American Risorgimento
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Soon after completing *The Confidence-Man* Melville set off alone for the eastern Mediterranean and his long-awaited trip to Italy. No one knows precisely when he decided to turn from fiction to poetry, but it is clear that this trip inspired “At the Hostelry,” “Naples in the Time of Bomba,” “Fruits of Travel Long Ago,” *Timoleon*, and *Clarel*, poems set in his primary destinations of Italy, Turkey, Greece, Egypt, and Palestine. And in his great book of Civil War poetry, *Battle-Pieces*, Risorgimento nationalism infuses his politics with a wrenching meliorism evident in the controversial “Supplement” and a melancholy brooding on national decline and fall that evokes the “ruins of Rome” topos. Historicizing Melville’s earliest poems, notably “At the Hostelry” and “Naples in the Time of Bomba,” is difficult because their dates of composition are uncertain and he worked on them for many years, returning to old manuscripts and revising and rearranging them on different principles.1 Very likely,

1. The fullest discussion of dating “At the Hostelry” and “Naples in the Time of Bomba” is in Robert Allen Sandberg, “Melville’s Unfinished *Burgundy Club* Book: A Reading Edition Edited from the Manuscripts with Introduction and Notes” (PhD diss., Northwestern, 1989), 12–28. See especially the chart on 24 listing the differing compositional stages of the poems and their accompanying sketches. All quotations from these poems, what I call Melville’s “Nea-
as scholars from Howard Vincent on have speculated, Melville included some of these poems in the manuscript volume of poetry he entrusted to Evert Duyckinck in May 1860, hoping it would be published by the time he returned from his voyage around the world with his brother Tom. This probability argues for examining his Italy-inspired poems as products of the decade beginning in 1857 and to treating them as intertexts for *Battle-Pieces*. In his recent book, *Melville: The Making of the Poet*, Hershel Parker establishes a rich aesthetic context for Melville’s long interest in poetry; what I add here is a social and political context centered on the rise of a united Italy that occurred from 1857–61, the years when Melville turned his full energies to poetry and developed an elaborate transnational conceit: a parallel between Italy before and after 1860 and the United States before and after the Civil War. This device is most evident in the Neapolitan diptych and in *Battle-Pieces*, substantial works that register Melville’s reaction to the historical contexts covered in this chapter: his Italian tour, Garibaldi’s conquest of the Kingdom of Two Sicilies, the unification of Italy, and the American Civil War.

After a decade of political dormancy, the Risorgimento took on new life in 1859 when Victor Emmanuel, with the help of the French, drove the Austrians from Lombardy and annexed it into his kingdom. Napoleon III, who feared a wider war for Italian unity, forced Piedmont into a hasty truce at Villafranca in July, a treaty widely viewed with disdain by Italian patriots and their supporters. The situation remained fluid and over the next nine months Cavour’s diplomacy peacefully brought Tuscany, Modena, Parma, and the Romagna (the northern section of the Papal States) into the new Kingdom of Italy while ceding Savoy and Nice to France (fig. 14).

In May 1860 Garibaldi, with the king’s covert support, led his legendary one thousand soldiers (Il Mille) to Sicily and in a series of brilliant battles liberated the island from Bourbon rule, crossed the Straits"
of Messina to Calabria, and in September entered Naples as its self-proclaimed “dictator.” Piedmont saw its chance and drove southward, defeating Papal and Neapolitan troops and annexing most of the Papal States. On November 8, 1860, only two days after the election of Abraham Lincoln, Garibaldi handed over southern Italy to Victor Emmanuel, thereby uniting the peninsula except for Venice and Latium, the area around Rome. Garibaldi’s Thousand had defeated an army of 100,000 men and unified north and south Italy for the first time in a millen-
inium. “There is,” write Beales and Biagini, “no comparable achievement in the settled history of modern Europe.” American interest in Italy reached a new peak as newspapers, magazines, and books celebrated Garibaldi’s valor, Cavour’s diplomacy, and Victor Emmanuel’s leadership. The questionable radicalism of Mazzini and other “Red Republicans” now seemed totally irrelevant as Americans held numerous torchlight parades and civic meetings to celebrate the monarchy’s military and diplomatic victories.

Melville shared in and abetted popular enthusiasm for Italy, and Italian art and politics course through his life during his turn to poetry and infuse his poems with a cosmopolitan detachment from temporary enthusiasms and render them more philosophical than topical, more universal than partisan, more historic than contemporary. He began reading more systematically about Italy beginning in 1857 with Valery’s *Travels in Italy* which he annotated in Florence, Giorgio Vasari’s and Luigi Lanzi’s histories of Italian painting which he borrowed from Evert Duyckinck in 1859, Hawthorne’s *The Marble Faun* which he read aboard his brother Tom’s ship in 1860, Elizabeth Browning’s *Poems* (1860) which he acquired in 1864, and Robert Macpherson’s *Vatican Sculptures* which he acquired in 1866. He may have owned Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* and would have run across significant references to Italy in his new volumes of Landor, Shelley, Ruskin, Leigh Hunt, and Moore’s *Life of Byron*, all acquired between 1857 and 1865.

For his first season on the lecture circuit he chose the topic “Statues in Rome,” anticipating the renewed popular interest in Italy. He received a letter inquiring about his poetry from Giovanni Spaggiari, an Italian exile living in New York, and was quoted favorably by a critic in the *Rivista di Firenze* of 1859, although he probably never knew about it. In early 1861 he pursued the consul-

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4. Risorgimento, 122.


6. For a thorough conspectus of Melville’s reading and annotations from 1859–60, see Parker, *Herman Melville* 2:402–8, 433–41.

7. Melville received Spaggiari’s letter in April 1859 informing him that a patriotic poem from *Mardi* had been published in Turin in Italian and would be republished in London, Rome, and New York in Spaggiari’s forthcoming *Latin-English-Italian Anthology* (14:335, 669–71). The “patriotic poem” is an Italian version of an 1849 French translation of Yoomy’s lyric in praise of Vivenza in chapter 154 of *Mardi* (3: 501–02; see Elizabeth Foster’s discussion of its complicated textual history, 3: 669–70). The poem is quoted at length in the *Rivista di Firenze* 5 (1859), 187, toward the end of a long multipart essay on the state of journal publishing and literature in America, and is attributed to “il poeta Hermann Merville.”
ship to Florence with the enthusiastic backing of his brother-in-law John Hoadley, who chaired the committee to celebrate Italian unification in Lawrence, Massachusetts, and although Melville had to terminate his consular quest when Lemuel Shaw suddenly died, it revealed his persistent interest in Italy and his continuing connection to American Italophiles, especially those in the newly empowered Republican Party. As he had since 1853, he continued making trips to New Rochelle to admire the Italian art at Winyah, the Tuscan villa that Richard Lathers—the husband of Allan Melville’s wife’s sister—had built (fig. 15). On July 6, 1859, he

8. Parker, *Herman Melville*, gives a thorough account of Melville’s quest for a diplomatic appointment (2:460–66). Hoadley was a Republican, and Melville sought support from others in the new party such as Richard Henry Dana, Thurlow Weed, and Senator Charles Sumner, all of whom favored Italian nationalism. He also received numerous endorsements from Pittsfield Republicans. See also Harrison Hayford and Merrell Davis, “Herman Melville as Office-Seeker,” *Modern Language Quarterly* 10 (1949): 168–73, 377–88.


*Figure 15. Alexander Jackson Davis, “Winyah,” architectural drawing, 1853. Designed by Davis, a leading architect of the day, this “Tuscan villa” in New Rochelle, New York, was the country seat of Melville’s family friend Richard Lathers, whom he frequently visited. From *Melville Society Extracts* 99 (December 1994): 18.*
wrote a letter that contains his first poem that we can date precisely, “Epistle to Daniel Shepherd,” which questions Napoleon III’s motives for supporting Piedmont in its war with Austria. And as American enthusiasm for Garibaldi’s conquest of Naples reached its peak in the winter of 1860–61, he may have begun writing “At the Hostelry,” which opens with a celebration of Garibaldi’s victory.

When the Civil War struck in April 1861, the transnational ethos reversed pattern: Italy was uniting while America was dividing, making the new Kingdom of Italy a better example of successful nation-building than the United States. As Americans confronted the weaknesses of the federal system and the violent consequences of sectionalism and slavery, Garibaldi, the unifier of Italy, came to symbolize national union and the wisdom of subordinating republican ideals to an enlightened prince like Victor Emmanuel. In one of the great ironies for American exceptionalists, constitutional monarchies with strong central governments now appeared superior to federated republics. Melville’s journals, lectures, and poems meditate on this irony and its significance for the Jacksonian democracy he once so ardently espoused. Garibaldi assumes mythic status in Melville’s imagination, Rome resurfaces as a historical analogue to the United States, and the now-successful Risorgimento prompts Melville to question more deeply his own country’s progressive view of history.

“THE GHOST OF ROME”
Italy as Tour and Lecture

Melville devoted more time and ink to Italy than any other country he visited on his Mediterranean trip of 1856–57. He spent two months there and devoted one-fourth of his journal to describing its art, architecture, landscapes, and social customs. Telegraphic rather than discursive, his journal mirrors his fast-paced travel through Scotland, England, the Levant, and Italy, a sharp contrast to Hawthorne’s elaborate and polished accounts of his three leisurely years abroad. Unlike Hawthorne, Melville journeyed alone, struck up conversations with locals, and used vivid, charged images to record the discontent he sensed in the populace. When a merchant from Ancona complains bitterly about the pope’s temporal wealth—“Estates of the Church—Estates of de Debel!” he grumbles—Melville notices an “Austrian man-of-war” hovering in the background (15:98), a deft collocation of dialogue and image that depicts a hypocritically materialistic papal regime supported by a foreign military power yet avoids explicit political
comment, a technique Melville elaborates in his poetry. His first description of Sicily focuses on an image of political oppression: “The forts of Messina command the town, not the sea. Large tract of town demolished, so as to have rest at command from fort,” a scene that recalls the vicious bombardment of Messina in 1848 that gave Ferdinand II the nickname “King Bomba” and that gave Melville the title for the second half of his Neapolitan diptych (15:100).

At Naples he notices the “clang of arms all over city. Burst of troops from archway. Cannon posted inwards,” an image he inserts into “Naples in the Time of Bomba” (111–12; 11:11–45), and at the theater of San Carlo he remarks on the “Sentinel on stage &c,” an emblem of government censorship (15:101, 102). He hears from an Englishman that Austrians had spied on Mike Walsh, the New York rabble rouser, and just riding in an Austrian coach from Florence to Venice gives him an eerie feeling: “Old fashioned vehicle. Mysterious window & face. Secret recesses. Hide. Old fashioned feeling” (15:97, 117). Clearly, Melville recognized a police state when he saw it.

Even in the face of oppression, however, Melville is no enthusiast for revolution, as his visit to Venice shows. He arrived on April 1, 1857, shortly after Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria appointed his brother Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian as governor of Venetia and Lombardy. On one hand Melville notices the “Austrian [sic] flags flying from three masts” in St. Mark’s Square and the Foscari Palace “Occupied as barrack” by Austrian troops; on the other hand he recounts how his bantering guide, Antonio, “lost his money in 1848 Revolution & by travelling” and, in his hectoring for tips, would have made a “good character for Con. Man” (15:118, 119, 120). Symbols of foreign oppression alternate with a comic reminder of revolution as Melville strives to fathom the political subtext of a foreign locale. Does Antonio invoke the tragedy of 1848 to exploit presumed American sympathy for Italian nationalism and gain more tips? Or does Melville include this incident in his journal to remind himself that revolution still lurks under Austrian tyranny? As he floats down the Grand Canal with “Antonio the Merry” Melville thinks he spies Maximilian himself leaning over a parapet: “Anxious to settle it; & in my favor, for I consider that some of the feirce [sic] democracy would not look with disrespect upon the man who &c &c &c” (15:120). This cryptic entry requires some glossing. Maximilian was widely viewed as that rara avis, a Hapsburg liberal. He took office in February 1857 on the condition

10. Hershel Parker, following Jay Leyda (Log, 552), says that Melville saw Verdi conduct Macbeth in Messina on February 14, 1857 (Herman Melville, 2:321). While Melville did see Verdi’s opera, the composer was not in Messina at this time; he was at his villa in northern Italy. See Mary Jane Phillips-Matz, Verdi: A Biography (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 354.
that he would command the local Austrian military, a move calculated to restrain the harsh conduct of Marshal Radetzky’s successors. Melville’s “&c &c &c” likely refers to this step toward civilian rule as well as to Maximilian’s comparatively high regard for the Italian people. Melville hopes that Italian democrats will “not look with disrespect” at Maximilian’s overtures, take a gradualist approach toward reform, and avoid the bloody reversals of 1849. He is willing to compromise with enlightened authority, as advised in Media’s scroll: “yet, in themselves, monarchies are not utterly evil. For many nations, they are better than republics; for many, they will ever so remain” (3:527). Evidently Melville didn’t know that only a week earlier this “feirce democracy” did show “disrespect” by hoisting the Italian tricolor above the Austrian flag in St. Mark’s Square, which might have moderated his optimistic meliorism.

Behind Melville’s scattered political musings lay the vast authority of the Roman Empire, a specter of unity and civic virtue that haunts his travels. At Salonica, Greece, he notices a Roman triumphal arch with the eagle still conspicuous, and he contrasts it with the surrounding misery of cheap wood structures and abject poverty (15:55). Passing under the aqueduct of Valens in Constantinople, he observes how “In these lofty arches, ivied & weatherbeaten, & still grand, the ghost of Rome seems to stride with disdain of the hovels of this part of Stamboul” (15:62), as if the city had reached its apex 1,500 years earlier and steadily declined ever since. On first entering Rome after four and a half tiring months of solitary travel he confesses that the city “fell flat on me”; soon, however, he experiences the power of “Gigantic Rome”: the enormous equestrian statues of “Monte Cavallo” before the Quirinale Palace, the “colossal statuary” in the Basilica of St. John Lateran, a massive painting of Samson in the Rospigliosi Gallery, all merit the adjective “gigantic” (15:106, 107, 108, 110). Naples he enjoyed for its lively, Broadway-like crowds, Florence offered incredible museums, Venice was unique, but Rome preyed on him like a recurring dream. It was, he knew, “nothing independent of associa-

11. The Times, London, February 23, 1857, 10, and February 24, 10
12. The Times, London, April 1, 1857, 10. The flags were run up overnight on March 23, the anniversary of the Battle of Novara in 1849 when the Austrians defeated Piedmont, ending Charles Albert’s hopes to unify northern Italy. Because the ropes needed to raise and lower the flags had been cut, they remained flying most of March 24. Eventually Maximilian advocated a series of reforms including home rule for Venetia and Lombardy and an Italian Federation under the pope, the latter an idea first broached by the neo-Guelph Vincenzo Gioberti (1801–52) and still supported by Catholic conservatives. However, none of these reforms appeased Venetian and Milanese republicans who remembered Radetzky’s lash and Pio Nono’s collaboration. For Maximilian’s policies, see King, Italian Unity, 1:52–53; for Gioberti, see Beales and Biagini, Risorgimento, 61.
tions” (15:106)—but what associations! Keats, Shelley, Marius, Edward Gibbon, Tiberius, Beatrice Cenci, Cesare Borgia, Machiavelli arose before his mental eye as his own literary allusions materialized in places and portraits. Meaning expands as the statue he identified with John Ushant now reinforces his deepening sense of historical repetition: “Dying Gladiator. Shows that humanity existed amid the barberousness [sic] of the Roman time, as it now [sic] among Christian barberousness. Antinous, beautiful” (15:106). History, morality, and aesthetics interfuse in Rome’s powerful iconography that alternately inspires and exhausts the weary Melville, making him unsure whether he was, in the formulation he conceived in *Clarel*, a tourist or a pilgrim, a philistine reading guidebooks or an acolyte of art (12:95).

Associations—the mental baggage we carry to every new scene—dominate Melville’s perceptions and prove Emerson’s maxim in “Self-Reliance” that we may seek Rome, and Naples, “the Vatican, and the palaces,” but “My giant goes with me wherever I go.” Melville’s giant is America itself. Ben Lomond, the Bosphorus, the Dead Sea, and Lake Como all remind him of Lake George (15:50, 65, 83, 121); the pyramids form an irregular line “like Notch of White Mountains” and their inner chambers are like “Mammoth Cave” (15:76, 75); the marble shards on the Acropolis look “like blocks of Wenham [Massachusetts] ice” and the Parthenon’s ruins look like the “North River breaking up” (15:99). The Tiber reminds him of the Ohio, Venice reminds him of Boston and the New York Battery, the Grand Canal recalls the Susquehanna, Turin looks like Philadelphia, and, as mentioned earlier, Naples’s Strada di Toledo resembles Broadway: “Dined & walked for an hour in Strada di Toledo. Great crowds. Could hardly tell it from Broadway. Thought I was there” (15:107, 117, 119, 122, 102). American travelers conventionally compared foreign and native scenes, as Headley’s comparison of the Toledo and Broadway suggests (see chap. 1, 50); but Melville’s similes occur more frequently than theirs and his lyricism constructs psychological and metaphoric links as, Whitman-like, he absorbs disparate scenes into highly personalized transnational images. He dedicated *Pierre* to “Greylock’s Most Excellent Majesty,” the whalelike mountain he could see from his study window; when he sees the Roman Colosseum he envisions the “Hopper of Greylock,” a metaphor that fuses past and present, artificial and natural, local and foreign (7:vii; 15:106). And of course the reverse would be true:

once having noticed this similarity, Melville could never look out his study window again without seeing the Colosseum. America truly would be, in his mind, a second Rome.

Rome’s reinvigorated centrality to Melville’s imagination surfaces in his first literary effort after returning from Italy, his lecture “Statues in Rome” (1857). To Robert Milder, its most recent critic, the lecture is uncharacteristically idealistic, a temporary “aesthetic withdrawal” from contemporary realities that explains its failure to please audiences. Yet at least one newspaper, as Hershel Parker recounts, found Melville’s elision of politics and theology reassuring. In fact, the lecture fuses politics and aesthetics with the muted comparisons Melville had practiced in his journal, for he knew that any work on “Rome” carried political connotations that his audiences would grasp, notably regard for law, order, and civic virtue. The lecture reinforces these connections by constructing what Parker calls “a rudimentary democratic theory of art appreciation” that opens the pleasures of “Art” (with a capital “A”) to, as Melville says, the “rude and uncultivated” as well as the “polite and polished” (9:398). Working without visual aids, he compares Roman statues to modern character types, for example a bust of Socrates to an “Irish comedian” and the head of Julius Caesar to a railroad president (9:400–1). He quickly complicates such philistine comparisons by adding that while these works reveal a commonplace humanity, they “are often deceptive, and a true knowledge of their character is lost unless they are closely scrutinized,” as when the pleasing countenance of Tiberius masks “the monster portrayed by the historian” (9:402). An untutored identification with the past quickly develops into a meditation on the relative truths of word and image, history and art, and an implicit recognition that neither has ontological status in the quest for truth. Even religious differences melt away under the powerful appeal of popular iconography, as when Melville terms the Dying Gladiator a man “Christian in all but the name” (9:405). Protestantizing Rome as did Fuller, Melville argues that “though the ancients were ignorant of the principles of Christianity, there were in them the germs of its spirit” (9:404). The lecture’s ideology seems invisible only because its symbols no longer signify, no longer carry the “pleasing and cherished associations” that Melville and his audience share.

15. Herman Melville, 2:369.
The lecture bespeaks a powerful conservative, antirevolutionary ideology that preserves the best of the past while denigrating science, progress, and political change, an ideology suited to the Risorgimento’s embrace of monarchy.

Additional comparisons make this conservative turn increasingly pointed. Melville prefers the timeless art of the Vatican to the mechanical inventions of the Patent Office, the durable Colosseum to the fragile Crystal Palace, the satires of Juvenal to the novels of Dickens, and rhetorically asks, “shall the scheme of Fourier supplant the code of Justinian?” (9:408). By juxtaposing a French socialist with a Roman jurist Melville exploits American contempt for “Red Republicans” to exalt Rome’s association with unity, peace, and the rule of law. He aims his strongest metaphor directly at his bickering countrymen: “As the Roman arch enters into and sustains our best architecture, does not the Roman spirit still animate and support whatever is soundest in societies and states?” (9:408). In the late 1850s, the ghost of Rome haunts a dividing America that sorely needs triumphal arches to validate its faltering republican experiment. If political idealists would express their dreams in art rather than in social reform, perhaps they would be more effective, the meaning I take from a passage near the conclusion: “The ancients of the ideal description, instead of trying to turn their impracticable chimeras, as does the modern dreamer, into social and political prodigies, deposited them in great works of art, which still live, while states and constitutions have perished, bequeathing to posterity not shameful defects but triumphant successes” (9:409). Art can be a more durable expression of social value than “states and constitutions,” not antithetical to politics but another and more universal expression of it. “Statues in Rome” works through this difficult concept as Melville assesses the meaning of his Italian travels and ponders the function of art in an insecure nation. As he would discover in Battle-Pieces, and as Lincoln would realize when he asked Garibaldi to join the Union army, national unity could be well served by the symbols of ancient Rome.

THE CULT OF GARIBALDI

After Mazzini, Garibaldi was the best-known Italian to emerge from the revolutions of 1848. In what is probably the first portrait of him published in America, a daguerreotype taken in New York and printed as the frontispiece for Theodore Dwight’s Roman Republic of 1849 (1851),
he appears calm, thoughtful, and plainly dressed in nonmilitary clothing (fig. 16), a “drastic change” from the flamboyantly garbed figure depicted in earlier European illustrations, as Lucy Riall has observed. The Democratic Review for September 1852 published an even more strikingly plebeian image of Garibaldi, sharply differentiating him from the splendidly aristocratic Louis Kossuth (figs. 17 and 18), a contrast that later served Garibaldi well. The next month the Democratic Review introduced Garibaldi to Young America by cloaking him in the mantle of Roman idealism, muting his revolutionary ideology, and enveloping him with the nostalgic aura of classical heroism in contrast to the cerebral and febrile Mazzini (fig. 19): “The type of his [Garibaldi’s] character is antique, and belongs rather to one of Plutarch’s heroes as Plutarch has painted them, than to any which our own times or the Middle

17. Garibaldi: Invention of a Hero (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 111–12. Riall brilliantly analyzes both the cultural and political functions of the “Garibaldi cult” and dissects the reasons for its success, particularly in establishing a prototype of Italian national identity that moderated revolutionary excess with republican principles.
Figure 17. Giuseppe Garibaldi, 1852. Frontispiece, *United States Magazine and Democratic Review* 31 (September 1852). This is the first image of Garibaldi to appear in an American periodical. It continues the democratization of Garibaldi’s public persona.

Figure 18. Lajos Kossuth, 1851. *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* 4 (December 1851): 40. In contrast to Garibaldi, Kossuth appears more aristocratic.
Melville, whose own reading of Plutarch influenced his conception of Roman history, drew on such popular associations in “At the Hostelry” when he painted Garibaldi as one of “Plutarch’s men” (Sandberg 80, 1:43). By the time Garibaldi reappeared on the American scene in 1858 he had openly disavowed Mazzini and subordinated his republicanism to the monarchy of King Victor Emmanuel II. In the 1859 war against Austria Garibaldi commanded the romantic Cacciatori delle Alpi, a daring cavalry of irregulars who swooped out of the mountains to harass the Austrians from the rear while traditional warfare continued on the plains. By placing patriotism before politics, Garibaldi conformed to American nationalist idealism and greatly increased his stature in the United States, as an article in Melville’s local weekly, the Berkshire County Eagle, asserted:

It is, by the way, a curious fact that this same Garibaldi, who fought so bravely against the French some ten years ago, would now be enlisted in the very cause to which they are so great a support; and it proves that

Garibaldi is no ranting Red Republican, but can lay aside all personal prejudices, and really and patriotically devote himself to the great cause of Italian amelioration and liberty—a cause in behalf of which Louis Napoleon and the French seem now to be powerful instruments. 19

Pragmatic yet principled, selfless yet individualistic, a revolutionary in the service of a monarch, Garibaldi represented the ideological paradoxes at the core of an America striving for national unity yet riven with increasing sectionalism, an America on the eve of its own civil war.

American newspapers followed the Italian war closely, especially the new illustrated journal Harper's Weekly that thrived on publishing engravings of battle scenes, officers in full military regalia, and charts of military movements. One of Melville's favorite magazines, Harper's Weekly offered detailed analyses of the conflict every week and even printed three folio-sized maps of northern Italy so readers could better follow military maneuvers (May 28, July 9, and July 30, 1859). Melville's local newspapers, the Pittsfield Sun and the Berkshire County Eagle, unabashedly supported the king and Garibaldi. The Sun of May 12 reminded readers of "the evils under which Italy was suffering from foreign despotism, ecclesiastical thraldom, and the tyranny of domestic rulers," specifically Austria, the pope, and the king of Naples, and on June 3 the Eagle printed William Cullen Bryant's attack on Austrian perfidy. 20 Nor were Italy's French allies to be entirely trusted. Although Napoleon III argued that he aided Sardinia only "to restore to freedom one of the finest parts of Europe," Risorgimento enthusiast Senator Charles Sumner expressed highly qualified confidence in the emperor in the July 1 Eagle. 21 In this transnationally charged political atmosphere, on July 6 Melville wrote a letter in the form of a poem inviting his brother Allan's law partner friend Daniel Shepherd to Arrowhead:

Come, Daniel, come and visit me:
I'm lost in many a quandary:
I've dreamed, like Bab'lon's Majesty:
Prophet, come expound for me.
—I dreamed I saw a laurel grove,
Claimed for his by the bird of Jove,

Who, elate with such dominion,
Oft cuffed the boughs with haughty pinion.
Indignantly the trees complain,
Accusing his afflictive reign.
Their plaints the chivalry excite
Of chanticleers, a plucky host:
They battle with the bird of light.
Beaten, he wings his Northward flight,
No more his laurel realm to boast,
Where now, to crow, the cocks alight,
And—break down all the branches quite!
Such a weight of friendship pure
The grateful trees could not endure.
This dream, it still disturbeth me:
Seer, foreshows it Italy? (14:337–38)

Although scholars know little about Shepherd—all of the facts are summarized in the headnote to the letter—he presumably enjoyed discussing foreign politics over a glass of liquor, which the rest of the poem discusses in convivial detail.²² What counts here is the precision of Melville’s allusions to Italian politics and his desire to discuss them with a presumably knowledgeable and interested friend. Framed as a dream-allegory, the poem questions Napoleon III’s motives and implies that French domination may follow Italian independence. The “bird of Jove” is Austria’s double eagle, the “chanticleers” represent the French, and the laurel branches are the Italian states.²³ As much as Italy needs rescuing, Melville wonders whether its “laurel grove” can sustain the weight of French “friendship,” a burdensome bond that contrasts sharply with the relationship the poet envisages with Shepherd. Melville shares Sumner’s distrust of Napoleon III and asks if Italy may simply be trading one foreign ruler for another. Prophetically, Melville wrote the poem the same day Napoleon asked Franz Joseph of Austria for a truce, an act that betrayed the Italian cause and led to the notorious Treaty of Villafranca on July 9 which allowed Austria to remain in parts of northern Italy. Melville’s prescience indicates a keen understanding of European politics and Louis Napoleon’s strate-

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²². Parker, for example, limits his discussion to the poem’s indications about Melville’s drinking habits (Herman Melville, 2:401).

²³. These glosses were first inferred in Melville, Representative Selections, ed. Willard Thorp (New York: American Book Company, 1938), 425n. Thorp misread one line as “bird of love,” yet still connected the image with Austria. My reading in the period suggests that Melville was using generally understood metaphors and national stereotypes.
gies. He knew that expressions of friendship from the lips of a Napoleon meant little, for, unlike the enlightened rulers he later praised in “The Age of the Antonines,” modern emperors will sacrifice noble ideals—the “laurel” that wreathes Italy’s separate states—to political expediency—here, Napoleon’s fear of republics. Constitutional authority depends on the character of its executives, and Napoleon III, as Sumner suspected, was more concerned with self-preservation than principle.

The looming Italian war may have prodded Melville to compose not only “Daniel Shepherd” but some of the six Italian poems in “Fruit of Travel Long Ago” with their air of danger, unrest, unease, and possible death in a land whose tradition of “fatal beauty” is about to explode. The first five stanzas of “Pausilippo (In the Time of Bomba)” exhibit “Daniel Shepherd’s” tetrameters and, by recalling Silvio Pellico’s “Clandestine arrest” for writing a “patriot ode / Construed as treason; trial none; / Prolonged captivity profound” (11:298; 31, 33–35), remind readers of Italy’s wrongs at the hands of foreign oppressors. “In a Bye-Canal” evokes the mystery of Venice when the narrator spies the “loveliest eyes of scintillation” peering through a lattice as he floats by in a gondola (11:292; 13). While the eyes are presumably female, and their invitation sexual, they partake of the unwholesome spying Melville experienced in the Austrian-dominated city, and the poem’s allusion to Jael, the Israelite woman who slew the Canaanite general Sisera, injects horror into an otherwise tranquil scene. “Venice” and “Milan Cathedral” offer celebratory verbal postcards of their subjects, but “Pisa’s Leaning Tower” imagines the structure as “A would-be suicide” (11:294; 11), an ominous note reminiscent of “The Bell-Tower.” “In a Church of Padua” compares a confessional to a “Dread diving-bell!” in which priests descend “into consciences / Where more is hid than found” (11:295; 14, 16–17), a metaphor that suggests both papal dungeons and the futility of Roman Catholic rites.

Garibaldi received even more acclaim after his successful invasion of Sicily and Naples confirmed his reputation as a man of integrity, one who refused the dishonorable treaty of Villafranca and stayed true to his vision of a united Italy. Even the splenetic Henry Adams rushed from Rome to Palermo to witness the triumph of the Thousand and meet the great

24. William H. Shurr, The Mystery of Iniquity: Melville as Poet, 1857–1891 (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1972), 47–75, calls these six poems the “Italian section” of Timoleon, where they were first published in 1891 (173). Taking a philosophical and formal approach to these works, Shurr believes that the poems “form a unified whole, comprising a small anatomy of Melville’s moral and imaginative universe, with issues of pride and sexuality, the possibility of suicide, the crushing of the defiant man—a universe presided over by [Milan Cathedral,] still another of his massive white symbols for divinity” (173). These insights nicely complement my historical analysis.
“Dictator,” who, he concluded in a letter to the Boston Courier, “was all he was ever said to be,” a brave, honest, charismatic leader who “looked in his red shirt like the very essence and genius of revolution, as he is.”

Later, in his autobiography, Adams wrote, “At that moment, in the summer of 1860, Garibaldi was certainly the most serious of the doubtful energies in the world; the most essential to gauge rightly.” By that fall Garibaldi was the most famous leader of the Risorgimento in the world. Newspapers reported his every move, periodicals embellished their pages with engravings of his colorful troops, scholars translated his memoirs, and journalists wrote fawning hagiographies. His image was everywhere, on tins of Virginia tobacco and bottles of perfume, a picture of a soldier with piercing blue eyes, a gentle smile, a thick beard, long hair, and square shoulders, dressed in a brilliant red shirt (fig. 20).

As the most romantic military hero of the day, Garibaldi’s exploits inspired even more Risorgimento poetry, including poems by Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Walter Savage Landor as well as Whittier, Lowell, and Longfellow. By early 1861 the Christian Examiner of New York asked, “Garibaldi—who has not heard of him? Who does not feel interested in his success? Who but wishes to know something more about him than what is reported in newspapers?”

The American press eagerly shaped Garibaldi’s legend to fit the contours of national ideology. Theodore Dwight rushed into print his translation of Garibaldi’s memoirs (1859) and argued that the Italian cause was providentially designed to fulfill “some of the most glorious prophesies and promises recorded in the Bible, especially in overturning popery.” Such a typology effectively enlisted Garibaldi as a New World enemy of the anti-Christ and satisfied Protestant fears of unwittingly supporting a Catholic. The Beadle Publishing Company initiated its “Dime Biographical Library” with Orville J. Victor’s The Life of Joseph Garibaldi, The Liberator of Italy (1860) and advertised the book as “Garibaldi, the Washington of Italy,” a catchphrase repeated frequently in popular jour-

Victor claimed that Garibaldi was of noble descent and compared him favorably to Roman generals, Napoleon Bonaparte, St. Paul, Martin Luther, Cromwell, and Washington. Like them, he was “the representative man” who carried out “the purposes of Divinity itself” in the service of a cause ordained by Providence. Harper’s Weekly devoted its June 9 and November 17, 1860 covers to full-length engravings of the general, first showing him astride a white horse leading men into battle (fig. 21), then portraying his head only, appearing calm and controlled as in the iconic Democratic Review frontispiece.

Periodicals extended the Americanization of Garibaldi by describing him in Protestant and Jacksonian tropes that merged him into the American vision of historical progress. Writing for the conservative North American Review, Henry Tuckerman characterized Garibaldi as “one of

30. Adams scornfully dismissed this comparison as mere cant: “Europeans are fond of calling him the Washington of Italy, principally because they know nothing about Washington. Catch Washington invading a foreign kingdom on his own hook, in a fireman’s shirt!” (“Henry Adams and Garibaldi, 1860,” 246). Adams did not realize that Americans had already appropriated the phrase themselves.

31. O[rville] J. Victor, The Life of Joseph Garibaldi, the Liberator of Italy (New York: Beadle and Company, 1860), 9–10n, 70, 81, 92, 97, 61. Some of the wrappers carried the title “Garibaldi, the Washington of Italy.”
Nature’s noblemen,” a phrase formerly reserved for Andrew Jackson. And J. B. Torricelli, reviewing five French and Italian books on Garibaldi for the Christian Examiner, affirmed the millennialist strain: Garibaldi is “predestined to be the deliverer of Italy, the messenger of the Almighty to

whom the commission was given to prepare his own countrymen for a new life.”

Of equal importance with his military success was Garibaldi’s return to his farm on Caprera. Such a repudiation of power, like George Washington’s, recalled the legendary Roman hero Cincinnatus who was called from his fields to lead the Roman army and, after defeating the foe, returned to the plow, preferring agrarian peace to military conquest. A central trope in the press, this comparison sanitized Garibaldi for American consumption. *Littell’s Living Age* reprinted a British assessment that portrayed Garibaldi as “another Cincinnatus” whose “chief glory is, that, being a ringleader of rebels, he is the servant of order.” Orville Victor considered Garibaldi’s renunciation of dictatorship even greater than Washington’s refusal of a crown: “George Washington, retiring from his power as commander-in-chief of the American army, to his farm at Mount Vernon, glad to return to the quiet of home, was an act [sic] of great moral sublimity; but that of Garibaldi far transcends it.” “Cincinnatus,” Garry Wills argues, “was an icon meant by the Enlightenment to replace churchly saints with a resolutely secular ideal,” an aim that targets perfectly both Washington and Garibaldi. For Americans who fancied their own republic a second Rome, Garibaldi provided one more link in a typological chain that extended back through Washington and the Pilgrims to ancient Rome and consecrated America’s rebellious spirit with the halo of providential order.

Whatever the reality of his politics, the Garibaldi represented to the American public was neither a Mazzinian social democrat nor a slavish monarchist. Such balance gave him admirers from across the American political spectrum. Longfellow covertly compared him to a volcanic Titan in the poem “Enceladus” (1859), while the more radical Whittier apostrophized him as “God’s prophet” in “Garibaldi” (1869). This was precisely the kind of energy that made Garibaldi a popular choice for a command in the Union army, that drove immigrant volunteers to form the “Garibaldi Guard,” and that made his autograph as valuable as Washington’s, John Hancock’s, or Kossuth’s at an 1864 benefit for the Union cause.

38. For Lincoln’s offer of a Union command and the Garibaldi Guard, see Introduction, p. 2n. For Garibaldi’s autograph, see Stanton Garner, *The Civil War World of Herman Melville* (Law-
Melville first read of Garibaldi’s feats in a San Francisco newspaper in October 1860; conceivably, he could have begun his verses on Garibaldi then.\(^{39}\) Or he might have begun them the following July 1 when he and Evert Duyckinck visited the steam sloop *Iroquois* at the Brooklyn Navy Yard (*Log*, 641), walking the same deck that Garibaldi had trod while the ship was protecting American interests in Palermo.\(^{40}\) At some point he may have discussed the general with his cousin Henry Gansevoort who had been in Italy with his family from late 1859 until August 1860, or seen the photographs of Garibaldi and his son Menotti in cousin Kate Gansevoort Lansing’s photograph album of famous Europeans.\(^{41}\) Whatever the sources, Herman and his extended family were well aware of Garibaldi-mania, a cause Melville advanced in his Neapolitan diptych, “At the Hostelry” and “Naples in the Time of Bomba.”

Although seldom studied, in one form or another these poems have been included in the Melville canon since the Constable edition of 1922–24 and textual scholars have thoroughly, if inconclusively, debated its structure, intent, and dates of composition. Of their 1,428 lines, approximately 200 allude to Garibaldi, Cavour, and the Risorgimento. Garibaldi allusions occur in three places: the beginning and end of the first poem and the end of the second poem. They thus frame the entire diptych and provide a link between the two parts. A different persona narrates each diptych, and the topics shift uneasily between history, politics, and...
art as other voices intrude to complicate the issue of authorial presence with what Robert Sandberg calls an “adjustment of screens.” Allusions to Garibaldi connect every voice, however, and offer differing perspectives on this complex hero. “At the Hostelry,” narrated by the Marquis de Grandvin, begins with 100 lines recounting Garibaldi’s victories in Sicily and the annexations leading up to Rome’s incorporation into Italy in 1870; it concludes with a biographical reminiscence of Garibaldi’s year of exile in New York, particularly his residence on Staten Island at the home of Antonio Meucci, an inventor and candlemaker. Thickly sandwiched in between is a long debate on the merits of the “picturesque” dramatized in the voices of thirty “Old Masters” such as Jan Steen, Adrian Brouwer, William Van de Velde, Tintoretto, Rubens, and Paolo Veronese. “Naples in the Time of Bomba,” narrated by Major Jack Gentian, recounts the major’s entry into Naples during the last years of Ferdinand II’s reign and draws heavily on Melville’s own experiences during his 1857 visit to Naples. The poem interfuses these scenes with disturbing recollections of Neapolitan history, including some of its darkest moments. Then, in a surprising turn, it concludes with an elegy for Garibaldi. As in his paired short stories set in America and England—“The Paradise of Bachelors and The Tartarus of Maids,” “The Two Temples,” and “Rich Man’s Pudding, Poor Man’s Crumbs,” first called “diptychs” by Jay Leyda—the paired poems connect disparate times and places to create a contrapuntal, transnational whole with Garibaldi as historical figure and poetic symbol bridging two distinct moments in recent Italian history.

“At the Hostelry” opens with a rush of details that authoritatively demonstrates Melville’s familiarity with popular representations of Garibaldi’s finest moment—the conquest of Sicily and Naples in 1860. A John Tenniel cartoon from Punch that was reprinted in the July 7, 1860 Harper’s Weekly, while Melville was at sea, anticipates the poem’s opening metaphor by depicting Garibaldi as a “Modern Perseus” rescuing Sicily-Andromeda from “Bomba Junior,” Francis II caricatured as a grotesque sea monster (fig. 22).

“At the Hostelry” applies this iconography to Garibaldi’s liberation of Naples, a city

long in chains
Exposed dishevelled by the sea—

Ah, so much more her beauty drew,
Till Savoy’s red-shirt Perseus flew
And cut that fair Andromeda free. (79; 1:10–14)

Figure 22. John Tenniel, “Garibaldi the Liberator; or, The Modern Perseus.” Harper’s Weekly, July 7, 1860, 432. This richly allusive cartoon celebrating Garibaldi’s conquest of Sicily first appeared in Punch and was immediately reprinted in Harper’s Weekly.

The cartoon uses the same iconography as chapter 55 of Moby-Dick where Ishmael refers to Guido Reni’s and William Hogarth’s depictions of Perseus rescuing Andromeda (6:261). Melville’s poetic allusion suggests that he not only saw the Harper’s cartoon but also noticed its alterations that
paint a more positive picture of Garibaldi’s military exploits. In Guido’s painting (fig. 23) Perseus descends astride Pegasus, brandishing a sword in a recognizable pose of military valor, like the Harper’s Weekly cover (fig. 21); in contrast, Hogarth’s Perseus (fig. 24), unquestionably supernatural and mythic, flies through the air unaided, holding the head of Medusa.

Tenniel’s cartoon changes these representations in several important ways. It eliminates Pegasus and gives his wings to Garibaldi, angelizing
him and reinforcing his moral distance from the sea monster, now transformed into Francis II, the misshapen prince of Hell. It gives Garibaldi a spear, linking him with St. George as well as Perseus, a common archetypal

44. “The Entry into Naples,” a poem published on the front page of Harper’s Weekly a few months later, clothed Garibaldi’s triumph in the rhetoric of millennialism, explicitly comparing him to “an angel from the skies” and “Heaven’s own chosen king” (October 13, 1860). Such metaphors almost transform Garibaldi into an evangelical Protestant.
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comparison that Melville used in *Moby-Dick* and one that further sanctifies Garibaldi’s efforts (6:363). Importantly, Andromeda wears clothes, lessening her sexuality; Medusa disappears, eliminating the chief emblem of Perseus’s violence; and Garibaldi wears a Roman uniform, placing him in the service of the imperial state. These alterations conform the story of Perseus and Andromeda to Victorian and American ideology by validating accepted gender roles and obsessions with empire while eliding the dangerous “Medusa of Republicanism.” They are iconographic euphemisms, calculated changes designed to obscure the brutality behind the Perseus myth that Ishmael invoked when he compared Ahab to Cellini’s statue. Although Garibaldi rebels against authority, his noble aims justify his deeds in a Machiavellian economy of war that repays violence with national independence.

Immediately after the allusion to Perseus and Andromeda, the poem turns toward the more mundane facts of Garibaldi’s life, which moderate his mythic stature. Recalling popular descriptions of Garibaldi, the poem terms him “The banished Bullock from the Pampas” (79; 11:23) and a “red Taurus plunging on” (79; 11:29), metaphors that combine New World and Old, Garibaldi’s participation in republican revolutions in Brazil and Uruguay with astrology. Behind “Taurus” lies Garibaldi’s oft-noted rashness and impetuosity, as well as Torino (“little bull”) or Turin, the seat of Victor Emmanuel who quietly supported Garibaldi’s invasion. More mundane historical facts follow as Garibaldi arrives in Naples by rail, not on a white horse, just after his foe “King Fanny” has ignominiously packed his bags and fled to the papal fortress of Gaeta. Garibaldi’s mechanized entrance links him with the industrial order that would soon dominate Europe and America and threaten the classic ideals that Garibaldi popularly represented. Melville’s Garibaldi blends linear and cyclic patterns of history as an apostle of unpredictable change, a mixture of ancient myth and commonplace modern reality.


46. For the Victorian reaction to the Risorgimento, see O’Connor, *The Romance of Italy*.

47. William Bysshe Stein, *The Poetry of Melville’s Late Years*: *Time, History, Myth, and Religion* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1970), interprets Garibaldi as a figure of cyclic history, a Dionysian reformer of the failed linear history of Christianity (229). Such a reading, while valuable, disregards the historical fact that Garibaldi liberated Naples from one king only to give it to another. Like many Melville critics who prefer to view Melville as disruptive and iconoclastic, Stein overemphasizes liberty and ignores authority.
her conclusion that “the creation of the myth of Garibaldi reflects both the political possibilities of modern communication techniques and the scavenging tendencies of nationalist rhetoric, which seeks to construct a popular and persuasive political ideology by appropriating and manipulating pieces of existing discourse and practice.” For example, after liberating Naples Garibaldi’s name shines in the “halls of history” (80; 1.36) as

one who in no paladin age

Was knightly—him who lends a page

Now signal in time’s recent story

Where scarce in vogue are “Plutarch’s men,”

And jobbers deal in popular glory. (80; 11:40–44)

Even while these lines criticize newspapers’ inflated rhetoric they share the rhetoric of Garibaldi’s obituaries in the press, evidence that Melville tinkered with the poem until 1882. E. L. Godkin praised Garibaldi’s “heroism of the antique type, the simple type which Plutarch has painted, but the reproduction of which in our time the newspapers are making less and less possible, because its largest element was its unconsciousness, and the modern hero finds it difficult to be unconscious.” A. V. Dicey saw knightly valor succumbing to utilitarian warfare, where mechanized armies, steel ships, and growing imperialism left no room for the “romance and generosity” of a Garibaldi. The New York Tribune considered Garibaldi “the last heroic figure in Italian history,” and Harper’s Weekly prepared a special full-page engraving depicting the highlights of Garibaldi’s career (fig. 25).

A revolutionary hero cloaked in Roman virtue, Garibaldi is one of Melville’s “kingly commons,” perhaps the last of his kind, a hero whose unquestioned merit reveals the shallowness of contemporary “popular glory.” Yet he is also, as Lucy Riall has shown, a product of the “jobbers,” a simple man elevated into living legend for the entertainment of newspaper readers and commodified as “picturesque” by well-intentioned writers like Dwight, Tuckerman, and even the caustic Adams. Whether wearing the regalia of the gaucho or the Roman legion, Garibaldi is one of Godkin’s self-conscious modern heroes, as much a construct of his time as a force shaping it. The “popular glory” that surrounds him parallels the process Melville described in a late letter complaining about the publish-

ing house of Harper: “This species of ‘fame’ a waggish acquaintance says can be manufactured to order, and sometimes is so manufactured thro the agency of a certain house that has a correspondent in every one of the almost innumerable journals that enlighten our millions from the Lakes to the Gulf & from the Atlantic to the Pacific” (14:492–93).

As an icon of modern heroism, Garibaldi runs the risk of being absorbed by a greedy and commercial age of increasing utilitarianism and capitalism. The Marquis de Grandvin, ever practical, realizes that some loss of heroic stature inevitably follows fame. Revolutionary idealism must give way to practical diplomacy in order to make Italy “A unit and a telling State / Participant in the world’s debate” (80; 1.65–66). The greater
good may now be better served by a canny politician like Cavour: “Few deeds of arms, in fruitful end / The statecraft of Cavour transcend” (80; 1.67–68). With the successive incorporation of Florence, Ancona, Venice, and finally Rome into a unified republic, Italy’s leaders must turn their attention to practical matters:

Swart Tiber, dredged, may rich repay—
The Pontine Marsh, too, drained away.
And, far along the Tuscan shore
The weird Maremma reassume
Her ancient tilth and wheaten plume. (81; 1.94–98)

William Bysshe Stein reads these lines as a criticism of Garibaldi, who actively supported these projects during the 1870s and thus betrayed his idealism with utilitarianism. But in Garibaldi’s time these projects were considered visionary attempts to recapture the glories of ancient Rome by making Italy a more industrialized and progressive nation. And because they are agricultural improvements, they link Garibaldi even more closely with Cincinnatus, a figure whose heroic stature rests on combining the military with the agricultural. It is not so much Garibaldi whom Melville criticizes as it is the inflated imagery and rhetoric of contemporary media.

Still, real questions about Garibaldi’s fame exist. Can his reputation survive his popularity? Or will he be reduced to a mere advertising image, a picture on a tin of smoking tobacco, a product of the “jobbers” at Beadle’s, the cartoonists at Punch and Harper’s Weekly, or the columnists at the Nation? In the conclusion of “At the Hostelry” the marquis wonders whether Garibaldi’s fame can survive the coming age of utilitarianism. Consider his costume:

The Cid, his net-work shirt of mail,
And Garibaldi’s woolen one:
In higher art would each avail
So just expression nobly grace—
Declare the hero in the face? (94; 8.11–15)

Is Garibaldi’s noble physiognomy sufficient to overcome his unheroic garb? Can he retain the heroic associations of the Cid even though he is customarily portrayed wearing ordinary clothes instead of armor? These ques-

52. Poetry of Melville’s Late Years, 228–29. For Garibaldi’s interest in making the Tiber navigable, see Mack Smith, Garibaldi, 189–90.
tions, as Gordon Poole has noticed, are implicit in the long debate on the picturesque that takes up most of “At the Hostelry.” Although the debate is finally inconclusive, Jan Steen’s pragmatic response suggests the dilemma Garibaldi faces as he becomes a more and more legendary figure:

Utility reigns—Ah, well-a-way!—  
And bustles along in Bentham’s shoes.  
For the Picturesque—suffice, suffice  
The picture that fetches a picturesque price! (82; 2.17–20)

Garibaldi becomes little more than an advertising gimmick, a cheap means of increasing magazine sales or selling tobacco. The Garibaldi of history fades before the Garibaldi created by the media, an artificial and picturesque figure that serves the interests of publishers, not the ideals of revolution. This more ambiguous vision of Garibaldi informs the end of “At the Hostelry”:

There’s Garibaldi, off-hand hero,  
A very Cid Campeador,  
Lion-Nemesis of Naples’ Nero—  
But, tut, why tell that story o’er!  
A natural knight-errant, truly,  
Nor priding him in parrying fence,  
But charging at the helm-piece—hence  
By statesmen deemed a lord unruly. (95; Sequel 17–24)

These lines capture the debate between cool-headed politicians like Cavour and Victor Emmanuel over Garibaldi’s long-term value. The king respected Garibaldi’s military genius and encouraged him when it served his ends, but, when Garibaldi recklessly set off on a buccaneering expedition against Rome in 1862 the Piedmontese army confronted his irregulars at Aspromonte and wounded the general so seriously he almost lost a leg. When he assaulted Rome again in 1867 the army defeated him at Mentana and the king placed him under house arrest on Caprera where he remained a virtual prisoner until 1871. With the revolution over, “the dragons penned or slain, / What for St. George would then remain!” (95–96; Sequel 39–40), asks the marquis. It is a question that Garibaldi, cast aside by the king he had so ardently supported, must have asked

54. Mack Smith, Garibaldi, 122–81.
himself.

The final lines of “At the Hostelry” confirm Garibaldi’s paradoxical nature: he resists both the historical typologies that seem to explain him and the picturesque aura conferred by the popular press. “A don of rich erratic tone,” evidently a conservative member of the Burgundy Club, reminds the audience of Garibaldi’s days on Staten Island. Were he born today, the don asserts, the “Red Shirt Champion” would never quit his trading trips,

Perchance, would fag in trade at desk,
Or, slopped in slimy slippery sludge,
Lifelong on Staten Island drudge,
Melting his tallow, Sir, dipping his dips,
Scarce savoring much of the Picturesque! (96; Sequel 56–61)\(^{55}\)

The don’s linear view of history as progressively more common and ignoble presages Henry Adams’s pessimism, where primal “forces” such as Garibaldi suffer from increasing entropy. To this bleak outlook a “cultured wight / Lucid with transcendental light” (96; Sequel 62–63) responds with a cyclical view of history:

Pardon, but tallow none nor trade
When, thro’ this Iron Age’s reign
The Golden one comes in again;
That’s on the card. (96; Sequel 64–67)

While it’s always tempting to find caricatures of Emerson in Melville’s writings, this “transcendental” view is decidedly non-Emersonian. “All history resolves itself very easily into the biography of a few stout and earnest persons,” Emerson wrote in “Self-Reliance,”\(^{56}\) privileging the individual above events. Both the cynical don and the “cultured wight” disagree with Emerson’s view and see men as products of their historical situation, whether it extends into an infinite and unpredictable future.

\(^{55}\) Both Stein (245) and William H. Shurr (Mystery of Iniquity, 216) read these lines autobiographically, taking them as references to Melville’s own dreary career in the custom house, a suggestion Poole, in the best published edition of the poem, repeats (39n). Yet Melville worked on Manhattan, not Staten island and seldom drudged at a desk, instead walking the docks in the open air as, in his own words, an “outdoor Custom House officer” (Log, 818). Of course, the lines allude directly to Garibaldi’s 1850–51 exile on Staten Island, a fact well known at the time and mentioned in all standard biographical dictionaries today. Melville’s poem is trying to enter history, not evade it, to engage experience, not retreat into autobiography.

\(^{56}\) Essays and Lectures, 267.
or returns to a familiar past. The puzzle of Garibaldi is that he seems to be all three, one of Adams’s primal energies exhausting itself in supreme effort, a picturesque Roman hero returned to usher in a golden age of Italian prosperity and independence, and a “representative man” who incorporates the spirit of the age so completely that it seems to have flowed from his veins. Garibaldi illustrates the impossibility of deciding whether man makes history or history makes man. Instead of an Emersonian motto, Melville presents a multivoiced, inconclusive debate on fundamental issues. The eloquent Marquis de Grandvin, perhaps more gracious than Melville himself, ends this “rhyming race” with a moderate position on the relationship between history and the self:

Angel O’ the Age! Advance, God speed.
Harvest us all good grain in seed;
But sprinkle, do, some drops of grace
Nor polish us into commonplace. (96; Sequel 74–77)

Drawing upon his famous reserve of geniality, the marquis appeals for a middle way that sustains the mystique of Garibaldi (“the drops of grace”) even while acknowledging the inevitable leveling of the advancing age of utilitarianism.

“NAPLES IN THE TIME OF BOMBA”
An American Garibaldi

“Naples in the Time of Bomba” counterpoints “At the Hostelry” by suggesting the limits of individual agency as a moderating force on history. Whereas “At the Hostelry” focuses on Garibaldi’s life and major accomplishments, “Naples” mentions him only once, at his death, in lines tacked on after 1882 and, in their last iteration, presumably spoken by the poem’s narrator, Major Jack Gentian. Sandberg’s analysis of the manuscript indicates that Melville added this narrator around 1875–77 and fleshed him out in sketches only loosely connected with the original poem, which focuses on Naples in 1857 and relies heavily on the travel journal.57 What I find striking about Jack is his similarity to Garibaldi, a man who represents the contradictory values of authority and individualism, violence and

peace, aristocracy and democracy, republicanism and monarchism, all the paradoxes of modern nationalism that beset both the United States and Italy. The framing devices of the Burgundy Club sketches re-vision Melville's original poem as Jack's narrative to his fellow Burgundians sometime in the late 1870s or even early 1880s, after Garibaldi's death. Of Southern stock, Jack grew up in the North and fought for the Union, losing an arm to the blind force of historical necessity. Like Garibaldi he is brave, impulsive, straightforward, and rash, and startles genteel society by swearing like a "Roman consul exhorting his infantry." No one, however, mistakes his natural merit, his noble bearing that inspires respect even in a New York "cabby" (98). On the surface democratic, Jack is in fact a natural aristocrat, that rare American who maintains the dignity of tradition yet fights on the side of a leveling utilitarianism. Postwar Jack understands how war complicates notions of individual valor and turns yesterday's hero into today's geriatric amputee, even as Garibaldi has fallen in esteem since 1860. Jack and his auditors would know of Garibaldi's two quixotic forays on Rome and his house arrest on Caprera. They might even have read about his escape to France in 1870 where he commanded a republican regiment in the Franco-Prussian War, or about his utopian plans to redirect the Tiber in 1875. With the postbellum "Iron Age" of utilitarianism well under way, Garibaldi seemed more and more of a historical curiosity, an eccentric whose reputation required reassessment and deflation, a theme cautiously advanced in some of the obituaries and overtly presented in William Roscoe Thayer's revisionist 1888 *Atlantic Monthly* pieces.58

Jack bears further comparison with Garibaldi by virtue of his membership in the Society of the Cincinnati, an international republican knighthood memorializing American-French cooperation during the Revolutionary War. Composed of Revolutionary War officers, their direct descendants, and French allies, the Cincinnati was America's only hereditary association, and included Melville's maternal grandfather General Peter Gansevoort. From its beginning in 1783 the society was steeped in controversy stemming from its aristocratic tendencies and foreign connections. Although Washington agreed to serve as its first president, on the advice of the anti-Federalist Jefferson he accepted only on condition that the society refrain from politics and moderate its elitism. Wills notes that after 1786 Washington never wore the Cincinnati's distinctive badge

Figure 26. Medal, Society of the Cincinnati, c. 1790. Reproduced by permission of The Society of the Cincinnati, Washington, DC. The obverse (front) depicts Cincinnatus at the plow, with shipping and villages in the distance; the reverse depicts three senators presenting a sword to Cincinnatus with his wife, child, and house behind him. Many versions of this basic design exist, and this one, the “Andrews–Richard Anderson Eagle,” represents the prevailing type when Melville’s grandfather General Peter Gansevoort joined the society. See Minor Myers, Jr., *The Insignia of the Society of the Cincinnati*, especially page 52.
and concludes that “Washington retained his membership in the Society only to check it.”\(^{59}\) When the France of Lafayette metamorphosed into the France of Robespierre, the society came under suspicion from conservative Federalists, for it now seemed allied with anarchy and rampant republicanism. Caught in the ongoing debate between authority and individualism, the Society of the Cincinnati served as a lightning rod for American uncertainty about the nature of republican ideology.

Ideological controversies surrounding the Cincinnati and a lingering personal sense of aristocratic pride explain Melville’s obsessive rewriting of Jack’s biography and his sketches on the society. For his service in the American Revolution Jack’s grandfather, a South Carolinian, earned “the eagle-wings in gold of the Cincinnati, a venerable order whereof he who still reigns ‘first in the hearts of his countrymen’ was the original head” (99). Since membership passed to the oldest son, Jack, like Melville’s cousin Guert Gansevoort, inherits the badge, and he insists on wearing it rather than his Grand Old Army medallion.\(^{60}\) The badge consists of a gold American eagle displaying Cincinnatus at his plow on one side and receiving his sword on the other (fig. 26). It hung from a blue ribbon bordered with white in honor of the French Bourbon flag.

Some of the major’s friends believe the badge betrays an aristocratic tendency, even “a weakness for certain gewgaws that savor of the monarchical”; but the narrator responds, “an inherited badge of the Cincinnati, every American however ultra in his democracy, must allow to be something of which no other American need be ashamed” (99). “The Cincinnati,” a superseded sketch by one of the most conservative Bur- gundians, defends “the guillotined victim” Louis XVI and recalls “the violent democratic crusade” that began shortly after his death and briefly discredited the society (140). In another version of Jack’s biography, one “Colonel Josiah Bunkum,” an unreflecting voice of Radical Republicanism, the cash nexus, and utilitarianism, attacks the Cincinnati as archaic, impractical, antidemocratic, and monarchical. Yet, “Justly proud art thou of thy decoration of the Cincinnati” (143), asserts a subsequent fragment, while another calls Jack “a democrat, though less of the stump than of the heart” (135). Embodying conservative, liberal, and radical ideas, Jack remains as politically capacious as Garibaldi. He personifies the political paradoxes of Revolutionary America allied with monarchical France, Union officers of Southern heritage, modern military heroes with ancient Roman virtues, and Jacksonian Americans claiming inherited nobility.


60. For the complicated and somewhat indeterminate history of the Gansevoort Cincinnati badge, see Parker, *Herman Melville* 2:518, and Garner, *Civil War World*, 166.
Like Garibaldi, Jack extends the typology of Cincinnatus-Washington into the present, an ambiguous iconography of military valor combined with pastoral humility that justifies force by moderating ambition. The inability of Jack’s friends to understand these contradictions reveals their shortcomings, not Jack’s. Outdated though he may seem to a “Bunkum,” Jack, with his missing arm, dignity, geniality, and magnanimity, is a picturesque reminder of genuine heroism and patriotism. Encompassing contradictory ideologies, he surpasses any single ideology save that of the “representative man,” the Emersonian ethos popularly applied to Garibaldi. Yet as a man enmeshed in history he complicates even that transcendental lure, that sop to individualism that mitigates the forces of historical necessity so obviously formative in Jack’s life. Parker, following Michael Rogin, suggests that Melville’s customhouse badge—which he wore daily when he was writing these poems—reminded him of the Cincinnati badge and what Rogin terms his “moral right” to wear it. One need not accept this psychological speculation to recognize that the Cincinnati motif symbolizes Melville’s recognition that history alternately demands aristocratic authoritarianism and democratic individualism, paradoxical qualities embodied in Cincinnatus, Washington, Garibaldi, and Jack Gentian.

Historical paradox riddles Jack’s meditation in “Naples in the Time of Bomba” and explains why Melville thought him an appropriate narrator for the original poem. In 1857 Bomba reigns, frivolity dominates, and the revolutions of 1848 have faded from memory. Although Jack enjoys the gaiety and thoughtlessness of the Neapolitan mob, he knows the “shocking stories bruited wide, / In England which I left but late, / Touching dire tyranny in Naples” (111; 2.4–6), an allusion to Gladstone’s famous letters of 1851 and the increasing English recognition of Bomba’s horrors. Seeing through the gay façade into the darkness of Bomba’s tyranny, Jack notices cannons turned toward the populace instead of the sea, troops mustered in a daily show of force, political prisoners in the Castel dell’Ovo, spies masquerading as blind beggars, and sycophantic Jesuits ready to rationalize Bomba’s “lawless power” (124; 8.69). Naples in 1857 combines the ethical ambiguities of The Confidence-Man with the political repression Melville observed firsthand on his Italian tour. Jack knows Neapolitan history and recalls such abuses of authority as Queen Joanna I’s murder of her husband and Tiberius’s exile of Agrippina, Germanicus’s noble wife. As twinned perversions of patriotism and filial loyalty, these events paint tyranny as the Janus face of anarchy, a fundamental paradox in Neapolitan history that culminates in the present reign of “A brag-
Underneath a smiling face, Naples is bubbling with Vesuvian fire, as Jack sees emblems of revolution everywhere: Vesuvius itself, of course, “a Power even more nitrous and menacing than the Bomb-King himself” (116); “Mariners in red Phrygian caps” (124; 8.48), the cap of proletarian revolt; and allusions to “Parthenope” (125; 9.12; 147, 148), both the ancient name of Naples and the short-lived republic established by French Jacobins in 1799.

The most horrifying event in Neapolitan history that Jack recalls is Masaniello’s abortive revolt of 1647, which conjoins politics and art in a welter of associations that, dreamlike, move across centuries to resonate with the French Revolution of 1789 and the Medusan iconography darkly shadowing Garibaldi’s deeds. When Jack hears the lilting song of a fruit girl selling blood oranges, a fruit whose very name blends the mixed horror and beauty of Medusa, specters from the past crop up as he remembers Masaniello’s revolt:

Lo, there,
A throng confused, in arms, they pass,
Arms snatched from smithy, forge and shop:
Craftsmen and sailors, peasants, boys,
And swarthier faces dusked between—
Brigands and outlaws; linked with these
Salvator Rosa, and the fierce
Falcone with his fiery school;
Pell-mell with riff-raff, banded all
In league as violent as the sway
Of feudal claims and foreign lords
Whose iron heel evoked the spark
That fired the populace into flame.
And, see, dark eyes and sunny locks
Of Masaniello, bridegroom young,
Tanned marigold-cheek and tasseled cap;
The darling of the mob; nine days
Their great Apollo; then, in pomp
Of Pandemonium’s red parade,
His curled head Gorgoned on the pike,
And jerked aloft for God to see.
A portent. Yes, and typed the years,
Red after-years, and whirl of error
When Freedom linkt with Furies raved
In Carmagnole and cannibal hymn,  
Mad song and dance before the ark  
From France imported with *The Terror!*” (122; 7.143–69)

Melville probably takes his details from the *Penny Cyclopaedia* which explains that three days after a treaty granting tax relief and amnesty the Neapolitan mob turned on Masaniello and “his head was cut off, fixed on a pole, and carried to the viceroy,”62 a startling homology to Babo’s fate in “Benito Cereno.” Although neither Rosa nor Falcone took part in the revolt, legend associated them with it and gave their famous paintings of robbers and brigands a spurious authenticity. In contrast with Joel T. Headley’s identification of Masaniello with George Washington, Jack thinks Masaniello prefigures the anarchy that overtook France in 1789 where peasant mobs sang the “Carmagnole” as they danced before the guillotine, an anarchy not unlike the “riotocracy” that Melville satirized in “Charles’ Isle and the Dog-King.” Jack’s reading of history is understandable given that he lost an arm suppressing revolt in his own country, and that even such a revolutionary document as Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense* used the example of Masaniello to warn against anarchy.63 Yet the overlay of painting and opera along with the “iron heel” of an oppressive foreign authority engender reader sympathy if not support for Masaniello’s doomed revolt and place the Amalfi fisherman in a long line of Roman and Italian republicans from Brutus and Rienzi through Mazzini and Garibaldi.

As a historical figure exalted into legend until his name metonymized the romance of revolution, Masaniello adumbrates the literary glorification that engulfed Garibaldi. Although Jack questions whether Masaniello is any better than the “foreign lords” he opposes, as a figure from picturesque Neapolitan history the decapitated Masaniello, like the decapitated Medusa whose head can still petrify enemies, assumes a literary afterlife as an ambiguous symbol of combined victimization and oppression. Figuratively, Masaniello requires readers to take a more complex view of history than Jack and serves purposes similar to Babo, John Brown, and Billy Budd, all ambiguous figures of revolt and murderous violence

63. Paine cites Masaniello to bolster his argument for immediately framing an American constitution: “If we omit it now, some Masanello [sic] may hereafter arise, who laying hold of popular disquietudes, may collect together the desperate and the discontented, and by assuming to themselves the powers of government, may sweep away the liberties of the continent like a deluge.” See Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense: The Call to Independence*, ed. Thomas Wendel (Woodbury, NY: Barron’s Educational Series, 1975), 99.
who are at once apotheosized and punished. Like “weird John Brown” in “The Portent” in *Battle-Pieces* (11:5), Masaniello too portends revolution and civil strife; like Babo, his severed head enforces a moral, however mysterious; and like Billy, he is young, handsome, naïve, and violent. All four resist authority and die trying, and all four inspire songs and stories that outlive their abortive revolts. Theirs is an aesthetics of violence like the one that Herman Swanevelt, one of the ghostly painters in “At the Hostelry,” discerns in Leonardo da Vinci’s *Head of Medusa* (fig. 27):

> Like beauty strange with horror allied,—  
> As shown in great Leonardo’s head  
> Of snaky Medusa,—so as well  
> Grace and the Picturesque may dwell  
> With Terror, Vain here to divide—  
> The Picturesque has many a side. (83; 2.65–70)

By mediating the revolutionary excess of decapitation through the beauty of art, whether the (falsely attributed) painting of Leonardo’s or Shelley’s poem on the painting, Melville offers a covert intertextual recognition of art’s political dimensions.64 Revolution too has a “beauty strange with

64. The *Head of Medusa* was attributed to Leonardo in 1783, an error that remained un-
horror allied,” a combination imaged in Garibaldi, revolution’s current dominant icon. And this of course was the great distinction Americans drew between the French and the Italian revolutions: the Risorgimento, despite its history of political assassinations and terrorist attacks, avoided the anarchy of regicide and the sheer horror of the guillotine, the symbol of revolt gone mad, and thus comported with the meliorizing ideology of American politics. Garibaldi’s elevated classicism sanitized revolutionary excess and allowed him to function as an American hero, a rebel with a cause. Like Jack, whose Cincinnati medal blends both revolution and monarchy and Roman imperialism and American democracy, Garibaldi retains a personal integrity that justifies his simultaneous exhortations to the mob and submission to the king. Unlike Robespierre or Napoleon, Garibaldi is magnanimous to his enemies, constrains the mob, and retires when his aims are fulfilled. Medusan iconography images the violence of rebellion and the sexual exclusiveness of revolutions fought mainly to liberate white men; but, as wielded by Perseus-Garibaldi and artistically rendered by Melville-Cellini-da Vinci-Shelley, the Medusa myth restrains revolutionary excess by giving the victims power even in death and justifying their murder with the overriding need for order. Unabated revolutionary activity kills Masaniello, Babo, and Robespierre—the beheaders beheaded. Garibaldi, a “knight-errant” with the common touch, both a “Perseus” and a “candle-dipper,” offers a secure icon to represent violent historical change, one approved by Americans and, I believe, Melville as well.

When Garibaldi reenters the diptych at the end, he seems to bring order to chaos:

She [Naples as Andromeda] sobbed, she laughed, she rattled her chain;
Till the Red Shirt proved signal apt
Of danger ahead to Bomba’s son,

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corrected until 1907. The painting was the nineteenth century’s standard referent for finding both beauty and horror in Medusa, a tradition that began with Goethe and ran through Shelley, Hawthorne, Pater, Swinburne, and William Morris. Although Melville could have seen this painting at the Uffizi in 1857, his lines probably come from Shelley’s poem “On the Medusa of Leonardo Da Vinci in the Florentine Gallery”: “Its horror and its beauty are divine,” Shelley wrote, “Yet it is less the horror than the grace / Which turns the gazer’s spirit into stone” as “the tempestuous loveliness of terror” mirrors “all the beauty and the terror there” (ll. 4, 9–10, 33, 38, Poetical Works, 250). This poem is included in the edition of Shelley’s Poetical Works that Melville acquired in 1861 (Sealts, Melville’s Reading, #469). For a conspectus of Romantic and Victorian appropriations of the Medusa myth see Jerome McGann, “The Beauty of the Medusa,” and for a study of Shelley’s poem see Grant Scott, “Shelley, Medusa, and the Perils of Ekphrasis” in The Romantic Imagination: Literature and Art in England and Germany, ed. Frederick Burwick and Jurgen Klein (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996), 315–32.
And presently freedom’s thunder clapt,
And lo, he fell from toppling throne—
Fell down, like Dagon on his face,
And ah, the unfeeling populace!
But Garibaldi:—Naples’ host
Uncovers to her deliverer’s ghost,
While down time’s aisle, mid clarions clear
“Pale glory walks by valor’s bier.” (130–31; 12.50–60)

The final image presents Garibaldi in all his contradictory power, as a live hero toppling monarchy yet initiating anarchic terror (“the unfeeling populace” that might revenge itself on its oppressors) and as a dead hero monumentalized in the language of the popular press. Now liberated, Naples must learn to use its freedom wisely and take its place in a unified Italian nation. Its turbulent history suggests difficulties, however, and for both the United States and Italy achieving unity after civil war will prove elusive.

“CHRISTIANITY AND MACHIAVELLI”
Risorgimento Ideology in Battle-Pieces

Unlike the stuttering composition of the Neapolitan diptych and Burgundy Club sketches, Battle-Pieces (1866) forms a unified book of poems chronologically arranged by the event each memorializes. The poems’ themes and tropes are mostly drawn, as Stanton Garner demonstrates, from the immediate events Melville read about in the Pittsfield Sun, Berkshire Eagle, Harper’s Weekly, The Rebellion Record, and witnessed first-hand when he visited the front in April 1864. Even after supplying this rich context Garner calls for further study of the poems’ biblical, Greek, and Roman allusions, an invitation to read the book within the transnational context of the American Risorgimento that leads, I believe, to more closely aligning Melville’s ideology with Federalism than Garner allows. Risorgimento nationalism hovers over Battle-Pieces to insist that modern nation-states require both a strong central authority and respect for regional differences, a delicate balance Melville tries to achieve with—

65. Civil War World, 443. Southern apologetics mark Garner’s analyses and lead him to read several poems ironically, such as “Gettysburg: The Check” (247) and “The House-Top” (255–57). In the latter poem Garner astonishingly places Melville on the side of rebellion, riot, and anarchy. Garner explains his ironic approach on 68–78.
out sanctioning racial oppression, sectional rivalries, or national disloyalty. Italy’s experience after unification was instructive. Anxious to establish a uniform society, Piedmont imposed its civil code on all of its new dominions. Piedmontese law was widely accepted in the central states of Tuscany and Romagna, but in the South, notably Sicily and Calabria, it provoked the “Brigand Wars” of 1861–65 that pitted rural bandits, poor peasants, and recalcitrant Bourbonists against the northern-dominated government. Cavour’s diplomatic skills might have smoothed differences between the regions but his untimely death in 1861 left the government under inept politicians unable to modify the stern policies of Victor Emmanuel. Only 2 percent of the population held voting rights which, along with Pius IX’s threat to excommunicate Catholics who participated in Italian politics, effectively created a parliamentary oligarchy. These divisions of region, class, and religion prompted the famous proverb attributed to Massimo D’Azeglio, “having made Italy, it remains to make Italians.” War alone had failed to create a nation, a lesson Battle-Pieces preaches explicitly in its “Supplement” as it gestures simultaneously toward national unity and a cosmopolitan acceptance of regional difference.

Melville grounds his meliorism in Roman history, in 1866 still a respected text for North and South alike but one capable of being misread through the lens of sectional prejudice. The most explicit example comes in the author’s note to “The Frenzy of the Wake,” a poem voicing a Southerner’s angry reaction to Sherman’s march through Georgia in 1864. The note carefully distinguishes Sherman’s scorched-earth policy from Pompey’s decision to spare Roman cities in the civil war that ended the Roman Republic: “The war of Pompey and Caesar divided the Roman people promiscuously; that of the North and South ran a frontier line between what for the time were distinct communities or nations. In this circumstance, possibly, and some others, may be found both the cause and the justification of some of the sweeping measures adopted” (11:177). Sherman, obviously acting on orders from Lincoln, did what was “by military judges deemed to have been expedient” (11:176), a Machiavellian justification for tactics that preserved the Republic, unlike

66. Beales and Biagini, Risorgimento, 156–59, 152.
68. Adrian Lyttleton, “Creating a National Past: History, Myth, and Image in the Risorgimento,” in Making and Remaking Italy, provides the more accurate but less colorful translation: “the Italians have wanted to make a new Italy, but themselves to remain the old Italians” (70n48).
Pompey’s more restrained and ineffective policies. In contrast to the note’s cool analysis, the poem’s anguished speaker voices the most extreme of Southern values: he hates Blacks and the American flag, he hopes Union soldiers will “wither” under the blazing Southern sun, and he yearns to avenge Sherman’s depredations as Jael avenged Sisera’s oppression of Israel by driving a nail through his head (11:97–98; 20, 9–12). Melville’s note confesses that this allusion, though composed before Lincoln’s assassination, implies Southern satisfaction with Lincoln’s death, but somewhat disingenuously remarks that, “after consideration, it is allowed to remain” (11:176). The North may be an iron-charioted Sisera, as Stanton Garner argues, but Sisera was the instrument Jehovah chose to punish Israel for doing evil, and he trusted himself to Jael because her family was at peace with Sisera’s king.69 In other words, Sisera was an agent of God betrayed by an ally, and identifying Southerners with Jael places them in an equivocal ethical position. Melville allows the imputation of Southern vengeance to remain because not all Southerners are honorable any more than are all Northerners. The note reminds readers “that, by the less intelligent classes of the South, Abraham Lincoln, by nature the most kindly of men, was regarded as a monster wantonly warring upon liberty” (11:176), a convenient stereotype that rationalizes secession and slavery and substitutes vengeance for penitence. “The Frenzy” of the poem’s speaker, clearly from the South’s “less intelligent classes,” allows neither forgiveness nor understanding of his Northern foe. By placing the poem immediately after the “March to the Sea,” which spends six stanzas celebrating Sherman’s march and two final stanzas questioning its necessity, Melville positions himself as an objective analyst who understands how military expedients can contribute to the greater good.

The next poem but one, “The Surrender at Appomattox,” answers the question asked in the final stanza of “The March to the Sea”: “Was the havoc, retribution?” (11:96; 91) and implicitly endorses Northern tactics because they conquered treason and preserved freedom:

The warring eagles fold the wing,
But not in Cæsar’s sway;
Not Rome o’ercome by Roman arms we sing,
As on Pharsalia’s day,
But Treason thrown, though a giant grown,
And Freedom’s larger play. (11:100; 9–14)

Both North and South share in the glory of the Roman eagle, yet symbols alone do not confer right any more than typological appeals to Roman history. Caesar defeated Pompey at Pharsalus, Greece, in 48 BCE and extinguished the last hope for a republican Rome, but the Union’s republican (and Republican) victory over the South renews America’s claim to be a “second Rome” that, with the demise of slavery, promises an even “larger play” of freedom than the first Rome. All men, regardless of color or region, can eventually share in the possibilities of democracy as the Union inherits and extends Roman civitas beyond anything dreamed of in either the past or Victor Emmanuel’s warring, divided, class-ridden “New Italy.”

The South has its share of Roman virtue too, but it emanates from individuals rather than policies or institutions, a romantic ideal ultimately inadequate to successful nation-building. The pair of poems titled “Stone-wall Jackson” offers Northern and Southern views of the famous Confederate general, the first respectful but certain that Jackson “stoutly stood for Wrong” (11:59; 4), the second “(Ascribed to a Virginian)” presenting him as a “stoic” with a “Roman heart” who “followed his star” until it led to death (11:60; 9, 8, 23). The double perspective leaves Jackson’s Roman qualities in question, for the Virginian admits that “much of doubt in after days / Shall cling, as now, to the war; / Of the right and the wrong they’ll still debate, / Puzzled by Stonewall’s star” (11:61; 47–50). The issue seems Machiavellian. Was Jackson’s the “star” of virtù, or personal valor? Or was it a “star” more like John Brown’s “meteor of war,” a happenstance of blind fortuna? Similar ambiguity inheres in the Northerner’s statement that Jackson is “True as John Brown or steel” (11:59; 12), another double-edged tribute especially given Melville’s apparent disdain for Brown’s tactics and the eerie portrait of him in “The Portent” (11:5). Jackson remains worthy of remembrance, Melville writes in the “Supplement” (11:182), yet his ethical merits, like Brown’s, remain uncertain.

“Lee in the Capitol,” the penultimate poem in Battle-Pieces, dramatizes Robert E. Lee’s appearance before a Senate committee in February 1866 and imagines him citing Roman precedent in a speech cautioning Northern senators against harsh reprisals. Roman imagery invests the poem with daunting grandeur as Lee views the Capitol with its dazzlingly white marble and “vaulted walks in lengthened line / Like porches erst upon the Palatine” (11:164; 49, and 168; 204–5). He asks the senators to avoid taking “Sylla’s way” (11:168; 187), a reference to Sulla’s proscrip-

70. See Garner, Civil War World, 43–48, for an overview of the Melville family’s attitude toward Brown and the ambiguities of “The Portent,” and see also 242–43 for an analysis of the two Jackson poems that differs in several respects from mine. Parker finds Melville indifferent to Brown’s trial (Herman Melville, 2:411).
tions of his enemies in the latter days of the Republic, and he makes a
transnational argument for tolerating Southern customs in his parable of
a Moor’s daughter who refuses to recant her faith for Christianity. The
South has no hope, he tells the senators, “Unless you do what even kings
have done / In leniency—unless you shun / To copy Europe in her worst
estate—/ Avoid the tyranny you reprobate” (11:168; 197–200). Europe’s
“worst estate” likely refers to the harsh penalties Ferdinand II imposed
on Naples after 1849 that Melville recorded in “Naples in the Time of
Bomba,” but it could more generally reference imperial revenge from any
era. More puzzling is Lee’s appeal to monarchical “leniency.” Without an
example it is difficult to know what Lee means, for even the compara-
tively lenient monarch Victor Emmanuel solved his Questione Meridionale,
or Southern Question, by sending 100,000 troops to crush the Calabrian
brigands. Lee remains a tragic figure, a man who went to war against the
ideals of his own ancestors, including George Washington, “Founder of
the Arch the Invader warred upon: / Who looks at Lee must think of
Washington; / In pain must think, and hide the thought, / So deep with
grievous meaning it is fraught” (11:165; 70–74). Washington constructed
in America the “Roman arch” of national unity that supports “whatever
is soundest in societies and states” (9:408), the metaphor from “Statues
in Rome” that posits Rome as the keystone of American political ideals.
Melville wants to ennoble Lee but realizes that his time is past, much
like Garibaldi’s after Aspromonte and Mentana. The General’s pleas fall
on deaf ears and the poem concludes with the North indulging in the
shallow optimism of redemptive teleology: “Faith in America never dies; /
Heaven shall the end ordained fulfill, / We march with Providence cheery
still” (11:169; 211–13). Lee understands that national unity requires mag-
nanimity and toleration, but his argument lacks force and leaves the South
dependent on the questionable charity of the federal government.

If the South’s claim to Roman virtue is weak, so is the North’s, a
key point of “The House-top. A Night Piece (July, 1863).” An imagined
vision of the New York City draft riots, the poem paints the largely Irish
Catholic rioters in colors usually applied to French revolutionaries: the
narrator hears the “Atheist roar of riot” amid the baleful glare of “red
Arson,” compares the rioters to “ship-rats / And rats of the wharves,” and
digs at Catholic belief by characterizing the calls for order issued by New
York’s Archbishop John Hughes as “priestly spells” (11.64; 8, 10, 11–12,
13, Melville’s note to Froissart’s account of the atrocities committed by
French seditionists reinforces the Gallic connection and contextualizes the
immediate horror within his lifelong antipathy for mobs (11:175). Order
is restored only when Federal troops arrive:
Wise Draco comes, deep in the midnight roll  
Of black artillery; he comes, though late;  
In code corroborating Calvin’s creed  
And cynic tyrannies of honest kings;  
He comes, nor parleys; and the Town, redeemed,  
Gives thanks devout; nor, being thankful, heeds  
The grimy slur on the Republic’s faith implied,  
Which holds that Man is naturally good,  
And—more—is Nature’s Roman, never to be scourged. (11:64; 19–27)

The poem’s endorsement of military justice drives Garner to an ironic reading that condemns the narrator more than the mob, but given Melville’s consistent criticism of mobs and revolutions most other critics take the poem literally, even if they find its moral disturbing.71 Draco’s laws may have been harsh—they punished nearly every crime with death—but the Athenians were overjoyed at finally having written laws in place of the capriciously enforced rules of an oral code.72 Similarly, New Yorkers were glad when Federal troops ended the arson, lynchings, beatings, racial terror, and destruction of property that four days of rioting inflicted on their city, taking over one hundred lives in the worst riot the city had experienced. If such violence does not corroborate Calvin’s belief in human depravity, the dark principle Melville associated with all deeply thinking minds in “Hawthorne and His Mosses,” what does? Americans must learn to accept what many Risorgimento nationalists realized by 1859: the cynic tyranny of an honest king may be preferable to anarchy and civil strife. The irony in the poem is actually directed at “the Town,”

71. Garner, Civil War World, 255–57, 276–79. For literal readings, see Shurr, Mystery of Iniquity, 39–40, and Karcher, “The Moderate and the Radical,” 220–21. Garner believes the narrator is a member of the radical Republican Union League Club, a pro-war organization dedicated to supporting Lincoln and the Union. Even if that were true—and there is no evidence to support it—Melville might well have endorsed the club’s desire for order since he knew several of its members, including George W. Curtis and Henry T. Tuckerman. Garner seriously understates the brutality of the mob’s attacks on blacks, women, and police officers, which were characterized by beatings, hangings, drownings, and mutilation, and elides the rapid erosion of support for the protest among German workers. Order was restored without martial law, and the draft resumed peacefully the following month. See Iver Bernstein, The New York City Draft Riots: Their Significance for American Society and Politics in the Age of the Civil War (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), esp. 3–72. David Devries and Hugh Egan attempt to resolve the debate in “‘Entangled Rhyme’: A Dialogic Reading of Melville’s Battle-Pieces,” Leviathan: A Journal of Melville Studies 9 (October 2007) by arguing that Melville has “created a lyric that resists an authoritative reading” (27). Although their analysis of multiple “voices” in the poem is insightful, by insisting on its “indeterminacy” they devalue Melville’s larger political aims and ethical values.

those naïve citizens who ignore the Calvinistic implications of the riot and continue to believe in “the Republic’s faith” that human beings—or at least Northerners—are essentially good. The final lines counter White-Jacket’s argument that Americans deserve the exemption from flogging granted Roman citizens (5:142) and contemptuously indict those who ignore the “gristy slur” of civil disorder. “The Town” indulges in the same shallow self-congratulation as the “cheery” Senate in “Lee in the Capitol,” preferring to view history optimistically as linear rather than cyclic and ignoring the North’s capacity for evil and discord.

Melville achieves his most nuanced appeal for accommodating Southern rights in his notorious “Supplement,” an essay whose conservatism has troubled readers from the first.73 Carolyn Karcher, who has praised Melville’s progressive views on race, regretfully finds that the supplement, by contending that the franchise should be granted to former Confederates immediately but to former slaves only gradually, “betrays a greater sense of kinship with white Southerners than with blacks.” Melville lapses, Karcher avers, “into a racial consciousness he had exposed as dangerously delusive in Moby-Dick and The Confidence-Man” and moves close “to the racial logic, if not to the anti-black prejudices, governing [President Andrew] Johnson’s program of ‘restoration.’”74 Within the context of the American Risorgimento, however, Melville is merely applying Machiavellian thinking to a difficult national question, a solution he may have borrowed from John William Draper’s Thoughts on the Future Civil Policy of America (1865), a book Garner believes Melville consulted as he wrote the supplement.75 Draper’s emphasis on strong central government and racial separation may have influenced Melville’s thinking on these topics in the “Supplement.” Draper was a professor of chemistry at the University of the City of New York who gave a series of lectures from December 1864 to March 1865 at the New-York Historical Society and used them as the basis for this book on postwar policy. He argues that nations undergo endless cycles of birth and death.
but inexorably evolve toward large, unified states with strong central authorities as did Rome: “Rome never would have permitted a divided empire in Italy: the Lion will tolerate no competitor in his desert, the Eagle will endure no companion in the air.” In his chapter on the effects of emigration, certainly a concern in the North with former slaves now free to venture northward, he cites Machiavelli’s division of society into three orders of men as the basis for his analysis: “a superior order, who understand things through their own unassisted mental powers; an intermediate order, who understand things when they are explained to them; a lower order, who do not understand at all.” When Rome allowed these groups to intermingle, it corrupted the previously homogenous race and created the “festering mass” of today’s Italians, a mixed race that clings to Roman Catholic superstition and papal authority, the two great obstacles faced by contemporary Italy: “With the noblest aspirations, what can Italy do in presence of the anachronism of Rome?”

Draper’s Machiavellian analysis of society surfaces in the “Supplement’s” most controversial section, a long paragraph advising differential citizenship for white Southerners and former slaves. Melville taxonomizes those Southerners who were “politically misled by designing men” (11:184) as coeval with Northerners in inheriting not authoring slavery, and advises toward them a prudent combination of magnanimity and law: “Benevolence and policy—Christianity and Machiavelli—dissuade from penal severities toward the subdued” (11:185). Southern whites, “who stand nearer to us in nature,” should be immediately reenfranchised, but “the blacks, in their infant pupilage to freedom,” require a “paternal guardianship” (11:185). Superior Northerners, intermediate Southerners (except perhaps for the “less intelligent classes”), and uneducated former slaves correspond rather neatly to Machiavelli’s three orders of society. Certainly this is racist and patronizing, but to a nation confronting a problem no other civilization had faced—the sudden emancipation of four million persons of another race under a government nominally committed to democracy and equality—it seemed like a rational, scientific, even ethical response, the enlightened tone that Draper projects in his treatise. Blacks will eventually earn citizenship, as Melville predicts in “Formerly a Slave” (11:115), but at present it is unwise to enfranchise a servile population and risk further enmity from a white South that remains as dangerous as the people of southern Italy who started the Brigand Wars, a comparison evident in a key passage in the “Supplement”:

76. Draper, Thoughts, 240, 111–12, 76.
And there are fears. Why is not the cessation of war now at length attended with the settled calm of peace? Wherefore in a clear sky do we still turn our eyes toward the South, as the Neapolitan, months after the eruption, turns his toward Vesuvius? Do we dread lest the repose may be deceptive? In the recent convulsion has the crater but shifted? Let us revere that sacred uncertainty which forever impends over men and nations. (11:185)  

Melville excavates vintage Machiavelli in reverencing the “sacred uncertainty” of politics that disrupts both anarchy and tyranny in an endless historical cycle, and concludes this section of the supplement with a warning against perverting “the national victory into oppression for the vanquished,” a policy that would only divide Northern Unionists and prompt “any honest Catos” to oppose federal policy. Cato (the younger, 95–46 B.C.E.) was a fervent republican who supported his former opponent Pompey in order to prevent civil war and the ascendency of Julius Caesar. According to Plutarch, when Pompey asked Cato to join his regime, Cato refused so he could remain free to criticize the government. Shortly thereafter he advised Pompey against enacting recriminatory laws against his former opponents, precisely the advice the supplement offers to the North. “Plutarch’s men,” whether Garib-
aldi or Cato, think for themselves, as does Melville in this controversial afterpiece.

Schooled by Roman history, Machiavelli’s politics, and Garibaldi’s military triumphs and failures, Melville creates in the supplement a blueprint for an American Risorgimento that will outstrip Italy’s: “Were the Unionists and Secessionists but as Guelphs and Ghibellines? If not, then far be it from a great nation now to act in the spirit that animated a triumphant town-faction in the Middle Ages” (11:187). Italy, still torn by traditional feuds and fearful of the Medusa of republicanism, was by 1866 a tarnished model for the United States. America too has confronted Medusa, the “Gorgon in her hidden place” that haunts the maternal icon in “America,” and has emerged like Andromeda freed by Perseus a wiser and more powerful nation with “Law on her brow and empire in her eyes” (11:121; 30, 45).80 Under the “iron dome” that Michael Rogin identifies as the triumphal symbol of law in *Battle-Pieces*, a dome with Italian frescoes lining its interior and a statue wearing a liberty cap on its peak, the United States combines the Risorgimento’s original republican idealism with the order and stability of a strong central government, effectively dissolving the ancient opposition of republic and monarchy. The supplement is essentially optimistic, for it presumes that Northern lenity will encourage Southern loyalty and eventually lead to black enfranchisement, reinstating Redburn’s vision of a continental nation of nations (4:169) and fulfilling America’s providential role as the Redeemer Nation. The essay concludes with these hopeful words: “Let us pray that the terrible historic tragedy of our time may not have been enacted without instructing our whole beloved country through terror and pity; and may fulfillment verify in the end those expectations which kindle the bards of Progress and Humanity” (11:188).

80. Deak Nabers, “‘Victory of LAW’: Melville and Reconstruction,” *American Literature* 75 (March 2003), examines the legal justifications for Reconstruction and finds in them a profound tension between the “aims of law and empire” (19). The Roman analogy was one way of reconciling these aims, and complements Nabers’s insightful analogies between Melville’s violations of poetic “law” in *Battle-Pieces* and the Union’s violations of positive law (such as *habeas corpus*) during the war.
Melville’s optimism echoes Draper who predicted that as a result of the war “there shall exist on this continent one Republic, great and indivisible, whose grandeur shall eclipse the grandeur of Rome in its brightest days—sovereign among the Powers of the earth; . . . There is indeed a manifest destiny before us” if only Americans will realize that “Liberty, therefore, is always, if such a paradox may be excused, liberty under restraint.”81 For Draper this meant subordinating the individual to the nation, a lesson Melville partly accepted, as in his gradualist approach to black citizenship, yet modified with his belief that religious sentiment—“Christianity and Machiavelli”—could leaven civic duty with compassion. The final poem in *Battle-Pieces*, “A Meditation,” expresses an almost transcendental faith in “the god within the breast” of individual soldiers who even on the battlefield treat their enemies as brothers and fellow men (11:170; 13). The poem’s title and much of the troubled questioning in *Battle-Pieces* shares the pensive mood of “Casa Guidi Windows,” particularly those in a footnote Browning wrote to accompany her lines describing the day Leopold II granted his subjects some basic civil rights: “Since when the constitutional concessions have been complete in Tuscany, as all the world knows. The event breaks in upon the meditation, and is too fast for prophecy in these strange times.—E.B.B.”82 This is the only passage in the entire volume that Melville triple-checked. Clearly, he meditated deeply and long on Italy in all its historic and contemporary manifestations, from the authoritarian arguments of Media’s scroll to the exaltation of Roman virtue in “Statues in Rome” and the celebration of Garibaldi’s victories in “At the Hostelry.” While the Civil War chastened his outlook, he remained hopeful that an American Risorgimento might avoid the mistakes of Italy’s and still prove the exceptional nature of his country.
