

The History of the Twentieth Century

Episode 23

“Making Italians”

Transcript

[music: Fanfare]

Massimo d'Azeglio was a Piedmontese politician, painter and novelist who served in the government during the dramatic days of Italian unification. After his death, his memoirs were published. In them, he wrote: “We have made Italy. What remains is to make Italians.”

As difficult as it had been to create a politically unified Italy, to mold it together into one social and cultural entity would prove to be the greater challenge.

Welcome to *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

[music: Opening Theme]

Episode 23. Making Italians.

Massimo d'Azeglio had it right. While there was a certain amount of friction between Germans of different states after German unification happened, it was nothing compared to the growing pains of the new Kingdom of Italy. Even before Italy was united under the Romans in the 3rd century BC, the peninsula was divided into different ethnic groups: Latins, Gauls, Samnites, Greeks. Post-Roman Italy was invaded by a number of other nations, each of which left its cultural and, yes, genetic stamp on Italy: Goths, Lombards, Byzantines, Arabs, Norsemen.

There was a saying in the late 19th century in Italy that “Africa begins just south of Rome”. I'd like to take a minute and unpack that statement. A lot of us think of Italians as dark, by which I mean dark hair, dark eyes and a dark complexion. And that's probably a fair description of many Italians. But there's a lot of variety, as you might expect in a country that combines all those ethnic groups I mentioned. There are blonde, blue-eyed Italians, there are green-eyed ginger Italians, and there are very dark Italians. And generally speaking, the lighter, fairer-skinned Italians are found in the north, and the darker Italians in the south. So part of what this saying is saying is that people get darker as you move farther south in Italy, which is sorta-kind of true, but I can't leave it there, because we can't overlook the phenomenally horrible racism of the era. To Europeans in the 19th century, Africa meant not just a place where people have dark complexions. It also meant people who were backward, ill-educated, superstitious and lazy. And to Italians from the north following unification, that's exactly what southern Italians looked like to them.

The literacy rate in northern Italy was over 50%. In southern Italy, 20%. And while Roman Catholicism is far and away the predominant religion in all of Italy, southern Italians practiced a form of Catholicism northerners didn't recognize, one with strong elements of curses and demons and supernatural beings that struck northerners as primitive and superstitious. Northern Italy was industrialized and had thousands of miles of railroad track. Southern Italy had a few dozen miles of railroad track in and around Naples.

And so, from the point of view of the northerners, southern Italy was something like a colonial project. It was the job of northern Italians to educate and civilize and uplift their new compatriots in the south, not unlike the American approach to the Philippines. And of course, we know that there was friction with that project, and something not terribly different happened in the south of Italy after unification.

When I told the story of Italian unification last week, I told it from essentially a northern perspective. I'd like to circle back for a bit and look at things from the southern perspective. As you'll recall, in the early 19th century the southern part of Italy and the island of Sicily comprised the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. It was ruled by a member of the Spanish royal family, and the kingdom was a neglected and backward place, not unlike the Philippines under Spanish rule. Like the Philippines, the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies had a small number of landowners with huge estates, and large numbers of peasant farmers working them. In fact, serfdom was still a thing in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies until the Napoleonic Wars, when neither the French, who were occupying continental Italy, nor the British, defending the island of Sicily for its king, had much sympathy for the whole thing, and between the French and the British, serfdom became not a thing anymore by 1812.

Under the feudal system that had prevailed in the kingdom, most of the land was owned by about a thousand aristocratic families. These families preferred to live in the big cities of the kingdom, like Naples and Palermo, and so they often rented large tracts of land to managers called *gabelloti* in Italian. These *gabelloti* would pay a fixed rent to the landowner, and in return would be entitled to the fruits of the land. *Gabelloti* were also responsible for security. They would have to hire armed guards to protect the estate; the government of the kingdom provided little or nothing in the way of police protection during this time.

Now you might think that the abolition of serfdom would be good news for the serfs. Ha ha, you naïve person, you. There was a round of land reform after 1812, but of course the former serfs (now peasants) don't have money to buy land. You know who does have money to buy land? The *gabelloti*, that's who. And a lot of them just moved up from being managers to being landowners in their own rights. In fact, the peasants, the people actually working and living on the land, ended up worse off in many ways, because serfs have certain rights under serfdom that peasants do not. Serfs have the right to graze their animals on common land, for instance, and to collect firewood from the landowner's forests. And remember that bit about hiring armed guards to protect the estate? Under feudalism, "the estate" includes the serfs. Under reform, the peasants are on their own. Now, a lot of post-feudal states have police forces to provide law enforcement and protection for all citizens, even the very poor. But someone in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies overlooked that point.

There was a second round of land reform following unification in 1861. This time, large tracts of public land and land that belonged to the church were parcelled out and redistributed. Again, the peasants were mostly left out in the cold, as the best land went to people who already had money. There were some moves to give land to the poor, but these tended to be very small plots of not very nice land – certainly not good enough to support your family on. And again, the privatization of public and church lands deprived the poor of land they were previously able to use for grazing and firewood collecting and such. And alms

from the Church were some kind of aid of last resort for the most desperate of the poor, but now the Church had less income, and therefore less money for alms.

Add to that the fact that the Pope was denouncing the new Kingdom of Italy and telling all the faithful Catholics to shun the state, even to the point of refusing to vote in state elections, and you may begin to understand why southerners are resenting the new Italy.

Since law enforcement never really got to be a thing in the south, there was an ongoing problem of lawlessness and banditry, and it got worse as the 19th century progressed. As the situation of the poor got more desperate, many of the poor were forced to turn to banditry for survival. And with resentment against the government on the rise, some of this banditry took the form of a tax on the government. The Kingdom of Italy found itself having to send armed forces into the south to help maintain order. And a culture emerged – a culture where you have more sympathy with the bandit, who is probably poor and desperate and one of your neighbors, rather than with agents of the state, who are chasing after your poor and desperate neighbor, agents of the state that was condemned by the Pope, agents of the state who come from a faraway place and speak what is practically a different language from what you speak, and who everyone was telling you until about 5 minutes ago were foreigners. And so when these state officials ask you questions about the bandits, you keep your mouth shut.

Now, you might be wondering by this point: What's the difference between armed bandits attacking the government and a guerrilla uprising? Well, that's a really good question. If you are the Italian government, the difference is that unified Italy was an unalloyed good for all Italians, and therefore this couldn't possibly be interpreted as a guerrilla uprising against the government by our fellow Italians. No no no, it must be banditry. Banditry, banditry, banditry – la la la la, I can't hear you!

But there was also banditry against landowners, who even by the late 19th century are still preferring to live in places like Naples and Palermo and not on or near their land. They are still using managers (*gabelloti*) to take care of things for them. And since police are still not a thing, and since we're still living in a quasi-neo-feudalism, it was up to the *gabelloti*, the local land managers, to provide the security. You might think that the way to provide security is to hire armed guards to protect the estate. Well, maybe, but you need to learn how to think outside the box. A really enterprising *gabellotto* might deal with theft by approaching the bandits and offering to buy back the stolen property. Eventually, the *gabellotto* and the bandits begin to realize that it saves everyone a lot of time and trouble if the *gabellotto* would just make regular payments to the bandits ahead of time to stay away from his particular estate. Another option might be to identify the biggest and meanest bandit gang you can find, and hire *them* to be your armed guards, on the theory that no other bandit gang is going to want to tangle with them. And if they do a little freelance banditry on the side against your neighbors, well, how is that your problem?

In fact, for the aspiring entrepreneur who hopes to break into this field, a good way to become a *gabellotto* is to have contacts among the local bandits. When you're making your sales pitch to a landowner in Palermo about why he should hire you, mentioning that the local bandit chief is your brother, and that he's agreed to stay away from any property you might be managing, could very well help close the deal.

And I'm sure you realize that the *gabelloti* are in the business of protecting the estate, not the peasants. Since we don't have feudalism anymore, the peasants are no longer considered part of the property along with the grounds, which, come to think of that, wasn't that what you said you wanted? Anyway, that means bandits who steal from the peasants get away with it, because nobody's being paid to protect them. So that means the peasants have to chip in some money to pay the armed guards/biggest meanest bandit gang in the area so that they'll take notice when bandits steal from peasants.

So you may have figured out where all this is going; you end up with a society run by the bandits. Except now there's two classes of bandits: There's the lower-class bandit who, you know, steals stuff; and then there's a more genteel kind of bandit, the kind who just comes around once in a while to collect some money in exchange for not stealing from you, or for protecting you from the tackier kinds of bandits. And no one's going to talk to the state authorities about any of this, because we trust them even less than we trust the bandits. So you can see where this is going, right?

In the Sicilian dialect, there is an adjective, *mafioso*. Its origin is obscure, it may come from Arabic. When it's applied to a woman, it means beautiful, charming; when applied to a man, it means handsome and rugged. With men, it also carried a connotation of swaggering arrogance. So this new class of bandit came to be called *mafiosi*. And this new level of banditry the *mafia*. The exact origins of the organization and the degree to which the *mafiosi* are actually organized is obscure, because again, like the Carbonari and Young Italy, illegal secret organizations don't exactly maintain minutes and membership rolls. But it wasn't long before "mafia" came to be used in a generic way to mean any kind of organized crime network, and not just in Italy. Although it appears that Sicilian *mafiosi* themselves prefer to refer to their organization as *la cosa nostra*, which literally means "our thing", but figuratively you can read it as "that thing we do" or "that thing we're involved in". There are other names for organizations in other parts of southern Italy.

And so, entrenched feudalism in southern Italy morphed itself into a post-feudal criminal syndicate by the end of the 19th century, a development helped along by distrust of the new central Italian government.

And central is a key word here. Piedmont-Sardinia had had a modern centralized government, while the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies had been, well, feudal. And here's the thing: When Garibaldi handed over the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies to Victor Emmanuel II, it wasn't like Italy held a constitutional convention and delegates from all across the country came together to decide what form of government the kingdom would have and write up a whole new constitution. No, that's not what happened. What happened was the old government of Piedmont-Sardinia up in Turin continued to operate just like before, still using Turin as its capital (although it did move the capital to Florence in 1865, and then to Rome in 1871). It's just that this government calls itself "Italy" now. The new Italian kingdom used the Sardinian *lira*, not the Sicilian *ducat*, as its currency. The constitution of the new kingdom was the same old Albertine Statute from Piedmont-Sardinia. The language of this new kingdom, the language that we today call Italian, was the Tuscan dialect. It was selected by a group of artists and intellectuals to represent the Italian language. Tuscany, of course, is in northern Italy, so southern Italians were now being told that the language they and their ancestors had been speaking for generations was no longer proper Italian. In fact, as of Italian unification, less than 10% of the population spoke the language that we today call proper Italian.

The laws of the new kingdom were the laws of Piedmont-Sardinia. The court system of the new kingdom was the court system of Piedmont-Sardinia. Well, seeing as how we're a constitutional monarchy, couldn't we title Victor Emmanuel the King of the Italians rather than the King of Italy, like they did in France and in Belgium? No, we can't do that. Victor Emmanuel is the King of Italy. Okay then, can we at least call him Victor Emmanuel I, seeing as how he's the first king of the new Italian state, rather than Victor Emmanuel II, which was his title when he was the second Victor Emmanuel to be King of Sardinia? Well, no, it turns out we can't do that, either. And so the very first king of the new Kingdom of Italy is Victor Emmanuel II, and logic be damned.

And so to the people of the south, unification begins to feel an awful lot like a foreign occupation. Some southerners grumbled that Piedmont-Sardinia was really after their money. Piedmont-Sardinia had been deep in debt from the several wars of unification it had fought, whereas the thrifty Kingdom of the Two Sicilies had had a surplus. And so some went so far as to say that unification was really a scheme to pay off Piedmont-Sardinia's debts.

Italy experienced a lot of emigration in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. There were emigrants from the north as well as from the south, but proportionally speaking a much larger percentage of southerners left the country than northerners. And whereas northerners who left Italy ended up in places like France or Switzerland, southerners who left the country were more likely to head to the western hemisphere, including (but by no means exclusively) the United States.

But it was not all poverty and violence in southern Italy, I don't want to give you the wrong impression. There were good times too. There was a happy historical moment in 1880 when a funicular railway was built on Mount Vesuvius. A funicular railway is one of those setups for climbing steep inclines by using two cars that are connected by a cable wrapped around a pulley, so that one car is going up the slope when the other is going down. It's not there anymore, it was destroyed in an eruption in 1944, but in this year of 1880, when the funicular opened, an Italian poet named Peppino Turco persuaded his friend, a musician and songwriter named Luigi Denza, to compose a humorous song in the style of a traditional Neapolitan folk song, for that year's songwriting competition in Naples. Naples has its own tradition of folk songs, and emigrants from Naples brought the songs with them to the New World. You may be familiar with some of them, like "O sole mio" or "Santa Lucia". Turco provided the lyrics, and Denza dashed off a silly little song inspired by the new funicular railway. They called it "Funiculí Funiculá", and it would soon become clear that Denza and Turco had created the world's first "earworm".

[music: Denza, "Funiculí Funiculá"]

The song would catch on, and within a few years, you could hear it sung all across Italy. It would become so widespread that not one, but two famous composers, Germany's Richard Strauss and Russia's Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, would hear the song during tours of Italy and, thinking it a folk song, would incorporate it into their own compositions, and then get sued for copyright infringement, because yeah, it happened then too.

The song is in the public domain today, though, and it is often repurposed when a silly little piece of music is required, especially in children's entertainment. I can't decide whether my favorite version is *Sesame Street's* "The Telephone of Brazil" or *VeggieTales's* "Larry's High Silk Hat". I checked out YouTube, and a video of "The Telephone of Brazil" is unavailable for some reason. This is a deplorable omission and I hope someone from Sesame Workshop is listening to this and gets on that right away, but until they fix that, you can watch "Larry's High Silk Hat" at our website, historyofthetwentiethcentury.com.

But let's get back to the problem at hand: The Italian government's unexpected difficulty in making Italians. All this internal friction between different Italian sub-nationalities, or whatever you want to call them, is making life difficult. The large number of Italian emigrants was a national embarrassment, not to mention all the talented labor and productivity the nation was losing.

If you were trying to lead this fractious nation in the late 19th century, you might well begin to feel nostalgic for the good old days of the *Risorgimento*, the drive to unification. Back in those days, people all over Italy, be it Turin or Rome or Naples or Milan or Palermo, all seemed to share this vision of a united Italy. It brought them together in a way that actually being part of a united Italy couldn't match. So, what do you do?

Well, here's one solution: The work of the *Risorgimento* is not over. Back in the heady days of the drive for unification, Italian nationalists deemed any region where the majority spoke a dialect of Italian as being properly part of an Italian state. By now, most regions that fit that description are in the kingdom, but there are a few that aren't. There was South Tyrol in the Alps, an Italian-speaking region that was still part of Austria. There was Trieste and Fiume on the Adriatic coast. There was Savoy and Nice, which had been given up to France, although some Italians, like Garibaldi, never accepted this. There was the Italian-speaking region of Switzerland.

And some Italians thought in even broader terms. There was Corsica, which had been handed over to the French some time ago, but wasn't it traditionally Italian? What about Dalmatia, the opposite coast of the Adriatic? This was part of Austria-Hungary, but the coastal city and islands of Dalmatia had a significant Italian-speaking population, and a long history of association with Italy that dated back to Roman times. What about Malta, currently a British possession?

During the *Risorgimento*, Italians would speak of *Italia irredenta* – unredeemed Italy. That was their label for territories that Italian nationalists believed should be part of the Italian state, but were not – yet. So passionate were the Italians about redeeming the unredeemed bits of Italy that it gave us in modern diplomatic parlance the English word "irredentism", which refers to claims a state might make to a nearby territory in another state on the basis of ethnic or historical affiliation, in the same way that the French fixation on recovering Alsace and Lorraine gave us the word "revanchism" as I described back in episode 7.

Some Italian irredentists were willing to dig pretty far back into history, all the way back to the ancient Roman Empire, in fact. And if you're going to start taking looks at maps of the Roman Empire, you're going to start to make some pretty grandiose claims. It calls to mind something that Lord Salisbury said in

a speech to the House of Lords in 1890, one of my favorite quotes: “I think that the constant study of maps is apt to disturb men’s reasoning powers.” As far as I know, not even the most ardent Italian nationalist of the late 19th century were willing to lay claims to France or Britain or Turkey or Spain, but there were those who took Roman history seriously enough to look longingly at Greece and at North Africa. In North Africa, the French already had Algeria, and the British already had Egypt, something which some Italian nationalists resented. They thought Italy had a pretty good claim to Egypt.

And then there was Tunisia. Look at a map, and you’ll see how close Tunisia is to Italy. Why, western Sicily is closer to Tunisia than it is to mainland Italy – and hadn’t Carthage been under Roman control ever since the Third Punic War, for something like 900 years? And there was also the fact that at this time, Tunisia had the largest population of Europeans of any place in North Africa, and many Italians felt that the natural place for Italy to begin its colonial expansion was right there. But the French got there first, after ginning up a border dispute between Tunisia and their Algeria, and by 1881, Tunisia was a French protectorate. As I mentioned back in episode 7, this made the Italians mad enough to sign up for the Triple Alliance with Germany and Austria, in spite of the fact that Italy had territorial claims against Austria. But Italy’s options in North Africa are now pretty limited. If Egypt is under British control, and Algeria and Tunisia are under French control, what else is left? There’s Morocco, but that’s pretty far away, and it seems likely to get gobbled up by the French at some point. And that’s pretty much all of North Africa, except for Tripoli. Tripoli... hmm... Tripoli. We’ll see what we can do.

Some in the Italian government were convinced that colonial expansion, which is something every other major power was doing, might work just as well as irredentism for bringing Italians together. It would build national pride, it would give emigrants some place to go, some place that was still Italian territory, and where their labor would be employed making Italy stronger instead of abandoning the country altogether. Italy had had some luck at snapping up a few small sultanates on the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea at bargain-basement prices, and before too long controlled Eritrea, a strip of coast along the Red Sea, and Italian Somaliland, a strip of coast along the Arabian Sea centered on Mogadishu. Britain and France were willing to support handing over these scraps of land to Italy in exchange for Italian acquiescence in British and French control of Egypt and Tunisia. The British and the French were also willing to acknowledge Tripoli, a strip of coast in North Africa between Egypt and Tunisia, as being in the Italian sphere of influence.

Italy nailed down control of Eritrea in 1889, following the death of the Ethiopian Emperor Yohannes IV. The nominal Empire of Ethiopia had been going through something of a dark age for the past hundred years or so. The inland nation, which was known to many in Europe as Abyssinia during this time, was languishing under a decentralized, virtually feudal, system of government plagued by succession crises, famines, and wars with its Muslim neighbors. But Ethiopia itself remained a Christian nation. One of the reasons Ethiopia managed to maintain its independence this long is that its status as a Christian state surrounded by hostile Muslims won it a lot of sympathy from Europeans. But with the death of the emperor, in battle against Muslims, there arose a new Emperor, Menelik II.

Menelik had the usual succession problems, and the usual problems maintaining control of the country that had bedeviled his predecessors, and the Italian government sought to take advantage of his weakness to get him to sign a treaty in which Menelik would agree to recognize Italian control of Eritrea on the Red

Sea coast in exchange for Italian recognition of his sovereignty over Ethiopia. But among Europeans, and with the support of the British in particular, Ethiopia was coming to be regarded as an Italian protectorate.

Meanwhile, and oddly enough, there was a halfhearted Russian effort to establish a colony on the Red Sea coast in what is today Djibouti. What we now call Djibouti was known at the time as French Somaliland, and the French did not take well to the Russians trying to muscle in on their little enclave and evicted them. This was before the Franco-Russian alliance of 1894. But during this brief period of Russian adventurism in Africa, the Russians made contact with the Ethiopians. And again, because the Ethiopians were not only Christians, but Orthodox Christians, making their religion quite similar to (although not exactly the same as) Russian Orthodoxy, the Russians were inclined to see the Ethiopians as partners and not as savages in need of civilization. This is in contrast to western Christians of either the Roman Catholic or Protestant persuasions, like the French or the Germans or the British or the Italians, to whom Ethiopian Christianity looks quite different. The Russians were even willing to receive an Ethiopian ambassador at St. Petersburg, and worked at building a relationship. This included supporting Menelik diplomatically – and with arms. This would begin a special relationship between Russia and Ethiopia that would continue throughout the 20th century.

But at the same time, Menelik discovered that the Italians had pulled a fast one on him. The treaty that he had signed with Italy said in the Amharic version that the emperor could use Italy as a go-between in his dealings with other powers, which sounds like one sovereign power offering friendly support to another sovereign power. But the Italian version of the treaty said that the emperor *shall* use Italy as a go-between in his dealings with other powers, which basically turns Ethiopia into a protectorate of Italy.

This kind of sneaky business was not unusual in dealings between European and African or Asian powers. You may recall the treaties that Henry Morton Stanley had signed with African leaders in the Congo that I talked about back in episode 19. Basically, nobody in Italy cared what Menelik knew or didn't know about the treaty. What mattered was that the Italian version of the treaty was the one they could wave under the noses of the French and the British to emphasize the point that Ethiopia was now a protectorate of Italy.

Given all of Menelik's internal problems, and given the fact that countries like Britain and France were already prepared to recognize the Italian claim to Ethiopia, the Italians probably figured they had cleverly won themselves a valuable African protectorate through shrewd diplomacy without firing a shot. As for Menelik, well, he bided his time for a few years and worked on consolidating control over his empire. But by 1893, he felt ready to publicly announce that the treaty he had signed did not say what he thought it had said, and therefore he was repudiating it. Western powers didn't care, but the Russians backed him up, and remember that they're selling his army modern weapons.

Italy, meanwhile, misjudging both the strength of the new emperor's grip over his empire and the power of his army, began to advance troops into Ethiopian territory, taking off chunks of land here and there on the theory that these local rulers felt no particular loyalty to Menelik and could easily be persuaded (or intimidated) into accepting Italian rule.

But by 1895, Menelik had assembled a substantial army numbering close to 100,000, and armed with Russian weapons, he began to push back, driving Italian units out of key Ethiopian territories. The Italian commander on the scene, Oreste Baratieri, had about 18,000 soldiers, a mix of Italians and Africans, under his command. That sounds pretty unbalanced, but remember that during this period, European colonial forces in Africa were routinely winning battles against much larger African armies. This was mostly because the Europeans had modern weapons and the Africans didn't, although Europeans didn't look at it that way. They preferred to think of it as demonstrating Europe's cultural and moral superiority to Africans.

Anyway, General Baratieri correctly judged that the Ethiopian Emperor would not be able to afford to maintain a large army in the field for very long, so his strategy of choice was to sit tight and wait until Menelik ran out of money. But back in Rome, the Italian Prime Minister, Francesco Crispi, an iron-fisted kind of guy who was modelling his political career on Otto von Bismarck, was finding it both infuriating and politically embarrassing to be reading reports of Italian troops retreating under pressure from Ethiopians, of all peoples. And on Friday, February 28, 1896, he ordered Baratieri to take the offensive. Baratieri did so at once, vowing to bring Menelik back to Rome in a cage. Baratieri's army advanced, and met the main body of the Ethiopian force near a place called Adwa. Baratieri was planning to catch the Ethiopians unprepared, but it was a Sunday, and the Ethiopian soldiers were already up and about getting ready for church. To the Italians' surprise, this large Ethiopian force, armed with modern weapons, was also able to take the field and maneuver under orders just like a European army. By the end of the day, the Italians had suffered the worst defeat in history of a European power by an African one. Less than half of the Italian force returned to base. The rest were killed or taken prisoner.

When news of this defeat reached Italy, the Crispi government fell. Italy was forced into the embarrassing, virtually unprecedented, position of negotiating with an African power for the return of European prisoners of war.

The problem of making Italians was not going to be solved today. The challenge of molding these disparate people of the peninsula into a single nation with a common purpose would continue to bedevil Italy and its leaders well into the 20th century.

We'll have to stop there for today, but I hope you'll join me next week at *The History of the Twentieth Century* when we return to the United States in time for the 1904 presidential election, and check whether Theodore Roosevelt can win the presidency in his own right. Oh, who am I kidding? Of course he can. That's next week, on *The History of the Twentieth Century*. Don't forget to check out our website, historyofthetwentiethcentury.com, like us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter.

Oh, and one more thing. I mentioned that southern Italy has a tradition of Neapolitan folk songs, and how "Funiculí Funiculá" was mistaken for one. Well, here's an authentic Neapolitan folk song: "Santa Lucia", or St. Lucy. It refers to a waterfront district in Naples. The singer takes the role of a boatman inviting you to ride in his boat for an evening on the bay. The song has been recorded by everyone from Enrico Caruso to Elvis Presley.

[music: Tino Rossi, "Santa Lucia"]

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