

# The History of the Twentieth Century

## Episode 22

### “La Forza del Destino”

#### Transcript

[music: Fanfare]

The land of Italy is the birthplace of opera, and for 400 years Italy has defined the form. In the 19th century, Italian opera joined the Romantic movement. Composers like Gioachino Rossini, composer of *The Barber of Seville* and *William Tell*, Vincenzo Bellini, Gaetano Donizetti, and the great Giuseppe Verdi defined the Romantic opera, full of passion, melodrama, gorgeous music, and cruel twists of fate.

One of Verdi's operas is entitled *La Forza del Destino* – The Force of Destiny. It could be the title of many romantic operas. It could apply to Italy itself, which began the 19th century as a shattered nation, and ended it against all odds as a world power.

But in opera, as in life, there is seldom triumph without tragedy.

Welcome to *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

[music: Verdi, Overture to *La Forza del Destino*]

Episode 22. La Forza del Destino.

The last time Italy was a united kingdom was the moment before Belisarius got off the boat on his mission from the Emperor Justinian to reconquer it for the Roman Empire.

Since the Renaissance, Italy, fractured into numerous small states, has become the boxing ring of larger powers, the arena in which France and Austria tested their mettle against one another.

One of these small states was the Duchy of Savoy, which lay in what we would call northwestern Italy, along the border with France. In the 18th century, the Duke of Savoy acquired the title King of Sardinia, which was pretty cool for him, because now he got to call himself a king, although he still maintained his seat in Savoy, because, hello, French Riviera! I'm supposed to give all this up to go live in Sardinia? As if!

During the Napoleonic Wars, Sardinia allied with Austria and the other coalition powers against France, which led to Napoleon invading and occupying the continental territories of the kingdom, forcing the King of Sardinia to pack up his beach umbrella and actually move to Sardinia. Reportedly his first words when he got off the boat were: “Where am I, again?” while his advisors patiently explained to him that Sardinia is an island, which means the French can't get to him because rule, Britannia, Britannia rules the waves.

Meanwhile, Sardinia's continental territories were organized by the French into the Piedmontese Republic – “Piedmont” coming from the Latin term for “foot of the mountains” because of the region's proximity to the Alps. A couple of coalitions later, Napoleon annexed the Piedmont outright. He also reorganized other Italian states into revolutionary republics modeled on France.

I'm not going to get into all of it here because, spoiler alert, Napoleon's reorganization of Italy is not going to survive Napoleon's downfall, but I will point out that one of these states, the Cisalpine Republic, was the first to use the Italian tricolor, a flag modeled on the French tricolor, but substituting green for blue. The Italian tricolor would also not survive Napoleon's downfall, but as the 19th century progressed, it would take on a new life as the flag of Italian nationalism and unification. The Italian tricolor is the flag of Italy today.

After the downfall of Napoleon, the victorious great powers met at the Congress of Vienna to establish the ground rules for post-Napoleonic Europe. The Congress reestablished the Kingdom of Sardinia, including its Piedmont possessions, and added in Genoa, and from this point forward this kingdom is often referred to as Piedmont-Sardinia, kind of like Austria-Hungary. The rest of northern Italy was restored as a collection of small duchies – city-states, really. What we today would think of northeastern Italy was under the control of Austria, including many ancient and well-known Italian cities such as Milan and Venice. The duchies were formally independent, but were in reality more like Austrian puppet states ruled over by Habsburgs, the Austrian Kaiser's lesser relatives.

Central Italy had been under control of the pope. It was reorganized into a republic by Napoleon, and then restored to the pope by the Congress of Vienna. Papal rule was deeply, deeply conservative. In the 19th century, Rome was the only city in western Europe that still had a Jewish ghetto. This Roman ghetto was a walled-off area of one of the less-desirable neighborhoods of the city where all Jews were forced to live. The gates were locked every night at sunset, presumably to protect Christian Rome from whatever it was they imagined Jews did at midnight. These barbaric restrictions on Jewish Romans had been in place by papal fiat since 1555, this in spite of the fact that Rome had had a vibrant Jewish community since before there was such a thing as Christianity.

The word “ghetto”, by the way, is itself Italian, derived from the Venetian island that served as Venice's Jewish ghetto centuries earlier. Today, of course, we use it more generally to describe an ethnic enclave within a larger city, though it still has many negative connotations.

South of the Papal States in the post-Napoleonic Italy lay the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, an oddly-named nation, since its name seems to imply peninsular Italy is somehow a second Sicily. Actually, when the southern part of the Italian peninsula was an independent kingdom, it was called the Kingdom of Naples. The two kingdoms ultimately became united under the name Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, for some reason, ruled by a branch of the Spanish royal family, an arrangement that was confirmed by the Congress of Vienna.

And so this is the state of the Italian peninsula as of 1815. In spite of the Congress's best efforts to return Italy to the 18th century, though, many Italians had tasted of the French ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity, and were not ready to go back to living in fractured neo-feudal city-states. Nationalism was on

the rise across Europe, and Italians could hardly be blamed for wondering how much greater Italy might become as a unified nation.

Of course, as far as the Congress of Vienna was concerned, breaking Italy down into fractured 18th-century neo-feudal city-states was the whole point. They were trying to hit Ctrl-Z on the whole French Revolution thing and eradicate any trace of liberal republican nationalism. Klemens von Metternich, the Austrian Foreign Minister who was one of the architects of the post-Napoleonic peace, famously said:

*The word "Italy" is a geographical expression, a description which is useful shorthand, but has none of the political significance the efforts of the revolutionary ideologues try to put on it, and which is full of dangers for the very existence of the states which make up the peninsula.*

An Italian would be quick to point out that Metternich was far from being a neutral observer as long as the country he represented, Austria, was controlling substantial Italian territory. In fact, if you take a close look at post-Napoleonic Italy as I have just described, you realize you are looking at a collection of mostly-backward states mostly ruled by popes, Austrians and other assorted foreigners.

The one exception is Piedmont-Sardinia. Here is the one piece of Italy actually being ruled by a local boy. Well, a Savoyard, but close enough. I hear he's even been to Sardinia – and he's not the pope, another plus. And so, Piedmont-Sardinia became the focus of Italian national aspiration across the peninsula. Italians dreamed of a united Italy, a dream that in Italian came to be called the *Risorgimento* (the Resurgence).

Secret societies were organized to work toward the *Risorgimento*. From the south of Italy came the *Carbonari* (literally the "charcoal-burners"). Exactly when and where the *Carbonari* came into being is a mystery since it was, you know, a secret society. Keep in mind that at this time, to advocate for Italian unification was regarded as treason by the governments of these various small states, so the *Carbonari* tried not to leave a paper trail. In fact, they were organized like an underground movement, with individual cells and very few people privy to the larger structure. The *Carbonari* were mostly active in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies and in the Papal States. Further north, a Genoan by the name of Giuseppe Mazzini organized a society called *La Giovine Italia*, or "Young Italy", whose stated goal was a united, independent, republican Italian state. These movements aimed for a day when popular revolts would break out across the peninsula, overthrowing the old order and ushering in a new Italy.

Meanwhile, as the 19th century progressed, and as these societies took root, Piedmont-Sardinia began to distinguish itself as the most advanced of the Italian states. The whole "not being governed by foreigners or popes and not being a neo-feudal state" thing was probably a factor in this, as well as proximity to a constitutionally-monarchical France that was still one of the leading countries of the world. Piedmont-Sardinia became the most industrialized Italian state, built the most railroads, and boasted a highly educated citizenry.

In the 1820s and 1830s, there were a number of revolts in the Italian states, including Piedmont-Sardinia, by liberals seeking to convert the absolute monarchies under which they lived into constitutional

monarchies or republics. The secret societies were behind many of these revolts, but all were eventually suppressed – until 1848.

That was the year that liberal uprisings broke out all across Europe. In Italy, revolts in Piedmont-Sardinia, Tuscany, the Papal territories, and the Two Sicilies formed constitutional governments in all four of these states. Meanwhile, Italians in the Austrian-controlled regions of Italy were also in revolt against the kaiser. The cities of Milan and Venice had ousted the Austrian garrisons and appealed to their fellow Italians for support. These four newly-liberalized constitutional states (Piedmont-Sardinia, Tuscany, the Papal States, which is now calling itself the Roman Republic, and the Two Sicilies) answered the call with an invasion of Austrian Italy. Unfortunately for the Italians, Destiny had not quite made up its mind yet, and the Austrians were able to put down the revolts and expel the invaders. Tuscany, the Two Sicilies, and the Papal States revoked their constitutional reforms, and their respective monarchs, with the help of foreign armies, restored absolute rule.

The defeated Piedmont-Sardinia was forced to pay reparations to Austria, and its King, Charles Albert, abdicated in favor of his son, Victor Emmanuel II. But the constitution that Charles Albert conceded to the kingdom, known in Italian as the *Statuto Albertino*, and in English as the Albertine Statute (after Charles Albert) lived on. Piedmont-Sardinia became a centralized constitutional monarchy with a Chamber of Deputies and a Senate, and in fact the only constitutional state in Italy. The *Statuto Albertino* was to become the basis of the Italian constitution, and would remain in effect for a century until 1948.

Still smarting from the defeat at the hands of the Austrians, the new liberal government of Piedmont-Sardinia, led by Victor Emmanuel's minister, the Count Cavour, remained committed to the cause of Italian unification. Or at least, to the cause of making Piedmont-Sardinia into a larger country. To the government of Piedmont-Sardinia, this was all the same thing.

As for Italian nationalists elsewhere on the peninsula, many of them were committed republicans, and were suspicious, as an Italian monarchy was not exactly what they had in mind. Others, on the other hand, gladly embraced this idea, being more closely focused on the unification piece of this goal than on the republican piece.

But what Piedmont-Sardinia needed was allies. An opportunity emerged when the Crimean War broke out in 1853. France and Britain recruited Piedmont-Sardinia to join with them in defending the Ottoman Empire against the Russians. Piedmont-Sardinia contributed an expeditionary force to the war, which bought it a seat at the Congress of Paris, where the peace was negotiated, and also gave it an opportunity for it to make its case to the two major powers of western Europe that Italy should be freed from Austrian domination.

Well, it must have worked, because in 1858, France, under Napoleon III, signed a secret alliance with Piedmont-Sardinia aimed against Austria. In 1859, Piedmont-Sardinia succeeded in provoking Austria into attacking it, which was all part of the plan, because it activated the secret alliance and gave France an excuse to jump into a war against Austria. This time, thanks to the Force of Destiny and with a little help from Napoleon III, Austria was defeated. She was forced to cede the Italian province of Lombardy, which includes Milan, to France, because the Austrian Emperor Franz Josef refused to make any concession

directly to a pipsqueak little country like Piedmont-Sardinia. But it doesn't matter in the end, because Napoleon III promptly turned Lombardy over to Piedmont-Sardinia. Meanwhile, Piedmont-Sardinia had also occupied central Italian territories: Parma, Modena, Tuscany, and Romagna, the last of which was part of the Papal States. With the blessings of the French and the British, and over the vehement objections of the Austrians, referenda were held in these territories, and they all voted to be annexed by Piedmont-Sardinia.

Now, you may be wondering: What does Napoleon III get out of this deal that makes him so eager to go to bat for Piedmont-Sardinia? The answer is, he got Piedmont-Sardinia to cede to France French-speaking territories in the western Piedmont, Savoy and Nice, which is ironic when you consider the fact that King Victor Emmanuel II is of the House of Savoy and the region of Savoy is his ancestral seat. Still, it was thought to be a price worth paying for the goal of Italian unification, not to mention it would make it just a little bit harder for the inalienable right of all Italian-speaking people to live together within a single Italian state if that Italian state isn't willing to concede the same right to French-speaking people.

Now, I promised you Verdi, so let's pause for a moment while we get caught up with him. Giuseppe Verdi was born in 1813, in the Duchy of Parma, although actually it was part of the French Empire at that time, because Napoleon. His father was an innkeeper. Giuseppe showed an aptitude for music at an early age, and when I say that he showed an aptitude for music at an early age, what I mean was he was hired by his parish church to be the church organist and was being paid a salary for it at the precocious age of 8. By his early 20s, Verdi was in Milan and breaking into opera. He married and had two children, but sadly he would lose first his daughter, then his son, and then his wife, all before his 27th birthday.

Devastated, Verdi resolved never to write music again. Fortunately for the world, his friends talked him out of it, and in 1842, he premiered his third opera, *Nabucco*, the biblical story of the Jewish exile to Babylon. *Nabucco* is the king whom we English-speakers call Nebuchadnezzar. *Nabucco* was a huge success, and Verdi was on his way.

Now, I can't talk about *Nabucco* without mentioning the chorus, "*Va, pensiero*", often referred to in English as "The Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves". It was inspired by the 137th Psalm, the one that goes: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion."

There is a story that at the premiere of *Nabucco*, the audience in Milan demanded an encore of this chorus, in defiance of Austrian regulations against public political displays, so moved were they by the chorus's language of remembering the lost country. It's a nice story, but unfortunately, more recent historiography shows it's not true. "The Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves" would gradually take on political significance, but it did not catch fire on opening night. When Verdi died in 1901, this is the song the crowd sang as they poured into the streets to lament his passing. And there are those in Italy to this day who would like to see it become the national anthem.

*Nabucco* made Verdi famous. It was performed around the world. In the early 1850s, he composed a string of three operas that sealed his reputation as the preeminent composer of modern Italian opera: *Rigoletto*, *Il trovatore*, and *La traviata*. Verdi chafed at the interference of Austria censors, who demanded

libretto changes that Verdi felt hurt the operas. *Rigoletto*, with its story of a plot against the life of a king, was particularly touchy, although the censors relented when the king was changed into a duke.

Verdi's best-known music is probably the song "La donna è mobile" from *Rigoletto*, which premiered in Venice in 1851. The title means something like "The Lady is Fickle", and it's a lighthearted song that was immediately popular, and soon after the premiere you could hear it all over Venice. Actually, its cheery tone belies that it gets used in a rather dark way in the opera.

And I suppose now is a good time to introduce Enrico Caruso, the great operatic tenor, who was a rockstar in the early 20th century. Now, obviously I'm using the term "rockstar" figuratively, since rock n' roll won't be invented for another half-century, but Caruso became big the same way by touring widely and making many recordings on the newfangled phonograph machines. Caruso's bright voice came through clearly, even through this primitive technology. It won him millions of fans who never would have had the chance to hear him sing in person. He really was the world's first celebrity as we understand that term today. So yeah, a rockstar in every sense except, you know, he sang opera and not rock. Anyway, here is Caruso singing "La donna è mobile"

[music: Verdi, "La donna è mobile"]

In 1859, after Lombardy came under control of Piedmont-Sardinia and Italian unification seemed within reach, Italian nationalists took to proclaiming "Viva V.E.R.D.I.", slyly using Verdi's name as an acronym for *Vittorio Emanuele, Re d'Italia* – or Victor Emmanuel, King of Italy – a phrase that spoken plainly could get you arrested for treason if you were in Rome or Venice or Naples when you said it.

Which brings us to the most important figure in Italian unification. Giuseppe Garibaldi was born in 1807 in Nice. He became a merchant marine captain and was recruited into the Young Italy movement. He was involved in one of those failed liberal republican uprisings against the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia in 1834 and was sentenced to death, but he fled the country.

He ended up in Brazil, where he got involved in a republican uprising known as the Ragamuffins. He met his first wife there; they married and settled down in Uruguay. The story goes that his wife Anita knew her way around a horse, and taught Giuseppe the *gaucho* arts. He got mixed up in the Uruguayan Civil War on the side of the Redshirts, and it is from his time in Latin America that he developed his trademark look of a red shirt and/or a poncho, by which he would become known on his return to Italy.

He did indeed return to Italy during the Revolutions of 1848. Piedmont-Sardinia was not particularly happy to see him come back, but he crossed over into Austrian Italy and supported the uprisings there. After the war with the Austrians was lost, Garibaldi traveled to Rome to support the newly-declared Roman Republic against the French army sent there to restore papal authority. Ultimately, the French succeeded, and Garibaldi had to flee Italy again. He lived in Staten Island, New York for a while, and returned to the life of a merchant seaman.

I should say a few words here about the Papal States, and their ruler, Pius IX. The Papal States, though usually referred to in the plural, are a single political entity in central Italy ruled from Rome by the pope.

The Papal States had a reputation as a backward and impoverished nation. Although the government was run by laypeople, they were appointed by the pope and his cardinals, and no one in the Papal States was eligible for government service without a recommendation from their parish priest. So needless to say, no Jew, no Protestant and no atheist need apply.

There was little industry, few railroads, and limited foreign trade. The Papal States lacked a uniform legal code, and justice was often arbitrary. There was no compulsory education, and what schools there were tended to emphasize religious over secular instruction. The only newspaper in Rome was published by the Jesuits. Government finances were perennially disorganized and corrupt, and rural areas of the Papal States plagued with banditry.

Papal rule was very, very unpopular, and the pope maintained order by recruiting volunteers from foreign Catholic countries into the papal army, most famously the Swiss Guard, but also soldiers from places like France and Austria. These foreign soldiers, with no ties to the local communities, tended to swagger about and bully the local Italians, reinforcing nationalist feelings that the Papal States were more like a foreign occupation zone than a genuinely Italian nation.

The previous pope, Gregory XVI, passed away in 1846. This was in the runup to the liberal Revolutions of 1848, when there was much political ferment in Europe. When the Papal Conclave was called, many cardinals were leery of the political climate in Italy and were afraid to attend. The Conclave was split between liberals and conservatives, with liberal support coalescing around the Archbishop of Spoleto, Cardinal Mastai Ferretti, who had already demonstrated support for political reforms in the Papal States and sympathy with Italian nationalism, even with the underground *Carbonari* movement.

The government of Austria, as successor to the Holy Roman Empire, claimed veto power over the selection of the pope, and sent the Archbishop of Milan to the Papal Conclave with specific instructions to exercise the Austrian veto if necessary to overrule the possible election of Cardinal Mastai Ferretti. But by the time the Archbishop of Milan arrived, the election was over and Cardinal Mastai Ferretti had already been elected. He was 54 years old, and as Pius IX, he would become the Roman Catholic Church's longest-reigning pope.

Liberals across Europe cheered the election of Pius IX, and for the first two years of his reign, he may have been the most popular figure in Italy. The nationalists started floating the idea of a unified Italian state governed by the pope. In the Papal States, Pius IX introduced some long-overdue reforms, like bringing government finances under control, abolishing that Jewish ghetto in Rome, and encouraging the growth of manufacturing and railroads. He issued a general amnesty for political prisoners, which had the unintended result of freeing the most ardent Italian nationalists in the Papal States, who promptly went back to doing what they loved most: Agitating for Italian unification.

During the Revolutions of 1848, Pius IX reluctantly agreed to a constitution for the Papal States, but when the Italian uprisings in Milan and Venice broke out, and they appealed to their brethren in the south for aid, the pope refused to send troops against Austria. His refusal led to a nationalist uprising that instituted the Roman Republic. Pius IX fled south to Gaeta in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, where he excommunicated anyone involved in the Roman Republic, including anyone who so much as voted in its

elections. This is the point where Garibaldi comes to the Roman Republic to defend it against French and Austrian troops sent there to restore papal authority, which they ultimately did.

You probably won't be surprised if I tell you that Pius IX kind of lost his taste for liberal political reforms after that experience, and even went so far as to reinstate the Jewish ghetto in Rome. In a famous and controversial case in 1858, a 6 year old Jewish boy named Edgardo Mortara was taken away from his parents by the papal police. He was allegedly baptized in secret by a Christian servant while ill, supposedly because she was afraid that if he died that he would go to Hell. The boy did not in fact die, but was now a Christian, and it was against the law in the Papal States for a Christian child to be raised by Jewish parents, and so the boy was seized by the authorities.

This move raised a storm of international condemnation across Europe and in the United States. Piedmont-Sardinia pointed to the Mortara case as evidence that the pope had no business running a secular government. Even some of Pius IX's strongest supporters, like the Austrian Kaiser Franz Josef and the French Emperor Napoleon III, condemned the action and called for the boy to be returned to his family. But the pope would not relent, and Edgardo was raised by the Church. Eventually, he became a priest, who took a special interest in preaching to Jews, though with no notable success.

Okay, so that brings us back around to 1859, when Italian unification seems closer than ever, and Viva VERDI is the watchword. Let's recap: Piedmont-Sardinia now controls most of northern Italy, after receiving Lombardy from Austria and annexing those little duchies. Our old friend and Italian patriot Giuseppe Garibaldi returned to Italy when the war broke out between Piedmont-Sardinia and Austria. Garibaldi recruited soldiers to fight in the war, but he was outraged when Piedmont-Sardinia ceded his hometown of Nice to the French. He never forgave the Prime Minister Count Cavour for that, though he continued to be a supporter of King Victor Emmanuel II, apparently conceding that an Italian republic was too much to ask for, but willing to settle for an Italian monarchy.

Of course, Italy is still divided four ways. Austria still controls substantial Italian-speaking territory, most notably the city of Venice in the northeast of the country. In the center are the Papal States, and south of these the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. And the first person who brings up San Marino is gonna get a dope slap, because I think this episode's plenty long enough already, don't you? Anyway, in the spring of 1860, there was another series of revolts on the island of Sicily. Garibaldi saw an opportunity and recruited 1,000 volunteers, dressed them in red shirts (I guess he never watched *Star Trek*) and headed for Sicily. He is said to have declared: "Here we either make Italy or we die."

The redshirts garnered a lot of support on the island. Sicily was an impoverished and oppressed land, where underpaid peasants worked the land for largely absentee landlords. Whether the peasant anger was political or economic in nature, well, we'll get back to that. By the end of May, Garibaldi was besieging the city of Palermo on the north coast of Sicily. The British negotiated a ceasefire, and the corrupt and not very competent royalist forces departed. By September, Garibaldi had secured control of the entire island, and had crossed the Strait of Messina into peninsular Italy. Within days, he entered the capital city of Naples unopposed.



At this point, Garibaldi controlled a force of nearly 25,000, as large as the kingdom's army. But the kingdom had not been defeated. The King of the Two Sicilies was holed up at his fortress at Gaeta, the very same fortress the pope had fled to for sanctuary 10 years earlier. Garibaldi announced his intention to march on Gaeta, defeat the King of the Two Sicilies, and then continue north to Rome, where he would proclaim the united Kingdom of Italy from that ancient city.

This announcement caused an uproar. Foreign Catholics were appalled at the thought of the pope being overthrown by force of arms in his own city. They contributed money and sent volunteers to defend the Papal States. Pius IX warned that he would excommunicate anyone involved in an attack on the Papal States. And don't forget that France has soldiers stationed in Rome to defend the Papacy, because Napoleon III is very dependent on conservative French Catholic support back in France.

Meanwhile, Piedmont-Sardinia also went into panic mode. To Victor Emmanuel and his government, Garibaldi looked like a crazy radical who was about to throw away the conquest of the Two Sicilies in a quixotic attempt to capture Rome against the combined forces of all of Catholic Europe. And so a deal was struck: Napoleon III gave Victor Emmanuel permission to march the Piedmont-Sardinian army across the Papal States to take control of the situation in southern Italy himself. In exchange, Victor Emmanuel agreed not to seize control of the Papal States. But Victor Emmanuel did not fully hold up his end of the bargain. He did indeed take control of most of the Papal States, sparing only Latium (that is, the region around Rome).

When the Piedmont-Sardinian army reached southern Italy, Garibaldi, addressing Victor Emmanuel as King of Italy, surrendered control of the Two Sicilies. On March 17, 1861, the Piedmont-Sardinian Parliament in Turin proclaimed the Kingdom of Italy. Rome was declared the capital of the new kingdom, even though it was still under papal control.

The formerly liberal Pope Pius IX was vehemently opposed to the new kingdom, to the extent of again threatening excommunication for any Catholic who so much as voted in an Italian election. King Victor Emmanuel II got excommunicated three different times. And Garibaldi, disappointed that the new kingdom seemed content to let the pope have his way in what was left of the Papal States for the time being, returned to Sicily and tried to organize a new volunteer force to march on Rome. The Italian Army blocked him. Garibaldi forbade his soldiers from firing on the Italian Army, and that was that.

In 1865, the new kingdom moved its capital from Turin to Florence, rather pointedly moving itself in the direction of Rome, you might say. In 1866, the Austro-Prussian War broke out. The Kingdom of Italy tried to take advantage of the opportunity to seize Venice. It was unsuccessful militarily, but the Austrian Kaiser Franz Josef agreed to cede Venice to France in exchange for French nonintervention in the war, and once again Napoleon III promptly turned around and handed Venice over to Italy.

In 1870, the Franco-Prussian War broke out. It went very badly for the French, as you know, and Napoleon III was forced to recall his troops from Rome. Demonstrations broke out across Italy demanding that the government take advantage of this and seize control of the city. The king sent an emissary to the pope, bearing a letter proposing that Italian troops take over garrison duty in Rome in an attempt to effect an Italian takeover in a peaceful and amicable way. But Pius IX was not in an amicable

mood. After reading the king's letter, he is reported to have thrown it onto the table and declared: "You are all a set of vipers, of whited sepulchres, and wanting in faith."

The next day, the Italian Army crossed the border into the Papal States, advancing slowly on Rome, hoping to avoid violence. The pope refused to surrender, insisting that some measure of resistance be taken so that the world would know he had not conceded his state voluntarily. The city was taken only after the Italian Army had to blow its way through the Aurelian Wall, at the cost of the lives of 53 Italian and 19 Papal soldiers.

The Italian government offered to grant the pope a portion of the city around the Vatican, but Pius IX refused, because accepting the offer might be seen as acquiescing in the annexation of the Papal States, which had happened following a plebiscite. He spent the rest of his pontificate in the Vatican, describing himself as a prisoner, although no one was actually forcing him to stay there. It would take until 1929 before the pope and the Kingdom of Italy would come to an agreement on the status of Rome and the Vatican.

But aside from the so-called Roman Question, a unified Italian kingdom is now a reality. It sounds like a happy ending, but this is one of those stories where I wish I could just stop right here, but there's more to come. Unification is one thing. Governing and modernizing is something else.

We'll have to stop there for today, but I hope you'll join me next week on *The History of the Twentieth Century*, as we explore what happens to Italy after unification. Making a nation is one thing, making a people is another. That's next week, on *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

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Oh, and one more thing. The King of Italy, Victor Emmanuel II, died in January 1878. When Pope Pius IX heard that the king was on his deathbed, he retracted his multiple excommunications. The pope himself died a few weeks later. The possibility of beatifying Pius IX was first raised in 1907, over the vehement objections of the Italian government. One of those who testified in favor was the now-elderly Father Edgardo Mortara. Pope John Paul II declared Pius IX venerable in 1985, and he was beatified in 2000. Descendants of the Mortara family still reside in Rome. They continue to call for the Catholic Church to apologize for taking Edgardo, and have criticized Pius IX's beatification.

[music: Verdi, Overture to *Nabucco*]