Florence

Capital of the Kingdom of Italy, 1865-71

Edited by Monika Poettinger & Piero Roggi

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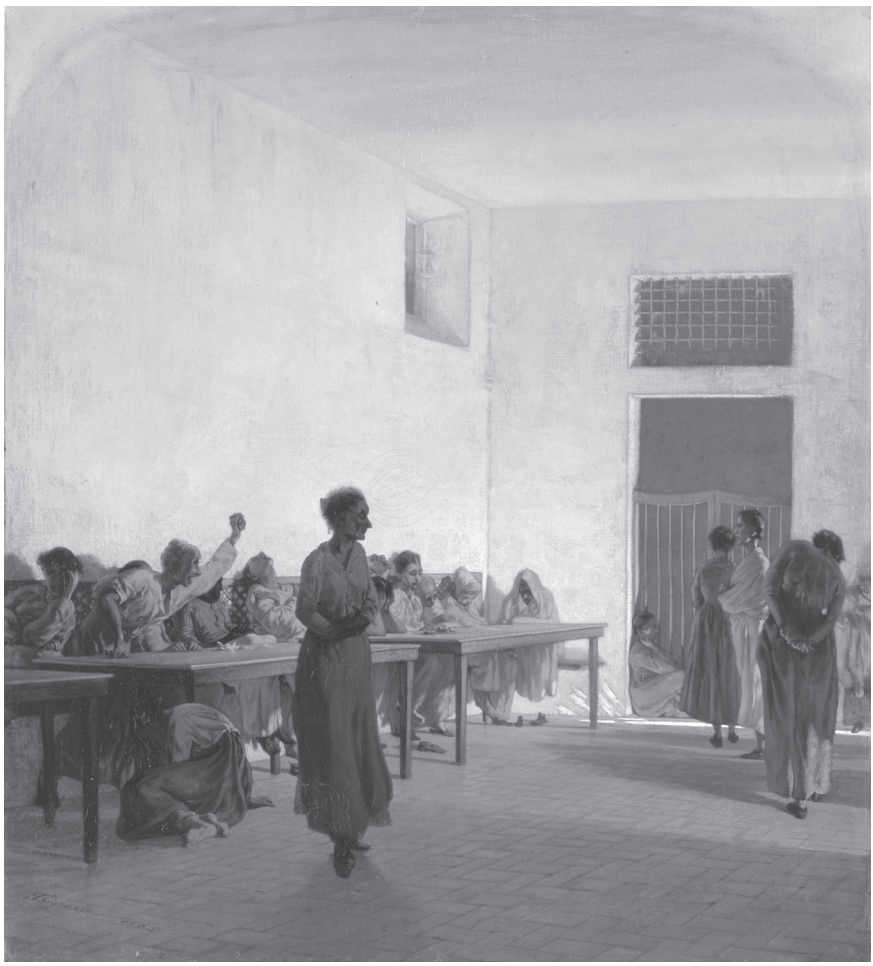

Frontispiece 'La sala delle agitate al San Bonifazio' by Telemaco Signorini (1865). Galleria d'arte moderna di Ca' Pesaro, Venezia

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Introduction: Florence, Capital of the Kingdom of Italy

Monika Poettinger

A capital for Italy

Just like many Italians, most foreigners visiting Florence ignore the fact that for six years, from 1865 to 1871, the Tuscan city was the political and administrative centre of the Kingdom of Italy. Historiography, even if spurred by the recent 150th anniversary of the event, has mainly produced journalistical and educational material or innovative studies limited to political science.[1] This volume is an attempt to revive the historical analysis of this period by using an interdisciplinary approach. To this end, researchers from various fields – economic and political history, history of literature, of science and of economic thought, philosophy and history of culture and ideas – analysed academic literature and archival sources of the years when Florence was the capital of Italy. The resulting essays include many new findings and innovative historiographic insights. The volume also follows the recent trend in historical analysis of reconstructing through images and maps the physical space in which events occurred. In the present case, this has been done by researching in detail all available material on the location of politically relevant loci, such as ministries, bureaucratic offices and the like, and of spaces dedicated to the pursuit of leisure, be they theatres, hotels, cafés or brothels. A detailed map can be found in the middle of the volume, and the reader can use this to stroll through Florence, following aristocratic promenades or more popular paths: in the steps of King Vittorio Emanuele, pursuing his long-standing lover Rosa Vercellana, retracing the routes of Dostoevskij or Bakunin, or joining servants, day-workers, weavers and shopkeepers in their everyday life. All places quoted in the volume that are not otherwise described in detail are listed at the end of this introduction with their location on the aforementioned map.

The volume offers to readers a detailed image of Florence in the years from 1865 to 1871 under three main headings. The section on politics and culture groups together all contributions linked to the political events and cultural ambiente of the time. Topics include the parliamentary activity, relevant characters as Bettino Ricasoli, the reception of Darwinism, the evolution of literary interests from the language question to realism, the presence of colonies of artists and foreigners, and many more. The central section is dedicated to popular life in the streets of Florence and to the detailed reconstruction of the places of power and leisure. Lastly, the section on economy and society analyses in depth the productive structure of the local economy and the turmoil of speculation

caused by the urban reconstruction plans implemented in the short time span when Florence was the capital of Italy. Specific contributions are dedicated to the banking sector, entrepreneuriality, homeworking productions and the availability of food. Despite being assigned to one of the main sections of the volume, all chapters maintain the interdisciplinary approach, offering links to other essays and a wide variety of related topics. They all refer also to precise locations around the city, allowing one to follow the narrative on the map and inviting one to look around for more information on places and goings-on.

In the following, a summary is offered of the main topics relating to the thematic sections, with the purpose of linking all contributions together and offering some historiographic interpretative tools. The great economic losses incurred by Florence in becoming a short-term capital were the price paid for the role that the city had in the institutional and cultural construction of the young nation-state, and at the same time the trigger of the change in mentality of Florentine investors and entrepreneurs after the disastrous speculations connected to the city's renewal plan.

Politics and culture

When the young Italian nation was born in 1861, the French Emperor accorded his substantial help and essential assent only upon the promise to move the capital away from Turin. At the time, Rome was still part of the Papal States and under French protection. The complex and secret diplomatic efforts concluding with the September Agreement (1864),[2] were led by French and Italian diplomats with opposing aims. Napoleon III sought Italian assurance that Rome and the Pope would be left untouched by the unification process.[3] On the contrary, Italians wanted French troops to leave the Papal States, paving the way for a future annexation. A compromise was struck when the Italian government agreed to elect an alternative capital city to Rome, while the French would – in due time – hand over the protection of the Pope to Italian troops. Napoleon III believed that the conquest of Rome would at least be delayed by the September Agreement, while Italians welcomed the treaty as opening the future possibility of uniting Rome with the Kingdom of Italy. European diplomatic circles reacted with doubts and mixed feelings. The temporal power of the Pope had evidently reached its end and the new capital of Italy would only be transitory.[4]

In the meantime, the Italian parliament had to choose between Florence and Naples to succede Turin. Not without struggle and political fractures, senators and members of the chamber of deputies favoured the former option.[5] Florence was easy to protect against foreign attacks, and its undisputed and widely recognized cultural heritage could be used to foster the national spirit.

There were ideological reasons, indeed, behind the choice of the new capital. In its peculiarity, the Italian unification process had created much resentment among local populations. Many Italian citizens considered the Piedmont rulers to be foreign oppressors as Austrians and Spaniards had been. Moving the capital from Turin to Florence could, in this sense, reconcile local communities with the new national government. Philosopher and member of Parliament Giuseppe Ferrari[6] called the

transfer 'a revolution on par with the battles of 1859 and the liberation of the South'.[7] Florence represented a 'symbol', a 'programme' and a 'material situation' that would oblige the present Italian administration to change from an apparatus of Piedmont to a true Italian government. 'In the absence of rulers', concluded Ferrari, 'a city was chosen, in the void of ideas a territory was indicated and a capital proclaimed only to assess that a system had been abated and a new one must follow in its wake'.[8]

Notwithstanding the widespread belief that Florence would be a temporary capital, its choice had a precise rationale: to Italianize the national government and extend the popular support for the Italian state. This cultural and ideological programme would be pursued with unrelenting enthusiasm by many intellectuals and politicians. Italy needed Italians who would share a common language and a national culture,[9] and Florence, more so than any other Italian city, could be their source of inspiration. In this sense, the years when Florence acted as capital of the Kingdom of Italy would be marked by the celebrations for the sixth centenary of Dante's birth on 14 May 1865 and the solemn inhumation of Ugo Foscolo's remains in Santa Croce on 4 June 1871. Both events became earnest liturgies of a state religion, the diffusion of which most educational and propagandistic efforts of the Italian political and intellectual elite were devoted to.

Dante was the acknowledged father of the Italian language and the main pillar of the new national identity of Italy. In the 1850s, the jurist Pasquale Stanislao Mancini had defined the commonality of language as the most important bond of nationality, the source of all other usages and institutions.[10] In 1869, Gino Capponi would rephrase this as: 'If the style is the man, the language is the nation.'[11] The success of Italy's unification thus had to be measured on the spread of a common tongue, an expression of shared moral values.

The *Gonfaloniere* (mayor) of Florence,[12] Luigi Guglielmo de Cambray-Digny,[13] transformed the inauguration of the statue of Dante in Piazza Santa Croce, on the occasion of the sixth centenary of the poet's birth in 1865, into an affair of national relevance. All major Italian cities were represented with their banners and flags, including municipalities that were still under foreign rule. Bearing their symbols and pennants, many literary and scientific academies, universities, colleges, cultural institutions and representatives of many associations of mutual workers, artisans and professionals participated in the procession from Piazza Santo Spirito to Piazza Santa Croce. Accompanied by the loud bells of the Palazzo Vecchio and many bands of musicians, the parade made its way first to the front of the Palazzo Feroni, the seat of the municipality, where members of the city's government took the lead. The parade then proceeded to Piazza del Duomo before heading to Piazza Santa Croce.

The city was adorned throughout with the national flag, the *Tricolore*. Festooned with flowers and wreaths, memorial plates were affixed to all buildings where famous citizens had been born, had lived or worked. Statues, columns and trophies were pinpointed along the parade's route to remember the most important men of arms and of letters, scientists and artists of the nation. The portico of the Uffizi, displaying a series of statues of meritorious Tuscans, was particularly embellished with elegant compositions. The King himself lifted the veil on the imposing statue of Dante, positioned in the middle of the Piazza Santa Croce, as a conclusion to the ceremony.[14]

Many other events followed: public lectures, exhibitions, special museum openings. On the evening of 14 May, mutual societies distributed subsidies in the Piazza Santa Croce, while on the following day in the Cascine park, a series of horse races took place. As Gino Capponi feared, moral suasion – it seemed – still went through *panem et circenses* more so than a common language. Much still had to be done. In 1869, Gino Capponi would write: 'The destiny of the Italian language will depend on what Italians will come to be.'[15]

The Italian religion of secularity had its God in Dante and many other beatified figures.[16] The church of Santa Croce was celebrated by Ugo Foscolo as the temple of memory for all these modern immortals. Foscolo himself, a materialist in philosophy, had written the perfect hymn for the new religion, the *Sepolcri*.[17] Florence, he chanted, was blessed above all other cities for its nature and its art, but even more for having heard the poem of Dante recited first, and for preserving the memory of the great spirits of the Italian nation.[18] These sacred memories would incite younger generations to great acts of value, courage and intellect. Memory of the past could thus be sublimated in virtue for the present.

Ugo Foscolo had died in England as an exile in 1827. However, in 1871, on the request of the mayor of Florence and on the order of the Italian government, his

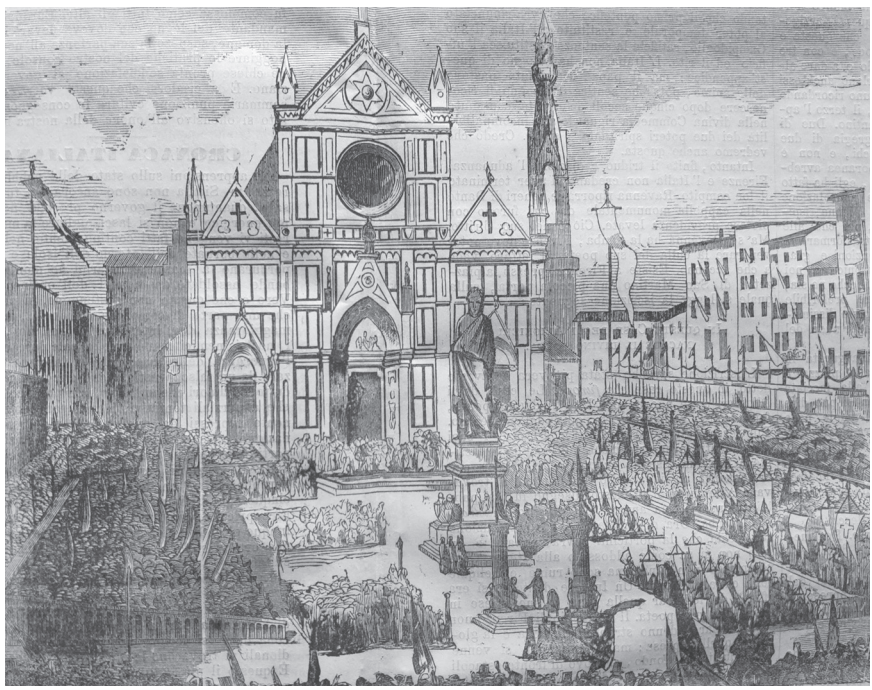


Figure 0.1 Piazza Santa Croce during the solemn festivities for the sixth centenary of Dante's birth.

Source: 'Piazza Santa Croce a Firenze', *Il Giornale Illustrato*, 2, no. 22, 3–9 June 1865. Private Collection.

remains were transferred to the church of Santa Croce. The inhumation ceremony would become the last secular 'mass' held in Florence as the capital of Italy.[19] On this occasion, the parade started from the central station and concluded in Piazza Santa Croce. The attendees were the same as those for Dante's ceremony: people of municipalities from all over Italy and cultural and social associations of all kinds were there to represent, under their colourful banners, the moral virtues of the Italian society. 'The crowd cramming into the streets was enormous,'[20] recalled Pellegrino Artusi, literary critic and gastronome. The cart with the urn, covered in sky-blue velvet, was pulled by six horses in black trappings. The urn itself, decorated with gold ornaments, was surmounted by a laurel crown and the eight golden cords surrounding it were held by ministers, dignitaries and foreign diplomats. In Piazza Santa Croce, the mayor Ubaldino Peruzzi welcomed the remains of Ugo Foscolo with a sober discourse.

The celebration of the Italian nation's fathers and forefathers, from Dante to the present, was not limited to their tombs. The cultural sanctification of the nation went well beyond a few statues, busts and bas-reliefs, and was more profound than public celebrations. Publishers flooded the book market with collections of Italian writers, poets and scientists, historicizing Italy's past in light of the *Risorgimento*. Florence was at the forefront of this effort, thanks to its exuberant publishing industries. The question of language,[21] raised by Alessandro Manzoni and brought to governmental level through the institution of a parliamentary commission, stimulated manifold debates on journals and the publication of a wide variety of dictionaries and vocabularies. Making Italy a nation 'united in arms, language and faith, united in memories, blood and heart',[22] as per Manzoni's wish, would not mean doing away with all local traditions and dialects, however. On the contrary, studies on vernaculars and the liveliness of common languages were actively practised by many Italian literates and linguists. *Verismo*, a literary genre born out the empiricist desire to represent the life of common people with complete detachment, also had its early conception in Florence, where Giovanni Verga wrote his *Storia di una capinera* in 1869.[23]

Empiricism, secularism and materialism were, as seen, common undercurrents of the cultural life of the new capital of Italy. They were undoubtedly a heritage of enlightenment, but they were also fostered and nurtured by the rift that the process of unification had created between the Catholic Church and the national government. The Italian state not only denied any temporal power to the Pope, but also, after civil marriage was introduced by law in 1865, it enacted a schooling system that wiped out the Church's monopoly on education and prohibited the teaching of religion in schools.[24]

Freemasonry, particularly powerful and diffused in Florence,[25] played no small role in supporting the spread of enlightened philosophy.[26] The sudden burst of freedom, from both foreign oppression and metaphysical Church dictates, flourished in multifarious scientific advancements[27] as in anarchical activities. Darwinism spread in Florence, where the brothers Hugo and Moritz Schiff could simultaneously experiment at leisure in chemistry and physiology while cultivating their socialist ideals. Michail Bakunin visited Florence in 1865, founding there the journal *Il Proletario*, overseen by Niccolò Lo Savio.[28]

Freedom of expression also meant a liberal attitude towards non-Catholic faiths. Confessional communities flourished and grew, creating a demand for new churches

and temples. The new synagogue was financed in 1868, at the testamentary bequest of David Levi. The first step was the purchase of a stretch of land in the middle of the new city sector, La Mattonaia, near Piazza d'Azeglio. The Tempio Maggiore Israelitico was then built between 1874 and 1882. Two other churches, one Russian orthodox and the other Anglican, were built at the end of the century in districts created by Florence's urban renovation. Their extraordinary appearance bears testimony to the cosmopolitanism of the local ruling class and of the presence of numerous foreign communities.

Florence, in fact, attracted an increasing number of tourists, while artists from all over Europe chose it as their elected residence to enjoy the unique historical heritage and the artistic masterpieces. Becoming capital of Italy, then, brought to Florence not only thousands of new citizens, but also diplomats from all over the world. Just as the antique walls designed in the sixteenth century were torn down, many a cultural provincialism fell under the blows of the culture shock from the sudden opening of the *Toscanina* to Italy and to the larger world.

Florence was so celebrated as the cultural capital of Italy: an example for the entire nation. Yet was this myth or reality?

Even if a parliamentary act and a few million lire were sufficient to move the capital city from Turin to Florence, creating a new national culture on which to base the social order and political consensus (as per the intentions of the governing liberals) would prove much more difficult. The first election held in Florence as capital of Italy proved humiliating for the Tuscan moderates, led by Bettino Ricasoli, Ubaldino Peruzzi and Luigi Cambray-Digny.[29] People in Florence blamed on their ruling elite all the hardship connected with the transfer of the capital. Rents and prices had skyrocketed, while the offerings of housing and primary goods could not keep pace. The poorest were driven out of the city, to nearby villages or into slums of prefabricated steel and wooden houses. There were also other reasons for general discontent. Pedlars and street sellers were expelled from the centre while the covered markets were under construction and thus still unavailable. Public slaughterhouses, inaugurated in 1870, and the cattle market were also moved to a peripheral area between the Mugnone river and the railway line.[30] All the vitality of everyday life vanished from the narrow streets of the city centre, constrained by the newly built broad boulevards as much as by the bourgeois decorum and dignity. The climax of this cleansing action was the abatement of the old ghetto and the old market, a maze of medieval passageways near the cathedral, where life had not changed much since centuries past. Under the motto of sanitation, the last remnants of vibrant lower-class life were wiped out in the 1880s. Another 6,000 people were then ejected from the centre, while crowded lodgings and workshops were substituted by neoclassical buildings, chic cafés and a spacious square.

Not all changes were welcomed by the local population. The expansion of the city was the result not of a widespread enrichment but of political planning. Wealthy aristocrats and the enriched bourgeoisie increased rents and profits in the years under study, while the rest of the population continued to live at subsistence levels or were dependent upon charity.[31] The capital had just been transferred when many a scandal unveiled how politics mingled with business, creating monopoly positions and inciting

speculations, insider trading and widespread corruption. Journalist Carlo Lorenzini described well the unchallenged bipolarity of Florentine society, writing: 'The population has been divided since ancient times into just two classes: Florentines driving carriages and Florentines travelling on foot. Those in the carriages were called "gentlemen" and those on foot "pedestrians". "Pedestrian" is an inelegant name but full of significance: it immediately calls to mind the vivid image of those poor web-footed men, condemned to walk all their life.'[32] In fact, at the end of the century, 72,000 of the 180,000 inhabitants of Florence were still considered poor.[33]

Clearly educational efforts, a common language or propagandistic ceremonies could hardly convince the destitute members of society to embrace enlightened ideals or bourgeois virtues.[34]

Many patriots, too, lost their faith in the ideals of *Risorgimento* by witnessing the corrupt workings of Parliament and the continuous betrayal of all they had fought for. Florentine satirical journals were full of this disillusionment, while *Verismo* and the first official enquiries denounced the living conditions of Italy's impoverished people. Liberals were losing their battle for public support. The spectre of socialism thus had to be kept at bay with more practical policies than cultural ideology. Italian citizens, on the other hand, were ready to exchange their newly acquired freedom for a minimum of subsistence. Baron Guglielmo de Toth, writing in *Fanfulla*, described the processions of famished people and muddlers continuously crowding the streets in front of town halls, asking not for *panem et circenses* but for bread and work. These processions represented a complete consensus in favour of a state that obliterated any private initiative to become an entrepreneur, banker or employer. De Toth sarcastically defined the new form of state idolatry: *statolatria*.[35]

In effect, during the years in which the Parliament held its sessions in the illustrious Salone de' Cinquecento in the Palazzo Vecchio and the Senate convened in the theatre of the Uffizi, many laws were discussed and approved that construed a centralized institutional apparatus for the new Italian state.[36] Federalism, as advocated by many patriots who had participated in the independence wars, was discarded,[37] while economic liberalism was embraced only temporarily. Hand in hand with the loss of power of Tuscan moderates, the new state increasingly came to control economic activities and the legal circulation of money. The administrative apparatus grew incessantly in order to grant occupation to former soldiers and insurgents. A growing bureaucracy acquired power through regulations and norms, while the excessive costs of wars and central administration multiplied taxes and levies.[38]

The new *statolatria* was surely effective. The debacle of 1865 would not be repeated in further elections. Freedom nonetheless drowned in the sea of regulations, laws, taxes and compulsory impositions. The lives of citizens were controlled, registered and managed from birth to death. Everything had its cost and its bureaucratic office. Carlo Lorenzini could not fail to comment ironically:

> Did you wish for Italy?
> Did you wish for freedom?
> Did you wish for a constitutional government?
> If you wished for them, pay for them![39]

Florence in particular paid a high cost for its brief experience as capital of Italy. After the transfer of the government to Rome in 1871, the situation distinctly worsened. Poor relief doubled in a matter of years, and crime substantially increased even as the population diminished (Table 0.1). Even suicide experienced a boom.

Parliament refused to cover the costs incurred by the municipality for transforming the city so as to be able to host governmental seats and all their personnel.[40] Adriano Mari quantified the lacking sum as being more than 96 million lire – an enormous amount, with the interest for this totalling 4,815,000 lire a year.[41] The 'question of Florence', along with the problem of the nationalization of railways, soon inflamed political debates. Many Tuscan parliamentary representatives revolted against their own right-wing government, finally bringing it down in 1876. Ubaldino Peruzzi, shocked by treatment inflicted upon his beloved city, had been the mastermind behind the fall of the *Destra Storica*. The event was remarkable in that, for the first time, the Parliament itself (and not the King) refuted its vote of confidence for the government. From then on, Italy was governed by left-wing alliances, while Tuscan liberals were in the opposition.

On 17 March 1878, Florence had to declare bankruptcy. The local elite, paying for the losses of the municipality with their own patrimony, was devastated by the event. The suspension of payments involved all creditors: the Cassa di Risparmio for more than 8 million lire, the Banca Nazionale Toscana for more than 6 million, private citizens for more than 60 million. A financial tsunami of unseen proportions left Florence's economy substantially weakened. At the same time, the central state reached its much-desired balance by leaving municipalities with more expenses than revenues. Other cities, like Naples and Rome, would suffer the same fate as Florence.

There were no easy exit strategies for the extremely difficult economic situation of Florence. In 1872, the literary critic Carlo Azzi called upon the pride of Florentines, asking them to abandon all political plans and to devise a more practical arrangement. Florence should 'become the centre of the agricultural, industrial and artistic activity of all surrounding cities, extending the relations with the outside'.[42] Other onlookers, though, doubted the capability of Florence to become an industrial and manufacturing centre. Tourism, too, seemed incapable of generating revenues adequate to counter the losses incurred after the capital city was transferred to Rome.[43]

Surely there was always one available solution: public works. Carlo Azzi himself suggested completing the plan of the architect Poggi and the renovation of the city centre as if nothing had happened. His advice was followed. After the effects of the bankruptcy dwindled, the centre of the city, as mentioned, was sanitized through extensive demolitions. The operation was accompanied, as usual, by speculation and fraud. Even the aesthetic effect was dubious. The *Macchiaioli* painters affectionately recorded in their works the likeness of the ghetto and Mercato Vecchio[44] before their demolition. They then protested against the repeated architectural nightmares by leaving the city for the more authentic countryside.

The new urban aspect of Florence, though, bears testimony to this day that a profound change had come to completion in the city. A new national political order had substituted the old Grand-ducal one. The Italian governing elite, for all its faults and merits, was comprised of Tuscans for the first time in centuries. The unhappy

voyage of the capital city from Turin to Florence and then Rome helped to de-provincialize and to nationalize the local elites, on the way to becoming Italian in language and culture. A century-long pedagogical effort had matured into a ruling class capable of gaining national independence, reforming the national constitution and creating a complex cultural machine. The new liberal ideology and bourgeois moral values spread further through a new compulsory secular schooling system, while scientific empiricism took a respite from ecclesiastic censure, inciting innovation in chemistry, physics and mechanics and a new way of applying accurate inquiries to analyse the true state of industry, agriculture, working conditions and poor relief.

Italians, perhaps, would never match the ideals of intellectuals and politicians of the *Risorgimento*, but Florence would forever represent, in its new neoclassical appearance, the mythos of a nation built from culture, language and moral values more than of race and military force.

Economy and society

The turmoil of politics pushed abrupt changes onto Florence. In just one decade, the city lost its status as capital of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, became the administrative centre of a mere province and was then elected capital of the Italian Kingdom for just six years. Institutions changed at an alarming speed. Architecture was the most visible expression of the new political order. The hastily devised plan of the architect Giuseppe Poggi followed the suggestions in the designs of Georges Eugène Haussmann for Paris.[45] In the attempt to transform Florence into a little Paris located on the river Arno, 300-year-old walls were torn down and many new districts planned and built. Streets

Table 0.1 Sums donated to charity (food, clothes, linen, beds, money and dowries) by the Regio Uffizio della Congregazione di Carità di S. Giovanni Battista to Florence's poor together with crimes reported to the district attorney's office in Florence.

Year	Donated sums (Lire)	Reported Crimes
1865	21,060.87	–
1866	31,576.00	–
1867	72,574.62	3358
1868	31,731.33	–
1869	28,038.85	2134
1870	25,885.84	3544
1871	33,282.72	–
1872	46,562.15	–
1873	43,239.86	4120
1874	50,328.54	–
1875	72,240.39	4080
1876	94,066.68	4370
1877	116,968.52	4587

Source: A. Mari, *La questione di Firenze*, 135 and 131. Data on reported crimes covered only particular years between 1865 and 1877.

were enlarged and medieval houses that crowded around churches were demolished to create spacious squares, while luxurious boulevards came to surround the centre, stretching up to the beautiful hills south of Florence.[46] Innovations such as street illumination, water management and sewers were finally introduced – already quite usual abroad.

While these novelties took just a few years or mere decades to accomplish, social and economic changes proceeded at a slower pace. An entire century would be needed to complete the industrialization and modernization of Tuscany. Certainly, accommodating an enormous number of new citizens brought about a general exaltation of the socio-economic order of the newly elected capital city and a rampaging real-estate speculation. However, aside from the catastrophic financial consequences of political misjudgement and speculative excesses, the years when Florence was capital of Italy deserve to be studied in depth also in terms of other less obvious but equally important changes that interacted with long-term dynamics, both as an accelerator and a stress factor, highlighting the resources and limitations of the local social and economic architecture.

In 1861, only a few months after unification, Florence hosted the first national exhibition of the Italian Kingdom.[47] The exhibition, programmed by the Lorenese government of Tuscany as a regional display of economic advancement, was transformed by Quintino Sella, counsellor of prime minister Cavour, into an occasion to show Italians and foreigners alike the significance of the new national state.[48] This was the rationale behind the ministerial order to include in the exhibition works of art along with industrial and agricultural products. Modern steam engines were not the only items displayed in the rear of the railway station for the Livorno line, transfigured by hastily erected pavilions, fountains and gardens. A great part of the exhibition space was dedicated to statues, paintings and handicraft works.[49]

Historiography justly remarks the oddity of the Florentine exhibition.[50] Scattered statues, representing the King and figures from the past such as Francesco Burlamacchi, Vittorio Fossombroni and Sallustio Bandini, already hinted at the cultural programme pursued by the Italian government. The journalist Pietro Coccoluto Ferrigni – known as 'Yorick son of Yorick' – in his report on the exposition lampooned this recent 'urge to erect monuments to all great dead men and busts and statues even to living ones, who had no greatness at all'.[51] In effect, the whole event was construed as a mythical representation of a united Italy. The glass covering of the main building, for example, was subdivided into 198 frames, each containing the insignia of an Italian city. All Italian regions were among the exhibitors, even those still in foreign hands and under the control of the Pope. 'The political meaning of the exposition – candidly stated the organization – is a second plebiscite with which Italy confirmed its unity.'[52]

Notwithstanding the effective propaganda and organizational success granted by the work of more than a thousand volunteers and the direction of the marquis Cosimo Ridolfi (senator of the kingdom and president of the prestigious Accademia dei Georgofili), only 360,000 visitors attended the Florentine exhibition, in contrast to the 6 million who visited the London universal exhibition of 1851; this demonstrated how great the gulf was between local industry/agriculture and the developed forms in Europe.[53] Unique achievements such as the presentation of the internal combustion

engine of Eugenio Barsanti and Felice Matteucci,[54] 'destined to change the face of the universe, substituting its unknown energy to that of steam',[55] and of the famous pantelegraph of the Senese physicist Giovanni Caselli,[56] could not conceal the reality of general backwardness. This was particularly true for Tuscany. While other regions could at least present adequate products in the textile industry, and in some cases in the mechanical sector, Tuscany stood out for straw hats and for highly specialized handiworks; these required mastery of various skills, but were ill-suited to be mechanized or produced in series.

This humbling outcome was not a consequence of lack of resources or averse comparative advantages, but the result of an informed political choice. Tuscany's long-lasting aversion to a chaotic industrial development had been born in the eighteenth century, when the Lorenese government favoured the theories of Sallustio Bandini over the mercantilism of the Ginori family. Bandini, whose statue had been displayed at the Florentine exhibition in accordance with the personal wishes of Cosimo Ridolfi, had championed for agricultural development based on free trade and sharecropping. Manufacture had no place in the resulting idyllic and ordered society. This ideal prevailed among Tuscany's elite up to Italy's unification and in some cases even longer.[57]

'Florence cannot aspire to become again an industrial city,'[58] Mayor Ubaldino Peruzzi asserted forcefully in 1870, discussing the future of the city in an address to the municipal assembly after the decision of Parliament to move the capital to Rome. The past of diffused manufacturing growth, lost in the decadence of the seventeenth century, was not to be replayed. For its development, Florence should have counted more on its cultural heritage and its artistic upbringing than on modern manufacturing – so the seasoned politician said. Peruzzi had travelled all over Europe on diplomatic missions and to visit all important exhibitions, from London to Paris. With the eyes of an engineer, he could appreciate the fascination of technological advancement. His faith in a liberalist and agrarian way of growth did not follow from a prejudice against mechanization. He believed, though, that hastened development forced through protectionist measures would have jeopardized the social equilibrium of Tuscany, exposing the region to the spread of socialism. Industries, rather, should slowly spring from a natural development nurtured by free trade and respectful of existing equilibria.

Beliefs like those of Peruzzi were shared by most of Tuscany's moderates and expressed by the Accademia dei Georgofili and, from 1874, also within the liberalist association Società Adamo Smith. The path chosen by its ruling class constrained Tuscany's economy to an alarmingly low productivity and its peasantry to time-consuming homework to earn a subsistence not granted by farming alone. The virtuous sharecropping advertised by Tuscans as the remedy to all social maladies was less diffused than in the idealized reckonings of moderates. The countryside was home to a huge number of day-workers living in an unending nightmare of hunger. Carlo Lorenzini, among others, perfectly represented this constant state of deprivation that resolved in veritable feasts when fortuitous work bore its fruit of lustrous coins. He described in detail all possible strategies to lessen the unnerving stimulus to eat: Geppetto had painted a steaming cooking pot on the wall of his house, expecting to smell the soothing odour of a much-desired meal;[59] Pinocchio, rather, yawned and

yawned and spat before giving in to hunger, going out in search of a handout on the streets of his village.[60] The street boys in the capital city Florence did the same. They spat, appeasing their hunger by merely gazing into the windows of a modern restaurant, parading delicacies such as roasted beef, chicken, capon and even fruit.[61] On the rare occasion when the possibility to eat one's fill arose, starved adults and children alike would feast without restraint, gorging on gigantic meals.[62]

In such a Tuscany, technological advancements were rare and considered more a curiosity than a useful tool for meliorating existing production. In fact, the two revolutionary innovations presented at the national exhibition were never exploited industrially in Tuscany or even Italy. The pantelegraph was installed in France and in Russia, but never in Italy. The internal combustion engine also found its first commercial success in France, then later in Germany. Visitors to the Florentine exhibition appreciated the art entailed in many hand-crafted products more so than technological wonders. Cameos, gems and pieces of furniture were highly praised, and an inlaid wooden table representing the father of the nation, Dante, was particularly successful. The public equally admired the many rooms dedicated to sculpture and painting. The king himself presented a sampling of his most beloved horses at the exhibition. What attention was left for Italian and Tuscan cloths in cotton, silk and linen or straw products was used to fuel the patriotic intent of substituting the import of French or English goods with such wares of lesser quality. The necessity to change the present inefficient production methods with mechanized manufacturing activated by steam-power was not thought worthy of discussion. Producing and consuming inefficiently meant maintaining a social order that was reputed as being of greater value – at least by the ruling class – than economic advancement.

Could the few years as capital of Italy change this century-long attitude towards industrialization? Surely not.

Nonetheless, some cracks were widening in the old development model.

After centuries of demographic stability, the arrival of the capital meant an increase of 56,000 people on a local population of 143,000.[63] The subsequent restoration plans did fuel debates on urban spaces distribution on the base of civil and economic functions. By forcefully driving every vestige of production outside the city, enclaves were created – some planned, yet others arising by chance – that amassed both manufacturing facilities and workers' homes. The Pignone foundry, with the gas production nearby, had already generated a manufacturing district outside Porta San Frediano. Another manufacturing district grew along the Mugnone river.[64] The first industrial premises were those of the Officine Galileo, manufacturer of optical and precision instruments, and of the foundry Le Cure. Also on the Mugnone, more to the south in Via del Romito, the laboratory of the English apothecary Roberts was opened, an initiation destined for a flourishing existence under the management of Alfred Houlston Morgan and the later Italian associate Lorenzo Manetti. In the same street, a glass manufacturer would begin its works. Other main manufacturers, flourishing thanks to substantial state subsidies, were the Regia Manifattura Tabacchi scattered between the convent of Sant'Orsola and the former church of San Pancrazio, and the Ferrovie Meridionali, whose great premises for the reparation of trains were located in Porta al Prato.

Slowly, but inexorably, Florence's regenerated centre, purged during the years as capital of Italy of most of its productive activities, was besieged by a multitude of workshops, laboratories, mills and manufactories, growing in number, extension and importance from one year to the next. In 1870, the chagrined Peruzzi had already noticed that, although Florence had no industrial vocation, 'here industries flourished and flourish and would flourish even more if arts and design would become the object of study not only of artists but also of artisans'.[65]

Not all onlookers were as resigned as Peruzzi, nor so averse to the protection of infant industries as Tuscan liberals. The call for the protecting intervention of the state was first expressed by the entrepreneurs themselves. Surely some of Florence's businesspersons had embraced the opening of the internal market with enthusiasm and even some measure of success. The extraordinary increase of state orders connected to the transformation of Florence into a modern capital helped many local manufactories. The relevant number of newly constructed residences in the new districts, then, needed to be furnished and decorated: a boost for artisans and workshops.

Some economic sectors however, particularly metallurgy and mechanics, suffered the effects of the free-trade policies pursued by the right-wing governments after unity. Foreign entrepreneurs confronted the problem with technological innovation, but in many cases the scarcity of resources, particularly fossil fuel, and of technological competencies was insurmountable. Only state protection could help – so the opinion of some entrepreneurs was reported in the industrial enquiry completed in 1874.[66] This was the case of Louis Langer, director of the ironworks located in the Valdarno, property of the Società per l'industria del ferro.[67] Among his employees was Vilfredo Pareto, a passionate liberal, with whom Langer would be in constant disagreement over the management of the manufactory and regarding political questions. The continuous debate with Pareto sharpened Langer's knowledge of economics, so that in his interview for the industrial enquiry, he even quoted Jean Baptiste Say and Adam Smith on the necessity of a certain measure of protection to diminish Italy's public debt and to protect new industries from external competition.[68]

In the end, the disagreement with Pareto forced Langer to resign. His ideas, however, became increasingly popular among Tuscan entrepreneurs, particularly when Rome became the capital of Italy, plunging Florence into a severe recession. Lorenzo and his son Carlo Ginori, proprietors of the famous porcelain factory located in Doccia, Sesto Fiorentino, are a foremost example of this change of heart from liberalism to protectionism. Tuscan entrepreneurs in favour of state intervention lobbied for the revision of the Italian tariffs and welcomed the change in policy towards protectionism effectuated by the left-wing government in 1878.[69] In the 1880s, they convened in the Associazione Commerciale, later Associazione Industriale e Commerciale di Firenze.[70]

A mere six years, though, could not change the productive structure of Florence and Tuscany.

When Carlo Azzi wrote his treatise *Florence and its Future*, in 1872, to motivate his fellow citizens to react positively to the economic depression and political crisis, he described the local economic activity as if walking in the salons of the national exhibition of 1861. 'The straw!' was his first exclamation. 'This thin strip,' he wrote, 'that

bends to every puff of wind has a significant importance for Tuscan industry.'[71] Other agricultural products, vital for the region's economy, were olive oil and wine. Wine, though, should have been produced from a narrower variety of vines, as advocated by Bettino Ricasoli, so as to be commercialized in greater quantities and sold abroad. Silkworms and bees should likewise have been bred in greater quantities.[72] Azzi also registered the liveliness of Florentine foundries, flourishing thanks to the renovation of the city, while ironworks were still lacking in technology and product quality. Great achievements concerned the majolica of Montelupo and the porcelain of Doccia. Other excellences were handiwork laboratories of goldsmithing, silverware, mosaics and marquetry. Modernity appeared in Florence in the form of omnibuses and coaches and stores such as the Bazar Europeo, selling playthings for children. Many everyday consumer items were also produced in Florence in acceptable quality: umbrellas, rubber wares, illumination devices, saddles and suitcases.[73]

What more could be done? Azzi had no doubt: homeworking in the production of cotton, silk and wool pieces. 'Let us operate the spindles, the looms and the winders. Let us multiply them, let us erect thousands of them; let us draw new designs; let us prepare dyes to colour our items. Let us copy the light blue of our sky, the green of our hills, the frescoes of our porticos, the paintings of our galleries!'[74]

Clearly, Azzi still believed in the development model of the past. Despite the title of his pamphlet, he could not envision a Florence of the future. He still saw a city living on agricultural rents, earned by exporting agricultural products and primary resources; a city specialized in handicraft productions; a city at the centre of complex networks of trade and homeworking in traditional sectors like textiles, including straw; a city where production was still dedicated to satisfying local demand, with no ambition to introduce technological advancements or reap economies of scale.

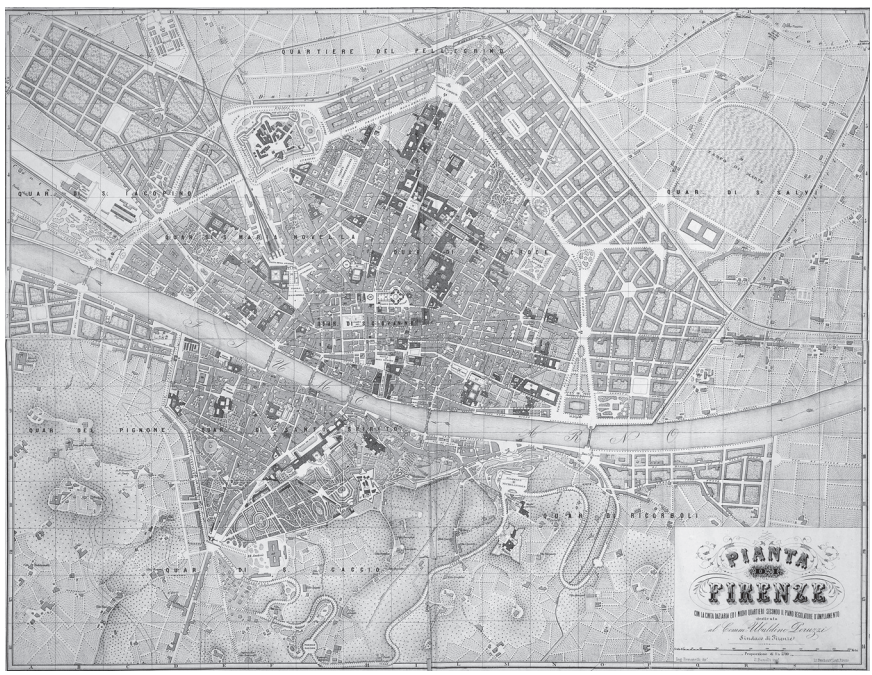
More and more people, though, wished for major change – particularly after the end of the extraordinary experience of being at the centre of the new Italian state.

Entrepreneurs were obviously interested in state protection. Many of them had participated in the speculations of the financial bubble ignited by the huge real-estate developments and by the suspension of convertibility. They accepted the increased intervention of the state in the economy in exchange for monopoly positions, protection and subsidies. Their aim was to extend production to cover internal demand under the umbrella of substantial state help.

Workers increasingly became conscious of their role. Notwithstanding Azzi's wishes, a growing number of people became employed in factories, while traditional homeworking activities inexorably dwindled out. The number of looms, for example, rapidly diminished not only inside the city walls, but also in Tuscany in general. Homeworking had rapidly changed from textiles to straw, because of the lesser fixed costs entailed for the worker. To weave straw, no instruments were needed beyond hands. Nonetheless, the *trecciaiole* – female straw workers – were aware of their value, to the point of organizing mass strikes at the end of the century. Union claims and disorder also plagued Tuscany's mines and the manufacturies with the longest traditions, such as the porcelain factory of Doccia.

The idyllic picture of an agricultural Tuscany, defined by social peace and redistribution of the generated surplus, came increasingly into question. The

globalization wave that had washed over sleepy Florence throughout the national unification movement and its becoming capital of the Kingdom served to highlight the provinciality and the limits of the development model chosen in the eighteenth century. A comparison with more developed countries such as France and England during the universal exhibitions left no doubts as to the backwardness of local production. Entrepreneurs and politicians adapted to this new consciousness by developing a protectionist attitude. Changes would take time, however. It would take decades for the industrialization of Florence to kick off. Nonetheless, as early as 1919, the first Italian industrial district was planned and realized in the same Florence dreamed by Tuscan liberals as a cultural and trading centre in the middle of an Arcadian Tuscany. In early acknowledgement of its modern industrial identity, the city launched a renewed city plan, dedicating a vast development area in the suburb of Novoli-Rifredi to its major industries.[75] The mentality of entrepreneurs, politicians and workers had been irrevocably changed by coming brusquely into contact with more developed realities in the years when Florence was capital of the Kingdom of Italy. A new Florence[76] originated from experiencing novel institutions, mingling of cultures and enhanced



Map 0.1 Plan of Florence with the new datiary perimeter and the new urban developments.

Source: Pianta di Firenze con la cinta daziaria ed i nuovi quartieri secondo il piano regolatore d'ampliamento (Firenze: Bettini, 1872). Property of Max Planck Gesellschaft and Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz Fotothek.

communications, a Florence that Carlo Azzi, Ubaldino Peruzzi, Bettino Ricasoli and many others would and could never have dreamed of.

Places of interest

Buildings

Galleria degli Uffizi (H, 8–9);
Istituto Tecnico di Firenze (I, 3);
Macelli Pubblici (Public slaughterhouses) (D, 1);
Museum of Ethnology (I, 7);
Museum La Specola (F, 10);
Palazzo Feroni (G, 8);
Palazzo Gianfigliazzi Bonaparte (G, 8);
Palazzo Ginori (H, 5);
Palazzo Pitti (G, 10);
Palazzo Spini-Feroni (G, 8);
Palazzo Vecchio (H–I, 8);
Villa Hildebrand (Villa di San Francesco di Paola) (C, 10);
Zecca Vecchia (N, 9).

Churches, monasteries and temples

Duomo (Cathedral) (H–I, 7);
Madonna della Tosse (M, 1);
San Bonifazio (Hospital) (I, 4);
San Lorenzo (H, 6);
San Marco (I, 4–5);
San Miniato al Monte (M, 12);
San Pancrazio (G, 7);
Santa Croce (L, 8);
Santa Maria Novella (F–G, 6);
Santa Maria Nuova (Hospital) (I, 6–7; L,6);
Sant'Orsola (H, 5);
Tempio Israelitico (M, 6).

City doors

Porta alla Croce (O, 7);
Porta al Prato (D, 5);
Porta Romana (E, 12);
Porta San Frediano (D, 8);
Porta San Miniato (I, 10);
Porta San Niccolò (M, 10).

Manufactories

Ferrovie Meridionali (B, 4);
Fonderia del Pignone (Pignone foundry) (D, 7);
Gazometro (Gas Works) (C, 7);
Officine Galileo (N, 1).

Markets, shops and bazaars

Bazar Europeo (H, 8);
Bellom (H, 8);
Madame Sarazin (G, 7);
Mercato Centrale (G–H, 5);
Mercato Nuovo (H, 8);
Mercato San Frediano (E, 8);
Mercato Sant'Ambrogio (Santa Croce) (M, 7–8);
Mercato Vecchio (H, 7).

Parks

Parco delle Cascine (A, 4–5);
Parterre Park (L, 1–2).

Sectors

Barbano (G, 4);
Camaldoli (C, 6);
Campo di Marte (Q–R–S, 3–4–5);
Cascine (A, 5);
Maglio (L, 3);
La Mattonaia (N, 6);
Piagentina (P–Q, 7–8–9);
San Frediano (D–E, 8–9);
Savonarola (M, 3).

Squares

Piazza Antinori (G, 7);
Piazza D'Azeglio (M–N, 6);
Piazza Brunelleschi (L, 6);
Piazza Cavour (Libertà) (L, 2);
Piazza del Duomo (H–I, 7);
Piazza Donatello (N, 5);
Piazzale Michelangiolo (M, 10–11);
Piazza San Firenze (I, 8);

Piazza San Marco (I, 5);
Piazza Santa Croce (L, 8);
Piazza Santa Trinita (G, 8);
Piazza Santo Spirito (F, 9);
Piazza Savonarola (M, 3);
Piazza della Signoria (H, 8);
Piazza Strozzi (G, 7).

Stations

Leopolda (customs offices) (C, 5);
Maria Antonia (S. Maria Novella) (F, 6).

Streets

Borgo SS Apostoli (H, 8);
Corso dei Tintori (L–M, 9);
Costa San Giorgio (H, 10);
Lungarno Corsini (F–G, 8);
Lungarno delle Grazie (I–L, 9);
Lungarno Serristori (L, 10);
Lungarno Torrigiani (H–I, 9);
Por Santa Maria (H, 8);
Via Alamanni (F, 5–6);
Via Aretina (O–P–Q, 7; R–S–T, 6);
Via Calzaioli (H, 7–8);
Via dei Cardinali (L, 6);
Via Cavour (H,6; I, 4–5; L, 3);
Via Cerretani (H, 6);
Via della Colonna (L, 5; L–M, 6);
Via Condotta (I, 8);
Via del Corso (I, 7);
Via Diacceto (E, 5);
Via Faenza (G, 5);
Via Garibaldi (D, 6);
Via Guelfa (G, 4–5; H, 5);
Via Madonna della Pace (G, 12);
Via Maggio (G, 9; F, 10);
Via del Maglio (La Marmora) (L, 3–4);
Via Montebello (D, 6);
Via dell'Oriolo (I–L, 7);
Via Panicale (H, 5);
Via Panzani (G, 6);
Via Porta Rossa (G–H, 8);
Via del Proconsolo (I, 7–8);

Via de' Pucci (I, 6);
Via Romana (G, 11);
Via del Romito (D, 1; E, 2);
Via San Gallo (H, 5; I, 3–4);
Via San Leonardo (11–12);
Via San Sebastiano (Gino Capponi) (L, 4–5);
Via Sant'Antonino (G, 6);
Via della Scala (E–F, 6; D–E, 5);
Via degli Speziali (H, 7);
Via Tornabuoni (G, 7–8);
Via Valfonda (F, 5);
Viale dei Colli (Galileo) (M, 10–11);
Viale in Curva (D, 4; E, 3);
Viale Militare (N–O, 2; P, 3);
Viale del Poggio Imperiale (G, 12–13–14);
Volta dei Tintori (L, 8).

Part I

Culture and Politics

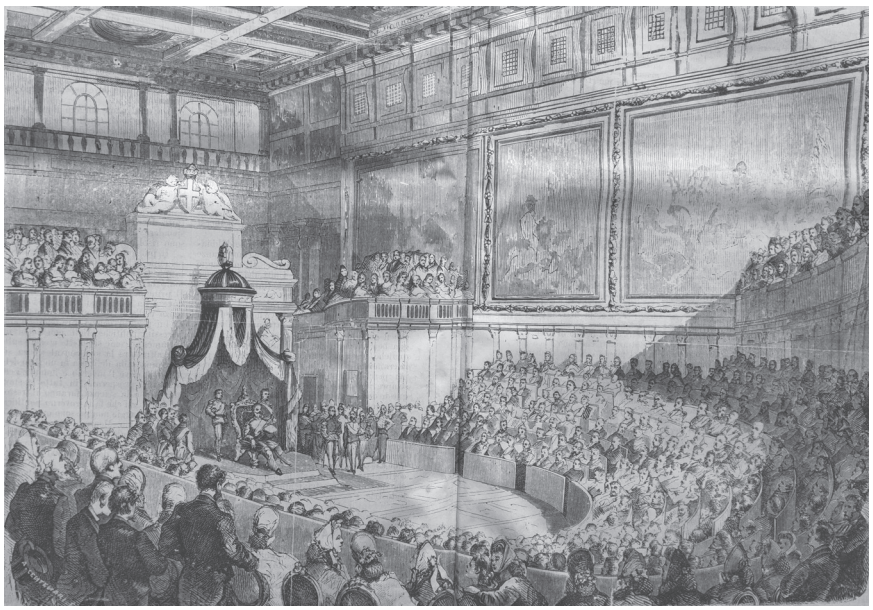


Figure P1 The Italian Chamber of Representatives in the Salone de' Cinquecento in the Palazzo Vecchio, Florence.

Source: 'La sala de' cinquecento', *Il Giornale Illustrato*, 2, no. 51, 24–30 December 1865. Private Collection.