An Edwardian’s Search for Meaning: Trevelyan’s Garibaldi

Of all the books written in English on the life, work, and influence of Giuseppe Garibaldi, none was so well known before the Second World War as that by the British historian George Macaulay Trevelyan (1876–1962). During the first decade of the twentieth century he produced a three-volume study that detailed Garibaldi’s exploits during the struggle for Italian unification: *Garibaldi’s Defence of the Roman Republic, 1848–9*, *Garibaldi and the Thousand*, and *Garibaldi and the Making of Italy, June–November 1860*. Trevelyan is no longer a household name, and his reputation has suffered much under the unduly harsh criticism of modern historians, yet his Garibaldi books are still in print, available for purchase by any interested reader.¹ Despite its apparent longevity, should Trevelyan’s *Garibaldi* trilogy, published almost a century ago, be relegated to the dustbin of historiography? If not, how is it to be interpreted by the historian, or for that matter, the general reader, in the twenty-first century?

During a trip to the Tweed and Yarrow country in Scotland in 1899, George Macaulay Trevelyan went to the river Yarrow’s edge and “waded in above the knee—to get the feeling of how people
were drowned in it.” Long before guided tours of historical sites, and kitschy historical theme parks, Trevelyan had captured the essence of history, its basic romanticism. It was the idea of the past as being a more known quantity than the present or future, less complicated or chaotic than life today that could attract people to history. For Trevelyan, history could offer a sense of continuity, an identification with an ancestor, a tragedy to be lamented, or a triumph. It could be many different things to different people, but not without some meaning when reflected upon. In his later years, the eminently quotable Trevelyan summed up best not only the essence of this romantic sense, but also his philosophy of life and history:

I take delight in history, even its most prosaic details, because they become poetical as they recede into the past. The poetry of history lies in the quasi-miraculous fact that once, on this earth, once, on this familiar spot of ground, walked other men and women, as actual as we are to-day, thinking their own thoughts, swayed by their own passions, but now all gone, one generation vanishing after another, gone as utterly as we ourselves shall shortly be gone like ghost at cock-crow. This is the most familiar and certain fact about life, but it is also the most poetical, and the knowledge of it has never ceased to entrance me, and to throw a halo of poetry round the dustiest record that Dryasdust can bring to light.2

Thus, it was not enough to simply read or think about past events. To truly understand the past, one must stand in the place where others stood in order to be there in the past as others were. This can best be achieved through an act of empathy, what Trevelyan mentioned numerous times as “sympathy” for historical actors and their circumstances. Empathy, though, the emotional and mental ability to put oneself in another’s place, as much as is humanly possible, is the term that defines more accurately his meaning. Such an empathy Trevelyan achieved through three crucially interconnected concerns that were an intrinsic part of his philosophy of life, and which
An Edwardian’s Search for Meaning

informed his philosophy of history: walking, nature, and spiritualism. The full flowering of Trevelyan’s historical vision in practice was to occur in his *Garibaldi* trilogy.

II. The *Garibaldi* Trilogy

Trevelyan created a portrait of Garibaldi, despite its subjectivity, which was as valid as any other. He had a clearly defined vision of who Garibaldi was and what he did, which was well-grounded on the evidence available to him at the time. The true Garibaldi can only be known to those who knew him personally, and knew him well. Readers of history depend upon others for their experience of Garibaldi, either Garibaldi’s contemporaries and associates writing at the time, or historians writing years after his death. Indeed, historians’ interpretations of Garibaldi are almost as legion as those of Jesus, Napoleon, and Lincoln. So, Trevelyan’s portrait is as valid as that of other historians, whether it be Mack Smith’s groundbreaking study, *Cavour and Garibaldi* (1954), his excellent popular short biography written without footnotes, *Garibaldi: A Great Life in Brief* (1956), Hibbert’s highly readable *Garibaldi and his Enemies* (1965), Ridley’s massive birth-to-death biography, *Garibaldi* (1974), or Andrea Viotti’s undocumented yet competent military history, *Garibaldi: The Revolutionary and his Men* (1979). Modern historians such as Mack Smith or Ridley might have used more refined methods of research, of gathering data and sifting evidence, or they might have had more material available to them, but they too have been prone to their own prejudices. These biases might not be as clearly evident to us today as are Trevelyan’s, but they will become known as time and circumstance permit.

Trevelyan’s prejudices originated in his immediate family. They played a prominent part in one of the more important artistic and cultural movements of the nineteenth century, which centered on Italy, the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. As a young man his father George Otto Trevelyan, was welcomed into the Pre-Raphaelite circle established by Walter Calverly and Pauline Trevelyan, cousins of
Trevelyan’s grandfather, Charles Trevelyan. Such a circle was usually centered at Wallington, the Trevelyan’s ancestral home in Northumberland, which Charles and in turn, his son George Otto, inherited from Walter. It included writers, poets, and artists enamored with Italy, such as John Ruskin, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, William Holman Hunt, John Everett Millais, Algernon Charles Swinburne, and tangentially Thomas Carlyle. Trevelyan was born into the house at Wallington and into the entire English Italophilic environment.\(^5\)

His father, George Otto, intended as a youth to join Garibaldi’s troops in 1867, but a day late, missed the defeat of Garibaldi at the Battle of Mentana. His father, however, was able to meet Garibaldi after the battle, spend some time in his company, and witness his arrest by the Italian Government. Trevelyan inherited his father’s sympathy for Garibaldi and the Risorgimento, and benefited from his companionship. He and his brothers would play games of soldiers with him, walking and running over battlefields to recreate exploits of the past. They also made playing with small lead soldiers their favorite indoor pastime. At other times he would listen to Otto’s mesmerizing tales of historical adventure.\(^6\) Thus, Trevelyan’s background particularly suited him for the writing of a narrative history of Garibaldi, being the grandnephew of Macaulay and the son of Otto, both prominent historians and statesmen. Trevelyan was raised in an English family proud of its Whig heritage, which extolled the virtues of personal liberty, intellectual tolerance, public service, and the cause for Italian freedom.

Trevelyan fell in love with Italy in 1895 on a trip he took there with a friend. Two years later in 1897, Otto took him to the western walls of Rome and there described on the spot the story of Garibaldi’s defence of Rome in 1849. These experiences with his father helped attract Trevelyan to the exploits of Garibaldi, whose life he considered “the most poetical of all true stories.” Their mutual love of Italy was a common phenomenon for English gentlemen of the Victorian period. They were educated in the classics, and inherited a romantic tradition from Byron and Shelley, which extolled the beauty and
wonder of Italy and the peninsula’s desire for freedom from foreign rule. Garibaldi’s triumphal visit to England in 1864 attracted crowds of all classes by the thousands. His charismatic presence was long remembered by many Victorians and Edwardians as a heroic and lasting inspiration to all lovers of freedom.

Although no evidence indicates that he had yet begun to consider Garibaldi as a possible subject of research, Trevelyan was taken with the presence that the Italian patriot had over the new republic. During a summer trip to northern Italy in 1902 Trevelyan observed that,

Garibaldi keeps guard in the Piazza before the old Lombard cathedral... and I sit before him, almost in his shadow al fresco, and write and have tea... The statues of Garibaldi are the best thing in Italy. All else, beautiful as it is, is mournful love of the dead past; the Statue is in every town the symbol of the hope of resurrection after centuries of death.

Trevelyan was in Italy again in the spring 1903, and had evidently begun reading more about the Risorgimento because his lectures at Cambridge in the fall of 1903 were entitled, “The Union and Freedom of Italy, 1796–1870.” The immediate impetus for his decision to write about Garibaldi was the wedding present of Garibaldi’s memoirs and other books on the Risorgimento that Bernard Pares had given to him in 1904. He recalled:

Merely because Pares had given me the books, I began one day to turn over their pages, and was suddenly entranced by the story of the retreat from Rome to the Adriatic, over mountains which I had traversed in my solitary walks: the scene and spirit of that desperate venture, led by that unique man, flashed upon my mind’s eye. Here was a subject made to my hand: if ever I could write ‘literary history,’ this was the golden chance.

Trevelyan began the research for Garibaldi I sometime in early 1906. During that Easter season, Hilton Young accompanied him...
on the last half of his travels through north-central Italy following Garibaldi’s route of escape in 1849. Young took ten of the photographs for the book, and Dorothy Ward, Trevelyan’s sister-in-law, contributed two others. He began writing the very same April, was finished by December, and published *Garibaldi I* in March 1907. At the time, he wrote to his brother Robert that it was “far and away the best fun” he ever had writing. Trevelyan later observed that throughout that year he “worked like one possessed and driven by a fierce imaginative excitement.” The book bore the “mark of something nearer to inspiration” than he ever reached again.9

Researching and writing *Garibaldi II* and *III* each took a couple of years to complete. Hot on the heels of *Garibaldi I*, Trevelyan and his wife Janet covered much of southern Italy by bicycle in April 1907. He researched in Rome at the end of the year. Then, in March 1908, he followed on foot most of the Sicily route of Garibaldi’s 1860 campaign, once again with Hilton Young, whose fifteen photographs graced the volume. Trevelyan began writing again in summer 1908, finished in early 1909, and published *Garibaldi II* in September 1909. In January 1910 he returned to Italy and spent most of the spring either in Rome doing research, or in pursuing Garibaldi’s trail. He journeyed on foot and by bicycle through eastern Sicily and the southern peninsula, tracing the route of Garibaldi’s march towards Naples. For the latter part he was accompanied at various times by others, among whom were Janet, her cousin Julian Huxley, and Dr. Thomas Ashby, the head of the British School at Rome. Their twenty photographs appeared in *Garibaldi III*, five by Janet, one by Huxley, and fourteen by Ashby. Trevelyan returned to England in May 1910 and spent a year writing, publishing *Garibaldi III* in September 1911. All three books became best sellers, were issued in numerous editions and impressions, and were published in Italian within two years of their English appearance.10

In *Garibaldi I* Trevelyan gave a brief overview of Garibaldi’s early life at sea and as a revolutionary in South America. He then focused on the defense of Rome during the short-lived Roman Republic, the
Republic’s fall in 1849, and Garibaldi’s tortuously long retreat from Rome to the Adriatic and back to the Tyrrhenian Sea. *Garibaldi II* contained a cursory view of Garibaldi in exile, Cavour’s diplomacy leading up to 1859, and Garibaldi’s Alpine campaign of 1859. The bulk of the book described in detail the exploits of the Thousand, from the army’s formation in Piedmont, through its Sicilian campaigns, culminating in the fall of Palermo in June 1860. *Garibaldi III* covered the period from June to November 1860, when the Thousand advanced through Sicily to Messina, crossed the straits, and advanced north up the peninsula to Naples.

Trevelyan’s vision of history places him within a select group of historians from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, whom Hayden White has identified and defined as “metahistorians.” These metahistorians attempted to go beyond reason to the discovery of historical truth through the use of the imagination. White did not include Trevelyan in his analysis, limiting himself to Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, and Croce in analyzing the philosophy of history, and to Michelet, Ranke, Tocqueville, and Burckhardt for the evolution of historiography. But Trevelyan had a keenly developed poetic sense that aided him in his reconstructions of the past. His search for meaning culminated in his dramatic portrayal of the unselfish and heroic deeds of Garibaldi, deeds that were to be emulated by his readers. As an Edwardian, he was not alone in this regard, for other literary artists sought,

> to give pleasure, to create or reveal aesthetic order in the flux of human experience, to convey the feel of existence and catch its moments of beauty . . . At the end of the century the theme was being sounded more and more frequently: life is something which *transcends* the intellect and which is largely inaccessible to empirical inductive reasoning; there are vast areas of truth not known by man.11

As such, he can be seen as continuing the narrative tradition of those in the second group of historians White studied.
Although Trevelyan’s trilogy has long been considered a classic work of narrative history, today it is probably more referenced than read. If one is to understand the Edwardians, and in turn Trevelyan’s trilogy, one must do so on the Edwardians’ own terms. Trevelyan was cognizant of the wide literacy of his time. He knew full well that his Edwardian compatriots were better informed and better entertained than any previous generation. He was competing for the public’s attention with all of the modern forms of entertainment with which the Edwardians were inundated, for instance, music halls, the phonograph, cinema, cycling, motoring, and the fast-growing phenomenon of public middle-class sports. Since he intended to reach as many readers among the general populace as he could, he wrote in as vivid a style as possible to compete successfully with other entertainments, including fiction books. The number of books of history published in Britain during the Edwardian period in comparison to works of fiction was quite small, more than a two to one ratio. This trend continued until well after the First World War.

The genre of Edwardian history books was also not as clearly divided between those written for experts and those written for a popular audience. However, it was becoming more common for books to be written as monographs for other scholars, or as textbooks for students. The Garibaldi books and much of Trevalyan’s other work are not so easily divided along popular versus scholarly lines. Given the paucity of reliable historical works in English on Italy, and those of Bolton King and William Roscoe Thayer notwithstanding, it is no surprise that Trevelyan’s work on Garibaldi achieved so much attention. Its overarching theme of Garibaldi’s military exploits, although actual battle scenes themselves form a small part of the overall narrative, may have accounted for at least part of its appeal to a generation enamored with warfare and all things military.

If the Edwardian press is an indication of generally accepted norms, then the idea of the military had changed significantly by the turn of the century. The soldier was no longer seen as a force of oppression, but as a popular hero dedicated to doing good, to
defending civilization. In social Darwinian terms, war was seen as a
natural event, as being beneficial for it supposed medicinal qualities.
Countering the actions of an enemy left the body strong and free of
disease, like a rough spar in the ring. This view of the military was
emphasized especially after the poor showing of the British forces
in the Boer War. Unfortunately, the greater part of the British pub-
lic gave little thought to the ultimate sacrifice required on the field
of battle.\textsuperscript{15}

Trevelyan’s romantic approach, during what was still in many
ways a romantic age, and the inherent romanticism of Garibaldi,
are what made his trilogy so appealing. His use of the paradigm of
the hero, the individual who struggles against known or unknown
forces, was the medium through which he taught his lessons of his-
tory. He expressed his public morality nowhere better than in his
Italian works, for nowhere else did he devote so much effort to
one individual as he did to Garibaldi. As is well known, Trevelyan’s
trilogy was in part a negative commentary on the state of affairs
in Liberal Italy, one dominated by transformist Giolittian politics.
Although he acknowledged that Liberal Italy was a progressive and
free country, Trevelyan wrote about Garibaldi in an effort to re-
capture the greatness and sense of purity he thought existed during
the peak years of the Risorgimento, when Garibaldi was the “very
personification of the idea of national unity.”\textsuperscript{16} Trevelyan extolled
the sacrifice that Italian patriots had made in the creation of their
nation.\textsuperscript{17} For example, he wrote of the death of republican troops
in defending Rome in June 1849,

in times when new nations and new principles of govern-
ment are being formed, men are moved by appeals to the
imagination—a fact too often forgotten in our modern analy-
sis of the history of such periods. Imagination is the force that
propels, though state-craft may guide . . . But in order that men
may aspire, it is necessary that they should have something to
remember. And so the sacrifice made . . . of so many of the best
lives that Italy could give, had great political, because it had great spiritual, significance.\textsuperscript{18}

He can be considered part of that group of writers, intellectuals, and politicians in Italy who practiced what has been called ‘nostalgia politics.’ They used the image and conception of Garibaldi as hero and impartial founding father, akin to Cincinnatus or Washington, to influence the current course of Italian politics and society.\textsuperscript{19} His effort in this regard continued throughout the Italian Liberal period. He ceased to write upon Italian history and current affairs once the true authoritarian rule of Fascism was established after 1925. He seemed to have given up hope by then, since Italy’s cause for freedom had obviously failed.\textsuperscript{20}

Trevelyan’s trilogy began with the following homage that aptly reflected the deep feeling he had for Italy: “to the immortal memory of Giuseppe Garibaldi this book is dedicated by the citizen of a country which he loved and where he was loved.”\textsuperscript{21} He intended it to be a monument to Garibaldi, to inspire Italians in the ways of freedom and democracy as much as the endless number of Garibaldi statues that he observed adorning nearly every piazza in Italy.\textsuperscript{22} The trilogy is an epic story of a hero, an Edwardian tale of struggle, adventure, and travel which can in many ways be considered the \textit{Iliad} and the \textit{Odyssey} of the Risorgimento. Like Homer’s two masterpieces the trilogy deals with the rudiments of war, and the vicissitudes of the journey, either in retreat or on the forward march to battle.\textsuperscript{23} Trevelyan referred to Garibaldi as a sea-trained “man of action” and a “man of destiny,” “a worn Odysseus” who was composed of “iron courage and endurance,” who “had, perhaps, the most romantic life that history records, for it had all the trappings as well as the essence of romance.” He described Garibaldi as having “been created with more in him of the divine than any training” could give.\textsuperscript{24} As such, he had,

all the distinctive qualities of the hero, in their highest possible degree, and in their simplest form. Courage and
endurance without limit; tenderness to man and to all living things...the power to fill men with ardour by his presence and to stir them by his voice to great deeds; but above all the passion to be striking a blow for the oppressed, a passion which could not be quenched by failure, nor checked by reason, nor sated by success, old age, and the worship of the world.

He praised Garibaldi’s numerous admirable traits, calling him a “warrior hero of a new type,” the “destined liberator,” a “man of the world and of the open air.”

Trevelyan has been criticized for presenting an idealized portrait of Garibaldi, but it was actually more a romantic than an ideal one. He wrote that Garibaldi had,

the fond simplicity of a child, the sensitive humanity of a woman, the steady valour of a soldier, the good-heartedness and hardihood of a sailor, the imposing majesty of a king like Charlemagne, the brotherliness and universal sympathy of a democrat like Walt Whitman, the spiritual depth and fire of a poet, and an Olympian calm that was personal to himself—all plainly marked in his port and presence, his voice and his eyes—made him, not the greatest, but the unique figure of the age.

Trevelyan admitted that despite all these qualities Garibaldi was neither a sage nor a saint. Although he “worshipped Garibaldi” as he himself said in later years, he gave a rounded characterization of him more often than not, liberally dishing out praise but acknowledging his foibles. He did not expect Garibaldi to be what he was not. He was true to his word, when he wrote:

I have concealed nothing prosaic and nothing discreditable—neither Garibaldi’s mistakes during the siege, nor the misconduct of some of his associates, nor the hostility with which part of the rural population regarded the red-shirts.
He admitted that Garibaldi had “a heart of gold and the brains of an ox,” and that he was a “bad” and “no great” organizer, who changed his mind frequently under the influence of the last person with whom he spoke. These personal characteristics contributed to his being “utterly unfitted to cope with any purely political or administrative situation or to bring order out of the chaos of revolution.” Moreover,

The ‘hermit of Caprera’ was the last man likely to succeed as administrator or politician. Beyond the life of the sailor, the poet, the farmer, and the soldier in active service, he understood nothing of the ways of men.

In numerous instances, Trevelyan also portrayed Garibaldi as making poor military decisions or moral choices, but he did not excuse his conduct. For instance, he thought Garibaldi guilty of “a piece of madness” when he ordered Emilio Dandolo to conduct a bayonet charge with only 20 men, on French forces who had already repulsed more than two companies of troops. He repeated this mistake, and in general, commanded poorly during that phase of the defense of Rome during June 1849. He thought that Garibaldi “never in his life made a worse mistake” than when he sent Zambianchi, who had previously murdered priests, to fight in the Papal States. Also, the manner of La Farina’s deportation “was most offensive” and left a “stain on the chivalrous character of Garibaldi.”

Trevelyan has also been criticized for having too simplistic a view of the competing forces that took part in the Risorgimento, and for depicting unification as inevitable. Both critiques are not quite true. Trevelyan did put the best face on the Risorgimento triumvirate, Mazzini, Cavour, and Garibaldi, when he should have been more critical of their actions. He did, though, depict the power politics at play in the unification of Italy, usually those of France, Austria, Naples, and the Papacy. He acknowledged that Italy was united and democratized insufficiently and too quickly, and noted the problem of the Mezzogiorno, all of which he ascribed to “deep-seated
sociological causes.” He simply said that “however this may be, it appears highly probable that if Italy had not acquired her independence when she did, and as rapidly as she did, and in the form of complete political union, she might never have acquired it at all.” Moreover, “the Italian revolution was not inevitable, but was the result of wisdom, of valour, and of chance.” In Garibaldi II and Garibaldi III, Trevelyan emphasized that the Risorgimento could have been successful if the main players had acted differently.

He did not attempt to write a panoramic account of the Risorgimento, but in some fundamental way he was criticized for not having done so. The trilogy is not a cradle-to-grave biography, nor a history of the Risorgimento in all its facets, nor a military history of the battles of the Risorgimento. It is an amalgam of all these types of historical work, in narrative form, focusing on the exploits of Garibaldi and his Garibaldini, their enemies, and some of the political context within which the fighting took place. Being closer in time to Garibaldi, Trevelyan expressed the charismatic nature of Garibaldi’s personality more fully than subsequent writers did. Garibaldi’s contemporaries described him very much in these terms, but in Trevelyan’s attempt to bring his romantic character to life he sometimes imitated too closely the language used by Garibaldi’s loyal followers.

Nevertheless, almost all writers on Garibaldi, no matter how they characterize or critique him otherwise, refer to him as a hero. By all contemporary accounts he was a larger than life figure, the romanticism of the age notwithstanding. There was, of course, a certain amount of myth which surrounded Garibaldi, and which disciples such as Alexandre Dumas, père, encouraged and disseminated. But, he was not referred to as “the hero of two worlds” without reason. Trevelyan and others have recorded how men willingly followed and died fighting with and for him, not only in Italy, but earlier in South America as well. For example, after the battle of San Fermo near Como in May 1859, Nino Bixio, one of his most trusted officiers, wrote to his wife, “Garibaldi gave his orders only
by gestures, and our men cast themselves down like a torrent. I am living in a world of poetry.”

The hysterically enthusiastic reception the charismatic Garibaldi received upon his visit to England in 1864 illustrated the attraction Italians and non-Italians had for him better than even Trevelyan’s romantic writings possibly could. There are, of course, places in the books where Trevelyan identified too much with his hero, and one can surmise that the author was really writing about an idealized image of himself, a man he would have liked to be. By identifying with a heroic historical figure like Garibaldi, Trevelyan went outside himself and his surroundings to inhabit the world in which Garibaldi lived. Certainly not alone in traveling in Italy to be free from the stultifying conformity of Edwardian Britain, Trevelyan shared “the Mediterranean passion” with an august company of other Victorians and Edwardians, who went east and south to fulfill their various demons. His passion may have been different because it was more purposeful. But it was no less fervent for his having walked literally in Garibaldi’s steps, and imaginatively, in his shoes.

Since Trevelyan actually walked the ground that Garibaldi trod, the immediacy of his history showed Garibaldi in a more romantic setting than more modern writers could provide. In this sense, he fulfilled Croce’s maxim that all history is contemporary history. Similarly, A.L. Rowse observed that Trevelyan “was a romantic . . . his feeling for history was so living that it was practically contemporary.” This can be to the reader’s benefit, for he provided a window into the romantic world of the nineteenth century, an era within which Garibaldi lived and one which he helped to create. Some of Trevelyan’s reviewers had a tendency to call his accounts “picturesque.” Others used the more apt term of “vivid” to describe his narration of Garibaldi’s times. William Roscoe Thayer, the most noted American scholar of nineteenth-century Italy living at the time, summarized the majority of the reviews of the Garibaldi books when he wrote that
An Edwardian’s Search for Meaning

one cannot take leave of the three volumes without expressing a new admiration that a narrative biography of such high quality has been produced at this time. It is popular in the best sense but based on very careful study of every available source, as anyone who turns from the brilliant text to the numerous and vigorous appendixes will recognize.39

In his search for meaning in life, Trevelyan the Edwardian historian used a Holmesian method of returning to the scene to discover or intuit the truth. For instance, Trevelyan described how after fleeing from Cesenatico by boat at the end of July 1849, Garibaldi made his way back to land at Bosco Eliseo. Carrying his dying wife Anita in his arms, Garibaldi climbed to the nearest of the sand-hills, and then “descended towards the marsh water beyond it.” Trevelyan concluded, “this he must have done, as personal observation of the scene will show.” It was his standard practice to rely upon written accounts, plus his own observations.40

I have not only visited the scenes in the capital and near it, but have walked along the whole route traversed by Garibaldi’s column from the gate of Rome to Cesenatico on the Adriatic, and have visited the scenes of his adventures near Comacchio and Ravenna... Through this land of old beauty I have followed on foot their track of pain and death, with such a knowledge of where they went, and how they fared each day, as is not often the fortune of pilgrims who trace the steps of heroes.

He even visited Garibaldi’s refuge at Caprera and compared it to northern Britain.41

Trevelyan presented vivid images of people and scenes, both of nature and human habitation, which cannot be found in any other English accounts. Precision of time and place, the details as to arms, costume, food, and habit were very important to him. In order to recreate what happened, and have the reader visualize and
experience with him what took place, the lines he wrote had to take on a life of themselves, because to him they were not just words but part of the poetry of life itself. Here was how Garibaldi was described when he finally decided it was time for the Thousand to set sail from Genoa:

In the Villa Spinola a small group of men were waiting for the General to leave his bedroom. He was alone, effecting some change in the black garb of civilization which, varied by the Piedmontese uniform in ’59, he had endured for the last decade. At length, the door opened and they saw him for the first time in the outfit which he wore for the rest of his life, whether at home, in Parliament, or in the field. Loose grey trousers of a sailor cut, a plain red shirt, no longer worn like a workman’s blouse as in ’49, but tucked in at the waist, and adorned with a breast-pocket and watch-chain, a coloured silk handkerchief knotted round his neck, and over his shoulders a great American puncio or grey cloak, which he know wrapped about him as a protection against the night air. A black felt hat completed the figure which will be familiar to the Italian as the symbol of his country for long ages to come. His face was radiant and his bearing elate, for now that after long hesitations he had made up his mind to go, he at least had no shadow of a doubt as to what the issue would be.42

Trevelyan’s ability to paint a mental picture in descriptive prose like this was perhaps his greatest skill as a writer. Through the close attention to detail and the easy flow of his narrative, he captured this single momentous instance in Garibaldi’s career as if he had photographed it. Similarly, in the last scene of Garibaldi II, one can see clearly Garibaldi after the battle for Palermo, when everyone had gone down to the harbor,

an unusual silence reigned in the upper part of the city, and Garibaldi for awhile was left in peace in the new lodging which
he had chosen for himself in the Royal Palace. This was one of
the humblest rooms which he could find there, the so-called
Observatory over the Porta Nuova, at the extreme north wing,
almost detached from the main building. On one side, his win-
dows looked down the mile-long Toledo to the sea; on the
other, up the road to Monreale across the Conca d’Oro. It
was his first day in these new quarters, and he stood gazing
at the city and plain which he had freed from servitude and
won for Italy. Above Monreale and Parco rose the grim and
splendid mountains, where he and his Thousand had dodged
with death; while from the sea, up the length of the Toledo gay
with flags and flowers, was heard ever nearer and nearer the
joyful roar of the people, as they came bringing the released
prisoners to present them to the Liberator. When the young
men, with their parents and families, at length came into his
presence in the little room over the gateway, tears stood in his
eyes, and it was some minutes before he could find voice to
answer their words of gratitude.43

Trevelyan made frequent observations regarding the natural
and urban landscapes. His attachment to the natural world that
Garibaldi experienced in Italy was evident throughout the trilogy.
But it was most pronounced in Garibaldi III during the hero’s trek
from southern Calabria towards Naples. For instance, he described
the Bay of Sapri in the present tense. It was the place where Garibaldi
landed in September 1860 after having come down from the moun-
tains of Calabria.

There is a fine beach, but no artificial landing-place at Sapri.
Only there may be seen in the clear water the ruins of an
ancient pier. It runs out from the foundations of a palace
built long ago by some magnate of Imperial Rome, who dis-
covered the beauty of the little bay, and carried thither the
whole apparatus of ancient luxury, leaving less adventurous
pleasure-seekers at Puteoli and Baiae. Meanwhile Garibaldi
landed there and spent the night in a straw hut upon the beach.\textsuperscript{44}

For the reader to experience what the location was like both then, and in the new century, Trevelyan made sure to state just how well preserved a certain spot was, or to what degree it had changed. So, a recurring refrain throughout the text and the footnotes was “as it still is to-day.”\textsuperscript{45}

Trevelyan’s version of spiritualism also appeared in the trilogy. He depicted the connection between the past and the present as a kind of spiritual struggle taking place for the soul of Italy. Just before the siege of Rome by the French began, Trevelyan envisioned an extra-worldly battle that mirrored the one about to begin.

Vast spiritual agencies were at work all over the world to keep Italy out of Rome. Peter and Paul, Augustine and Loyola were rising from their graves to withstand Mazzini—the pale, frail Genoese, whose face was scarred with the sorrows of his country; and this shadowy host could call up armed men from the utmost ends of Europe to defend the Pope.

In addition, his remembrance of the resting place of Shelley, who had loved Italy, seemed to make the French placement of their guns there an even more egregious desecration.

A battery was erected on Monte Verde to silence the Italian guns on Monte Testaccio, and, as the French shells flew over the mound, many of them passed on and burst unnoticed near a solitary and sacred spot. Under the cypresses that Trelawny had planted in the shadow of the wall and of the pyramid, in the remote burying-place of the heretics, that quiet brotherhood slept on and did not hear the distant roar of the battle for Freedom; nor could even the near bursting of the tyrants’ bombs awaken him, who, of all men that ever lived, would have been most eager to hasten with long strides up the Janiculum, to stand enchanted amid the shots beside the Republican
defenders, and to speak with Garibaldi and Ugo Bassi as with
friends long dreamed of and sought in vain.46

This description of the Protestant cemetery outside Rome during the
siege in 1849 spiritually linked the cause of the Risorgimento with
one of the earliest English Italophiles of the nineteenth century. He
more fully explored such a connection with England by emphasizing in Garibaldi III the diplomatic and military support England
provided for the Risorgimento in 1860.

Trevelyan did not try to hide his opinions. He was prone to ex-
aggerate the injustices suffered by the mass of Italians under the
Bourbon and Papal regimes so as to more easily show the justice
of the cause of Italian unification as orchestrated by Piedmont.
The sufferings of the inhabitants of the Papal States and the King-
dom of the Two Sicilies were described in extreme terms, and most
frequently the villains were those he derisively called, “priests,”
“clericals,” “monks,” “black skirt” or the “strange third sex.” Also,
whenever a secret plan of Garibaldi or one of the Garibaldini had
been made known, or whenever a column of troops had been at-
tacked from behind, it was usually “clerical spies,” “crusaders,” or
“friars and priests” who were responsible. His anti-Catholic prej-
udice was consistent throughout the trilogy but most prominent
in the Garibaldi I, which dealt with the revolt against the Papal
States.47

This was typical of his Edwardian worldview, which was full of
many of the prejudices and moralistic judgments of the time. So one
should not be surprised that Trevelyan expressed an animus in his
language for ‘the Turk,’ and ‘the German,’ both of whom repre-
sented barbarism for him. Nor at his use of time-limited terms such
as “evil” and “race” that contributed to anthropomorphic descrip-
tions and organicist theories of nations or states. And, as an English
gentleman he stereotyped the character of Italian commoners as be-
ing gentle with human sympathy, and as having in it “something be-
yond the reasonable.” Also, the work of Italians digging barricades
“did not always imply very hard work, according to Anglo-Saxon standards.”

This need not detract from his works, however, for all historians unwittingly put themselves into their work. Knowing that this occurred can give the reader a fuller appreciation of the books, and should train the reader to look for similar occurrences in all written portraits of Garibaldi, whether old or new. If provided with enough information the reader can better distinguish truth from falsehood, and choose the interpretation that seems the most convincing—for now. Trevelyan himself advocated for the wide and judicious reading of various historians on a given subject, before a reader would conclude that any writer’s account was an accurate one. Although the tone in Garibaldi II and III was less exaggerated, one must concede as Trevelyan himself did later, that all the Garibaldi books suffer from many of the same biases. In 1947, he admitted:

I once wrote three volumes on Garibaldi. They are reeking with bias. Without bias I should never have written them at all. For I was moved to write them by poetical sympathy with the passions of the Italian patriots of that period, which I retrospectively shared. Such merit as the work has, largely derives from that. And some of its demerits also derive from the same cause. Even I can now see that I was not quite fair to the French, or to the Papalist or to the Italian Conservative points of view in 1849. If I had to write the first volume of that Trilogy again I should alter this somewhat, though not enough to satisfy everyone. But in fact I could not possibly write the book again. What is good in it derived from the passions and powers of my youth, now irrecoverable.

Trevelyan often expressed himself in flamboyant language in certain passages that is even more difficult for today’s reader to appreciate than it was for one of the original reviewers of the trilogy. The reviewer in the Spectator stated that although “it would be impossible to construct a more moving and absorbing narrative,” the reader
should be warned against “a source of possible danger,” “an inclination towards exuberance” on Trevelyan’s part due to his “flowing, and even flowery” writing style. Trevelyan would invariably get the essential facts correct, but had a tendency to be carried away by the sentiments of his eyewitness sources, thus presenting a scene in too dramatic a fashion.

In addition to being perhaps the only known person at that time to have traversed on foot and by bicycle almost all of the sections of Italy which Garibaldi had traveled in 1848–49 and 1859–60, Trevelyan was one of the first English language historians working on the history of the Risorgimento to make extensive use of manuscript material held in public and private archives. For Garibaldi II and III he conducted interviews with more than two dozen of Garibaldi’s contemporaries, and “made it a practice to take down notes on the spot during conversation, and if necessary write out the notes again carefully within twenty-four hours afterwards.” He realized that nearly all of the participants of these events had passed away by the early years of the new century. It might be the last chance for him, or anyone else, to record the survivors’ experiences of a half-century ago. And as Cannadine has noted, those eyewitnesses he was unable to interview, he plied for letters, either for them to recount their experiences, or to clarify a certain point.

As a result all three books were heavily footnoted. In these footnotes, Trevelyan frequently cited more than one authority as evidence to verify an event or substantiate an opinion. He weighed varying interpretations or conflicting accounts, made the most judicious decisions he could, and frequently explained why he did so. The books also had more than a dozen appendices each at the end of the text where he more fully analyzed finer points of historiographical debate, oftentimes disputes between sources. For instance, in Garibaldi I, Appendix I gave the “Numbers of the Roman Army during the Siege” where he had created a table comparing the numbers that were provided in three different accounts of the siege, while Appendix K contained “The Numbers of the Killed and Wounded.”
Most of the appendices in *Garibaldi III* gave very complete descriptions of both the numbers and types of troops that were fighting on the mainland for the Bourbons and for the Garibaldini in the summer and fall of 1860.\(^53\)

Trevelyan exhibited a depth of learning in all three Garibaldi books that is matched only by the scholarship of Denis Mack Smith in English, or by Rosario Romeo in Italian. The amount of research and reading Trevelyan did on Garibaldi was truly prodigious. Each book came equipped with an extensive bibliography listing all of the manuscript and published material in English, Italian, French, and German, which he had read. Incredibly, almost every published book and article contained an annotation guiding the reader to what was unique about a particular source. Moreover, as a caring scholar he continued to stay current on newly available sources or newly published work, and updated the bibliographies as new impressions or editions were printed.

In addition to Trevelyan’s scholarship, the books have had an appeal because he took such care in their physical crafting. There were seven maps in *Garibaldi I*, five in *Garibaldi II*, and four in *Garibaldi III*, all produced by Emery Walker under Trevelyan’s direction. Almost all of these maps were of the detailed and fold-out variety, and are crucial for an understanding of Garibaldi’s battles and marches. On more than one occasion, Trevelyan, ever the informative guide, directed the reader to specifically consult a map to understand fully the text being narrated.\(^54\) In the tradition of literary history, every chapter was begun with a germane quotation, some long, some short, that set the stage for that part of the story which is about to unfold. Each page on the right-hand side has its own description at the head of the page so the reader could more easily browse, and all the volumes were fully indexed by Trevelyan’s own hand. Each was illustrated with contemporary art and current photographs, including those taken by his traveling companions. Trevelyan took full advantage of the new medium of reproducing photographs in books, making them excellent examples of modern
Edwardian publishing.\footnote{55 These photographs helped make his presentation more realistic as well as reinforcing the immediacy of the history that Trevelyan narrated.} Trevelyan’s \textit{Garibaldi} trilogy should continue to be read because no one in the English language has yet superseded what he has written about Garibaldi. He created for his time a modern prose documentary of Garibaldi’s exploits, using the scientific research methods of the day to locate, analyze and document written material. And he was a pioneer in the observation and gathering of non-written evidence, using the most advanced methods of travel and recording then available, the bicycle and train, the camera and oral interview. He was thus able to capture Garibaldi in time, and despite his romanticism, present a romantic figure in realist guise for his Edwardian audience. He also provided a challenge for potential readers of all generations; read him as well as others, then decide for one’s self whose work is best.

If Trevelyan is read in the context of his background and sensibilities, and with the knowledge of his biases, one will be able to benefit from his evocative portrayal of Garibaldi and the Italian struggle for unification. In addition, one may even find that a detail can only be found in Trevelyan. For example when narrating the events of the Thousand aboard ship in route to Sicily, Trevelyan provided the reader with an example of the awe and respect with which Garibaldi’s followers held him. The scene does not appear in the books of Ridley, nor Mack Smith, and only in two sentences in Hibbert’s.\footnote{56 After some of Garibaldi’s men had mistreated the inhabitants of Talamone, he ordered them, in disgust, all back aboard ship. Trevelyan wrote,}

\begin{quote}
That night no one dared to approach his cabin, for his wrath was prolonged by the continued absence of his commissary Bovi, who had been sent to Grosseto to purchase food for the voyage. Garibaldi chafed at the delay, for everything else was ready for their departure... He retired to rest, leaving
\end{quote}
orders that when Bovi appeared he was to be thrown overboard. Just before daybreak he arrived with the provisions. Garibaldi came out of his cabin, while all held their breath to see in what temper he had woken up. When he saw the culprit, he puffed at his cigar and said, ‘Good morning, Bovi; you made me very angry last night.’ All breathed again, and the faithful Bovi, who was in fact an excellent commissary, wiped his eyes with his one remaining hand (for he had lost its fellow in the defence of Rome), and explained the difficulties which had caused the delay. The General heard him out, and dismissed him with ‘Eh, va bene.’ If Garibaldi had not been feared as well as loved, he could not have extracted, as he always did, the utmost service that each man could render to the cause.57

One may read more factually accurate biographies of Garibaldi, such as Ridley’s. One will more often return to Ridley to check a fact. But, one would much more likely re-read Trevelyan, because he exhibited a passion and an inspiration for his hero Garibaldi that has never been equaled.58

Conclusion

Two of Trevelyan’s purposes in writing history were to present the truth of the past as vividly as he could, and to inspire his readers to good acts. As an Edwardian historian at the start of a new century he saw his works increasingly compete for the public’s attention with new sources of amusement and inspiration. At the start of this new century, a similar phenomenon has occurred today. The computer-internet-electronic revolution has made it exceedingly difficult for all serious writers, including historians, to compete with film, television, and electronic media for the public’s attention. Today, memory and historical consciousness are enhanced and/or obscured through participation in all three media. There seems to be no end to the unprecedented proliferation of history websites and historical epics

142
that try to achieve a sense of past immediacy for their viewers. In a significant way historical leisure pursuits try to recreate past reality, so the participant can, in a pseudo-Rankean sense, not only tell but also experience the past as it once was.

The importance of memory, memorials, and historic sites has also undergone a resurgence in our time. It is ironical that the ‘Grand Old Man of English History’ made extensive use of all these corollaries to historical writing. In some fundamental way Trevelyan presaged the current awareness of memory and tapped into the basic human need to make sense of the past, either one’s own, or the past of others. It is in this sense that the techniques he used to recreate history for his Edwardian contemporaries can have relevance for all historians. In today’s world of hyper-entertainment, written history cannot compete with historical leisure pursuits unless it can hold a reader’s interest and bring the past alive, as Trevelyan tried to do.

The narrative power of Trevelyan’s writing is unmatched in all later accounts of Garibaldi by other scholars. What Cannadine stated about all of Trevelyan’s books is most true in regard to the Garibaldi trilogy: they were true labors of love. He worked hard at the writing and rewriting of his history, exemplifying his own maxim that “what is easy to read has been difficult to write.” For Trevelyan, the books were an act of artistic creation in their scholarly, aesthetic, and written presentation. His attention to the craft of writing, and the creative effort which he poured into his Garibaldi histories, are on a par with the assiduous care taken by other Edwardian writers, most notably Henry James, who was a great admirer of Trevelyan’s work. As Shelby Foote has emphasized,

the novelist and the historian are seeking the same thing: the truth—not a different truth: the same truth—only they reach it, or try to reach it, by different routes. Whether the event took place in a world now gone to dust, preserved by documents and evaluated by scholarship, or in the imagination, preserved
by memory and distilled by the creative process, they both want to tell us how it was: to re-create it, by their separate methods, and make it live again in the world around them.60

For historical writing to be read by and be relevant for the public, it must convey something more than mere facts reported by the historian, and must do so in captivating prose, similar to literature, that allows the reader to know what it was like ‘to be there.’61

Histories, like the Garibaldi trilogy, which deal with war, death, love, or the meaning of life, will have a better chance of being read today, and of becoming timeless works of history tomorrow. Recently the leading British novelist and journalist, Julian Barnes, selected the Garibaldi trilogy as his TLS choice for ‘international book of the year.’ In so doing, he outlined some of the metahistorical aspects of Trevelyan’s Garibaldi:

[the trilogy] make up one of the masterpieces of narrative history: deeply researched, passionately committed, lucidly written… Honour and heedless bravery in a just cause are always moving, but never more so than here: the Sicilian Campaign was ‘poetry made real,’ as some of the Thousand put it. Garibaldi himself was the essence, the concentration of the movement: courage, generosity, obduracy, austerity, and a grander concept of liberty than our current reduced, state-dependent version. The man, without whom Italy would not have been united as it now is, loathed all forms of taxation, bureaucracy, policing, finance and law court (not to mention the caging of birds)… Those suffering withdrawal symptoms after finishing this great trilogy can console themselves with Trevelyan’s later-written prequel: Manin and the Venetian Revolution of 1848.62

As Plumb and Cannadine have suggested, Trevelyan’s histories, especially his Garibaldi trilogy, have timeless qualities, and are worthy of being cherished and preserved.63
Historians have been reluctant to view Trevelyan’s histories within the literature of his Edwardian time. It is time to place his works not only within Edwardian literature where they assuredly belong, but also with the great literature of all time. As such, the Garibaldi tril-ogy merits inclusion with the other two great, multivolume, English histories of Italy, Edward Gibbon’s Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (1776–88), and John Addington Symonds’ The Renaissance in Italy (1875–86).

NOTES
1. George Macaulay Trevelyan (hereafter GMT), Garibaldi’s Defence of the Roman Republic 1848–9 (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1914 [1907]). Garibaldi and the Thousand (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1912 [1909]). Garibaldi and the Making of Italy, June–November 1860 (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1926 [1911]). The convenience of Garibaldi I, Garibaldi II, and Garibaldi III will be used hereafter. Throughout the notes, the first dates given are for the edition consulted, while dates in brackets are those of the initial publication. The trilogy has recently been reprinted in paperback by Phoenix Press of London, but without Trevelyan’s extensive bibliographic notes and appendices. Cassell did the same for the set in the 1980s. By the 1990s only the first volume was available from them (1988), still devoid of scholarly apparatus, but complete versions were still available from AMS Press (1979) and Greenwood Publishing (1982), for the second and third volumes respectively.
4. Andrea Viotti, Garibaldi: The Revolutionary and His Men (Dorset: Blandford Press, 1979). Mack Smith’s first book, as well as Ridley’s biography, were based on extensive research in primary sources held in Italian and English archives, with Ridley also exploiting material held in Latin America. Most of the other accounts have been based primarily on published primary and secondary sources. Before Mack Smith’s Cavour and Garibaldi appeared in 1954, much scholarship, especially that in Italy, had emphasized the failure of the Risorgimento leaders to achieve a true Italian national revolution strong enough to change the economic, political, and social bases of power. This interpretation was astutely advanced by Antonio Gramsci in the Marxist historical writings that were published in his prison notebooks. See “Notes on Italian History,” in Selections from the Prison Notebooks, ed. and tr. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 44–120. The interpretation against which Gramsci and others had argued had been espoused earlier in the century by Benedetto Croce. He presented the traditional liberal perspective, in Italy, of the Risorgimento as a cohesive, progressive wave of patriotic thought and feeling exhibited by many classes and regions.
in Italian society which all led inevitably to the unification of Italy. This view, with significant caveats, was most clearly expressed in English by Trevelyan. See Harry Headder, *Italy in the Age of the Risorgimento, 1790–1870* (New York: Longmans, 1983), 8; and Lucy Riall, *The Italian Risorgimento: State, Society, and National Unification* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 4–5.


6. GMT, *Sir George Otto Trevelyan*, 80–85; GMT, “Autobiography,” 3–4, 12; Moorman, *George Macaulay Trevelyan*, 7–9. Robert Calverly Trevelyan described their attachment to playing toy soldiers: “A battle would often take weeks of hard work and had sometimes to be left unfinished at the end of the holidays. But it was a wonderful game, and we continued playing it right down to our undergraduate days and even for some years later,” (Moorman 8).

7. GMT, “Autobiography,” 27–28, 13; Moorman recounted that in 1897 before Trevelyan met his parents in Rome he spent time with Lord Acton in Milan. Acton told him “much about the ancien regime in Italy when he had lived in Milan under the Austrian government after the failure of the 1848 rising” (*George Macaulay Trevelyan*, 58); GMT, “Englishmen and Italians,” 104–23; similarly *Garibaldi II*, 22–23.

An Edwardian’s Search for Meaning


11. Lester, Journey Through Despair, 81, 87.


13. See Rose’s Appendix, “Census of Books Published in Britain 1870–1924,” tabulated from the Census of Books compiled by the Publisher’s Circular. Fiction, grouped with juvenile, predominated at 20–25%, not including belles letters, nor poetry & drama. History & biography hovered around 8%, coming in third behind theology’s 9%. By 1907, both history and theology trailed behind illustrated works of arts and science, which began to command 11% of titles. In 1911 the categories changed, fiction and juvenile were split, literature created, theology became religion, and arts and science were split as well. In 1907, 1909, and 1911, the years of the Garibaldi trilogy, history and biography, together until 1910, separate in 1911, commanded 8.8%, 8.5%, and 8.3% respectively, while all fiction categories still accounted for almost 30% of the total (Rose, Edwardian Temperament, 213–22).


17. Feske commented derisively that Trevelyan’s trilogy “displayed a sustained fascination with violence that should have given pause to any Whig constitutionalist,” moreover, his “poorly focused Edwardian liberal passion revealed a very illiberal tolerance of, if not downright enthusiasm for, violence” (Feske, From Belloc to Churchill, 157, 162). This was based upon his interpretation of Garibaldi as an itinerant soldier-for-hire (Feske 160–62). He focused primarily
on Garibaldi’s foolhardy efforts at revolution after 1861, without any real acknowledgement of Garibaldi’s contribution to the Risorgimento before then. As a basis for this view, Feske stressed Garibaldi’s unsophisticated political philosophy, including his advocacy and use of dictatorial powers during times of crisis. Trevelyan and others have not glossed over these aspects of Garibaldi, because seen in context they do not detract from his achievements. Feske did not cite any evidence for Trevelyan’s supposed enthusiasm for violence, nor for Garibaldi’s supposed bloodthirstiness, because neither existed. He just made a convoluted reference to a Trevelyan letter where the latter stated that the language used in a book about General Gordon could be applied to Garibaldi, except that their situations were completely different (Feske, 161 and note 85). In addition, Feske showed his double standard once again vis-à-vis Churchill. He criticized Trevelyan’s supposed violent streak, but did not mention Churchill’s palpable lust for bloody combat to further his own glory and that of the British Empire, the Second World War notwithstanding. This endless fascination with warfare is very well-documented in Churchill’s own writings, especially his autobiographical ones.

18. Garibaldi I, 191; see also Garibaldi II, 7; Garibaldi III, 31, 295–96.
20. Aldo Berselli, L’Italia dall’eta giolittiana all’avvento del fascismo: negli scritti di G.M. Trevelyan e nella politica della sinistra inglese (Bologna: R. Patron, 1970). Only Berselli’s first section is on Trevelyan (pp. 1–73), and summarizes his writings on Italy after the trilogy, 1911–1923 (see note 13), including his disapproval of the Italian invasion of Tripoli in 1911. The degree to which he deplored Italy’s new imperialism was vented in letters to his brother Robert: “The Tripoli horrors and the whole folly of the war discourage me terribly. I don’t think I shall have the heart to go to Italy again for many years . . . The action of the degenerate Italians of today in going to conquer another race at the expense of European peace takes the heart out of me as far as my books are concerned” (Raina, George Macaulay Trevelyan, 74–75). He soon took heart in Italy again and supported its intervention on the Entente side fighting German aggression, writing in May 1915 that, “Italy’s soul has conquered her baser part, represented by the political ‘boss’ Giolitti. Mazzini has triumphed over Machiavelli” (Raina, 91). This was a positive spin on the sordid business of Italy’s entry into the fray. In Scenes from Italy’s War he continued to have this outlook, modifying it only with the rise of Fascism, which he did not see coming as quickly as he could have. He was not alone in his lack of foresight. By 1923 he saw well what dangers existed in an Italy under Mussolini. In his Historical Causes of the Present State of Affairs in Italy he attributed the rise of Fascism to the incompleteness of the Risorgimento which had never integrated the entire populace into the nation, and lamented that the Risorgimento tradition had become a memory of the past rather than a faith for the present and future (12–13). He conceded that Fascism’s establishment of order and stability was a good thing but regretted the Fascist abrogation of liberty, the physical violence against opponents, and the censorship of the press (16–17). He hoped that the politics of the piazza, as he referred to it, would die down and be replaced by a more effective parliamentary democracy along English lines (18–19). He concluded: “Signor Mussolini is a great man and, according to his lights, a very sincere patriot. Let our prayer for him be, not that he victoriously destroy free institutions in Italy, but that he may be
remembered as a man who gave his country order and discipline when she most needed them, and so enabled those free institutions to be restored in an era happier than that in which it is our present destiny to live” (20).


22. Trevelyan made sure to mention monuments where he had seen them on his perambulations. Some examples are: the statue of Garibaldi on horseback at the Wall of Urban VIII, Garibaldi’s statue in the piazza at Todi, the memorial pillar which marked the spot where Garibaldi stood at the Rubicon, Garibaldi’s statue in the piazza at Cesenatico, and the stone marking Garibaldi’s hut near Ravenna (*Garibaldi I*, 125, 254, 282 note 6, 284, 305).

23. Trevelyan wrote to his mother while he was at Cambridge, c.1894, “there is nothing which gives me the feeling of the ‘Romance of history,’ like the Odyssey, though Macaulay’s *Lays* are a splendid effort to fill the place of an Odyssey for the Roman world,” (Heron, “The Last Whig Historian and Consensus History,” 69). Trevelyan made frequent analogy to Greek qualities and Homeric characters. For instance, Garibaldi is described as giving up command with the “childish wrath of Achilles” and after his farewell as “resembling a perfect type of ancient Greek beauty . . . as though he were the sole descendent of some fabled, god-like race of old,” (*Garibaldi I*, 214, 232).

24. *Garibaldi I*, 13, 3, 23, 24; Trevelyan also called him “this Ulysses” when describing his seafaring journeys (*Garibaldi II*, 18), and later referred to him as a “modern Odysseus” (*Garibaldi III*, 109).


27. *Garibaldi I*, 5, 85; *Garibaldi II*, 87, 107, 120.

28. *Garibaldi III*, 56. He repeated this refrain twice more: Garibaldi was “utterly unfitted to choose among the pack” for administrative jobs, and “utterly incapable . . . of understanding the difficulties of administrative and military reorganization that confronted the new State” (*Garibaldi III*, 62, 284).


30. *Garibaldi I*, 180, 188, 190. Also at the Battle of Vellettri on 19 May 1849, Garibaldi’s strategy was right, but was wrong in his discipline of the forces for not being in command of the advanced troops (*Garibaldi I*, 154). He also made a mistake in putting La Masa’s men at the head of the march on the way to Palermo, June 1860 (*Garibaldi II*, 287).

31. *Garibaldi II*, 217; *Garibaldi III*, 58. Trevelyan also disapproved of Garibaldi condoning the assassination of Rossi, the Papal administrator in November 1848 (*Garibaldi I*, 83).


33. See especially the reviews of the trilogy by David Baird Smith, in *Scottish Historical Review* 4 (1907): 465–68; 7 (1910): 187–89; and 9 (1912): 201; also reviews of *Garibaldi III*, in *Saturday Review* 112 (18 November 1911): 647; and *Nation* 94 (11 January 1912), 33–34.

34. For a brief summary, see Stanislao G. Pugliese, “The Myth of Garibaldi,” *Italian Journal* 16, no. 11 (Autumn 2000): 11–15. See also Lucy Riall, “Hero, Saint or Revolutionary? Nineteenth-Century Politics and the Cult of Garibaldi,” *Modern Italy* 3, no. 2 (1998): 191–204. Riall showed how there was a Liberal government-sponsored campaign to use religious symbolism to deify Garibaldi as a secular ‘patriot saint’ to solidify the new nation. Although she admitted that the cult appeared spontaneously during the early years of the Risorgimento, she may have overstated the case by attributing it to Garibaldi’s doing, and not to others. He may have encouraged or allowed its development and dissemination, but she intimated that
he helped create his own cult. There does not seem to be evidence that his persona was contrived.


36. Sometimes Trevelyan’s description of Garibaldi sounded very close to one of Trevelyan himself. For instance, Garibaldi had a “naturally freedom-loving, romantic and poetical disposition” (Garibaldi I, 11).


40. Garibaldi I, 293 and note 3; also, “My authority for the incidents recorded in the remainder of the book is Guelfi, 117–147 . . . I have visited all the scenes,” (Garibaldi I, 319, note 1).

41. Garibaldi I, 5; He stated that it had “more than a touch of the feeling of our northern landscape . . . the scene would pass for one of those inlets on the western coast of Scotland,” (Garibaldi II, 33).

42. Garibaldi II, 205.


45. Garibaldi I, 174, 182, 212–13 and Garibaldi II, 32, 94, 155, 177, 180, 181, 202 are just a few of many examples of scenes remaining the same. Some examples of scenes having changed include: Villa Spada “as it still stands to-day,” but with a new name of Villa Nobilia (Garibaldi I, 210 and footnote 3), towards Prodo “for the modern pedestrian to experience for himself . . . it is not possible to go along” a certain route (Garibaldi I, 255 and note 2). Other times he described what the scene looked like: description of Flora at Citera while standing on the hill where the photo was taken (Garibaldi I, 264 and note 1), description of Guiccioli dairy-farm in the present as being “finely built” (Garibaldi I, 299).

46. Garibaldi I, 192, 201–02. For two more examples, see Garibaldi’s dream of his mother’s death and Mazzini’s mother dying (Garibaldi II, 17, 19), and Garibaldi fulfilling the dream of his life: “The vision of all that he might some day do for Italy had first risen before his mind’s eye more than twenty years before . . . The vision had drawn near, only to vanish again like a mirage on the walls of Rome . . . now all Europe was watching this poet’s daydream enact itself in the world of living men (Garibaldi III, 59).


48. These selected examples were consistent throughout. For Turks and Germans, see Garibaldi I, 46, 62, 70; for time-limited terms such as “evil” and “race,” see Garibaldi I, 54–55; for anthropomorphology and organicism, see Garibaldi I, 51, 55; for stereotyping Italians, Garibaldi I, 115, 136, 209.


50. GMT, “Bias in History,” in An Autobiography and Other Essays, 77; in a similar vein, the cantankerous Gaetano Salvemini once wrote, “I, for my part, declare that my mind is carpeted with biases—religious, philosophical, scientific, social, political, national, and even personal—and that I constantly make use of my biases in my studies. I am not ashamed of this fact, because biases are not irreconcilable with scientific research,” see Historian and Scientist (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 1939), 75.


54. GMT, “Autobiography,” 32; One example reads: “it is essential that the reader should follow the map, p. 141 above,” (Garibaldi I, 243, note 1).
55. A one-volume edition of the trilogy was eventually published: *Garibaldi: Being “Garibaldi’s Defence of the Roman Republic,” “Garibaldi and the Thousand,” “Garibaldi and the Making of Italy”* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1933). The Publisher’s Note stated: “In order to make possible the issue of these works in a single volume, it has been necessary to omit the Appendices, Bibliographies, Indexes and most of the Illustrations, retaining, however, all the Maps except two. The original separate volumes are still on sale and available for historical students and others desirous of consulting the sections not included in this one-volume edition.” Trevelyan was so established an historian by the 1930s, and since he had not kept his bibliography and appendices up-to-date, he acquiesced in this truncated presentation. Indeed, *England under Queen Anne*, considered by many to be his best work, had comparatively little by way of scholarly apparatus. He did not need to prove that *Queen Anne* had integrity by equipping it with bulky proofs as he had done with the trilogy. By then, producing a sound narrative history was of paramount importance to him. The bald one-volume *Garibaldi* may have started a precedent. Cassell began in the 1980s to publish the trilogy in paperback with neither apparatus nor illustrations. This may have contributed to scholars taking the trilogy less seriously.

56. Hibbert, 202. Garibaldi “stormed back into his cabin, slammed the door and no one dared approach it. When he learned that his commissary, Paolo Bovi, had still not returned with provisions from Grosseto he gave orders for him to be thrown overboard as soon as he appeared.”


58. Trevelyan revised *Garibaldi I* as new evidence became available, publishing a Second Edition in June 1907, and a New Edition in June 1908, (see the prefaces). *Garibaldi II* and *III* did not have substantive revisions because by 1912 he was already working on non-Italian projects. In *Garibaldi III*, though, he twice corrected himself for errors in *Garibaldi II* and *I* respectively (49, note 1, and 152, note 2).

59. GMT, “Clio, A Muse,” 34; Cannadine misquoted this slightly by using the past tense “was” and “had” (p. 195) and also cited it incorrectly in his notes (note 48, p. 274) as “‘Clio,’ p. 162.” On his own writing Trevelyan also wrote: “I have always taken a good deal of pains with the writing of my books, transcribing each paragraph four times on the average before the typing stage” (“Autobiography,” 1).

60. Shelby Foote, “Bibliographical Note,” in *The Civil War, A Narrative: Fort Sumter to Perryville* [Vol. 1] (New York: Random House, 1958), 815. See also Conversations with Shelby Foote, ed. William C. Carter (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1989) where his point was made again in interviews with John Graham (69), Evans Harrington (91), W. Hampton Sides (232), et. al. Foote’s Civil War trilogy was well-known amongst Civil War scholars, students, and ‘buffs,’ but he was not a household name until his major role as interviewee and expert on Ken Burns’ Civil War documentary. The power of the visual medium, and the charismatic personality, in this case Foote’s, cannot be overemphasized.


64. Kenneth Churchill made the link between Gibbon and Symonds in his *Italy and English Literature, 1764–1930* (Totowa, N.J.: Barnes and Noble, 1980), 117, but did
not include Trevelyan in his analysis. Plumb wrote that the Garibaldi trilogy ranks “with the works of Prescott or Parkman, in fact with the world’s best narrative histories,” (G.M. Trevelyan 21). His homage to Trevelyan was notable not only for its content but also for its having been published in a series of supplements to the *British Book News* which included pieces on other Edwardian writers, such as Arnold Bennett, G.K. Chesterton, Joseph Conrad, T.S. Eliot, E.M. Forster, Henry James, Bertrand Russell, G.B. Shaw, and Osbert Sitwell.
Copyright of Journal of the Historical Society is the property of Blackwell Publishing Limited. The copyright in an individual article may be maintained by the author in certain cases. Content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.
An Edwardian's Search for Meaning: Trevelyan's Garibaldi. Article. Mar 2005. Gustave Flaubert and George Eliot moved beyond the realist novel, then at its height, towards symbolism in the search for fresh modes of expression for their perspective on history. Flaubert's Salammbo and Eliot's Romola, both of which received harsh criticism, are discussed as exemplary texts for the understanding of the dilemmas posed by the writing of historical novels.