on. Moreover, this is not Dumas's first translation-adaptation from Italian: he seems to have signed an 1839 edition of *Jacopo Ortis*, a translation of Foscolo's masterpiece, which had struck him upon reading it at seventeen years old!

But with Garibaldi, Dumas wants to be more than a translator. He would like to propose himself as the historical authority on Garibaldi. This means having exclusive rights to sources as well as being a first-hand observer. In closing his translation Dumas leaves no doubt as to the role that he attributes himself in the telling of Garibaldi's story: "Garibalid's memoirs end here. Just as I obtained the first part of his life, I will one day obtain the second and it will be summed up in two words: exile and triumph[15].

In Genoa, while passing through in January 1860, Dumas gathers from his friend Bertani that Garibaldi is in Turin. He has dreamt of meeting him. The encounter is

---

[13] G. Garibaldi, *Memorie autobiografiche,* Barbera, Firenze 1888, versione which reappears in *Le Memorie di Garibaldi* in the final edition of 1872 ENSGG (Edizione nazionale degli scritti di Giuseppe Garibaldi), vol. II, Cappelli, Bologna 1932.
[14] *Mémoires de Garibaldi* cit. [trans. it. A. Dumas, *Garibaldi*, Riccardo Reim, ed. and introduction, Newton Company, Roma 2003].
[15] *Ibid.,* p.179.

recounted in *Viva Garibaldi* (chapter II) with spectacular staging which portrays Dumas and Garibaldi as near equals, beginning with these three elements: simplicity, action and prophecy. General Garibaldi is in a simple hotel room, without servants and without escorts save his four faithful apostles, among them Dumas's Hungarian friend Türr. Garibaldi is the only man standing, and he is pacing, as does a man of action when he is reflective, waiting to go to the king and Cavour. The prophetic nature of the scene is twofold: Dumas, without as much as introducing himself, predicts the future success of an expedition in Sicily for Garibaldi and Garibaldi, in turn, recognizes Dumas without having been told his identity.

The encounter on January 4 1860 has, moreover, a function of investiture for Dumas: he is giving the role of future cohort and friend of the general and depository of Garibaldi's *Memorie* and archive. Indeed, the encounter is marked by two signs of trust in Dumas on the part of Garibaldi: on the one hand, a full-clearance pass in the form of a valid recommendation, which Dumas's biographer, Claude Schopp, will define as a simple exchange of courtesies[16]. "I recommend to my illustrious friends my friend Alexandre Dumas"; moreover there is message to Bertani filed in the archives of Garibaldi, which confers legitimacy on Dumas as a Garibaldian "historiographer": January 11 1860, procure for Dumas my memoirs, which should be in the hands of Carrano or Miss …"[17]. Thus, the year 1860, that of our *Odissea*, marks the conclusion and the publication of the French version of Garibaldi's *Memorie*, and the encounter of Dumas with is hero in flesh and blood and the appointment of the writer to the role of literary witness to the leader of the Mille, from which he extracts some articles and a story entitled *Les Garibaldiens.* Is this a case of self-appointment by Dumas or official appointment on the part of a Garibaldi who is hungry for publicity? Dumas wishes to paint himself as both witness and close friend of the hero, as both an agent and indispensable link in the chain, while all the while serving as a historical polygraph.

With the embarkation of the Garibaldian volunteers at Quarto of Genoa during the night between May 5 and 6 1860, the triumphal entry, albeit scarcely military in nature – he arrived by train – of Garibaldi in Naples on September 7, and the surrender of the Bourbon troops following their defeat on the Volturno on October 2, Garibaldi and his men wrote some of the most glorious pages of their collective epic after the defense of Gianicolo. There is no dearth of Italian and international testimonies – journalistic, political and literary, contemporary and immediately subsequent, recalling the red shirt's expedition. From the Ligurian coast, where the obelisk adorned with the star of the Mille towers all the way down to Sicily, where there are more than twenty monuments –not counting the plaques – which commemorate the most victorious moments of the volunteers, it is clear that "to speak well of Garibaldi" – citing the title of an interesting collection of Garibaldian epigraphs[18] – means "to speak well of the Mille".

Therefore, Alexandre Dumas participates quite early on in this celebration. Up until then, the most noted text was *Les Garibaldiens. Révolution de Sicile et de Naples*,

---

[16] Cl. Schopp, *Alexandre Dumas*. *Le genie de la vie*, Fayard, Paris 1997, p.516.
[17] G. Garibaldi, *Edizione nazionale degli scritti di Giuseppe Garibaldi* (ENSGG), vol. XI, Epistolario, vol. V, Massimo De Leonardis ed., ISRI, Rome, 1988, lettera 1374, p.14.
[18] F. Guelfi, *Dir bene di Garibaldi*, *155 epigrafi raccolte e ordinate,* Luciano Cafagna, intro., Il Melangolo, Genoa 2003.

whose official publication date is 1861.[19] The volume, translated in various languages and revised various times between then and now, presents itself as an autobiographical story whose chronological framework is principally structured around the life and the travels of the writer more than by the adventures of Garibaldi. Everything begins at the end of the month of may in 1860, where Dumas, in Genoa, has just finished editing Garibaldi's *Memoires*– thanks, in particular, to the texts which Bertani consigned to him after their meeting in January – and has just received news of the Sicilian expedition, three weeks after its beginning. And *Les Garibaldiens* closes, not on September 7, the date of Garibaldi's entry into Naples, but on September 14, the same date as the General's letter sanctioning the entry of the French writer into a small Neapolitan building in the guise of the new "Director of the excavations and museums" of Pompeii and Naples. Between these two events which serve as bookends to the narrative, Dumas recounts, as a an eye witness and privileged confidant, the principle episodes of the crossing and conquering of the island and of the political and military events which preceded the arrival of the volunteers in Naples.

This story constitutes a large part of the military chapters of *Viva Garibaldi*. A sign that Dumas intended to substitute his travelers garb for the red shirts of the Garibaldinis. Let's examine the ways in which he does this and with what result.

2. Dumas the Garibaldian face-to-face with his hero.

In order to paint his own self-portrait as a Garibaldian, Dumas presents himself as the historian of the epopee by representing himself as faithful follower of Garibaldi before proclaiming himself supplementary volunteer to a political endeavor to which, like many of his contemporaries and French compatriots, artists, and writers of romantic provenance, he adheres and in which believes.

Alexandre Dumas's repeatedly defines himself as a historian. It is in fact a mission: "…As a historian we have two duties to fulfill: that of verifying the facts and that of supplying an explanation.[20] But before establishing and demonstrating a fact, one must collect the information. From the moment in which Garibaldi entrusted him with his manuscript, in January 1860, gathering written and oral information became and obsession. It is not clear which task takes priority for Dumas: carrying out the translation of the *Memorie* or continuing to work on a biographical work which would be truly original. Garibaldi entrusted Bertani with the task of helping Dumas. As some of the unpublished documents from their correspondence testify, it is a serious matter. Dumas needs Garibaldi's originals, but also particular details about the events, as this letter from 1860 demonstrates:

Dear Doctor,

First and foremost, thank you very for what you've done for me in Genoa. But that is not everything. You must gather together all of your memories on the deaths of Manara, and the death of Morosini, on the abandonment of his body; you must put into

[19] Cf. *supra*, note 2 .
[20] Cf. *infra*, p.157.

writing that which you recounted to me so poetically one night. I would like to do something as comprehensive as possible on Garibaldi. Help me by sending me everything to rue Ventimille 11, Paris. I reiterate my thanks and send my most sincere salutations[21].

The matter concerns clearing the facts surrounding some episodes regarding the defense of Rome, but above all one should note the imperative method and historical ambitions of Dumas: utilizing what we might call precise schemata laid out by others, aiming at an exhaustive veracity but privileging particulars capable of beautifying the writing and attracting the reader: "the abandonment of the cadaver" and other more poetically significant elements.

As such, his recounting of the expedition of the Mille gives a lot of space to second-hand testimonies, subsequently re-written by Dumas. The reconstruction of the origins (the "Sicilian revolution") and the beginnings of the expedition is borrowed from Vecchi, whom Dumas finds at the Villa Spinola, in Genoa, in mid-May. For the occasion he makes Garibaldi's friend into "the precise and elegant historian of the war of 1849" and one of the "protagonists of the great political drama"[22] of 1860, setting aside eight chapters for his testimony (XI-XVIII). In other points Dumas abandons first person narration and refers to events to which he was not a witness: from Marsala to Palermo (chapters XXII-XXVI); the battle of Milazzo (chapter XL). For the last weeks of August and the first ones of September the different registers of narration tied to the varying nature of the testimony, mix more often as if to accelerate the dramatic rhythm of the story. A friend, Cottrau, a musical editor in Naples, informs Dumas "first-handedly", as he himself notes (chapter XLIV-XLV), while a captain attests to the veracity of some information all the while leaving Dumas with the task of consulting the "particulars […] transmitted via telegraph, an instrument which as is quiet well known, does not allow for great explanations. [23] (Chapter LIV).

But the historian Dumas also likes testimony in the form of correspondence. The story is illustrated with the help of attached documents: letters and words from Garibaldi to the narrator, to the expedition's officials and even to the king, orders of the day, like that from August 24 in honor of the French Garibaldian Paul de Flotte who "died for Italy […] in the same manner as if he had been fighting for France"[24], official and popular proclamations – over ten of them reproduced in full – which range from the manifesto for the Annexation affixed on the balconies of the city to the order of La Masa, one of the victorious from Palermo, which would leave the author with "the collection of his proclamations and his daily agendas"[25]. Included in the *corpus* are a number of Garibaldi's public speeches: to the Sicilians, to the Neapolitan army, to the "good

---

[21] Archivio del Museo Centrale del Risorgimento, Roma – Istituto per la Storia del Risorgimento italiano (MCR-ISRI): Archivio J.W. Mario, Letters signed by A.Dumas and Agostino Bertani; b.434, 43.
[22] Cf. *infra*, p.124.
[23] Cf. *infra*, p.408.
[24] Cf. *infra*, p.348.

[25] Cf. *infra,* p.248.

priests"[26], without of course leaving out the historical declarations which delineate the great events. Calatafimi becomes a place of great ceremony with the proclamations of Garibldi, the momentary dictator of the provisionary Sicilian state, and the speech from May 14 1860 which predicts victory and the transformation of Sicily into an "Italian continent". Obviously, one may and one should call into question the authenticity of these texts, even more so than in the case of the oral testimonies which were immediately remodeled by Dumas.

Up till now, it has been common to look on Dumas's work with some suspicion. Dumas's contemporary detractors belonged to two groups, one different from the other: those who were against the unification of Italy, who defended the Pope on the Roman Question, and for whom Dumas's texts had little more value than the lies of vulgar antipapal and radical propaganda; and the second, the liberal progressives and Garibaldians, who accused Dumas of having profited personally from events which he had only followed from a comfortable distance, of having exaggerated his personal role with unthinkable vanity, to the point of insinuating himself in the greatest intimacy of the general by including the presence of his own lover disguised as a man. Other than the testimonies of volunteers such as Bandi, the best Italian example of this critical thread remains the partial pastiche of the *Garibaldiens* published in 1862 in the satirical periodical *Garibaldumasseide*, which like Pierre Larousse's *Grand Dictionnaire du XIX^a siécle* does not hold back anything – vanity, literary style, inadequate knowledge of Italian, inaction, etc. – in its critique of, as he is ironically dubbed by Bandi, "the Great Alessandro. Here he is evoking his grotesque clothing: ornate hat with red, white, and blue feathers. Readers and historians of subsequent generations have noted above all the improbability of certain particulars and the invasive presence of Dumas's literary fantasy. We will not return to discuss polemics surrounding the facts. It is clear that is impossible to read a literary text in the same objective and probably equally inadequate way that one deciphers any other defined source, even when it functions as a testimony. We should note however that one quite often finds excerpts in the correspondence and documents of Garibaldi which have been cited with great accuracy by Dumas. We should also remember that the author of *Viva Garibaldi* defines history above all as a well written text to be used for pedagogy as well as the publicizing of political use.

Beginning, in fact, with this mass of documents, Dumas deconstructs his role as a historian by creating and elaborating on the already concluded dramatic narrative while separately representing it in journals in the form of articles. It is in this sense then that we must interpret the already cited key words "to verify and to explain". Writing is the first objective of the author. After having heard the words of Vecchi, he affirms: "I was obliged to finish this action story"[27]. A task which he has no problem carrying out, on the spot, in the form of chronicles and the reportage for the press, some of which will actually be published. He is even more successful when he publishes *Les Garibaldiens* or brings together the majority of his *Odissea* in "Le Monte-Cristo", two years after the events. But his love of writing and his need – also in financial terms – to publish never transgress his great affinity for the Italian cause incarnated in the figure of Garibaldi. Dumas is faithful and completely adherent to the Garibaldian cause: his portrait of the

[26] Cf. *infra*, p.205.
[27] Cf. *infra,* p.124.

Bourbon supporters is always negative. Certainly, when he can, the author provides support for his argumentation in the form of documentary proof which are presumed to be neutral and objective, for example of a Swiss representative in Palermo, describing in detail the massacre of civilians at the behest of the "royals"[28]. Likewise, Dumas censures the culpable inertness of Cavour and his emissaries. Only Garibaldi and his men, to which one may also add the soldiers who desertered the Bourbon army, remain un-criticized. The fact is that for Dumas, being a historian means aspiring to the role of "official historiographer" of the great man. A mission which he will carry out at the cost – as he remembers – of perturbing those to whom he must send his reportage, such as the director of the journal "Le Constitutionnel", Mirès, who reneges the contract extended to the journalist out of a fear of discontenting his French readers, too politically moderate to applaud Garibaldi and his red shirts.

Therefore, before 1860, whenever Alexandre Dumas spoke of Garibaldi he did it as an admirer: unconditioned, sure, but whose only tie was a ten years of fruitful literary relationship. Already at the beginning of 1860, Dumas does not hide his enthusiasm for Italian Unification in his correspondence which appears in "Le Siècle":

I am writing some letters on the history of Italy and on Garibaldi immersed in the most certain information and in the events which are occurring in front of my eyes […] The French patriots are accused of being sans-culottes and *va-nu-pieds*; one cannot say otherwise of the Italian patriots […] one of my compatriots once said this to me and I repeat here this great truth: no, Italy is not the land of the dead…[29]

For Dumas, as for many others, Garibaldi is more than the symbol of this land of the living. He is the one who brings Italy to life; makes it aware. It is therefore urgent that he gets close to this man who awakes the dead.

Dumas insists on his proximity to the living hero. He expresses a sense of fraternal friendship which ties one to the other from their first encounter. The lexicon adopted by the two attest to this proximity: Garibaldi addresses Dumas "dear friend", and recommendeds him as an "illustrious friend" at the beginning of the story. And so the sentiment is mutual. Garibaldi defends him by evoking the transitivity of friendship when they come to complain about a Dumas's squandering of money by inviting twenty people to his table: "Of one thing I am sure, If Dumas has twenty people at his table, that there are indeed twenty friends"[30]. Garibaldi would even shout out in joy upon seeing him again for the first time in Palermo, telling him how much he had missed him.
A scene in the epilogue reaches the point of a paroxysm: "It was the first time that the general had addressed me informally. He embraced me crying with joy".[31] These literary formulas and vocabulary are common enough: Victor Hugo and Garibaldi, who had never met one another, addressed each other in correspondence as "dear friend". As far as the effusive behavior and the hugs, we know all too well how typical they were of the customs and the writing of the 19th century to mistakenly overvalue their significance. One should note that both Garibaldi and Dumas are more than reserved when it comes to

[28] Cf. *infra*, pp. 240-41.
[29] "Le Siècle", January 31 1860, cited in A.Collet, *Alexandre Dumas et Naples*, Slatkin, Genève 1994, p.26.
[30] Cf. *infra,* p.417.
[31] Cf. *infra,* p.416.

women, which are scarcely present in the story after the episode of Rosalia, the consort of Crispi, who insists on joining the combatants.

Two observations allow us to proceed beyond the certainty of mere banalities. First and foremost, an objective and poor ascertainment: in the so-called definitive version of his *Memorie*, like in *I Mille*, dedicated to the expedition, Garibaldi never mentions "his friend Dumas". The only friends he mentions are fellow combatants and even towards them he demonstrates a paucity of sentiment. Moreover, if Dumas insist on the friendship which Garibaldi lavishes upon him, he is on the other hand very careful not to overly present the relationship as reciprocal. In spite of the vanity of which the author is accused, he does not exaggeratedly dwell on the immediate expression of his own sentiments of friendship in relation to Garibaldi: he understood that the dynamic of the generous and providential hero works in an asymmetrical manner. Once you have been admitted into the circle of friends, it is enough to demonstrate that you are the object of the attention of the great man. There is no need to insist if not only on your own sense of gratitude. A recognition which Dumas expresses even more efficaciously through his portrait of the hero.

Dumas's Garibaldi is canonical: an excessive human nature which the expedition of the Mille elevates to the stature of national and international hero, destined to become mythic in his own lifetime.

Let's begin with that which is purely literary. Garibaldi is at once Edmondo Dantès and the count of Montecristo: he is the people, a people of the sea, obstinate and honest. He has suffered injustice and in fact, if his castel of If were America, he came to know prison and he evaded it. Like the count, when he calls himself by the name of Simbad the mariner, Garibaldi knows how to do everything at sea: "On board the general did everything: he was a the stoker, the machinist, the commander"[32]. Even on land wher he conducts his battle, but the parallels finish here. In contrast to Montecristo, Garibaldi does not follow up on any blind vendetta : he is not a tragic hero. He is commander of his own destiny. Dumas makes a "hero poet" of him when he recalls his South American past. Writing "he is a hero because he is a poet" is tantamount to recalling that the man of action is first and foremost a visionary. In the case of Garibaldi, we may add two elements: his enthusiasm and his passion – his stye – make of him a person who responds to the poetic parameters of Romanticism. Above all he is a hero because he knows how to translate grand destinies into words, both his own as well as that of Italy. With his poet Garibaldi, Dumas curiously anticipates the complement which Hugo would later confer upon the hero.

Dear Garibaldi,
In the Achilles's tent there was a lyre, and there was a harp in the tent of Guida Maccabeo; Orlando wrote in verse to Charlemagne; Federico II dedicated odes to Voltaire. Heroes are poets. You also prove this point. It was with great emotion that I read the noble and lyrical letter which you wrote to me. A letter in which you make the soul of Italy speak with the language of France. The same breath of justice and of liberty which inspire great actions inspire great thoughts.
Talk to you soon, illustrious friend
Victor Hugo[33]

---

[32] Cf. *infra*, p.145.
[33] Archivio MCR-ISRI, b.243, 36 (2): Lettera from Victor Hugo to Garivaldi, January 20, 1868.

Later on, by taking up writing again, Garibaldi moved even further into the realm of the poets. But for now he is busy, as a man and as a soldier, providing the poets of his time with material.

Garibaldi the man represents the perfect synthesis between common qualities and exceptional attributes. Two travel companions of Dumas remarked stupefied: he is "so great and at the same time so simple"[34]. Particulars on his simplicity abound. Simplicity of manners, needs and requests: he eats little, contenting himself at times with bread and water, sleeping on the bare ground, "on the dirt of the fields, on the sand of the beaches and the pavement of the street"[35]. It is repeatedly said that he loves sobriety. It is a moral and social quality – sobriety, poverty, and honesty go together – certainly, but it is also a natural and innate virtue: at the time, frugality is for scientists and travelers alike, the principle characteristic of the quintessential Mediterranean man – one who needs little and is capable of a lot. But Garibaldi is just as simple in his public life: he is not fond of fancy uniforms, contenting himself with his red shirt, he is uncomfortable in the palaces of the king of the Two Sicilies and he refuses to let himself be kissed on the hands or be addressed with the title "your Excellence" (Chapter 26). When a young farmer confers the title of "general of the heart"[36] upon him, he recognizes the quality of an authentic public sentiment in his simplicity.

But this simple man is great. In the first place because he is handsome. In idealized portraits of him, physical beauty becomes the unifying trait between simplicity and poetic greatness, without having to disrupt the physiognomy in fashion at the time – beauty and harmony are enemies of complexity. In *Viva Garibaldi* Dumas reproduces in detail the physical portrait of Garibaldi already constructed in 1850 in Montevideo. This is not the first time that the portrait is recycled. It had already been published in "L'Indipendente" on October 11 1860.

Garibaldi is a forty-year-old man, of medium stature, well-proportioned, with blond hair, blue eyes, a greek nose, chin and forehead, those features which approach as much as possible an authentic type of beauty, like that of Jesus in the *Last Supper* of Leonardo Da Vinci, to whom he is very similar in appearance[37].

It is useless to dwell on this syncretic icon in which ancient Greece and Renaissance Italy converge. More important and lasting will be the iconic image of Garibaldi as a Christ like figure, an association which has long future after 1848. We should solely observe that from the very beginning Dumas adopts the image of a forty-year-old Garibaldi, while in 1860 he has already surpassed 50 years of age. Heroes, it is well known, do not grow old! It is in this way that Dumas is able to express the greatness of the man transformed into hero.

That which is celebrated is indeed the "great commander of the Italians" or a character "bigger than Washington or Cincinnato". His heroic status is backed-up by his past: he is the leader of the myriad endeavors in the two worlds. And, as is noted, Dumas contributed to the codification and the diffusion of the images. In this *Odyssey in 1860*

---

[34] Cf. *infra*, p.199.
[35] Cf. *infra*, p.346.
[36] Cf. *infra*, p.137.
[37] Cf. *infra*, p.20.

Dumas does even more, he wants to nationalize Garibaldi in the eyes of the entire world: he becomes a full-scale national hero, in a political and military sense. Politically, even though he seizes every opportunity to censure the attitude and the actions of the "diplomatic Cavour", Dumas insists on the loyality of Garibaldi to the Piedmont king. Therefore, this text forges the image of a positive binomial of Italian unity, constituted by two men of action, king Vittorio Emanuele and Garibaldi, excluding any intermediary such as Cavour. This political construction of a ecumenical Risorgimento which makes king Vittorio Emanuele "a progressive prince amongst the reactionary kings" and Garibaldi his armed right-hand man is obviously not original to Dumas. In Italy, and also in France, it is a product of many liberals and radicals who, like the volunteer poet of the Mille Maxime Du Camp, who remembers the antiquity of liberal traditions in Piedmont; a territory whose sovereign is the only one to not forcefully revoke the constitution conceded in 1848[38]. Nevertheless this version of the politician Garibaldi who clashes with the monarchy in 1860 is not subject to complete consensus. Many republicans never admit the he is in disagreement with the prince of Savoia and they make themselves heard. In "L'Indipendente", Dumas reproduces the opinion of his elder brother Lamartine, the republican poet who, after having celebrated "Garibaldi the cosmopolitan hero whose homeland is fire", fails to hide his difference of opinion with and his absolute renouncing of the monarchy: "As far as the annexation of Piedmont and the monarchy are concerned, I disagree with you and the dictator of Sicily. As a republican from 1848, it seems illogical to me to make Italy into a monarchy through the work of the republicans"[39]. But it will be Garibaldi himself, ten years later, to deliver the fatal blow to the idea of this alliance between the dynastic *Risorgimento* and the popular and democratic *Risorgimento*, thus rendering a part of this Odyssey obsolete after the death of Dumas. In 1875, Garibaldi publishes his memories from the expedition of the Mille, a work which he is particularly interested in having published in French. In 1875, the French version is dedicated to "the republican France and the martyrs of liberty". In the preface, Garibaldi denounces both the moderate government (the heirs of Cavour) and the Italian monarchy which is hostile and egotistic towards any type of progress[40]. While Garibaldi the poet of his own autobiography feels the need to settle the score, from Aspromonte to Mentana, Dumas's Garibaldi is still a serene political hero, concerned with efficaciously working toward unification and alien to any vindictive thought.

On the battle field the panoply of the armed hero is inexhaustible. We encounter the individual, traditional qualities of the "brave General" (courage, temerity, strength and grace). However, for Dumas, it is the collective virtues of the leader against his enemies as well as towards his men which prevail: to begin with, the realism of the commander-strategist who Dumas defines a veritable "center of operations". The author describes a Garibaldi who reflects before attaching, who is wary of the exploits of the undisciplined who are without future (chapter XXV), and who is unwavering in his negotiations with enemies. For his men, Garibaldi is an example to imitate, a commander

---

[38] M. Du Camp, *La Résurrection italienne* in *Orient et Italie*. *Souvenirs de voyage et de lectures*. Didler, Paris 1868, p.110.

[39] "L'Indipendente", October 11 1860: correspondence, Letter from Lamartine from August 15 1860.

[40] G. Garibaldi, *Les Mille*, Charles Sylvain, Paris, 1875, pp. IX-XV.

who is able to communicate with simplicity to everyone, who recognizes the virtues and the sacrifices of every man, from the oldest to the youngest of the red shirts. The altruism of the leader is summed up in the formula: "he thinks first of his men and then of himself"[41]. Garibaldi is the possessor of an arsenal of supernatural qualities, of which Dumas does not hesitate to make use. And it is at this point in which we enter into the sphere of myth.

The Garibaldi in *An Odyssey* is indicative of myth in its two most banal acceptations: one, his figure supports a legendary story; and two, he becomes a simplified image made to incarnate the values of one or more groups who then recreate themselves in imitation of that image.

The legendary hero is repackaged as a figure that the masses cannot beat but which can win over the masses. Dumas abandons every concern with historical objectivity when he describes Garibaldi against whom the enemy's gunfire merely grazes "the sole and the spur of his boot", when he makes him the protagonist of a "battle of giants" (chapter XV). His mere presence is disarming; just appearing in front of the general Ghio's army is enough to make them lower their weapons and flee. Dumas does not always take stock in every thing he recounts. At times he refers to the naïve admiration of some of the followers of Garibaldi: "the soldiers who fought at Calatafimi say that during combat the general's red shirt was struck by one hundred and fifty bullets, but that after combat he shook the shirt out and all of the bullets fell to the ground"[42]. Occasions such as these allow Dumas to remind the reader that no myth is truly legitimate until transported by the kind of popular fervor and affection which has the power of turning the ordinary objects associated with the epic of the hero into cult objects: in this case, Garibaldi's red shirt, the two handkerchiefs he wore around his neck, and above all his magnificent American saddle, the story of which Dumas is unable to resist telling (Chapter XIII). Who has not heard of Garibaldi's saddle? In reading the story of the general's saddle, I myself cannot help but remember a certain young French historian, present at Villa Farnese to commemorate the bicentennial of the French Revolution. I was promised a view of "the" saddle of Garibaldi by a women who was religiously conserving it in a villa in the Veneto region. Perhaps also she, if she pauses to read this preamble before reading *Viva Garibaldi,* will remember that very same moment. But let's get back to the cavalier.

Which values are communicated in this myth magnanimous and undefeatable hero, as revisited here by Dumas? An important recent essay underlined the sacred dimension of the nation during the Risorgimento. The essay examines images associated with a community vision which is also constructed on violence and exclusion[43]. of Dumas's Garibaldi gives support to the idea of a Risorgimento which is consecrated through the figure of the man of providence who makes himself instrumental to the destiny of Italy. As is the case in Caltanisetta on May 27, where he brought home victory with the help of the archangel Michael (Chapter XXXI), Garibaldi receives supernatural aid and cannot therefore radically reject Christianity. This is demonstrated by the

---

[41] Cf. *infra,* p.218
[42] Cf. *infra*, p.331
[43] A.M. Banti, *La nazione del Risorgimento. Parentela, sanità e onore alle origini dell'Italia unita*, Einaudi, Torino 2000.

episodes with Garibaldi's chaplain, father Giovanni, in which the good priests and their faithful are distinguished from the evil ecclesiasts who are friends of the Bourbons and the Pope.

Garibaldi himself becomes Italy's regenerator, a galloping incarnation of the Risorgimento blazing across the peninsula, just as Napoleon was for Hegel: a *Welgeist* on horseback, moving across the universe, victory upon victory. In the pages dedicated to the bandit Santo Meli, Dumas gives some particulars which should not be ignored. The pages are part of an apparently insignificant chapter collocated however in the exact center of the book. (Chapter XXVIII): the author claims to be crossing "beautiful Sicily which regenerates itself with the breath of the man of Providence". Which regenerates itself or purifies itself? And here things are clarified: Garibaldi is not only the liberator but also the purifier of "a country corrupted by four hundred years Spanish and Neopolitan domination", he is in fact representative of the purity of the Latin race, as it is defined by certain Garibaldian moderates.

> In this moment in Italy there are two different populations distinct in civilization, homeland and in fact race: the pure Latin race, which crosses the sea in order to liberate Sicily and which finds in Sicily a race which is the mixture of Latins, Greek, Saracens, and Normans. If we are too severe with Santo Meli, the Sicilians might say that one of their first patriotic acts of one of their Northern Italian brethren was their execution of a Sicilian patriot[44].

Garibaldi does not express an opinion on the execution of Santo Meli, entrusted to civil justice. It is magnanimous and fair. Dumas does not recount to his reader that Garibaldi, one month after the episode of Santo Meli, asked his lieutenant Bixio to forcefully repress the revolt of the farmers of Bronte. The lesson which he wants to convey is clear: in 1860 – at the time of the conquest of Sicily – the unification of Italy may be read as a victory of the north over the south. But that victory only has significance in so much as it confirms the supremacy of the true Latin race, that which history would preserve from every contamination. Nevertheless, and it is here that Dumas distances himself from the violent "canon of the Risorgimento" previously evoked, the man of providence which incarnates the rebirth of a pure Italy is also, in that moment, the only one who can reconcile, with his heroic breadth, the population of two races. Italy is created for absorption, not for exclusion; this is the mythic truth of Dumas's Latin-Mediterranean hero, with the qualification that race is determined by history before blood. This conception of the encounter between the providential hero-liberator-unifier and the conception of a pure Latin race, adopted to explain the Risrgimento, corresponds to one of the possible historical uses of the Garibaldian myth of the battle for the emancipation of the people. It is certainly not the only one, but it is most definitely present in Dumas and has been reused many times in the history of contemporary Italy.

Now we have arrived at the moment of reckoning for the two characters: what can Garibaldi gain from these texts and what is Dumas looking for in the tracks of the leader of the Mille.

By attracting and tolerating the attention of Dumas, Garibaldi is able to associate himself with one of the most capable constructors of heroes. He realizes that his personal popularity and that of the movement he is conducting will be greatened. The writer sends

---

[44] Cf. *infra*, pp.260-61.

correspondence which functions as war reportage to both the Italian and the French press. Moreover, there are traces of this in every passage of *Viva Garibaldi*, beginning with: "I write to you from …" These chronicles are an efficacious form of propaganda. This is another reason why Garibaldi confers official functions on Dumas in the provisional government in Naples. Dumas, by establishing himself just a walk away from the Castel dell'Ovo in the Chiatamone building – now inexistent – is able to simultaneously conclude his Garibaldian story, enjoy himself in the administration of the museums and the ruins, and launch a journal which Garibaldi sponsors … independence.

The journal that my friend Dumas wants to create in Palermo will have the wonderful name of "L'indipendenza" and it will merit the name even more so if it starts off with the intention of not sparing anyone, myself included, if ever I were to err from by my duty as son of the people and soldier of unification[45].

Although Garibaldi concede this license of independence, it should be said that Dumas never had cause to "not spare" his hero and protector.

Sure, Dumas writes about Garibaldi in order to earn a bit of money. But he is spurred to trace his footsteps by something altogether different. Thirty years after the revolution of Louis, Garibaldi gives him the opportunity to incarnate the ideal of the romantic poet, man of action and prophet of grand individual and collective destinies. Does he truly think he has personally participated in the expedition in Sicily. Sure, he did not combat, but he did contribute to the collection of arms and money, by putting his fame as an author at the service of Garibaldi, collecting funds in Marseilles. Sure, at times Dumas exaggerates his role as mediator, for example in the instance with the liberal and revolutionary Neapolitans. The fact remains that the French writer, who never describes himself as a warrior, would like to mark his place as a character in the epopee. Out of vanity? Perhaps, but even in this case the *licit minimum* is too easy. Dumas dreams of being Garibaldian in order to rediscover his personal political genealogy and authenticate his personal story. Returning to the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies he remembers that he was bothered by the authorities in 1836 because of his friendship with the *carbonari*. He was already a type of Garibaldian, *ante litteram*. But above all he is Garibaldian in the form of a son when he returns to the lands of Naples in order to vindicate his father that was poisoned there during his return from the campaign in Egypt. Already when writing about Napoleon, his intentions are first and foremost to speak about his father[46]. With Garibaldi he is more successful because he can he is able, in a sense, to fight along side his father. The volunteer Dumas had every reason to confront the Bourbons: "just as Ernani was at war with Charles V, I am at war with the king of Naples"[47]. He would like to demonstrate that his personal war is an ancient one, and that it is, thanks to Garibaldi, the same as that of the people.

In Conclusion, we have Italy and the Mediterranean. Garibaldi's initiative assumes this breadth only because it corresponds with the Mediterranean dream of

---

[45] In French, also in the Italian version of the first issue of "L'Indipendente".

[46] Cf. on this subject L. Mascilli Migliorini, "Preface" by Alexandre Dumas, *Napoleone,* Tullio Pronti, Napoli 1999, pp. 5-10 (first edition 1839).

[47] Cf. *infra,* p.168.

Dumas and of his French readers. The author of the *Comte de Monte-Cristo* is one of the earliest and most vigorous literary interpreters of the Sansimonian thesis, according to which, following the *Système de la Méditerranée* of Chevalier, the future of Europe and of the West, passes through the sea of its origins. By making the Mediterranean coasts the battle field of the new volunteers of liberty, Dumas confers a strong, new significance to this Mediterranean dream: that of the political adventure which completes the artistic adventure.[48]

[48] We should note that the Theater San Carlo in Naples was chosen to present the first show of a contemporary opera entitled *Garibaldi en Sicile*, on October 23 2004. It is a lyric opera in two acts and eighteen tableaux vivants, libretto by Kenneth Koch, freely adapted from Alexandre Dumas the father's *Les Garibaldiens*. Music by Marcello Panni. I thank my friends Giuseppe Talamo from the Museo centrale del Risorgimento in Rome, Matteo Sanfilippo, Luigi Mascilli Migliorini e Sergio Luzzatto, to whom we owe the initiative for this project.