

The geographer who hid Giuseppe Mazzini under his bed: the forgotten story of Antonio Snider Pellegrini and his role in the Italian Revolutions of 1848-1849

by Giovanni Modaffari

During the twentieth century, the name of Antonio Snider Pellegrini (1802-1885) was occasionally mentioned in writings about the history of the Continental Drift theory, since in 1858, he had published a graphic representation of it predating Alfred Wegener's diagrams by several decades. However, little else was known about this enigmatic figure raised in the Austrian port of Trieste, who spent his life travelling between four continents and whose professional ventures were very wide-ranging. He was a businessman who took part in setting up the Generali insurance company; a geographer, a leader of colonization projects, and an art dealer and collector, but according to recently discovered documents he was also a pro-Italian activist who played a dynamic role in the Revolutions of 1848-49, in the making of Italy and in the struggle against Austria. In those years, dividing his time between London and Civitavecchia, he figured prominently as a potential moneylender to the governments of Venice, Palermo, Turin and as supporter of the activists of the Roman Republic. When the turmoil came to an end, he was involved in saving the life of Giuseppe Mazzini, who was fleeing from Rome – an episode so far missing from biographies of the central figure in the Italian revolution – and he was a flanker of Italian exiles in London. This article sets out to reconstruct the complex history of a man constantly fluctuating between a passion for business and commerce, political activism, pioneering journeys, and fabulous art deals.

Keywords: Antonio Snider Pellegrini, Risorgimento, Giuseppe Mazzini, Roman Republic, Venetian Republic

Until recently, the name of Antonio Snider Pellegrini (Trieste, 1802-New York, 1885) had either been long forgotten or was almost totally unknown, but recent research¹ has shed new light on this multifaceted figure: he was a geographer, a busi-

¹ The author (University of Milano-Bicocca, Department of Sociology and Social Research) of this article has published *La deriva di Antonio Snider Pellegrini. Viaggi, imprese, invenzioni*, Unicopli, Milan 2021, which is the first and the most comprehensive work on Pellegrini's life, travels, and endeavours. This article resumes chapter 6: *Italia, 1848*, pp. 87-111, providing some updates and corrections. All the documentation used for this research and licensed by the respective owners will be made available on the website sniderton.org. Only a few articles about Pellegrini have appeared over the last century, the ones based on original research were written by journalists and historians. The first brief account was by Carlo Curto and appeared with the headline *Un negoziante triestino profeta e patriota*, in «Il Piccolo della sera» of 1 September 1920, p. 2: Curto first proposed here that Pellegrini was affiliated with the Giovine Italia and confirmed it a year later in the essay *Ricordi mazziniani nella Venezia Giulia (1831-1915)*, included in the «Rassegna Nazionale» of 16 September 1921, pp. 78-91 (see pp. 83-84). The second and longer reconstruction was made by Giuseppe Stefani: *Avventure ed enigmi nella vita di Antonio Snider-Pellegrini*, published in «Bollettino delle Assicurazioni Generali», nn. 3-4, March-April, 1951, pp. 44-50; and n. 5, May 1951, pp. 19-24. The most recent, by Bernard Desmars, *Snider (ou Snyder)-Pellegrini*,

nessman and a traveller; a leader of colonization projects and, most relevant to this article, he was a prominent activist in favour of the unification of Italy. Pellegrini was raised in Trieste, then the Austrian Empire's main outlet to the sea, by a family of bankers belonging to the French nobility. In the first part of his life, he was a highly successful businessman and in 1831, was one of the founders of the Generali insurance company². However, at the end of the 1830s, bankrupted after what appears to have been a series of judicial mishaps, he left Trieste in a hurry, reaching Paris first, and then Texas, making a failed attempt to set up a colony modelled on the ideals of Charles Fourier³.

On returning to Europe, from 1848 onwards, in Civitavecchia and in London, he became a prominent associate (and financial supporter) of the Italian Revolutionary governments and in 1849, saved the life of its most famous member, Giuseppe Mazzini. As we shall see, several clues indicate a connection with Mazzini dating back to the 1830s and point to this as having been the real cause of his judicial troubles with Austrian officialdom. Between 1857 and 1861, he also published a series of books in Paris on economic geography: *Du développement du commerce de l'Algérie* (1857) and on political and religious issues: *Le Pape et son pouvoir temporel* (1860); *Dernière réponse aux évêques et à tous les avocats du pouvoir temporel du Pape* (1860). On the eve of the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy (1861) we find him in two of the focal points of this event: Milan and Turin.

However, the book that really enabled Pellegrini to miraculously escape oblivion was *La Création et ses Mystères dévoilés*⁴ (1858), where he outlined a bizarre theo-

Antonio ou Antoine, is an entry in the *Dictionnaire biographique du fouriérisme* (http://www.charlesfourier.fr/spip.php?article1856&var_recherche=sni+der+pellegrini, last access: 9 May 2022). These attempts to frame Pellegrini's existence contained significant gaps but are still the necessary points of departure for further research into the figure.

² In 1861, Pellegrini published *La Justice en Autriche, appuyés sur 2645 documents déposés; terminés par des considérations sur les motifs de la décadence de l'Empire d'Autriche, une prophétie, un conseil, correspondance de l'auteur avec M. de Bruck, et dernier mot de cet ex-ministre des finances de l'empire: mémoires de A. Snider*, E. Dentu, Paris. This work may be considered his autobiography as regards the persecutions he suffered in Trieste but also as to his early career as businessman. No mention is made of his role in the events of 1848-49. Note that the name Pellegrini (almost definitely his mother's) was added to the protagonist's last name starting from the 1840s. Proof of his involvement in the establishing of the Generali can be found in A. Snider, *La Justice en Autriche*, cit., pp. 353-354; and in the company's archives. See Archivio Storico Assicurazioni Generali, Presidenza e organi sociali, Verbali, Assemblea generale, files 1020 (minutes of the assembly of 30-11-1830, where Snider is appointed board member) and 1021 (minutes of the assembly of 19-12-1830 and 26-1-1831: the final draft of the statute is approved, and the shares are distributed; 12 of them are assigned to Snider).

³ See National Library of France (NLF), 8-PB-1518, *Plan de colonisation (du Texas)*, Paris, 1841; Second part: Lucca State Library, b. 269, n. 5, *Suite et développement du Plan de colonisation de la Compagnie Agricole Industrielle du Texas*, Paris, 1841. And *Événements Phalastériens*, in «Le Premier phalanstère», 15 September (but wrongly dated August) 1841, first page. In the official act giving birth to the *Compagnie Agricole Industrielle du Texas*, Pellegrini's signature is accompanied by the title of Knight of the Grand Cross of the Order of Jerusalem. See Archives Nationales (Paris), MC/ET/CVII/836, Acte de constitution de la Compagnie agricole, industrielle et financière du Texas, en date du 24 mars 1842 (dépôt de publication le 16 juin 1842). The overall story of this endeavour is reconstructed in G. Modaffari, *La deriva*, cit., chapter 5: *Paris, Texas*, pp. 71-86.

⁴ *La Création et ses Mystères dévoilés: ouvrage où l'on expose clairement la nature de tous les êtres, les éléments*

ry on the creation of the universe, starting from a Genesis-inspired structure divided into six days, with several original observations including two illustrations of the Continental Drift hypothesis predating Alfred Wegener's diagrams by more than half a century⁵. Here, Pellegrini put forward his ideas about the Earth, and this led to him being considered a geographer, but it is worth pointing out that he had already shown a close interest in geography in his youth, launching his project when still in Trieste (in the footsteps of Lloyd's of London) for a *Universal Almanach*, with the purpose of collecting information about all the other countries which the businessmen of his time might find useful⁶.

From the 1870s until he died, Pellegrini was a very busy art dealer, almost definitely based in New York, with an impressive collection of over 250 paintings by Fragonard, Rembrandt, Titian, and other great artists⁷. After his death, the only traces left of his life and studies were scattered in books on the history of the Continental Drift theory, and no reference can be found in the literature to his political and financial activity, but for the odd mention which never attempted a general appraisal of his figure and his thoughts. Here, we finally attempt to join up the dots of this historical figure, and recount to a public of historians (and not just historians) his most significant political accomplishment, namely, saving the life of Giuseppe Mazzini, an episode missing from all the most accurate biographies of the founder of the Giovine Italia so far consulted⁸ and which would seem to have been a major event in Pellegrini's life. The reader should consider this article as a geographer's expedition, as a privateer, into the seas of historiography.

Pellegrini's connections with the Revolutionary governments in 1848-1849

Pellegrini's problems with the law started on 17 July 1833, in Trieste, where he was arrested, as part of what seems to have been a broader political persecution, culminating with him being sentenced to a year's hard labour for bribing public officials, which he spent in the prison of Capodistria (Koper) and which ended on 21 January 1836, although the overall jail-time lasted over thirty months. On leaving

dont ils sont composés et leurs rapports avec le globe et les astres, la nature et la situation du feu du soleil, l'origine de l'Amérique, et de ses habitants primitifs, la formation forcée de nouvelles planètes, l'origine des langues et les causes de la variété des physionomies, le compte courant de l'homme avec la Terre, etc., Frank-Dentu, Paris 1858.

⁵ Regarding Pellegrini's contribution to the Continental Drift theory, further articles by the present author will be appearing shortly.

⁶ A. Snider, *La Justice en Autriche*, cit., pp. 305-306.

⁷ A comprehensive list of the artworks owned by Pellegrini can be found in G. Modaffari, *La deriva*, cit., Appendix A: *La collezione d'arte: quale Verrou?*, pp. 155-172. Several entries give important information on works by some of the most well-known artists, including Fragonard's *Le Verrou*, which Pellegrini claimed to own, providing very precise episodes of the story of this painting and details which seem to indicate differences with the one bought by the French National Museums in 1974 and today on display in the Louvre (Paris) (see pp. 155-158).

⁸ Such as D. Mack Smith, *Mazzini*, Yale University Press, New Haven-London 1994 and R. Sarti, *Mazzini. A Life for the Religion of Politics*, Praeger, London 1997.

prison, Pellegrini recounts that he walked into the city's cathedral and that while he was praying there, he had a mystic vision in which God announced the fall of the Austrian Empire:

This vision sprang into my mind several times while I was in the deserts of America, and when I was sailing the seas of one hemisphere or the other. It would haunt me on the mountains of Asia even as in the burning sands of Africa, and often comes to me again in Europe, from which I conclude that it will surely come true⁹.

To explore the circumstances in which Pellegrini was arrested, it is very useful to read the newspapers of the day, and it is of particular significance that a recurrent theme at the time was a *Notification* from the government of the Austrian Litoral province, which announced that any members and supporters of a recently established political association (the Giovine Italia, founded in 1831 by Giuseppe Mazzini) would be guilty of high treason – punishable by death. Furthermore, following the *Notification*, protection was offered for whistle-blowers¹⁰. This public announcement is just one example of how the Austrian officials were organizing a counteroffensive to the initial moves of the Italian activists, a broader design in which it seems Pellegrini too was entrapped, given some hints that we will delve into more deeply, particularly about his time in Civitavecchia. Further tantalising clues can be found in a letter from the Austrian police informant Attilio Partesotti, who reported in February 1843: «that Snider from Trieste, who in Paris called himself Pellegrini, will be back in Paris from Texas in two months»¹¹; and in those by the exile Vincenzo Toschi, who mentions Pellegrini's presence in Malta at the end of 1845¹².

However, the most useful sources on Pellegrini's moves during the turmoil of the mid nineteenth century are a letter he wrote to Antoine Superviele (1809-1880?)¹³, a

⁹ A. Snider, *La Justice en Autriche*, p. 283. All the citations in language other than English are translated by the author of this article.

¹⁰ The *Notificazione* was signed by the governor, Prince Porcia on 5 August. In it, the Giovine Italia was described as a society whose aim was «the overthrow of current governments and all the civil order. The means employed include corruption and even assassination by order of its anonymous leaders, as it was in the ancient secret Courts». See the *Foglio ufficiale* of the «Osservatore triestino», 13 August 1833.

¹¹ Letter (from Attilio Partesotti) to Madame Delavigne, 5 February 1843, in *Protocollo della Giovine Italia: congrega centrale di Francia*, v. 1, 1840-1842, Galeati, Imola 1916, pp. 295-296.

¹² Letter from Vincenzo Toschi, 20 October 1845, in *Protocollo della Giovine Italia: congrega centrale di Francia*, v. 3, 1844-1845, Galeati, Imola 1918, pp. 310-313. To emphasize once again the importance of the business undertaken by Pellegrini, we should add the fact that in Malta he most certainly developed business relations, especially in the coal trade, with Tagliaferro and Sons, the company founded by the Genoese shipowner Biagio Tagliaferro (1777-1862) at the beginning of the nineteenth century; among its business interests was the bank of the same name, which was to become one of the most important institutions in Malta. This is hinted at in a letter belonging to a private collection (Trieste), dated 29 August 1854, sent from Pellegrini to Tagliaferro and Sons in which he mentions the routes for deliveries of coal that had to pass through Civitavecchia.

¹³ NLF, Département Littérature et art, VP-27281, *Lettre à M. Superviale* [sic], *au sujet d'affaires commerciales et pour repousser les calomnies et les attaques dont il est l'auteur, signée: A. Snider Pellegrini*, 25-1-1870.

foreign business associate; the correspondence with a figure who ended up becoming one of his closest friends, Luigi Pianciani (1810-1890)¹⁴; and the correspondence between Pellegrini and prominent Venetian activists such as Niccolò Tommaseo (1802-1874)¹⁵. Superviale appears to be the man who first involved Pellegrini in the colonization project in Texas, since he was probably one of the agents of the Texas government sent to Europe in the search of financial sponsors for the young Republic which had just gained its independence. In the letter, written a few decades after the events, having talked about his time in Texas, Pellegrini recounts:

From 1848 to 1856, in my own name [...] I opened a trading house in London and one in Civitavecchia, near Rome in Italy [:] all the almanacs of the capitals reported this every year, contracts for supplies with the French government, with the Italian government and with the Pope, show this very clearly, as well as my passports and my travels to Austria and Hungary and in the Levant¹⁶.

These few lines contain some crucial information. During those years, Pellegrini had started a commercial activity in which his headquarters were split between England and the Papal States; he had business relationships with several governments at a high level; in spite of his previous problems with the law, he had already returned to Austria, but no proof can be found of an even temporary return to Trieste. The first case to focus on is therefore the project for lending money to the Provisional government of Venice. After that, similar cases will be taken into account involving the activists of Turin and Palermo. The last and the most complex case regards Pellegrini's precise role within the Roman Republic and his personal relationship with Mazzini.

Venice

Since his glory days back in the 1830s, Pellegrini had built up some very special bonds with Venice and its lagoon, making journeys to Venetian art galleries as a young man in search of the best pieces for his collection. On 11 February 1833, a fine new lighthouse was unveiled in the port of Trieste. However, it had 35 wicks which required 40-50 pounds of oil to produce a rather unsatisfactory light at night. As a solution, Pellegrini, who was still looking after his company's affairs despite being harassed by the Austrian authorities, imported from The Hague in Holland

¹⁴ State Archives of Rome (SAR), Archivio Pianciani, Serie I, b. 38, correspondence with Pellegrini Schneider [sic]. For the correspondence between Luigi Pianciani and his father Vincenzo, reference will be made to *Vincenzo Pianciani al figlio Luigi. Carteggio (1828-1856)*, v. 4: 1849-1856, ed. S. Magliani, GEI, Rome 1996.

¹⁵ Letters in *La Repubblica Veneta nel 1848-49*, v. 1, *Documenti diplomatici*, ed. R. Cessi, G. Gambarin, Cedam, Padova 1949; in the Correr Museum Library (CML), Manin 505, and in the National Central Library of Florence (CLF): Raccolta Tommaseo and Carteggio Vieusseux.

¹⁶ A. Snider Pellegrini, *Lettre à M. Superviale*, cit., p. 7.

the prototype of a catadioptric light developed by the Waritz company. This was erected on the roof of the «house of Count Giovanni Vojnovich» and the first test was carried out on the night between 5 and 6 October 1835, resulting in a brighter, more effective light. At this point, though, the Austrian officials tried to circumvent Pellegrini's intermediation by sending their consul in Amsterdam to The Hague to negotiate, but the Waritz company refused to break off their deal with the businessman. In April of the following year, after Pellegrini was released, a similar experiment was conducted in Venice, in an attempt to illuminate the Fusina lagoon, but nothing came of it, despite another impressive result, as was reported at the time in the local newspaper¹⁷.

In 1848, it was Venice that gave Pellegrini his first opportunity to contribute to that fall of Austria that had been prophesized to him in the cathedral in Capodistria. The correspondence of that period shows the close ties he had formed with one of the most prominent political characters – Niccolò Tommaseo – in the Provisional government of the Republic of San Marco, established on 22 March 1848, and focused at the time on the two things essential for its survival: preparing the city's defences in view of what was considered to be a certain attack by the Austrian army, and sourcing the funds necessary for the survival of this new liberal and patriotic institution¹⁸.

On 15 May 1848, the poet Aleardo Aleardi and the librarian Tommaso Gar were sent on a secret mission to Paris to negotiate with the French government for men and weapons, and to make it clear that Venice would not become part of Carlo Alberto's Piedmont¹⁹. The mission lasted three months and failed. Just three days after their departure, in a letter to the Provisional government, Pellegrini wrote from Birmingham about a project related to a weapons factory in the lagoon. A week later, he wrote again to say that supplies of English capsules were available, along with between two and four thousand rifles a week and some consignments of uniforms. In these letters, Pellegrini had no hesitation in writing quite openly about what he candidly described as «our cause». He also stated that he was looking into

¹⁷ See A. Snider, *La Justice en Autriche*, cit., pp. 279-181. An account of this episode can be found in the «Gazzetta privilegiata di Venezia» of the 28 April 1836, first page. Further proof lies in the chronicles collected by Alfredo Comandini, where we read under the date of 14 April 1836: «With a special system of catadioptric lamps of the Waritz Company from The Hague, were illuminated, as an experiment and with good effects, the several ports of the Venice lagoon» (*L'Italia nei cento anni del secolo XIX*, v. 2, 1826-1849, A. Vallardi, Milan 1903, p. 624). The story of Pellegrini's lamp also captured the imagination of the Italian traveller Count Carlo Crotti from Cremona who, a few years later, included it in his plan of the ideal city (*Progetto di una nuova capitale di vasto regno*, Tipografia G. Feraboli, Cremona 1844, p. 45).

¹⁸ See R. Balzani, *I patrioti e le belle arti. La politica dei governi rivoluzionari italiani del 1848-1849 nei riguardi del patrimonio storico-artistico*, in *La circulation des oeuvres d'art: 1789-1848 / The Circulation of Works of Art in the Revolutionary Era, Actes du Colloque Rédistributions: Révolution, politique, guerre et déplacement de l'art, 1789-1848, Paris, 9-11 décembre 2004*, ed. R. Panzanelli, M. Preti Hamard, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, Rennes 2007; Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, Paris; Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, 2007, pp. 125-138, here pp. 125-126.

¹⁹ *Amori e Politica di Aleardo Aleardi*, v. 1, ed. U. Mazzini, Vecchioni, Aquila 1930, pp. 8-9, 51-52.

the possibility of making commercial deals between Venice and English and Irish manufacturers. Further on, he recalled some details from his years in Texas which he thinks might be useful for his interlocutors:

I was in America at the time of the war with Mexico and I found myself in circumstances more critical than those in which the Government of Venice finds itself, defending some European cities and villages from the invasions of Indians and Mexicans, [so] I can say that it is not difficult to improvise a proper national army when it is required by the common interest.

He then continued with his suggestions:

[People should be taught how] to use feet, hands and weapons properly with sticks until rifles are supplied, the government, the priests, women should tickle the self-love of men for discipline, encourage emulation, inspire passion for freedom and for the homeland; the government must give awards, ranks, and praise publicly; if a coward appears incorrigible, he is shot and his disappearance will convert the most timid into Lions: so in two months an army is prepared to go halfway to the frontier [to] prevent the advance of the enemy, while the other half perfects itself to then advance, destroy, exterminate the enemy in his den if he does not come to beg for peace; with this plan, Friuli would not have been taken over by the Austrians, but nothing is too late, and Friuli again with the support of the Provisional government of Venice, can reorganize itself if the love of the homeland exists in the hearts of the natives.

The Austrian Empire is rotten to its core; Viennese schoolboys are braver than the inhabitants of Lombardo Veneto, alas! A group of Croatian barbarians who were promised loot, and spurred on by the pusillanimity of their adversaries, was enough to conquer and subjugate an entire population which, by number and for the cause, should have easily wiped out that band of beasts, they are just as craven and cowardly when confronted with firmness, ardor and resoluteness in the fight [;] I compare the Croats to the Indians, sow the seeds of panic and you'll see them scatter like flies. [...] why couldn't the Lion of San Marco go to Vienna and tear apart the two-headed eagle?²⁰

In the final lines of the letter, Pellegrini makes it clear that he would await a reply until 18 June, at which point he would set out for Italy, determined to stop «wherever the danger is the greatest». Interestingly, the detailed account he gives of the war between the United States and Mexico in the spring of 1846 confirms that he was actually there at the time. On 11 August, when Daniele Manin was back in power and the commissioners of Piedmont had left after the Peace of Salasco (9 August) had ended the First Italian War of Independence, Niccolò Tommaseo headed to Paris with Angelo Toffoli, to replace Aleardi in the mission of obtaining French support.

²⁰ CML, Manin 505, Letter from Snider Pellegrini to the Provisional government of Venice, 25-5-1848.

Reading the correspondence between Manin and Tommaseo, we learn that the Provisional government had to pay for the maintenance of 25,000 men-at-arms: «We will resist – writes Manin – be sure of it. Venice is quiet, and there is excellent readiness to resist; but our finances make us tremble»²¹. At the time, the monthly financial requirements of Venice were over 3 million liras, of which 2.7 million for military expenses, against tax revenues which amounted to about 300 thousand liras. As guarantee for a potential loan from the French government, several ideas were taken into consideration, including the offer of the city's works of art, an option considered preferable to offering historic buildings such as the Palazzo Ducale and the Procuratie Nuove, already proposed in an unsuccessful attempt to obtain a loan of 10 million through the subscriptions of Italians²². But as Tommaseo made clear to his government, his French counterpart was unwilling to commit to the loan because of the lack of adequate resources at the time²³. Other solutions were then considered, such as a lottery, following the example of certain German countries and the suggestion made by Cristina Trivulzio di Belgiojoso²⁴.

Informing his government about the advancement of the mission, Tommaseo writes: «To another [emissary] who has a hand in Holland, I have recommended the matter of a loan, and in London to a Pellegrini from Trieste, who gave the name of Marconia to a new country of Texas, after the new republic of San Marco»²⁵. No further details emerged about this mysterious land in the course of research for the present article, but in effect, it was part of the offer Pellegrini actually made, since it crops up again in one of Tommaseo's letters dated a few days later: «The same individual who proposed a profit to me, proposes to allot together, as the Germans do, Venetian paintings and land in Texas, and carats in the city of Marconia»²⁶. On 26 September, however, Tommaseo asks Pellegrini (who was now in Dublin) for a final proposal and stayed in contact with Aleardi and Frapolli in order to try to gauge just how reliable his interlocutor was. But his final opinion is undecided: «Pellegrini seems like an honest man to Aleardi and Frapolli, nor do I have the opposite impression; others consider him to be exceedingly cunning and say be wary of him: I am telling you the pros and cons»²⁷.

In typically dynamic fashion, Pellegrini sent off his final plan, which included a financial section regarding the loan and a section about a lottery to be organized in London, Paris and Frankfurt. On 28 October, Tommaseo, warning against other

²¹ Letter from Daniele Manin to Niccolò Tommaseo, 5 September 1848, in *La Repubblica Veneta nel 1848-49*, cit., pp. 312-314.

²² On the financial situation of Venice, see P. Ginsborg, *Daniele Manin e la rivoluzione veneziana del 1848-49*, Feltrinelli, Milan 1978, pp. 314-315; A. Bernardello, *Venezia 1848: arte e rivoluzione*, in «Società e Storia», n. 96, 2002, pp. 279-288, here pp. 279-280.

²³ Letter from Niccolò Tommaseo to the Government, 10 September 1848, in *La Repubblica Veneta nel 1848-49*, cit., pp. 323-324.

²⁴ Letter from Niccolò Tommaseo to the Government, 29 September 1848, *ivi*, pp. 367-368.

²⁵ Letter from Niccolò Tommaseo to the Government, 26 September 1848, *ivi*, pp. 359-360.

²⁶ Letter from Niccolò Tommaseo to the Government, 15 October 1848, *ivi*, pp. 404-406.

²⁷ Letter from Niccolò Tommaseo to the Government, 14 October 1848, *ivi*, pp. 401-402.

English competitors and the possibility that the terms of the loan could prove more onerous than expected, sent the proposal to the government: a loan with 75% on the exchange, for an amount between 500 thousand and one million pounds sterling (12.5-25 million and a half francs), granted by a group of London financiers – which also included a member of the Rothschild family – at 5% interest and 3% commission, to be repaid in 20 or 26 years.

In addition to that, Pellegrini stressed that, based on the legal advice received by the investors, the works of art should be sent to London as private property and not as the property of Venice, so as to avoid confiscation in case of re-occupation by Austria, an eventuality he would find unbearable: «Venetians should prefer the treasures of Venice to be in the hands of the American savages rather than under the control of the Austrians»²⁸, he writes. A second condition was for the works to be valued in England – in order to avoid what had happened a few years earlier in Portugal, where the lenders had been forced to return the crown jewels²⁹ – but both of these conditions were refused by Tommaseo, who thought it impossible to comply with them, and began to lose faith in Pellegrini. The proposed plan bore the signature of a certain «solicitor A. Clare» but Tommaseo strongly suspected that Pellegrini had drawn it up all on his own: «He [Marsuzi, an agent who had proposed an alternative plan] as well as Pellegrini are very cunning men who claim to be more than what they are, they have no resources and no fixed abode, they don't state clearly who these lenders are we should be dealing with»³⁰. Just a week later, Pellegrini finds himself once again haunted by his past history in Trieste: «About Pellegrini from Trieste – writes Tommaseo – you can find out from the Triestinis how he left his country under a cloud and what kind of cloud»³¹.

In the meanwhile, a committee was set up in Venice composed of nine members and two political representatives, with the task of deciding which works of art could be sacrificed in the likely (though still undecided) event of the loan becoming reality, whoever the lenders were to be. A list was drawn up of 58 works with an estimated value of 14 million liras and it contained the names of artists such as Giovanni Bellini, Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese and many more. Other works were excluded, such as Vittore Carpaccio's *San Giorgio* which was considered to have lost all *raison d'être* once removed from its original location and Giorgione's *Burrasca* (or *Tempesta*) because it was too damaged³².

On 6 November, however, the government of Venice abandoned the idea completely because of increasingly strong opposition from the general public, and in the face of initiatives such as a manifesto for the defence of Venetian treasures and

²⁸ Letter from Schnider Pellegrini to Niccolò Tommaseo, 16 October 1848, *ivi*, pp. 409-411.

²⁹ CLF, Raccolta Tommaseo, cassetta 130, n. 48, Letter from Snider Pellegrini to Niccolò Tommaseo, 23-10-1848.

³⁰ Letter from Niccolò Tommaseo to the Government, 28 October 1848, in *La Repubblica Veneta nel 1848-49*, *cit.*, pp. 433-436.

³¹ Letter from Niccolò Tommaseo to the Government, 5 November 1848, *ivi*, pp. 450-452.

³² A. Bernardello, *Venezia 1848: arte e rivoluzione*, *cit.*, pp. 284-285. For the commission's report, see F. Gualdo *et al.*, *Relazione sui capi d'arte che Venezia avrebbe potuto costituire in pegno d'un prestito*, included in R. Fulin, *Venezia e Daniele Manin*, in «Archivio Veneto», book 9, Venezia 1875, pp. cxvi-cxxx.

works on display in the churches but owned by private citizens³³. Moreover, the issue was causing serious conflict with the Accademia, which numbered some prominent members of the aristocracy among its ranks, but also members of the middle and lower classes who gained an income from the visitors who came to Venice and for whom the loss of those works of art would have had historical, and above all, financial consequences of a certain dimension³⁴. There are a few traces of further contact between Pellegrini and the Venetian activists, once again regarding business and to be precise, regarding shipments of coal he was proposing to Tommaseo³⁵, who no longer trusted the Venetian envoy to Paris, Leone Serena, in this regard³⁶. But there were still signs that Pellegrini continued to be trusted to some extent, since in December Tommaseo gave him, who was on his way from Marseille to Sicily, the task of sounding out the possibility of a public subscription by the citizens of England³⁷.

Palermo

In September 1848, Aleardi was relieved from duty in Paris, and from his letters it appears evident that his revolutionary zeal was gradually weakening, and also that he was abandoning the idea of moving to Texas, a plan which his tutor, Dr. Luigi Carli had some financial involvement in, and in relation to which we meet another of those prominent figures committed to working behind the scenes of the Revolution: Lodovico Frapolli, who was the representative in Paris of the Provisional government of Lombardy, of the Tuscan Democratic one, and of the Roman Republic: he would eventually become Minister of War for Luigi Carlo Farini, royal commissioner in Modena at the end of the 1850s.

In a letter written in December 1848, Frapolli writes to his friend Aleardi, who was losing interest in the project involving Leopoldo Triulzi – the envoy of the *Comitato di salute pubblica* of Milan – and another of his friends, Dupeyron, concerning some lands in Texas as indicated in a contract in which the counterpart was Antonio Snider Pellegrini. Frapolli suggests that Aleardi should join him in

³³ A. Bernardello, *Venezia 1848: arte e rivoluzione*, cit., p. 283. This notice had appeared on walls in Venice: «There is a well-founded rumour that mortifies and demeans the true Venetian, that the Government wants to sell our city's most precious paintings [...] And you, Venice, do you not tremble before the great disaster that threatens you? [...] Do you not know that if, unfortunately, you were deprived of your beautiful paintings, you would no longer be considered for what you are, because people come from all over the world just to admire the art treasures that you have the good fortune to possess? [...] God grant that this protest of ours has the effect that all true patriots ardently desire, that is, to save our works of art and force the Italian cities to give us some help for the common good. [Signed:] Many Venetians who are true lovers of their homeland» (full text in A. Pilot, *Disegnata vendita di preziose tele a Venezia nel 1848*, in «Rivista d'Italia», n. 4, 30 April 1916, pp. 572-575).

³⁴ A. Bernardello, *Venezia 1848: arte e rivoluzione*, cit., p. 288.

³⁵ CML, Manin 2378, Letter from Snider Pellegrini to the Provisional government of Venice, 4-12-1848.

³⁶ Letter from Niccolò Tommaseo to the Government, 8 December 1848, in *La Repubblica Veneta nel 1848-49*, cit., pp. 502-503.

³⁷ CLF, Raccolta Tommaseo, Cassetta 130, n. 48, Letter from Snider Pellegrini to Niccolò Tommaseo, 20-12-1848.

partnership to keep their share in case the Revolution fails: «Reaction is triumphant everywhere and who knows if any European land will bear us in six months time»³⁸. The project was abandoned for good on 7 February 1849, and in a letter dated that day, Frapolli tells us about another one of Pellegrini's forgotten adventures:

[Pellegrini] was in Sicily for a loan project. It failed and it was partly his fault. The project was excellent, easy to carry out, very profitable for the country, but the man lacks everything, he made enemies of certain bosses who expect to know everything and do everything. And what is more, there was intrigue underneath. [Eight lines follow of heavily erased writing which are completely illegible, and then in the margin: «Sorry: if I could talk to you, I would not have deleted»]. Be discreet and we will explain it verbally. But if you mean some bad thing against Pellegrini, know that he is not the one who deserves the blame. Pellegrini wants to do business for himself, it is true; but he is an honest man, and better than some patriots, scientists, and men of letters³⁹.

According to Frapolli, this episode was part of a broader design aimed at damaging Michele Chiarandà, Baron of Friddani and *chargé d'affaires* of the Sicilian government in Paris. The mission to Sicily was confirmed by correspondence between the Sicilian special commissioner to Paris, Michele Amari, and the foreign minister of his government, Vincenzo Fardella, Marquis of Torrearsa. As in the case of Venice, Friddani too was committed to looking for a foreign loan for his government, a task made more difficult by the turmoil occurring throughout the Italian peninsula and in another letter from December 1848, Amari made it clear that:

[Friddani] cannot be accused of carelessness, because he did all that could be done [...] They besiege Friddani with other proposals; and I stand by him to make sure that he does not listen to the scoundrels. Such a one seems to me a certain Snider Pellegrini, half between Lombard and English, who wanted to sell us certain sealed alchemy. The Baron was about to fall for it when I took him by the arm, but it is worse than a fatal disease, nobody knows how to close the door on charlatans⁴⁰.

A few days later, when Amari briefed his government about Pellegrini's trip to Sicily, he mentioned that there was a letter of introduction signed by Friddani – which Amari had refused to sign himself – and a project for a loan and a lottery very similar to the one Pellegrini had proposed to Venice⁴¹. Nevertheless, some weeks earlier, when Amari had been in London, he had no qualms in considering Pellegrini to be a

³⁸ Letter from Lodovico Frapolli to Aleardo Aleardi, 11 December 1848, in *Amori e Politica di Aleardo Aleardi*, cit., pp. 100-101.

³⁹ Letter from Lodovico Frapolli to Aleardo Aleardi, 7 February 1849, *ivi*, pp. 106-108.

⁴⁰ Letter from Amari (Special Commissioner to Sicily in Paris) to Torrearsa (Sicilian Minister of Foreign Affairs), 6 December 1848, in *Le relazioni diplomatiche fra il Governo provvisorio siciliano e la Francia*, 3rd series, 1848-1860, ed. F. Curato, Istituto Storico Italiano per l'Età Moderna e Contemporanea, Rome 1971, pp. 314-319.

⁴¹ Letter from Amari (Special Commissioner to Sicily in Paris) to Torrearsa (Sicilian Minister of Foreign Affairs), 16 December 1848, *ivi*, pp. 336-339.

trustworthy courier for communication with Friddani in Paris⁴². A harsher verdict was delivered by Pietro Lanza di Scordia, when he described the Sicilian government's search for loans and how the Minister of Finance, Filippo Cordova, had «discounted the disconnected proposals of an Anglo-Lombard adventurer Lider Pellegrino [sic]»⁴³.

Turin

The documents about the business relationship with the Piedmont officials reveal the reappearance of Carlo Snider, Antonio's brother, who had also been mixed up in the mishaps of Trieste but had left the Adriatic port in 1840 headed for the Levant, and thereafter we hear nothing more of him⁴⁴. In the lapse of time we are talking about here, he was in Paris and from there, he maintained relations with Vincenzo Ricci, who alternated with Ottavio Thaon of Revel as Minister of Finance of the Kingdom of Sardinia's constitutional government. Just like their counterparts in Sicily and Venice, the recently settled officials of Piedmont were also desperate to obtain a loan, and this episode saw the intervention of Genoese banking circles⁴⁵. In the papers that are part of a classified file dating back to the second half of 1848⁴⁶, Carlo Snider was named as being part of a project to loan 50 million francs, in coordination with other agents such as Emanuele Perasso and Abelardo Borzini. In letters to the minister, Carlo put his name forward but, in the project proposed, those of five banks are listed, and among these we find the Snider Pellegrini of Paris⁴⁷. This indicates an ongoing, although undercurrent, financial activity on the part of Pellegrini in Paris too at the time.

⁴² See the letter to Friddani signed by Amari, the Prince of Granatelli (Franco Maccagnone) and Luigi Scalia, 25 October 1848, in *La Rivoluzione siciliana del 1848 in alcune lettere inedite di Michele Amari*, ed. A. La Pegna, Guida, Napoli 1937, pp. 206-209.

⁴³ See P. Lanza di Scordia, *Dei mancati accomodamenti fra la Sicilia e Ferdinando II*, in *Memorie della Rivoluzione Siciliana dell'Anno MDCCCXVIII*, v. 2, Consiglio comunale di Palermo, Palermo 1898, p. 190.

⁴⁴ A. Snider, *La Justice en Autriche*, cit., p. 439.

⁴⁵ For a complete reconstruction of the story and its context, see G. Guderzo, *Il Piemonte e le grandi banche europee nel 1848-49*, in *Ricerche storiche ed economiche in memoria di Corrado Barbagallo*, ed. L. de Rosa, E.S.I., Napoli 1970, pp. 567-670. Trace of a petition concerning the proposal by Carlo Snider is found in *Atti del Parlamento Subalpino. Discussioni della Camera dei Deputati, Seconda sessione del 1849*, ed. G. Galletti, P. Trompeo, Tip. Eredi Botta, Turin 1862, p. 388 (session of the Camera dei Deputati, Parlamento Subalpino, 12 September 1849). See also L. Maffi, «*Nous avons protégé sa maison depuis qu'il a commencé*». *Le relazioni di James de Rothschild con i banchieri privati dell'Italia del Nord*, in *Borghesie nazionali, borghesie cosmopolite. Banca privata, finanza, reti (Italia, secoli XVIII-XX)*, ed. G. Gragorini, M. Romani, FrancoAngeli, Milan 2021, pp. 183-210, here p. 199.

⁴⁶ The papers referred to are kept at the State Archive of Turin (SATo), Ministero delle Finanze, Direzione generale del Tesoro, div. II, mazz. 74 (with two letters by Carlo Snider to Ricci of 27-7-1849 and 15-9-1849, and the Borzini-Perasso file) and 76 (which includes the confidential file, the Snider file, and the Correspondence folder).

⁴⁷ List attached to the document Museum of Risorgimento (Genoa), Carte Ricci, cart. 20, n. 2643, Perasso; Borzini - Loan project of 50 million, 1-1-1849. This is the element which could confirm that the Carlo Snider in question is the brother of the protagonist.

When Carlo Bombrini – initially director of the Bank of Genoa and when this bank merged with the Bank of Turin, of the National Bank of the Sardinian States – went to Paris to have personal talks with French bankers and their intermediaries, he gave Ricci his feedback on Carlo Snider, describing him as «just an agent, at most of third rank», nonetheless very efficient in providing useful contacts⁴⁸.

Rome and the saving of Giuseppe Mazzini

The main source of information regarding Pellegrini's role in saving Mazzini's life (and so far the only one) is an article published in a New York review, «The Truth Seeker», in the aftermath of the geographer's death⁴⁹. In it, a few lines are quoted from his diaries. The first excerpt reads as follows: «In 1848 the revolutions in France compelled me to attend strictly to my business houses in London and in Civita Vecchia, Italy. In 1849 the revolution at Rome compelled me to reside in Civita Vecchia. There I saved the lives of many priests, and the life of Giuseppe Mazzini». There are other indications which suggest that this last claim was likely.

The first sign of Pellegrini's move to Civitavecchia can be found in a letter to Aleardi from Emanuele Muzzarelli, the president of the Council of Papal States, after the liberal Pope Pio IX escaped to Gaeta (at the end of November 1848). Muzzarelli thanks Aleardi for introducing Pellegrini to him, mentioning the project of a «financial league» that the businessman had proposed to his government⁵⁰. Further confirmation of this can be found in a letter written by Pellegrini to Tommaso Gar from the Porta Rossa Hotel in Florence, around the same time⁵¹. Moreover, in other letters, Pellegrini stresses the fact that the project had also been proposed to the former counsellor to Pio IX, Gioacchino Ventura, by then representative of Palermo's Revolutionary government; to Aurelio Saliceti, as well as to Giuseppe Garibaldi, although the copy sent to the general went missing before he could read it⁵².

⁴⁸ SATo, Ministero delle Finanze, Direzione generale del Tesoro, div. II, maz. 76, Letter from Carlo Bombrini to Vincenzo Ricci, 26-1-1849.

⁴⁹ *Career of a Noted Italian Freethinker*, in «The Truth Seeker», 2 May 1885, pp. 278-279. «The Truth Seeker» was a radical freethought periodical founded in Paris, Illinois, in September 1873, by the writer DeRobigne Mortimer Bennett and his wife Mary Wicks Bennett; it was soon relocated in New York City and today is based in San Diego (California). Several traces of the contacts between Bennett and Pellegrini can be detected in the issues from 1881. Bennett was also the publisher of the last book by Pellegrini: *The mortality of the soul, and the immortality of its elements. The traffic of Paradise. Preceded by an examination of the theory of Darwin. On the origin of the species*, D. M. Bennett, New York 1881. «The Truth Seeker» was the first and the most accurate in reporting these episodes of Pellegrini's life and, in the following days, the article on him reappeared in other newspapers.

⁵⁰ Letter from Carlo Emanuele Muzzarelli to Aleardo Aleardi, 11 February 1849, in *Amori e Politica di Aleardo Aleardi*, cit., pp. 190-191.

⁵¹ CLF, Carteggio Vieusseux, Cassetta 121, n. 177, letter from Snider Pellegrini to Tommaso Gar, 2-2-1849.

⁵² Letter from Snider Pellegrini to Aleardo Aleardi, 14 February 1849, in *Amori e Politica di Aleardo Aleardi*, cit., pp. 175-177.

In his writings, Pellegrini shows growing impatience with the assembly dynamics that were hard to reconcile with his own businesslike pragmatism and his fury with the forces of Reaction. But although his tone is sometimes despondent, he is never disheartened:

Recommend – he writes to Aleardi – as much as you can that levers be made and be armed as much as possible in the frontline. All we have to rely on is strength and to respond with bullets; doubtless the hordes of Croats will raid in a short while; shall we be taken by surprise as naïve? A lot of precious time is wasted in the Assembly here; this seems to be an incorrigible defect of all Assemblies. When every minute of rest should be regarded as a serious loss for the cause, we are still not thinking about finances or the army⁵³.

On 27 February 1849, Pellegrini announced to Aleardi that he is leaving Rome and heading for Livorno with Giacomo Antonini, the commander of the Legion which had taken control of Marghera and the fortresses of Venice. From Livorno, he would then return to London⁵⁴. On the same day, he wrote a letter to the Roman Ministry of Commerce, Arts, Industry and Agriculture, presenting himself as business partner of the Wilkin, Walker & Barker coal shipping company (Newcastle) and the Wilkin & Walker ship hire company (London) proposing a plan to set up a coal storage facility in the port of Civitavecchia just like the one he claimed to have in Livorno and Palermo⁵⁵.

Once back in Civitavecchia, a few months later, he would perform what may be considered the most significant gesture of his life with regard to his political activism:

I was in my house in Place San Francisco in Civita Vecchia in September 1849, when someone knocked at my door. Three persons came in. They were Frederick Campanella, Lawyer Camponi, and another. Camponi said: “Here is Mazzini. Save him. A price is placed upon his head, either dead or alive”. I had known Mazzini for many years, and recognized him. Campanella and Camponi left. Mazzini remained with me for three days. Some of the time he lay on my bed, and sometimes was concealed under it. I brought him food myself, as I could not trust anyone else to do it. On the third day a steamer from Sicily bound for Marseilles arrived. I sent Accursi (ex-Director of Police in Rome, expelled, but with passport of exile) to find out who was the captain of the steamer, and to pay for a passage on condition that no name was to be asked, and that the passenger was to be dressed as a fireman and to be kept at the furnaces. To get Mazzini from the house without exciting suspicion, I put a torn

⁵³ *Ivi*, p. 177.

⁵⁴ Letter from Snider Pellegrini to Aleardo Aleardi, 27 February 1849, *ivi*, p. 178.

⁵⁵ SAR, Organi e Uffici preunitari, Camerlengato (1816-1854), II (1824-1854), III (commercio), b. 142, f. 2789, letter from Antonio Snider Pellegrini to the Ministry of Commerce, Arts, Industry and Agriculture, 27-2-1849. The f. 2789 contains several papers on Pellegrini’s business activities in Civitavecchia.

overcoat on him. I placed a rough-looking cap on his head and a great bundle under his arm. I ordered him to follow me as if he were a servant. Guards of police and custom house officers were on each side of us as we walked along. My own boat was at the water's edge. We climbed into it, and the men rowed us to one of my three vessels, which I had in the port loaded with coal. To allay suspicion, we went on board one of these, climbed down the other side, and thence were rowed to the steamer. An hour afterward the commissioners came on board the steamer to call the roll of passengers. As I was well known to them, they accepted my invitation to go back to shore in my boat. The steamer started on her voyage, and Mazzini was saved⁵⁶.

The anonymous author of the article mentions that Pellegrini's narrative is in Italian and that a few letters by Mazzini were attached to the memoirs. After the steamer had reached Marseille, Mazzini would make his way to Geneva, from where the letters seem to have been sent. This route is confirmed by the most recent accounts of Mazzini's wanderings⁵⁷ but for an incongruence in the dates which probably derives from the fact that Pellegrini only wrote his memoirs a long time later: Mazzini actually left Civitavecchia for Marseille in the middle of July, after the Roman constitution was promulgated and despite the arrival of the French army in Rome with the fall of the Roman Republic. Also testifying to this episode is a letter by Mazzini, dated 15 July, in which he suggests to his friend Adriano Lemmi, the so-called banker of the Italian Revolution and already involved in the defence of the Roman Republic⁵⁸, to settle in Civitavecchia and take Pellegrini – «who you already know» – as his representative in the city and associate in the coal trade. In the closing line, Mazzini announces: «I am leaving today: may God be with me»⁵⁹. Further on, in Mazzini's autobiographic notes, the role of other people in his escape is firmly excluded:

A steamboat, the *Corriere Corso*, was soon to set sail in Civitavecchia. The captain, I think a De-Cristofori, Corsican too, was unknown to me: Nonetheless, I ventured to ask him if he wanted, at his risk, to welcome me without papers, and I had unexpected consent. I embarked [...] and I got to Marseille⁶⁰.

⁵⁶ *Career of a Noted Italian Freethinker*, cit.

⁵⁷ See, for example, D. Mack Smith, *Mazzini*, cit., p. 73, and R. Sarti, *Mazzini*, cit., p. 147. In this regard, an inconsistency should be noted: in the article of «The Truth Seeker», it is stated that Mazzini actually got off the steamer before it reached Marseille.

⁵⁸ Adriano Lemmi (1822-1906) and Mazzini had met in London in 1847. One of the central figures of the Risorgimento and Italian Unification, Lemmi held the role of Grand Master of the Grand Orient of Italy from 1885 to 1895. See A. A. Mola, *Storia della Massoneria in Italia dal 1717 al 2018. Tre secoli di un ordine iniziatico*, Bompiani, Milan 2018, pp. 163-167.

⁵⁹ Letter from Giuseppe Mazzini to Adriano Lemmi, 15 July 1849, in G. Mazzini, *Scritti editi ed inediti di Giuseppe Mazzini*, v. 50 (Epistolario v. 21), Galeati, Imola 1924, pp. 209-210: Lemmi and Pellegrini supposedly knew each other from their times in Constantinople or Malta, where Pellegrini had done business and Lemmi had spent some of his exile in the preceding years. What is more, it is always possible that the communication in question was a coded message.

⁶⁰ G. Mazzini, *Nota autobiografica*, in Id., *Scritti editi ed inediti*, cit., p. 199.

London, the Italian exiles, and the US agents

In another letter, from the day after and sent by Mazzini, whose presence in Civitavecchia «had to remain a secret», to the American consul in Genoa, H. S. Paisely⁶¹, a peculiar circumstance should be pointed out with the aim of stimulating further research. Mazzini was looking for a passport which he could use to escape with and attached a letter of introduction signed by the United States ambassador Lewis Cass Jr., recalling that he had promised him an American passport bearing the name of George Moore.

There is no further evidence to exclude an idea of pure coincidence, but the name must have been very familiar to Pellegrini, since from 1821, George Moore (1779-1871) had been United States consul in Trieste⁶². A very attentive observer of international affairs, Moore had close ties with the representatives of Trieste's bourgeoisie but had left the office in November 1845, telling his superiors that he was going to England on a particularly urgent trip and that he would not be resuming his consular duties⁶³, but would be devoting himself only to business. Moreover, George Moore's circle also deserves greater attention in the light of the role played in the Papal territories by his associate and then son-in-law, the first hemp merchant in Trieste and then British Vice-Consul in Ferrara, William Macalister (1797-1880)⁶⁴, who in February 1849, had to deal with the arrival of the Austrian Lieutenant General Jacob von Haynau (1786-1853), sent there on a punitive expedition, and who would later go down in history as the "Hyena of Brescia". At the time, the Roman Republic had just been established. When Haynau demanded huge sums from the population of Ferrara to prevent him from bombing the city, Macalister was the interlocutor who persuaded him to allow payment by instalments. Macalister's action also ensured the safety of the six noblemen who had been taken hostage by the Austrians during this period of time⁶⁵.

⁶¹ Central Museum of the Risorgimento in Rome (Archives), (912) 23, letter from Giuseppe Mazzini to H. S. Paisely, 16-7-1849. This letter contains further confirmation of Accursi's involvement, since he is suggested by Mazzini as the contact to whom the passport should be handed on board the steamboat. From a subsequent letter to his mother, Mazzini confirmed that he travelled from Civitavecchia to Marseille without passport. See the letter to his mother, in Genoa (n. 2720), 20 July 1849, in G. Mazzini, *Scritti editi ed inediti*, cit., p. 216.

⁶² Moreover, only a few years before the appointment, Moore was involved in the daring story of Napoleon's former Minister of Police, General René Savary, Duke of Rovigo, who had been condemned to death by Louis XVIII. Moore is supposed to have been one of the agents who brought a box of documents belonging to Savary to Trieste. Savary had escaped from Smyrna and arrived in Trieste on 29 April 1817 but was immediately arrested. The contents of the box were said to put some parts of the French establishment at serious risk. Again, there are several indications that Moore was affiliated with the pro-carbonari sect called Silence of the Greeks, active between the Adriatic and the Levant. For more information, see O. De Incontrera, *Trieste e l'America*, Edizioni dello Zibaldone, Trieste 1960, pp. 133-135.

⁶³ S. Di Giacomo, *Dall'Atlantico all'Adriatico. La presenza consolare statunitense nella Trieste preunitaria*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli 2008, pp. 61-66.

⁶⁴ *Le memorie personali di William Macalister nella vicenda del Risorgimento a Ferrara per il periodo dal 1832 al 1857*, ed. G. Righini, S.T.E.R., Deputazione provinciale ferrarese di storia patria, Ferrara 1959, p. 8.

⁶⁵ *Ivi*, pp. 31-45.

However, a further hint linking Pellegrini to American diplomats can be found in his correspondence with Luigi Pianciani, exiled to London, and the letters between the latter and his father Vincenzo. The Pianciani family were a noble family from Spoleto: Vincenzo was an official in the Papal administration and followed his son Luigi's vicissitudes from Rome. In 1836, Luigi was one of the founders of the Cassa di Risparmio di Spoleto and a few years later would become «the most esteemed mayor of Rome but the least well-known and popular one»⁶⁶. On 3 April 1848, Luigi left for Venice to support the revolution against the Austrians, and the Republic of San Marco. Once back in Rome, in November, he was elected as deputy of the Constituent assembly of the Roman Republic. Between May and June 1849, he led the expedition to the Furlo Gorge with the task of stopping the descent of the Austrian army. But on 11 June, he was arrested in Rome by the French authorities and after that, ten years of exile began, characterized by numerous hardships, also financial.

Vincenzo Pianciani met Pellegrini in Rome between the end of 1851 and the first half of 1852, warmly thanking him for the attention he had paid to his son in London⁶⁷. With his trading house in Civitavecchia, Pellegrini acted as courier for the Pianciani family, but also tried to take advantage of Vincenzo's official position, regarding at least three matters related to his own business activities. First, he was claiming payment from the Papal government for some coal supplies he had provided; one of his consignments of fabric for clothes was held up at customs and he claimed that the duties he was requested to pay were not due⁶⁸; but, above all, he was looking for influential supporters who could help him obtain the concessions he needed to carry out a new project, once again well beyond his means: the building of a railway connecting Rome to Civitavecchia, because of the growing importance of this port in international trade.

Actually, Pellegrini seemed more interested in the sale of the concessions in London and Paris⁶⁹ and the company of which he was part included one of the directors of the Bank of England and other English investors; the overall capital was 2.4 million dollars⁷⁰. Vincenzo could do little to help and tried to convince Pellegrini of the unfavourable opinion of the government⁷¹ because of some bad precedents in

⁶⁶ R. Ugolini, *Luigi Pianciani negli anni dell'esilio*, in *Vincenzo e Luigi Pianciani ed il loro tempo, Atti del Convegno, Spoleto, Palazzo Ancaiani, 26 settembre 1986*, ed. R. Ugolini, Cassa di Risparmio di Spoleto, Spoleto 1988, pp. 13-28, here p. 17. In 1865, Luigi Pianciani would become a deputy in the Italian Parliament and then mayor of Rome from 1872-1874 and 1881-1882.

⁶⁷ «[...] I will surely try to show him every possible attention since he has shown so much kindness to you, it is my duty to show them to him»: letter from Vincenzo Pianciani to his son Luigi, 8 January 1852, in *Vincenzo Pianciani al figlio Luigi*, cit., p. 1787.

⁶⁸ Regarding this incident, see the «Daily News» (London), 12 August 1852, p. 5; and the letter from Vincenzo Pianciani to his son Luigi, 4 March 1852, in *Vincenzo Pianciani al figlio Luigi*, cit., pp. 1798-1799.

⁶⁹ Letter from Vincenzo Pianciani to his son Luigi, 25 March 1852, *ivi*, p. 1802.

⁷⁰ «Daily News» (London), 27 June 1850, pp. 4-5.

⁷¹ Letter from Vincenzo Pianciani to his son Luigi, 8 January 1852, in *Vincenzo Pianciani al figlio Luigi*, cit., p. 1787.

the past⁷²; he began to have misgivings about the businessman's financial stability and warned his son Luigi about this and Pellegrini's past history⁷³. At the same time, however, the PIANCIANI family was trying to get Pellegrini's help in setting up an English cotton spinning factory in Terni.

Regarding this period, we should also mention Pellegrini's participation in the Great Exhibition in London (1851) as part of the Papal States representatives, with his production of Tolfa alum, which earned him an «exhibition medal» from the papal treasurer Giacomo Luigi Brignole⁷⁴. Much more telling is the correspondence between Pellegrini and Luigi PIANCIANI, in which one can read the role of prime importance played by the former in supporting Italian exiles in London and a few other clues about his relationships with Mazzini and Lemmi. This correspondence, which was long forgotten in the archive of the PIANCIANI family, consists of about 80 letters dating from the early 1850s to 1857, when Pellegrini was forced to flee to France because of «four or five robberies» he had suffered at a time when he was not doing any business because of health issues⁷⁵. Travelling back and forth from London to Civitavecchia, Pellegrini liaised with the Roman activists and Mazzini – who had taken refuge in London – as also confirmed by Accursi⁷⁶, and provided support for the exiles PIANCIANI sent to him.

A close friendship developed between the two men and while Pellegrini explained to Luigi the financial operations he was conducting with his friend's capital, the latter gave his impressions on the Crimean war, helping Pellegrini – who would visit the theatre of war in 1856⁷⁷ – to look for new business opportunities in

⁷² The Papal government would not issue the concession for the Rome-Civitavecchia line until 23 April 1856, to Casavaldès e Compagni (the Marquis Casavaldès, Count De Quinto and Fernando Munõz, Duke of Rianzares). The act provided that the railway should be built and managed at the risk of the company, which enjoyed the support of the French banker Jules Mirès, but with no guarantee of government involvement. One month later, the second concession was issued, which was for the construction of the Rome-Bologna line via Ancona, thereby completing the Pio-Centrale line. The Rome-Civitavecchia line was inaugurated on 16 April 1859. See *Le ferrovie nello Stato Pontificio, 1844- 1870*, Archivio Economico dell'Unificazione Italiana, Series 1, v. 16, n. 2, ed. P. Negri, Rome (Turin, I.L.T.E.) 1967, pp. 12-13.

⁷³ See the following letters from Vincenzo PIANCIANI to his son Luigi, in *Vincenzo PIANCIANI al figlio Luigi*, cit.: 15 January 1852 (p. 1789); 29 January 1852 (p. 1793); 1 April 1852 (p. 1805); 15 July 1852 (p. 1839); 29 July 1852 (p. 1834).

⁷⁴ The *Great Exhibition* took place from 1 May to 15 October. On Pellegrini's participation, see the *Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue of the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations*, Part IV: *Colonies and foreign states - Division*, Spicer Brothers, London 1851, pp. 1285 e 1287; on the medal, see SAR, Organi e Uffici preunitari, Camerlengato (1816-1854), II (1824-1854), III (commercio), b. 141, n. 2771/47, Roma - Londra: Ufficio - Grande esposizione di Londra. Elenco dei concorrenti che conseguirono la Medaglia di Premio, altri che conseguirono al Medaglia di Esposizione con menzione onorevole e altri che conseguirono la Medaglia di Esposizione.

⁷⁵ SAR, Archivio PIANCIANI, Serie I, b. 38, correspondence with Pellegrini Schneider [sic], letter from Snider Pellegrini to Luigi PIANCIANI, 12-7-1857.

⁷⁶ SAR, Archivio PIANCIANI, Serie I, b. 38, correspondence with Pellegrini Schneider [sic], letter from Snider Pellegrini to Luigi PIANCIANI, 22-3-1852. See also SAR, Archivio PIANCIANI, Serie I, b. 38, correspondence with Accursi Michele, letter from Michele Accursi to Luigi PIANCIANI, n. 11 (1851).

⁷⁷ SAR, Archivio PIANCIANI, Serie I, b. 38, correspondence with Pellegrini Schneider, letter from Snider Pellegrini to Luigi PIANCIANI, 9-10-1856.

the light of political developments in Europe⁷⁸. Pellegrini also talked about Victor Hugo, who was in exile on the island of Jersey – «what a pity that such a sublime talent remains out of action» – and whom Pianciani took a close interest in and about Mazzini, repeatedly asking for news of him⁷⁹. But some operational details prove to be even more interesting. First, in the same correspondence an undated note is included, in which Pellegrini is very concerned about a letter containing a plan for Lemmi that he sent in reply to some letters from Aurelio Saffi. For some reason, he fears it is a trap and implores Pianciani to look into the matter because in the event that the letter has ended up in the wrong hands, his business would be at serious risk⁸⁰. Secondly, from the content of some letters exchanged between Mazzini and Pianciani, it would appear that Pellegrini's house in London is considered a safe shelter for exiles⁸¹.

The last operational circumstance is the most dramatic and mysterious one. From what Pellegrini wrote to Superviele in 1870, after the years in London and Civitavecchia he had decided to cease his business activities, allegedly taking refuge in Paris: «[...] for health reasons I retired from business in 1856, leaving the succession of my establishments to my first commis of London and of Civita Vecchia, with circulars spread throughout Europe»⁸². Before that, in the spring of 1855, Pellegrini arrived in Civitavecchia on his way to Rome, when he was summoned to London by a telegraph dispatch containing terrible news: the death of his only child, his little daughter Annette, who was just nine years old⁸³, an event of which no other trace can be detected, even in his memoir of 1861 (*La Justice en Autriche*). A few days

⁷⁸ SAR, Archivio Pianciani, Serie I, b. 38, correspondence with Pellegrini Schneider, letter from Snider Pellegrini to Luigi Pianciani, 17-12-1854.

⁷⁹ For a brief reconstruction of the network of exiles that Pianciani introduced to Pellegrini in London (including the Carlo Arrivabene from Mantua and «La Favilla» newspaper correspondent Plutarco Pizzi), in addition to letters from the correspondence in question, see F. Bozzi, *Tra Mazzini, Garibaldi e l'Internazionale. Luigi Pianciani volontario, cospiratore, proto-socialista*, in *Luigi Pianciani e la democrazia moderna*, ed. M. Furiozzi, Fabrizio Serra, Pisa-Rome 2008, pp. 129-149, here p. 142.

⁸⁰ SAR, Archivio Pianciani, Serie I, b. 38, correspondence with Pellegrini Schneider, note from Snider Pellegrini to Luigi Pianciani, undated.

⁸¹ The correspondence with Mazzini occupied file 31 of the Pianciani Archive. However, this file was stolen in the 1970s and all that remains of the letters is the transcription published by Armando Lodolini in the 1920s. In letter xxix, undated, Mazzini writes: «Dear Pianciani, if besides Filici a certain Peracchi Luigi comes to you from Parma – give him the passport I am sending you; examine him a bit; and if necessary, give him six or seven shillings for me, telling him that I am ruined as well. When you come, I'll repay it all to you. Provided that Pellegrini organizes the lunch L. accept [sic]. Saffi is arriving Saturday. Goodbye, yours Gius. Mazzini», *LXXVII lettere inedite di Giuseppe Mazzini a Luigi Pianciani*, ed. A. Lodolini, extract from «Patto Nazionale», nn. 7-8-9, year 5, series 2, 21 April 1927, p. 13.

⁸²A. Snider Pellegrini, *Lettre à M. Superviale*, cit., p. 7.

⁸³ From the records of the parish of St. Giles in Camberwell, Surrey, Annette Snider Pellegrini was born in 1846 and died on 23 May 1855. She is buried in Nunhead Cemetery in Southwark (London). The letter in which Vincenzo tells his son Luigi of the tragedy is dated 24 May 1855: *Vincenzo Pianciani al figlio Luigi*, cit., 1996, p. 2049. From the letter sent by Emanuel Gaminara, a former soldier of Napoleon and one of Snider's commis, to Luigi Pianciani, her death occurred on 15 May: SAR, Archivio Pianciani, Serie I, b. 38, correspondence with Pellegrini Schneider, letter dated 16-5-1855.

before her death, Pellegrini had told Luigi Pianciani about his daughter's ill-health, begging him to call Gaetano Valeri, who had his photographer's studio in Chelsea⁸⁴, if the worst should happen: «If fate is to take her from me, at least I will have her portrait». Deeply dejected, Pellegrini admits that he would much rather avoid going back to Civitavecchia so as to remain close to his daughter, but adds that he had no choice, since he carried with him «the dispatches of the US legation»⁸⁵.

Conclusions: An Italian geographer

The lack of any other documents available at the moment leads us to conclude that Pellegrini's active participation in the making of Italy came to an end after 1856. From then on, as we have seen in the first part of this article, his time in Paris was spent publishing a series of his books⁸⁶. However, there is a fascinating comment in the letter to Superviele, which offers some promising new openings for more research into him:

I spent a year in Milan and Turin, where I published a true story of the house of Austria with everything it included, good and bad [...] You can see that, far from hiding, as you say, I have done nothing but provoke Austria and my story has been detailed in all the Italian newspapers, get yourself, among others, *Les Nationalités* of Turin of 24 February 1861⁸⁷.

In fact, his very critical *Storia della Casa d'Austria* was indeed published in Turin in 1861⁸⁸ and this suggests that he was physically present in those two cities so central to the unification of Italy, right on the eve of proclamation of the new Kingdom on 17 March 1861. In the same year, he was the suspected head of a committee of emigrants from Trieste and the Istrian and Giulian territories who sought an audience with King Vittorio Emanuele to re-affirm the Adriatic port's wish for annexation⁸⁹. Pellegrini's struggle against Austria would continue until his

⁸⁴ SAR, Archivio Pianciani, Serie I, b. 47, correspondence with Gaetano Valeri, letter from Gaetano Valeri to Luigi Pianciani, 1-4-1855.

⁸⁵ SAR, Archivio Pianciani, Serie I, b. 38, correspondence with Pellegrini Schneider, letter from Snider Pellegrini to Luigi Pianciani, 6-5-1855.

⁸⁶ A complete Pellegrini bibliography can be found in G. Modaffari, *La deriva*, cit., Appendix B: *Biblioteca e Archivio Antonio Snider Pellegrini*, pp. 173-175.

⁸⁷ A. Snider Pellegrini, *Lettre à M. Superviale*, cit., p. 6.

⁸⁸ Id. *Storia della Casa d'Austria dalla sua origine sino al giorno d'oggi*, Tipografia G. Favale e Comp., Turin 1861.

⁸⁹ See the Trieste political daily «Il Diavoletto», 22 October 1861, p. 1022. In this accusation, another prominent figure from Trieste was mentioned: the Italian activist and diplomat Raffaele Abro (1836-1867). As reconstructed in G. Modaffari, *La deriva*, cit., pp. 145-147, some hints may suggest that they were involved in the donation to King Vittorio Emanuele of the painting *Allegoria di Trieste*, by Annibale Strata. In February 2022, the painting was moved from the Royal Museums of Turin to the Historical Museum of Miramare Castle in Trieste.

last days, though through other means, since the final article he wrote, in which he was presented to the reader as «an Italian patriot», was about the “Italian-ness” of his hometown, Trieste⁹⁰. Moreover, in the article on his death, there is a line containing further very intriguing details: «He [Pellegrini] was once offered the Treasury portfolio of Italy by Cavour, and it is said that he could once have had the Treasury portfolio of France»⁹¹.

In conclusion, all these elements which point to his lifelong support in the fight for Italian independence must be combined together and can lead only to one clear conclusion. In most encyclopedias⁹², Pellegrini tends to be described as a «French geographer» but in light of the present research, this would appear to be a misunderstanding arising from the fact that he was brought up by a French family and that most of his books were written in French. Despite the fact that he was continuously on the move from country to country and continent to continent, our findings show that he really should be regarded as an Italian: in 1861 Joseph Arnaud included Pellegrini in his list of ‘Italian writers in French’, considering him ‘of German origin but Italian in his soul and heart’⁹³.

If further evidence in support of this contention was necessary, it can be found in the very last phase of his career which began in the 1870s, when he was an art dealer and collector in New York. In the preface to the catalogue of the auction of his art collection, which was held in 1876, he stated his intention to sell all his works without a reserve price, because he still wanted to return «to his early home in Italy»⁹⁴. A wish which seems not to have been granted, because when Pellegrini died in New York on 17 April 1885⁹⁵, in the house of his friend (and former soldier of Garibaldi), Dr. Onofrio Abruzzo⁹⁶, he was buried in Green-Wood Cemetery, in Brooklyn, and there he remains, with his grave now underneath a tall pine tree.

⁹⁰ A. Snider-Pellegrini, *Trieste non è Austriaca nè Tedesca ma è Italiana*, in «Il Progresso italo-americano» (US daily in Italian language), 12 February 1885, first page. This article was a reply to what the French journalist and senator John Lemoine, wrote in the «Journal des Débats» of 11 (first page) and 29 January (first page). For Lemoine, Italy would have to give up Trieste by virtue of the fact that the city had always been considered Germany’s southern outlet to the sea, and Germany was an empire that, given the great race to the Mediterranean of the time, wanted to extend its territories on the Adriatic, and from there to the East.

⁹¹ *Career of a Noted Italian Freethinker*, cit.

⁹² See for example the entry in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Antonio-Snider-Pellegrini> (last access: 8 May 2022).

⁹³ J. Arnaud, *Les Italiens prosateurs français*, Typographie de Dominique Salvi, Milan 1861, p. 128.

⁹⁴ Library of the Netherlands Institute for Art History (The Hague), TEMP201015521 MAG PREC/VEIL/, *Mr. A. Snider-Pellegrini’s Collection of Oil Paintings, Water Colors, Drawings & Etchings, Miner’s Art Galleries, 4-6 Dec. 1876*, p. 4.

⁹⁵ *An eventful career: The death of A.S. Pellegrini recalls some of the incidents of his life*, in «The New York Times», 19 April 1885, p. 3.

⁹⁶ Santa Margherita di Belice, 8 April 1840- New York, 7 December 1915. In a letter addressed to Garibaldi, Abruzzo, who declares his support and praises the General, signs himself «secretary of the reunited Societies»: Central Museum of the Risorgimento in Rome, Archives, 924/2.