A Macro-Nationalist Periodical for a New Europe? Franco-Italian Exchanges and Latin Renaissance in *Cronache della civiltà elleno-latina* (1902-1907)

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the discourse on pacifism and Latinity in the Italian periodical *Cronache della civiltà elleno-latina* (1902-1907), founded by Angelo De Gubernatis. Under the leadership of Crispi in the 1880s and 1890s, Italy embraced expansionism, colonialism, and pro-German attitudes, which strained its relations with France. In stark contrast to this militarism, the *Cronache* championed a vision of Italy rooted in liberal and democratic ideals. The periodical advocated for a peaceful international order to enhance Italy's position in modernity. In doing so, it proposed an anti-belligerent macro-nationalism based on the dissemination of the values of Latinity: harmony, peace, and order. Specifically, I analyze how the periodical used the historical relations between France and Italy to construct a myth of a new Latin Renaissance. This Renaissance envisioned a profound epochal transformation, a new beginning in European history characterized by peace, unity, and solidarity among Europe's nations.

Keywords

Latinity, Renaissance, De Gubernatis, (Anti-)Imperialism, Macro-Nationalism

Introduction

Many European intellectuals viewed the beginning of the twentieth century as a significant juncture, holding the potential for a long-awaited and desired rebirth. In Latin Europe, this desired rebirth intersected with a response to the new identity politics that emerged in Europe between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Previously, Europeanness was defined in terms of the contrast between Europe and the East. However, the division began to manifest within Europe itself and established a sharp contrast between Northern Europe, interpreted as the epicenter of modernity, and Latin Europe, perceived as an inert and degenerate relic of the past (Dainotto, 2007). Claims of decadence were directed against Latin Europe from the North, yet these claims were also embraced by intellectuals within Latin Europe. For instance, the Italian historian Guglielmo Ferrero argued in his *L'Europa giovane. Studi e viaggi nei paesi del Nord* (1897) that Europe's Latin peoples, especially the Italians, suffered from a nervous degeneration that made them less capable of facing the challenges of modernity. Against this backdrop, towards the end of the nineteenth century, a group of more optimistic thinkers aimed to challenge the perceived marginalization of Latin Europe in modernity. Their goal was to promote the idea that the literary, cultural and political relevance of Latin Europe was not only on par but even exceeded that of Europe's 'Teutonic', 'Germanic', 'Northern' cultures (Al-Matary, 2008). The defense of Latin culture was articulated through literary histories, manifestoes, memoires, and, most importantly, periodicals, such as *Anthologie Revue*

de France et d'Italie (1897-1900), *Il tesoro* (1897-1898) and *La Renaissance Latine* (1902-1905) (Baldazzi, 1981: 187-200).

In this article, I discuss the promotion of Latinity in the Italian periodical *Cronache della civiltà elleno-latina* (1902-1907) (henceforth *Cronache*), founded by Angelo De Gubernatis, one of Italy and Europe's most prolific and protean intellectuals and peace activists during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[1] His *Cronache* were the organ of the Società Internazionale Elleno-Latina De Gubernatis founded in Rome in 1902. The periodical was multilingual, as it was published in Italian, French, Spanish, and occasionally in Romanian and Latin. As I will argue, De Gubernatis proposed a form of macro-nationalism rooted in the solidarity among Europe's Latin nations. He conceptualized an anti-belligerent ideology founded on the dissemination of the ideas and values of Latinity, such as harmony, peace, and order. This ideology served as a response to the prevailing era of violent nationalism, as well as the moral and political chaos that characterized the Crispi era in Italy and the "age of empire" (Hobsbawm, 1987) in Europe. In sharp contrast to dominant militarism, De Gubernatis championed a vision of Italy firmly grounded in liberal and democratic ideals. He rejected expansionism and militarism and instead advocated the establishment of a peaceful international order as a way to elevate Italy's standing in the modern world. Despite the seemingly progressive nature of this project, it is important to note in advance that this discourse was nonetheless rooted in a problematic emphasis on racial hierarchies. De Gubernatis' ideas in the *Cronache* were part of his broader lifelong effort to challenge claims of Latin degeneration that permeated fin-de-siècle intellectual discourse on modernity and to reaffirm the superiority of the 'Latin' race. For example, from the last decades of the nineteenth century onwards, De Gubernatis participated as an orientalist in the definition of European Aryanism.

[1] During his career, De Gubernatis published on a wide range of subjects and held multiple influential institutional roles. In 1861, he founded and served as the director of the periodical *Letteratura civile*, followed by *L'Italia letteraria* in 1862 and *La civiltà italiana* in 1865. He tried to foster transnational dialogues between Italy and the rest of Europe in his periodicals *Rivista contemporanea* (founded in 1868), *Rivista europea* (1869) and *Revue Internationale* (1884). Between 1876 and 1886, he was the editor of the "Rassegna delle letterature straniere" section in the *Nuova Antologia*. Additionally, he collaborated to numerous foreign journals, including *Revue Bleue* and *Cosmopolis* in France, *Contemporary Review* in the UK, *Deutsche Revue* in Germany, *Viestnik Evrop'I* in Russia. He was mainly known as an orientalist, yet, in 1891, he became professor of Italian Literature at the University of Rome. Furthermore, he was also a pacifist. This is testified by his participation at peace conferences from the end of the nineteenth century onwards, for instance the Universal Peace Conference of 1911 in Rome, and by his preface to the *Catalogo del Museo storico della pace* (Roma 1912). For a more extensive discussion of De Gubernatis, see Strappini, 1988 and Taddei, 1995.

He redirected the attention to the Italian-Roman contribution, aiming to overturn the dominant perception of Germanic preeminence in the Aryan narrative (De Donno, 2019).

In the first part, I will discuss the program that underpinned De Gubernatis' Società Internazionale Elleno-Latina. In the subsequent parts, I will focus on how this program translated into the *Cronache*'s attention towards the historical relations and dialogues between Italy and France. I will try to show how these dialogues were used to construct the myth of a new Latin Renaissance. In the *Cronache*, this modern Renaissance represented a profound epochal transformation, a caesura in European history that was meant to overcome violence and narrow nationalism. It aimed to unify Latin Europe and, ultimately, Europe as a whole, starting with the exchanges between France and Italy.

Società Internazionale Elleno-Latina

In 1902, Angelo De Gubernatis founded the Società Internazionale Elleno-Latina in Rome. The Società quickly attracted 600 members, aiming to secure a membership of at least 1000 to reach financial stability (Società Elleno-Latina, 1902: 3-4). Its members included politicians, sociologists and writers from Italy (Antonio Fogazzaro, Nunzio Nasi), the Latin world (Juan Valera, Hélène Vacaresco), as well as non-Latin European intellectuals (Jacques Novicow) who valued the role of Latinity in modernity. De Gubernatis published the Società's statutes in the first issue of the *Cronache* and later on through the Forzani publishing house. The statutes' ten articles outlined the Società's purpose and practical organization. The latter was particularly outlined in the last eight articles, while the first two delineated the association's primary objectives. The first article stated that its main aim was to promote "the moral and intellectual interests of the people belonging to the Hellenic and Latin civilizations" ("Statuto della Società Internazionale Elleno-Latina", 1902: 1).[2] The society aimed to rekindle the vitality of Hellenic and Latin cultures, support their study, foster harmony and facilitate dialogues among Latin communities all over the world. All this served to demonstrate the modern liveliness and idealism in these civilizations. Additionally, as stipulated in article 2, the society was committed to ideals and did not pursue political and material goals. The italicization of the adjectives *political* and *material* at the beginning of the second article ("non ha intenti *nè politici, nè materiali*") underscored this emphasis on ideology over practical politics (1). Furthermore, the sentence expressing this objective was visually set apart from the remainder of the article. The goal was to foster the ideal bonds between the Hellenic-Latin family, as they were expressed in art, science, studies, and life. As De Gubernatis made clear on January 15, 1903, this family

[2] Translations from Italian and French are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

included, among others, Italy, France, Romania, Spain, Portugal, Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Colombia and Mexico (De Gubernatis, 1904a: 1-2). Indeed, between 1902 and 1907, the *Cronache* paid attention to most of these nations through the presentation of their main artists, writers and intellectuals. In this paper, I focus only on Franco-Italian exchanges, as they form the core of the periodical's ideology, which mainly engaged with reflections on modern Europe.

Although the statutes stipulated that the Società had no direct involvement with politics, a brief discussion of developments in Italian politics is necessary to understand the historical backdrop against which the *Società* and the *Cronache* emerged and in which De Gubernatis developed his cultural and ideological ideas. To understand this backdrop, it is useful to consider the changing relations between France and Italy in the first decades after Italian unification in 1861. On May 20, 1882, Italy joined the military alliance between Germany and Austria-Hungary. Italy's ties with Germany grew even stronger during the four governments led by Prime Minister Francesco Crispi between 1887 and 1896 (Duggan, 2002). This came at the expense of Italy's relationship with France, not in the least because the latter had been a strong adversary of Germany since the Franco-Prussian war and the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine to the German empire. Crispi's policies marked an era of Italian expansionism, colonialism, a pro-German alignment, and, consequently, a strained relationship with France. Indeed, Crispi perceived France as a significant threat to Italy's ambition, as the nation aspired to dominate the Mediterranean. In this context, Crispi was eager to achieve military success, ideally over France, akin to Germany's victory in Sedan in 1870, to establish Italy as one of the great powers in international politics (Duggan, 2004: 315-29).

During this period, Italian intellectuals found themselves divided between sympathy for Germany and France, with these two nations playing a pivotal role in shaping public opinion on matters of war and peace (Chabod, 1997: 462-63). More specifically, the period saw the emergence of anti-Crispi attitudes rooted in pro-French sentiments. The conflicting positions of pro-German Crispi supporters and anti-Crispi pro-French pacifists revolved around differing interpretations of Italy's role in international politics. On the one hand, Crispi envisioned Italy as adopting an aggressive stance towards its enemies, in close collaboration with Bismarck and the Triple Alliance, as well as an expansionist and colonial approach. On the other hand, peace activists such as De Gubernatis championed a liberal and democratic vision of modern Italy. They favored reconciliation with France (interpreted as the guardian of democratic traditions), opposed expansionism and militarism, and promoted a peaceful international order to enhance Italy's dignity in the modern world. These two contrasting visions also revealed a broader shift in nineteenth-century nationalism, i.e., between what Eric J. Hobsbawm (1992: 101-30) has

termed liberal-bourgeois nationalism and a more aggressive form of ethnic nationalism. According to Hobsbawm, liberal-bourgeois nationalism saw the formation of the single nation-states as the penultimate stage within a broader evolution of human society, which had its utopian teleological endpoint in a global unification of humanity. Thus, liberal nationalism emphasized large-scale human unification and, in doing so, rejected territorial divisions based on linguistic and ethnic differences. Instead, a significant shift occurred in the post-1880s era. At this time, as Hobsbawm puts it, "ethnicity and language became the central, increasingly the decisive [and divisive] or even the only criteria of potential nationhood" (102). The evolution was largely determined by the presence of new pseudo-scientific race theories that connected nations to ethnic descent, and the new lower middle classes that came to play a more active role in politics (101-110). Furthermore, this evolution of nationalism saw a rise in aggressiveness and militancy, driven by international rivalries among powerful nations and internal political and social tensions with European nation-states. Indeed, the escalation of European nationalism was directly tied to the surge in global colonial conquests. These further fueled rivalries among European powers, as nationalist tensions within Europe spilled over into their overseas ambitions (Giladi, 2020: 259).

In this context, De Gubernatis never abandoned his attachment to national and patriotic goals. However, he also remained dedicated to international peace, aiming to harmonize his patriotism with an open-ended cosmopolitan outlook. The negotiation between the national and the transnational points to the inherent complexity of being a peace activist during the age of imperialism and empire. This tension was present across various peace associations, yet it was particularly explicit in the Italian peace movement, which was closely tied to liberalism and democracy but also to the aspirations of the Italian Risorgimento (Cooper, 1991; Girardi, 2014). As I will discuss in this paper, in response to hegemonic and belligerent ethnic nationalism, De Gubernatis and his Società championed a form of macro-nationalism, which involved an elitist recovery of bourgeois ideology adapted for the twentieth century and integrated certain elements of ethnic nationalism.

As Amotz Giladi has explained, macro-nationalist movements, or pan-movements, such as Pan-Germanism, Pan-Slavism, and Pan-Latinism, spread across Europe in the late nineteenth century as part of the first globalization wave elicited by European colonialism. These movements "advocated linguistic and cultural homogeneity within vast geographic areas, but also within the borders of the already established nation-states" (Giladi, 2020: 258). While retaining the bourgeois-liberal idea of human progression from smaller to larger units, macro-nationalism emphasized culture, language and even race as crucial factors in defining human

groups, aligning itself with the later ethnic phase of nationalism. Unlike the direct transition from national to global unification envisioned in bourgeois-liberal nationalism, macro-nationalism proposed a new final step, where nation-states would merge into larger macro-nations. In Italy, a form of macro-nationalism, Pan-Latinism, gained new momentum when the Crispi era dramatically ended after Italy's defeat at the Battle of Adwa in 1896.[3] The period between 1896 and 1901-1902, the year of both Crispi's death and the establishment of the Società Internazionale Elleno-Latina, witnessed the development of a new diplomatic rapprochement between Italy and France. This shift was largely driven by Emilio Visconti Venosta, who assumed the role of Minister of Foreign Affairs in the summer of 1896 and made reconciliation with France a top priority to defend Italy's Mediterranean interests (Zucconi, 1959: 243-62; Milza, 1981). This reconciliation gave peace activists a renewed historical momentum to promote Italo-French friendship and to champion the role of both nations in fostering European (and global) peace. This promotion rested on linguistic and historical factors and the emphasis on a shared 'Latin' identity of France and Italy that dated back to classical antiquity.

This emphasis on Italo-French relations and a shared Latin identity definitely holds true for the Società Internazionale Elleno-Latina and its main organ, *Cronache della civiltà elleno-latina*. Indeed, their centers of gravity were Italy and France. This is evident from the Società's statutes, which were published in both Italian and French, underscoring the central role of these two major Latin-European nations in its ideological project ("Statuto della Società Internazionale Elleno-Latina", 1902). The importance of Italo-French relations was further confirmed by readers of the *Cronache*. For instance, Gaston Jourdanne, the political director of the journal *La Démocratie de l'Aude*, expressed his support for the Società by applauding De Gubernatis' intention to "strengthen the affection between France and Italy, the two sister nations" (*Società Elleno-Latina*, 1902: 57). It is also worth noting that French and Italian were the most frequently used languages in the *Cronache*. The continued presence of French in particular highlights De Gubernatis' intent to address the broader Latin world and European world, as French still maintained its prestige as the lingua franca of the European intellectual elite. Indeed, the aim of the society and its periodical extended beyond merely fostering a closer relationship between France and Italy. Instead, De Gubernatis interpreted French and Italian culture as the intellectual core that, by propagating Latin ideas, would contribute to a more

[3] For reflections on pan-Latinism before the end of the nineteenth century, see at least Giladi, 2014; Benvenuto, 2015; Zantedeschi, 2015.

profound sense of harmony among Latin peoples, and, ultimately, across all of Europe. De Gubernatis explicitly articulated this intention in two articles, both titled "Italia e Francia", written on the occasion of Italian King Victor Emanuel III's (first) visit to the French president Émile Loubet in the fall of 1903. The first article, published in July 1903 before the actual visit, contemplated the cultural and historical significance of the impending encounter, portraying it as the "seal of perfect and sincere peace and warm brotherhood between Italians and Frenchmen" (De Gubernatis, 1903a: 128). In line with the periodical's antiwar and idealist positions, De Gubernatis further argued that the "fraternal kiss" between Loubet and Victor Emmanuel III would be worth "one hundred battles won without shedding blood" (128). He then linked the significance of the visit to the Società Elleno-Latina's own mission, emphasizing the ideals of optimism, peace and unity through the union of Italy and France:

> The Società Elleno-Latina, born for the union of Latin peoples, rejoices especially in seeing Rome and Paris now reunited in a single affection and a single thought. The Italo-French union will eventually attract the other two more civilized nations of Europe, Germany and England, sooner or later. Through this unbreakable civil league, true peace will be assured without the need for ruinous and deadly armaments. Around this great vital flame, every other civil assembly will naturally seek support, and every barbarism will ultimately fall. Let us, therefore, allow Italy to exult now in a joyful three-day celebration, with our thoughts focused on Paris, which is celebrating our King. Let us raise a high *Te Deum laudamus* from Rome for this great joy of two entirely pacified nations (128).

The two metaphors "around this great vital flame" ("intorno a questo gran fuoco vitale") and "every barbarism will ultimately fall" ("ogni barbarie dovrà, finalmente cadere") conveyed the notion that the union between France and Italy was to bring warmth, life and enlightenment, dispelling the darkness of conflict and anarchism that dominated modern Europe. De Gubernatis suggested that the Italo-French union would eventually attract other European powers, such as the UK and Germany, thereby extending Latinity's influence throughout the entire continent and leading to a more united Europe. Indeed, he argued that Latinity, with France and Italy as its guardians of peace, would serve as a beacon of progress, attracting other civilized nations.

The second article, published after the visit, stressed the historical and cultural connections between Italy and France, as well as their role in modernity. The first part of the short article recalled the anti-Austrian alliance between the Second French Empire and the Kingdom of Sardinia during the Second Italian Independence War in 1859, when Italy and France were "fraternally embraced" during the Battles of Montebello (May 20), Palestro (May 30-31) and Solferino (June 24) (De Gubernatis, 1903b: 223). De Gubernatis fashioned these events as moments of solidarity and cooperation, which were later followed by a period of

separation that had damaged the "Latin civilisation" (223). The article called for a return to the former unity, as Rome and Paris were the two major centers of Latin civilization essential for its full prosperity. He also referenced a forthcoming visit by the French president to Rome, using the metaphor of Rome's heart beating with joy ("Rome is eager to make Latin France feel her heart beats with joy") to convey the strong emotional anticipation of this future new chapter in the history of France and Italy's friendship (223). The article ended with an aphorism and a rhetorical call to action: "Italy and France are invincible when united, and only their union can genuinely impose peace on the world in the name of civilisation" ("L'Italia e la Francia unite sono invitte; e la loro solo unione può veramente, in nome della civiltà imporre la pace al mondo") (223). The internal rhyme between "unite" (united) and "invitte" (invincible) further conveyed the idea of France and Italy's strength and influence, while the figura etymologica ("unite"-"unione") reinforced the emphasis on the paramount importance of collaboration between France and Italy. It suggested that the union of Italy and France was not just about their own national interests but also about promoting peace on a global scale in the name of civilization; their union was essential for the moral improvement of humanity.

This strong emphasis on France and Italy's common mission derived from the abovementioned emergence of various pan-movements in Europe, as well as the need for a Latin block to counterbalance the formation of these other movements. Indeed, as the archaeologist Filippo Vivanet wrote to De Gubernatis, the Latin intelligentsia felt compelled to no longer remain inert in the face of the ongoing organization of the Anglo-Saxons, the Slavs and other ethnic groups into larger entities (*Società Elleno-Latina*, 1902: 23). In this context, the fashioning of France and Italy, and by extension all of Latinity, as proponents of peace and solidarity, served to challenge the pessimistic predictions about the decadence of the Latin nations and their waning relevance and influence in modernity. It contributed to the creation of a new narrative and a new historical consciousness, one that no longer focused on Latin *decadence* but on Latin *Renaissance*. In the remainder of this article, I will further analyze the persistent presence of Franco-Italian exchanges in the *Cronache* and how they were used to shape a new role for Latinity in modernity through the narrative of a Latin Renaissance.

Centenaries and Intellectual Politics: Franco-Italian Exchanges and Latin Renaissance

The first issue of the *Cronache*, published on April 1, 1902, opened with the publication of the bilingual statutes discussed in the previous section. The first full-length article, entitled "Risorgimento", was written by Angelo De Gubernatis and served as the second mission statement of the periodical. As the director of the periodical, De Gubernatis addressed Italy's

intellectual elite and urged them to disseminate the "good seed" of the "Italian tree of life" and to establish "harmony, concord and peace" among all peoples, but especially among "the Helleno-Latin peoples" (De Gubernatis, 1902a: 4). He framed this particular task as an invitation to a "great intellectual banquet" (4), a metaphor that underscored the importance of intellect and culture in shaping a transnational community, inherited from Risorgimento liberal nationalism. Indeed, it recalled Giuseppe Mazzini's ideas on the banquet of the sister nations in what Recchia and Urbinati (2009) have called his cosmopolitanism of nations, which refers to Mazzini's ideas about Italy's mission in fostering global unity and peace by developing a sense of shared values among different independent nation-states. De Gubernatis further asserted that it was the duty of the Italians to perpetuate their glorious historical and cultural mission, which had reached its zenith during the Roman Empire and the "Tuscan Renaissance" (De Gubernatis, 1902a: 4).[4] This mission had to start in Rome, described as the modern hub of intellectual openness and dialogue ("from this Rome, generously welcoming and not stingily exclusionary") (5), yet De Gubernatis also extended this responsibility to all intellectuals of Hellenic and Latin lineage. In doing so, he invited them to collaborate in working towards a new Latin-Hellenic Renaissance ("nuovo Rinascimento ellenico-latino") that had to be the catalyst of "a brighter and more beneficial civilization" (5).

Thus, right from its very first issue, the *Cronache* linked its cultural and ideological mission to the notion of a new Renaissance. As such, the periodical's language participated in the broader longing for new Renaissances in the context of modernity. This longing for 'renaissance' was a significant theme in global intellectual politics from the late nineteenth century to the interwar period (Schildgen, Zhou and Gilman, 2006; Gamsa, 2013; Campagnola 2018; Siljak, 2018). During this time, intellectuals from around the world faced what they perceived as the crisis of modernity. This crisis was characterized by various socio-political, cultural and spiritual issues arising from industrialization, colonialism, secularization, urbanization. In response to these challenges, intellectuals searched for tropes to express their concerns and resist the perceived decline of modernity. They emphasized the need to rejuvenate society, create a significant caesura in history, and inaugurate a new era (Griffin, 2007). This cultural and socio-political discourse generated various ideologies, aimed at re-creating or renewing modernity itself, that engendered a confrontation with the past. In this context, intellectual discourse of modernity witnessed the emergence of a global use and metaphorization of *Renaissance* to confront the present and past, and to delineate paths for the

[4] De Gubernatis, "Risorgimento", 4.

future. In other words, *Renaissance* served as both a historical hermeneutic tool and as the framing concept of a mindset for analyzing the complexities of crisis and renewal. Indeed, as I will argue, in the *Cronache*, it sustained a self-reflexive consciousness that served to analyze contemporary reality, dominated by imperialism and conflict, and to delineate a vision of a new future that transcended the immediate, decadent past. Hence, this use of *Renaissance* in the *Cronache* implied a double confrontation with history: on the one hand, it was a protest against the present, i.e., against the position of Italy and the neglected values of Latinity in the modern world. On the other hand, it instituted a past that contained elements that were different from the imperialist present and that had to be recovered. This dynamic of innovation in renovation –the act of looking back to move forward– is arguably the most distinctive feature of the literary-historical and socio-political uses of *Renaissance* in the modern age.

From its very first issue, the *Cronache* further established a connection between its calls for a *Renaissance* and transnational identity formation between Italy and France. For instance, the inaugural issue featured a sonnet by Giuseppe Aurelio Costanzo, titled "Latin Sangue Gentile" which envisioned Rome and Paris as the cultural epicenters destined to become the beating heart of the future world: "From the heart of great Rome and Paris / Latin blood surges, and perhaps once again / you shall be the glory and soul of the world" (Costanzo, 1902: 16). The most relevant effort to thematize the historical and modern friendship between France and Italy was the attention dedicated to the centenary celebration of Victor Hugo (1802-1885). During his lifetime, Hugo passionately advocated for a united Europe, driven by his desire to bring peace to the continent. While his vision was initially based on Franco-German sympathies, he shifted his focus following the Franco-Prussian War. He moved his focus to a Franco-Italian axis, with Paris as its cultural epicenter, promoting the values of the French Revolution, and championing liberty, equality and fraternity (Weller, 2021: 116-119). Hugo's centenary was present in the *Cronache* through the publication of a speech De Gubernatis delivered in Roma on February 23, 1902, during the inauguration of the Roman festivities devoted to the French writer (De Gubernatis, 1902b: 5-13). In his opening address, De Gubernatis placed Hugo within a pantheon of artists who possessed the extraordinary power to influence all of humanity. This pantheon encompassed figures such as Homer, Plato, Cicero, Virgil, Dante, Petrarch, Machiavelli, Vico, Alfieri, Shakespeare, Byron, Goethe, Niebuhr, Cervantes, and Tolstoy, among others. He went on with a *captatio benevolentiae*, arguing that France was the European nation that had produced the greatest number of such universally influential geniuses in the past two centuries, with Victor Hugo as the ultimate exemplar:

> From Buffon to Cuvier, from Comte to Littré, from Voltaire to Rousseau, from Rousseau to Chateaubriand, from Chateaubriand to Quinet, from Quinet to Michelet, from Michelet to Renan, from Renan to Hugo, to speak only of those poets and prose writers who, through the magnificence of their style, elevated human thought to greater heights in our age, the Bright Beacon of French ideas destined to become universal ideas. Now, above all these voices, clear and powerful, rose the wonderfully polyphonic voice of that polymorphic genius, which filled almost the entirety of its century with its resonant notes, and was known as Victor Hugo (6).

Subsequently, the orator reflected on Hugo's societal impact and his attention for the Italo-French friendship by referencing Hugo's life and identity. De Gubernatis referred to Joseph Léopold Sigisbert Hugo's, the author's father (1773-1828), who had served as a soldier during the First French Republic and the First Empire. In doing so, he drew a clear distinction between the father, a soldier, and the son, an intellectual, asserting that "the voice of his son alone" had more profoundly influenced European history than the thunder of cannons during the battles of Marengo (1800) and Austerlitz (1805) (6). This perspective aligned with the periodical's idealistic viewpoint, which maintained that ideals and the transnational circulation of ideas wielded a more profound and lasting influence in shaping history and the course of humanity than wars and violence. Furthermore, De Gubernatis interpreted Hugo, despite the German origins of his father, as a Latin genius because he had been deeply fascinated by and educated within the context of Latin Europe during his time in Italy (1807-1808) and Spain (1812): "Victor Hugo had aggregated himself into our civilization, thus earning recognition as a magnificent Latin genius. […] In any case, even if he inherited some German traits from his father, […] the sun of Avellino in Italy and Madrid in Spain had warmed his blood and fantasy during his childhood" (8). De Gubernatis argued that Hugo's strong connection to Latin culture made him a foremost protagonist of the historical friendship between France and Italy, as well as a defender of Italy in France. More specifically, he recalled the aftermath of the Roman Republic when Victor Hugo defended Rome's liberty and protested against the politics of the French president Louis Napoleon. The Roman Republic was a republican experiment, guided by Giuseppe Mazzini, Aurelio Saffi and Carlo Armellini, that temporarily replaced the Pope's temporal power in 1848 and 1849. This historical episode is primarily renowned in cultural and political mythology for the heroic defense of Rome, featuring the participation of prominent patriots from the Risorgimento, such as Nino Bixio, Goffredo Mameli and Giuseppe Garibaldi. They were engaged in a hopeless battle against 40000 French soldiers sent to Rome by the president of the Second Republic, Louis Napoléon (Duggan, 2007: 169-180).

Indeed, one of the first questions the National Assembly (of which Hugo was part) had to discuss after Napoléon's election in 1848 was the Roman Republic. The assembly voted in

favor of France's intervention in Rome in order to protect the peninsula in the name of liberty and humanity. The intervention officially aimed to safeguard Rome from the looming threat posed by Austria, which had already taken control of Milan (Radicchi, 2019: 108-109). However, rather than protecting Rome's liberty, the French president issued secret orders to reinstate the Pope's power in an effort to gain support from Catholics in France. In response to this, the liberal faction of the French Assembly rebelled against its president on October, 15, 1849. Victor Hugo was among the most notable figures in this revolt. De Gubernatis quoted a portion of Hugo's speech,[5] in which the poet expressed his desire to reach a European-wide resonance with his words. Hugo presented himself as a "humble soldier" fighting for the cause of "order and civilization", strongly condemning "savages" such as the Austrian leaders Haynau and Radetzky, who claimed to serve a noble cause "while defending civilization through barbaric methods" (De Gubernatis, 1902b: 10). Furthermore, he criticized Napoleon for betraying France's moral responsibility and national values by placing his personal ambition above the greater cause of humanity, as seen in his efforts to restore the Pope's authority at the expense of the Romans' pursuit of liberty (10). De Gubernatis used this historical episode to fashion Hugo as a champion of (Italian) liberty and to prove the continuous sympathies between French intellectuals and Italy, which endured beyond the vicissitudes of international politics and diplomacy. Indeed, he argued that Hugo, as a Frenchman, was the sole intellectual in Europe who had protested against the suppression of Rome's liberty (9). He added that Hugo's protests had largely faded from Italy's mind but deserved to be preserved in the nation's collective memory as a reminder of France's enduring nobility, even arguing that Hugo earned to be recognized as an honorary citizen of the Italian capital (10).

In the same year, the *Cronache* continued its dedication to celebrating Hugo. In the third issue, published on May 1, 1902, the politician Paolo Lioy (1834-1911) presented his translation of a speech given by Hugo on June 18, 1860 during his exile in Jersey. Hugo pronounced this speech just one month after the beginning of Giuseppe Garibaldi's Expedition of the Thousand (*Spedizione dei Mille*) in May 1860, a significant event towards the achievement of Italy's unification (Lioy, 1902: 62).[6] Lioy motivated his translation by arguing that Hugo's words expressed a main component of the *Cronache*'s ideological project, namely the notion that nations should stand together in harmony because of the interconnectedness of their fates. In his speech, in opposition to the imperialist politics of Louis Napoléon, who had become

[5] De Gubernatis referred in particular to Hugo's speech, titled "L'expédition de Rome". See Hugo, 1882: 289-308.

[6] Lioy's translation is based on the speech "Rentrée à Jersey". See Hugo, 1875: 177-194.

Emperor of the Second French Empire after his putsch in 1851, Hugo argued that the influence of Italy's genius was not only confined to its newly-founded national borders but had the potential (even the obligation) to guide the entire world. Hugo depicted Italy as a beloved child of Greece and the mother of France, while portraying Italy's unification as a divine event. He stressed the significance of Italy's unification on a global scale, as the nation would advance humanity through its moral and intellectual force rather than its military strength. Indeed, Hugo eloquently characterized the Italians as the foremost advisors of Humanity ("sommi consiglieri dell'Umanità"), and described Italy's unification as a moment of global celebration: "Oh Brothers of Humanity, the time of Italy's is a moment of rejoicing for all peoples" (62). Furthermore, Hugo used the powerful metaphor of 'Italian genius' as a new guiding star in the sky, as he invited Europe and the rest of the world to contemplate its fresh enlightenment.

The articles published on the occasion of Hugo's centenary reveal a significant aspect of the *Cronache*'s focus on promoting Franco-Italian relations and theorizing a Latin Renaissance. Indeed, a key element in this is the attention given to the centenaries of writers. This practice was embedded in the broader "cult of the centenary" (Quinault, 2002) or "centenary fever" (Leerssen and Rigney, 2014) that dominated intellectual politics during the long nineteenth century. These centenaries celebrated cultural heroes to serve political goals and they became influential and constitutive cultural rituals that had the power to generate change and mobilize public opinion. In the case of the *Cronache*, they were instrumental in establishing a transnational canon of Latinity that embodied the core qualities of its civilization and the fundamental values of the envisioned cultural transformation underlying the periodical's interpretation of Latin Renaissance, i.e., a new beginning in European history, characterized by pacifism, unity and solidarity among Europe's nations, fostered by Italy and France, that overcame the degenerate age of empire and envisioned a more peaceful and glorious future for the Latin nations and Europe as a whole.

If Hugo was the main commemorated figure in its first year, the *Cronache*, over the course of its existence, also commemorated other intellectuals to thematize the relations between France and Italy. This was, among others, the case for the centenaries of Vittorio Alfieri (1749-1803) in 1903 and Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-1872) in 1905.[7] However, the most relevant

[7] Alfieri's centenary coincided with the first visit of King Victor Emmanuel III to the French president (discussed in the previous section). For this reason, Alfieri's centenary forced intellectuals to take position on one of the author's most controversial works, namely his anti-French *Il misogallo* published in 1799. The French-minded intellectuals involved in the *Cronache* reacted in diverse ways to negotiate Alfieri's inclusion or exclusion in the canon of Latinity. For instance, Paolo Bertini

commemoration in the elaboration of Latin Renaissance was the Sixth Centenary of Petrarch (1304-1374), which coincided with the French president Loubet's visit to Rome in April 1904. By the time the *Cronache* paid attention to Petrarch in 1904, the author had already been the subject of a long tradition of centenaries, each serving various ideological goals.[8] In 1904, in the *Cronache*, Petrarch became the ideal figure to celebrate both the historical friendship between France and Italy and the broader transformation envisioned by the new Latin Renaissance. For instance, De Gubernatis represented Petrarch, "the first man of the Renaissance", as a cultural bridge connecting Italian and French culture ("ce pont lumineux entre l'Italie et la France"), crediting him with introducing the musicality of the Italian language in Avignon (De Gubernatis, 1904b: 3). Furthermore, De Gubernatis emphasized Petrarch's role as a champion of Renaissance values such as justice, liberty and humanism ("chevalier de justice, de liberté, et d'humanité"), which, thanks to the French Revolution also became French values. This reading highlighted a broader interpretation of the Renaissance as an era of intense dialogues beyond borders and established an ideal continuity between Italy and France in the course of modernity.

This cross-cultural reading of the Renaissance was further elaborated by Antoine Dragon's "Pour l'union latine", which was published in the penultimate issue of 1904 (Dragon, 1904: 357-361). The article printed the introduction to Dragon's monograph, titled *L'Unité italienne à travers les âges, aperçu historique sur le rôle de la France et de l'Allemagne en Italie*, in which the author placed his focus on Petrarch and his era within a broader theory of Latin Renaissance. The article was accompanied by an introductory note by the editors of the *Cronache*, which set the stage for Dragon's article. It linked Dragon's contribution to "the

(1903: 225-26) used Angelo Morretti's *Saggio storico delle relazioni letterarie tra Italia e Francia* to motivate his negative judgements of Alfieri's *Misogallo*. According to Bertini, it was an empty and rhetorical book without literary or historical value. To motivate this criticism, he drew the reader's attention to a letter of Alessandro Manzoni to M. Chauvet, which was discussed in Morretti's *Saggio*. In this letter, Manzoni criticized Alfieri's anti-French views and argued that *Il misogallo* did not gain prominence in Italy and did not express the Italian public opinion, as the Italians were inclined to reject Alfieri's idea of building Italian patriotism upon hatred for France. A more positive interpretation of Alfieri emerged from the periodical's attention to the Alfieri festivities in Asti. More specifically, the periodical published the speeches pronounced by Léon-Gabriel Pélissier, professor at the Faculty of Literature at the University of Montpellier, and by Nunzio Nasi, who was at the time Italy's Minister of Public Education. The latter, for instance, argued that Alfieri had always maintained a strong sympathy for France and that *Il misogallo* had to be understood as a critique of the excesses of the French Revolution (Nasi, 1903: 202).

[8] For instance, in 1874, Petrarch was appropriated by both defenders of Pan-Latinism and the Félibrige movement's revival of Occitan regionalist identity. See Zantedeschi, 2014: 134-151.

principle of brotherhood among peoples" and highlighted that the present was a period of transition from an era marked by divisive debates over the perceived superiority or decadence of races and nations to a more harmonious epoch where the union of larger racial families was seen as a path to global cohesion, as the "easiest and most direct means to achieve the United States of Humanity" (357). Within the article, Dragon reflected on the role of transnational collaboration in human progress throughout history. He argued that cultural isolation had always led to decadence, and stressed the importance of dialogues between neighboring nations, while also maintaining one's identity and traditions. For this reason, Dragon turned to the relations between France and Italy, asserting that the return to its long-forgotten Latin traditions played a pivotal role in achieving the latter's national unity.

At this point in the article, an editorial note in Italian interrupted Dragon's argument and stressed the significance of his historical observations on the "ancient relations of friendship between Italy and France" (358). These observations mainly regarded the Avignon Papacy (1309-1376), which Dragon represented as a decisive moment in the intellectual history of Italy, France and Europe.[9] He saw it as the catalyst for the exchange of ideas that gave birth to the Renaissance. Indeed, he argued that Avignon served as an intellectual melting pot that marked the ideal beginning of a long history of Franco-Italian exchanges (358). The two countries were connected through the physical (and intellectual) mobility between Italy and Avignon of some of the most renowned writers (Petrarch, Boccaccio), artists (Memmi, Giotto), politicians (Cola di Rienzo) and mystics (Catherine of Siena) of the time. He added that humanism, thanks to Petrarch had originated in Avignon before bearing its fruits all over Europe. Hence, he argued that the Avignon Papacy was not a calamity; rather, it had facilitated intellectual exchange between the "two Latin countries", as Avignon became the intellectual "trait d'union" between the Italian and the French soul, the "crucible" that forged the grand ideas of the Quattrocento (359). In essence, he contended that the Avignon Papacy and the entailing intellectual migration were decisive and epoch-making moments of Franco-Italian dialogue: They were "the true starting point of this Renaissance of the 16th century, which, in our view, was the most beautiful flowering of the human spirit and surpassed antiquity itself" (359). Hence, Dragon's overarching argument was that the Renaissance was a product of both France and Italy, the ultimate example of the force of Latinity and the beginning of a new era of humanity as a whole. He noted that Avignon had set the stage for the next centuries, when some of the greatest names in the arts and literature, such as Benvenuto Cellini, Leonardo Da Vinci, Michel De Montaigne,

[9] On the Avignon Papacy, see at least Rollo-Koster, 2015; Mullins, 2008; Hamesse, 2006.

and Pierre De Ronsard, had traveled, worked and refined their intellect in both countries. In other words, the dialogues between France and Italy had contributed to the refinement of their national geniuses, ultimately leading to the global dissemination of their achievements. This interaction thus demonstrated that the Latin idea became a vital element of human progress: “Such was the result, even in that distant era, of half a century of close relations between France and Italy” (360).

Certainly, Dragon's interpretation was rooted in a rather selective understanding of the Avignon Papacy. During this period, the city indeed became an intellectual hub, a “truly cosmopolitan place”, which set a precedent for future Renaissance Popes (Falkeid, 2017: 173). These later Popes, akin to their predecessors in Avignon, played significant roles in supporting and promoting the burgeoning culture in Rome. However, it is important to acknowledge that some of the individuals mentioned by Dragon, such as Petrarch and Catherine of Siena, were among the most outspoken critics of the Avignon Papacy. As Unn Falkeid (2017) has pointed out, by the mid-fourteenth century, criticism of the papacy's presence in Avignon was increasingly accompanied by a fervent defense of Rome (95). In this context, Petrarch consistently portrayed Avignon as a city rife with moral and legal corruption, in stark contrast to Rome whose authoritative legitimacy derived from the classical past (98). Nevertheless, for the purposes of this paper, what is crucial is not the historical accuracy of Dragon's theories, but rather the specific context in which they were formulated. Indeed, Dragon appropriated this complex chapter in the history of France and Italy to create an idealized past that served contemporary ideological goals.

Following Dragon’s intermediate conclusion on the role of the Avignon Papacy in the birth of the Renaissance, a new editorial note shifted the focus towards the conclusion of Dragon’s book, which paid tribute to Latin genius and the universal character of Rome (Dragon, 1904: 361). Dragon discussed Latinity’s historical achievements and its potential for working towards a new modern era, a new Renaissance. He emphasized that all great achievements over the past three millennia had spread globally through Latinity. However, he argued that, in modernity, this metaphorical Latin light had been obscured by German culture, which had cast a shadow on the brilliance of the Latin world and generated excessive doubt in the modern mind. In this context, he contended, a Renaissance of Europe’s Latin peoples was more necessary than ever, given significant shifts in international geopolitics, particularly the rising

power of Asia that threatened Europe's moral prestige on the world stage.[10] To save Europe, Latinity, especially Rome, had to reclaim its position as the center of the world and act as a catalyst for change, just as it had in antiquity and as Avignon had done at the beginning of the Renaissance: Rome had to become a cultural epicenter that served as the ideal glue between France, Italy, and other European nations. Indeed, it needed to become the starting point of a new beginning, "of a new era destined to proclaim to the world the power and glory of the Latin spirit" (361).

European Decadence and Latin Renaissance: The Humanitarian Third Rome

Dragon's emphasis on Latinity's responsibility in inaugurating a new era for humanity was emblematic of the enduring state of transition and crisis that permeated European modernist culture between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Kermode, 2000; Griffin, 2007). Modernist culture was dominated by a sense of expectancy stemming from the belief that the present was a period of transition towards a better future. European intellectuals became increasingly fascinated by the dialectics between endings and new beginnings, envisioning the present as a potential precursor of a new epoch for humanity (Griffin, 2007: 9). The confrontation with the European crisis prompted profound reflections on the need for a new foundation for reality and on strategies to transform decline into progress or decadence into renaissance. This confrontation also entailed lively debates about the role of war and violence in shaping European history (D'Auria, 2018: 686-704). At the beginning of the twentieth century, calls for violent actions and an epoch-making war gained momentum across the continent. Indeed, for a substantial part of the European intelligentsia, "violence seemed the solution for Europe's predicaments: the only way to arrest its decline" (686-687). Proponents of warfare in the twentieth century drew upon the theories of their illustrious nineteenth-century predecessors, notably Jacob Burckhardt and Friedrich Nietzsche. The former believed that extended periods of peace were catalysts of decadence, as the greatest epochs in European history, such as the Renaissance, had been marked by division and violence.[11] The latter was arguably the most influential thinker of European decadence, viewing Europe as an aged and depleted civilization (Weller, 2021: 137).[12] According to Nietzsche, Europe had long been under the influence of the slave morality of Christianity, which prioritized solidarity at the expense of

[10] Here Dragon referred to the colonial war between Japan and Russia (1904-1905), as they clashed over shared imperial interests in Korea.

[11] See Ruehl, 2015.

[12] On Nietzsche and warfare, see also Pangle, 1986.

Europe's progress. With the death of God, Europe had lost its moral compass and found itself in a state of nihilism, which had generated a prolonged sense of meaninglessness in the European mind. In this context, Nietzsche was not absolutely enthusiastic about warfare, but he recognized its value in modernity because he believed that wars presented an opportunity to move beyond Nihilism. It was a potential remedy for Europe's decadence, as the shocking experience of conflict would regenerate the Europeans and lead them towards a renewed and more meaningful existence (D'Auria, 2018: 693).

Advocates of violence and warfare as progressive forces in European history faced opposition from peace activists, such as De Gubernatis. They recognized the sense of decline but offered an alternative path to regeneration based on principles of peace, solidarity and transnational collaboration. De Gubernatis believed that these three principles constituted the core historical characteristics of Latinity, and he saw it as the responsibility of Europe's Latin nations to spread them throughout the continent. In this context, as the Japanese-Russian war was drawing to a close in 1905, De Gubernatis spoke out once more in favor of peace and freedom, criticizing the prevailing fixation on violence. He strongly condemned the glorification of force and warfare, while elevating peace as a morally superior choice. Consequently, he quoted the last verse of Petrarch's political *canzone* 'Italia mia, benché 'l parlar sia indarno' (*Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*, CXXVIII) to invite writers and intellectuals to follow in Petrarch's footsteps and join the Latin cause of peace:

> Human and peaceful sentiments are gaining intensity day by day. Despite the recent carnage in the Far East, which has once again revealed all that is horrifying, detestable, and ugly in this worship of material force that drives people to kill each other in order to measure the power of their muscles and destructive machines, a strong desire for a bright peace occupies the minds of the intelligent, preparing us for a future of peace. [...] The breath of peace is a breath of freedom; let us unite, writers, and continue our peaceful struggles [...] to provide rest for the great human family, which has the right not to be disturbed in its useful and fruitful work. [...] Let us, like Petrarch, continue to resound, near and far, the human cry, the evangelical cry, which has essentially become a Latin cry, *pace, pace, pace* (De Gubernatis, 1905: 49-53).[13]

De Gubernatis' ideas on Latinity's humanitarian mission, set within a context dominated by violence and international tensions, found resonance with Jacques Novicow (1849-1912), a renowned advocate for peace and a liberal sociologist who supported the idea of a European federation (Alleno, 2013: 7-20). In *La missione dell'Italia* (1902), Novicow entrusted Europe's intellectual and moral leadership to Italy. In doing so, he reacted against the pessimistic views

[13] For an analysis of Petrarch's self-portrayal as a peace mediator in the *canzone* 'Italia mia, benché 'l parlar sia indarno' and other writings, see Stroppa, 2007.

of the nation and Latin Europe that permeated intellectual discourse at the time. According to Novicow, Italy occupied a favorable political position to become the ideal leader of the international peace movement and to promote the unity of Europe. This was because its military weakness rendered the nation uncompetitive in international conflicts. Novicow's ideas on Italy were linked to his broader vision of the role of violence and warfare across European history. He argued that as societies progressed, they tended to mitigate violence. For instance, he argued that in Renaissance Florence, the population had developed such a strong aversion to violence and such a preference for peace that it preferred hiring mercenaries over engaging in direct combat (Cooper, 1991: 143). In this context, he saw Europe's modern preoccupation with warfare as a sign of its barbarism, as the notion that conquest and progress were synonymous had proven to be nothing but an illusion. Therefore, it fell upon the enlightened segment of Europe's intelligentsia to combat the various ideologies and movements that glorified war as a catalyst for change (144). In this combat, the Italians had to assume a leadership role, end their agreements with the militaristic powers of the Alliance, and actively work towards the federation of Europe (170). In other words, Novicow linked Italy's mission to its intellectual authority and peripheral political position in modern Europe, stressing the potential of the nation's underdog position to steer political modernity away from belligerent imperialism and inaugurate a more humanitarian era.

References to Italy's and Latinity's mission to usher in a new era of peace and international collaboration abound in the *Cronache*'s vision for a Latin Renaissance. For instance, in February 1903, Settimio Aurelio Nappi, in his article "Italia e Francia latinamente unite in Roma", contemplated the roles of France and Italy in shaping "the new era that must emerge from the current historical period of transition" (Nappi, 1903: 218). Implicitly referencing Novicow's book, Nappi highlighted that other European intellectuals were beginning to embrace the newfound mission of Italy, France, and the "idealist and humanitarian" Latin race (218). According to Nappi, the Latins had made significant contributions to the advancement of human civilization in the past, and they would continue to do so in the modern age. He invited Latin intellectuals to fulfil their shared duty of averting imminent threats, such as a European civil war and the rise of the USA and Asian empires as new dominant forces on the world stage. Furthermore, Nappi contended that the Latin race was uniquely positioned to live in perfect harmony with all the nations of the world and to offer each one its impartiality in international disputes, owing to their historical role as the inventors of the *ius gentium*. In this context, their social and historical mission was to found the "third humanitarian Rome" (219), reestablishing Rome as the indisputable center of life. Thanks to its

"cosmopolitan, global, and universal" character, Rome "would triumphantly uphold the values of peace, duty and love" (219). Nappi's references to the Third Rome and the historical mission of the Italians and the Latins established a continuity between the *Cronache*'s pacifist macro-nationalism and Risorgimento liberal nationalism, especially with reference to Giuseppe Mazzini. Mazzini envisioned the Third Rome as the next stage in European civilization, characterized by the emergence of a new universal religion of humanity originating from Italy. In Mazzini's view, Rome was not only the natural capital of Italy but also the temple of humanity. Therefore, Italy's mission was to fulfil this role, serving as the catalyst for this European unification (Fournier-Finocchiaro, 2012: 213-216).

The role of the Latin Renaissance in overcoming the struggles within modern Europe and generating a new era of peace, led by the Latin civilization, was also emphasized by the French philosopher Édouard Schuré – a protagonist of the idealist revival in Europe – on December 15, 1903, when the *Cronache* published a letter of his in honor of Angelo De Gubernatis. Schuré and De Gubernatis had first crossed paths in Florence at the beginning of the 1870s, when their enduring intellectual friendship began (Burrini, 1995: 115-156). Hailing from Alsace, Schuré had personally experienced the impact of the Franco-Prussian War, when the region became part of the German empire. From then on, he viewed with disdain the prevailing German material dominance in Europe. In response, as Arnaldo Cervesato highlighted in his introductory note to Schuré's letter, he came to believe in the role of Latinity as "the greatest messenger of peace in the world" (Cervesato, 1903: 258). In his letter, Schuré used his friendship with De Gubernatis to develop a reflection on the bonds between France and Italy, the role of Latinity in modernity and his belief in a "Latin renaissance" within the broader intellectual and geopolitical context of the early twentieth century, dominated by imperialism, militarism and shifting power dynamics (Schuré, 1903: 258). Schuré emphasized how their mutual interest in each other's cultures had deepened their bond and how their friendship had enabled him to comprehend the profound cultural and emotional bonds between their two nations. These bonds, he felt, surpassed material interests and the contingencies of politics and diplomacy; instead, they represented an intrinsic aspect of their two nations' heritage: "a fact engraved in the heart of two sister nations" (258). Schuré characterized the intellectual foundation of the bond between France and Italy as a shared form of idealism, which he termed the "cult of integral humanity", emphasizing the importance of this bond in a broader global context (258). He connected this cult to the legacy of Greco-Latin ideas. While Greece had given the world the concept of beauty, Italy had offered Humanism, and France, with the Revolution, had expanded these ideas to the world. Then, Schuré highlighted the distinctive

characteristics of Latin genius, which he identified as beauty, universality and pure humanity. He contrasted this with the German empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, suggesting that their excessive focus on self-interest and material domination limited their ability to conquer hearts and minds, which was the real path towards achieving global influence. Instead, Schuré believed, the glory of Italy and France was that they prioritized humanity rather than their own self-interest, that they valued humanism and that they were committed to the betterment of humanity itself: "These are the weapons, these are the torches that tradition places in our hands" (258).

He further expressed great optimism regarding the future realization of this conception of Latin Renaissance. In its achievement, he attributed a pivotal role to his friend De Gubernatis, whose unwavering dedication to promoting Latin ideas and bridging cultural divides, exemplified the kind of intellectual activism that was needed to shape a more harmonious world. Schuré felt that De Gubernatis' polyvalent activism as a critic, poet, philologist, orientalist, writer, and orator, combined with his role as a cultural mediator who introduced the Italians to foreign literatures and the main developments of European thought, showcased the Latin Renaissance's potential to bridge gaps among nations and promote unity. Additionally, Schuré noted that the *Cronache* represented the ideal endpoint of De Gubernatis' activism, as it had become the platform for an intellectual reaction that spanned all Latin countries. He ended his text with a toast to De Gubernatis and his disciples, symbolically raising a glass to the idealist youth of Italy and "the future of the Latin Renaissance" (259). So, in the face of imperialist Germany, Schuré's (and De Gubernatis') vision of Latin Renaissance represented a counterbalance –a call to prioritize the values of culture, beauty and human openness over mere material gain and territorial conquest. It was a vision that sought to transcend national boundaries and political contingencies in favor of a shared heritage rooted in the Greco-Latin tradition. As such, the Latin Renaissance had to revolve around cross-cultural exchange, intellectual idealism, and a commitment to shared human values.

Schuré revisited the question of the Latin Renaissance in August 1904 in an article, titled "Qu'est-ce que la Renaissance latine?" (Schuré, 1904: 153-55). Here he discussed his definition of Latin Renaissance in response to Gabriele D'Annunzio, whose reputation as a leader of Italian nationalism and imperialism had risen following the publication of the first volumes of his *Laudi del cielo, del mare, della terra e degli eroi*. Back in 1895, Eugène-Melchior De Vogué had already praised the Italian poet as the central figure of the ongoing Latin Renaissance. The critic portrayed D'Annunzio as the epitome of the cosmopolitan intellectual of Latinity, whose work reflected the cultural revival of Europe's Latin cultures (De Vogüé, 1895: 187-206).

D’Annunzio himself had used De Vogüé’s article to reinforce his intellectual reputation in Italy, where he was regarded at the time as the poet of Italy’s decadence. In doing so, he proposed a rather nationalist and ultimately imperialist interpretation of this new Renaissance (Nemegeer, 2022: 24-42). D’Annunzio’s perspective was grounded in the Nietzschean celebration of violence and war as transformative and epoch-making forces, a viewpoint that was evident in his poem-novel *Vergini delle rocce* (1895), his involvement in World War I and his war diary *Notturno* (1921) (Santi, 2008; Nemegeer and Santi, 2021).

Although he appreciated some of d’Annunzio’s stylistic efforts, Schuré associated D’Annunzio’s work with a decadent and hedonistic ethos, akin to the Alexandria of antiquity. D’Annunzio’s true inspiration, Schuré argued, were pessimistic poets and unbridled hedonists (Schuré, 1904: 54). He added that he firmly believed in the Latin Renaissance, but not one that revolved around sadism and Nietzscheanism, such as d’Annunzio’s. Schuré envisioned the true Latin Renaissance as an intellectual transformation that would yield benefits for both the Latin nations and humanity as a whole. It was a movement poised to cultivate free spirits, who would bring about change in modern Europe, particularly in the face of its political disorder. This transformation had to be guided by three core principles: “*Sympathy, Synthesis, Humanity”* (54). In this sense, Italian intellectuals did not have to follow the twentieth-century belligerent nationalism, propagated by the likes of d’Annunzio; Instead, Schuré contended that they should re-embrace the liberal ideals of the Italian Risorgimento and its heroes, including Massimo d'Azeglio, Giuseppe Mazzini, and Giosuè Carducci. Consequently, Schuré's perspective on the Latin Renaissance not only offered criticism of the German empire but also of Latin intellectuals like d'Annunzio, who endorsed a similar aggressive nationalism.

Conclusions

My discussion of Franco-Italian exchanges and the elaboration of Latin Renaissance in *Cronache della civiltà elleno-latina* reveals the emergence of a transnational community of intellectuals, who shared the ambition to renew modernity through the rediscovery of the values of the Greco-Latin tradition. The *Cronache* envisioned a macro-nationalist Latin Renaissance, grounded in the idea of Italy and France jointly pursuing a peaceful mission for the betterment of humanity. This vision was embedded in the broader intellectual response to the aftermath of the Crispi era in Italy, the peripheral position of Latin Europe in modernity, and the problematic fixation on violence and warfare that characterized the age of imperialism. However, the Latin responses themselves represented a multifaceted phenomenon, ranging from cosmopolitan and antimilitarist perspectives to nationalist and militarist positions. For instance, the periodical *La*

Renaissance Latine (1902-1905) pursued an analogous defense of Latin culture in France. However, it opened with a manifesto by Gabriele Hanotaux, who, as Minister of Foreign Affairs had advocated for the colonial expansion of France. In his article, Hanotaux argued that, amidst the expansionism of Anglo-Saxon, Slavic, and Germanic powers, Latin nations had also found their means for expansion. Hanotaux pointed to recent Latin successes in colonizing Africa as proof of their vitality and adaptability to different environments (Hanotaux, 1902: 1-7). While Hanotaux's article shared with the *Cronache* the defense of Latin culture, his expansionist claims and focus on imperialist civilizing missions did not align with De Gubernatis' own vision.

The internal division of these discourses on Latin Renaissance and the formation of a somewhat fractured transnational community of Latinity certainly offer promising avenues for future research. For now, in these conclusions, it is worth noting that the concept of a civilizing mission also entered the *Cronache,* as the peaceful project it proposed relied on a similar problematic rhetoric of Latinity as the civilized bestower of civilization upon less civilized barbarians. Indeed, the notion of Latin civilization itself became often synonymous with human civilization, carrying an ethnocentrism that revealed the tensions inherent to the periodical's peaceful idealism. The periodical saw imperialism and its rhetoric of civilizing missions through military conquest as barbaric phenomena, yet, paradoxically, its own project assumed the characteristics of a new idealist cultural imperialism. This imperialism derived from political pragmatism, driven by Italy's inability to contend in the global military struggle, and it relied on notions used in imperialist discourse itself. For instance, this tension was present in De Gubernatis' description of Goethe, as his praise for Goethe's universalism clashed with his affirmation that these ideas stemmed from the author's transformation in "a new and better man" in the wake of his discovery of civilization in Rome, attesting to Latinity's civilizing power (De Gubernatis, 1903c: 130).

Hence, despite the efforts to disseminate a form of pacifist macro-nationalism in the age of empire, the *Cronache* did not go entirely beyond the civilization-barbarism dichotomy that was common in imperialist discourse. Furthermore, De Gubernatis' underlying conservatism and belief in elitist discourse placed the prospects of a better future in the civilizing power of the circulation of ideas. On the one hand, this idealistic vision of history ultimately fell short of reaching a broader audience. This was an important shortcoming in the historical moment of the nationalization of the masses, i.e., when the new classes began to play a more significant role in international politics. This penetration beyond an intellectual elite was also limited because De Gubernatis' macro-nationalism used the idea of the Latin community as a family.

Yet, this same rhetoric had already been more effectively used by violent twentieth-century nationalism, which offered citizens a notion much easier to relate to than the abstract concept of Latinity: the nation. On the other hand, terms such as solidarity, collaboration and peace were met with suspicion by European intellectuals, as these notions were also integral to left-wing ideologies such as communism and socialism. These ideologies were accused of promoting cultural homogenization and were viewed as threats to the privileged position of the intellectual elite. Ultimately, all these factors contributed to the downfall of the Società Internazionale Elleno-Latina and the *Cronache*. Indeed, in April 1907, De Gubernatis announced that due to financial constraints, the *Cronache* would be replaced by an annual *Annuario letterario e artistico del mondo latino*, as the periodical had never reached the 1000 subscribers required for financial stability. However, this new initiative also ceased publication in 1908 after just one edition.

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