

0. GARIBALDI and the UNIFICATION of ITALY - Story Preface

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In this image we see Pietro Aldi's fresco, "The Meeting of Garibaldi and King Victor Emmanuel II at Teano." It depicts the moment when Garibaldi hands-over control of Southern Italy to the King during October of 1860. The fresco is located in Siena, at the Fondazione Musei Senesi. Click on the image for a full-page view.

Southern Italy was already more unified than Northern Italy because of the "Kingdom of the Two Sicilies." This state came into being when the Kingdom of Naples, and the Kingdom of Sicily, joined together in 1815.

The "Two Sicilies" was the largest of all Italian states before unification. The problem, however, was that it was controlled by a foreign power. As Austria had controlled Lombardy, so France (via the Bourbon royal family) controlled the "Two Sicilies."

For Italy to be unified as a single country, France would have to give-up control of its territory. This was unlikely to happen voluntarily.

A man known today simply by his last name—Garibaldi—further helped to unify the south. The U.S. State Department tells us [how that happened](#):

Giuseppi Garibaldi, a native of Piedmont-Sardinia, was instrumental in bringing the southern Italian states into the unification process.

In 1860, Garibaldi cobbled together an army (referred to as the "Thousand") to march into the southern part of the peninsula. Landing first in Sicily and then moving onwards into Naples, Garibaldi and his men [also known as "The Red Shirts"] overthrew the Bourbon [French] monarchy and turned over the southern territories to Victor Emmanuel II, King of Piedmont-Sardinia.

Notably ... and as a side note ... Garibaldi—from Piedmont—did not ask the people living in the "Two Sicilies" whether they wanted this unification action.

On the other hand ... once Garibaldi and his men turned-out the Bourbons, and turned-over Southern Italy (Naples and Sicily) to Victor Emmanuel II, people in Southern Italy voted whether to join Piedmont-Sardinia.

The vote passed; Southern Italy became united with Piedmont-Sardinia.

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Media Stream



Garibaldi Meets Victor Emmanuel at Teano

Pietro Aldi's fresco, described above, online via Wikimedia Commons. Public Domain.

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