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War, virtue and mobilization in the Risorgimento:

Massimo d'Azeglio's *Niccolò de' Lapi*

Anne O'Connor

In 1841 Massimo d'Azeglio, the nineteenth-century politician, painter and novelist, published his second novel which was titled *Niccolò de' Lapi*. In this classic Risorgimento tale, set in the sixteenth century, the author tells the story of the Lapi family during the turbulent years of 1527-1530 in Tuscany. The struggles that took place at this time in Tuscany, culminating in the famous siege of Florence in 1530, are for Massimo d'Azeglio a perfect launching pad for his ideas on virtue and duty; the qualities that he identifies in sixteenth-century Tuscans (and in particular the Lapi family) are presented as inspirational for subsequent generations of Italians in whom such qualities are deemed to be deficient. D'Azeglio deliberately set his novel in a time of war in the Tuscan region famed for its factionalism, in order to issue a rallying call to the nineteenth century for greater unity among Italians. The Tuscan location also allowed d'Azeglio to explore Tuscany's history of independence and defiance, exemplified by the sixteenth-century events, as a means of finding inspirational examples for later generations. *Niccolò de' Lapi* thus aimed to advance the Italian national discourse during the nineteenth century and the choice by d'Azeglio of his Tuscan topic was both successful and pointed: it contained common Risorgimento narratives such as suffering, danger and repression and also an exaltation of individual and collective struggle in defence of the community.¹ The novel sought, through the historical example of former events in Tuscany, to convince of the contemporary need for sacrifice, conflict and heroism.

¹ On key tropes of the Risorgimento novel, see Gigante & Vanden Berghe (2011).

Set in the years between 1527 and 1530, the work focuses mainly on the siege of Florence of 1530 when a small republican city and its Tuscan territories faced the mighty powers of Emperor Charles V and Pope Clement VII who wished to regain the city for the Medici. The story of the siege was a classic David and Goliath tale, and the defence of the city was of particular significance to nineteenth-century patriots as it involved a popular movement fighting against foreign forces faced with seemingly insurmountable difficulties. D’Azeglio’s first novel *Ettore Fieramosca* (1833) had also been set in a time of war and had as its centre-piece a duel between Italian and French forces.² *Niccolò de’ Lapi* develops on this form of narrative and rhetoric by using the historical example of previous battles to prepare Italians for future conflict during the Risorgimento. In contrast to *Ettore Fieramosca*, the second novel is much darker in its themes and dilemmas and delves more deeply and at length into the notion of sacrifice and death.³ In particular, d’Azeglio highlights certain virtues and attributes that connect with key nineteenth century concepts in patriotic discourse: kinship, sanctity and honor (Banti, 2000). These concepts were central to the Risorgimento and through *Niccolò de’ Lapi*, the author interweaves these nineteenth-century concerns into his narrative. Lucy Riall has observed that a “common theme of Risorgimento narratives and political rhetoric is suffering and danger — a hero betrayed, a virgin dishonored, a land oppressed by foreign tyranny — and with this threat comes an equal emphasis on the redemptive power of courage, rebellion and martyrdom.” (Riall, 2007: 25) These concerns are incorporated by d’Azeglio into his novel, making it an archetype of Risorgimento fiction.

² Riall claims that d’Azeglio’s first novel, *Ettore Fieramosca*, is one of the most emblematic of all Risorgimento stories. (2008: 168).

³ Francesco de Sanctis in his commentary on the novel wrote, “Qui domina un’aria fosca, la quale fa contrasto a quella fresca e viva del primo romanzo” (1954: 303).

By setting his novel in war-torn Tuscany, d'Azeglio was able to privilege themes which would have a patriotic appeal - the defiant hero, the valiant struggle, the virtuous death. The iconography resounded with aspirations for a new Italy. It was important that d'Azeglio chose a story that was ultimately one of defeat (the Florentines lost the siege) as this echoed with nineteenth-century setbacks. Furthermore, the strengthened emotions surrounding defeat spoke to the nineteenth-century romantic sensibilities. Suffering, death and defeat had an iconographic potency which d'Azeglio harnessed for his novel. It is also significant that d'Azeglio wrote about war in his novel rather than other elements of Tuscany's history. The cultural/artistic story of the region is well known but for the nineteenth-century writer, the militaristic emphasis better reflected the endowments desired in Italians in the later century. This is best illustrated in the novel in the figure of Michelangelo who appears as a character in *Niccolò de' Lapi* not as an artist but instead as a military architectural strategist.

Setting the historical novel in a time of war served d'Azeglio's aim to stimulate participation and emulation in the nineteenth century and to create a canon of heroes and martyrs for that era. As Riall has noted, "The association of national identity with war and masculine virility is not unusual [...] the military provided a bridge between abstract public ideals of the nation, on the one hand, and models of personal behavior and gender roles, on the other" (Riall, 2012: 154). This can be clearly seen in d'Azeglio's descriptions of two important characters in the novel: Francesco Ferruccio and Lamberto (de' Lapi). The latter, the adopted son of Niccolò, has, we are told, every possible virtue, from physical prowess to exemplary moral fibre which had been combined with an excellent education in the Lapi

household (d'Azeglio, 1895 (1841): 101).⁴ Early in the story, Lamberto leaves Florence to become a soldier and the narrative follows him in his military exploits from his initial escapades enrolling with Giovanni delle Bande Nere, to his participation in naval battles with Filippino Doria. These scenes are described with verve and at length by d'Azeglio.⁵ Even though they do not directly relate to the historical events in Tuscany in 1530, Lamberto's military exploits before he returns to Florence for the siege are considered crucial to the novel. Through these descriptions, the author creates a character who can provide a model of personal behavior for nineteenth-century Italians; in Lamberto, d'Azeglio provides an example of the virtuous hero, one who is willing to risk his life, his love, everything for the cause in which he passionately believes.

Francesco Ferruccio fulfils a similar role in the novel: the famous captain of the Florentine troops who died in Gavinana near Pistoia during the siege is presented as the ultimate martyr and hero. In a classic case of the romantic interest in the dying hero, Ferruccio's death in the novel is both noble and defiant, but the manner of his death is also a cause of anger and indignation, two powerful emotions to be drawn from the events of the siege. The affective dimension of the writing is not to be underestimated and Ferruccio's courage and valor made him a prototype that could be used for the benefit of nineteenth-century character formation (O'Connor, 2008: 57-63; Petrizzo, 2013). These literary models of virile, noble men were important as they were designed to impact on the character of the nineteenth-century Italians. The well-used accusations of Italian indolence and degeneration in the nineteenth century (Patriarca, 2005, 2010), both among national and international commentators, made this a matter of some urgency for those who, like D'Azeglio, wished for

⁴ De Sanctis said of Lamberto, "è ciò di più puro, di più nobile, di più grande può concepire un poeta volendo idealizzare un uomo" (1954: 304).

⁵ Marshall claims that d'Azeglio is "at his best in depicting scenes of swift action" in his novels. (1966: 67).

a virile, virtuous Italian nation. The depiction of Lamberto and Ferruccio in the novel must therefore be seen as a pointed choice which aimed to enhance, through example, the national character.⁶

Whereas Ferruccio and Lamberto serve in particular in the novel to highlight the importance of military prowess and virtue, the main character of the book, Niccolò, fulfils another function, namely the elaboration of the thematic of sacrifice and martyrdom. Niccolò loses four sons to the defence of Florence and is himself executed after all his attempts to fight for the Florentine Republic have failed. The novel opens and closes with a funeral; in the opening chapter of the book, Niccolò is described at the funeral of his second son:

[...] colla fronte alta, la faccia serena, e la mente tutta assorta in Dio, al quale offeriva non solo la vita di questi due figli, che teneva per martiri, ma quella degli altri ancor vivi, e la sua, purchè salvasse Firenze (d'Azeglio, 1895: 14)

When Niccolò is executed at the end of the novel he faces his death serenely and D'Azeglio draws heavily on the iconography of religious martyrdom to create a scene of pathos. Niccolò was a follower of Savonarola and throughout the novel his devotion to religion sustains his belief. There is a flowing of concepts in the book between the religious, military and domestic worlds and sacrifice is a key theme that emerges in all of these realms. Savonarola had sacrificed his life for his religion; the Lapi family will sacrifice everything in defense of the city; and finally, religion sustains the characters and provides them with the strength to continue their doomed resistance.⁷

⁶ Gigante has noted that “[...] d'Azeglio si cimenta nell'impresa romanzesca per una questione 'd'onore nazionale,' che appare intimamente legata non solo, sul piano dei contenuti, ai sentimenti cavallereschi di cui il suo romanzo è pieno [...] ma all'idea di riforma del carattere degli Italiani, che è il *Leitmotiv* di molti suoi scritti pubblici e privati.” (2011b: 91)

⁷ On martyrdom in the Risorgimento see Riall (2010: 255-87).

The interrelationship of key Risorgimento concepts in the novel is also evident in the bonds displayed between family and patria. For the Lapi family, the patria is but an extension of the family and the bonds that tie families to each other such as love, shared experiences and kinship, extend to the wider horizon of the army. Domestic emotions are transferred to patriotic realm and throughout d'Azeglio's novel, he moves seamlessly between betrayal of the family and betrayal of the patria; threats to the family and threats to the patria. For the Lapi family, there is no distinction between the domestic and the national. Love spills and flows between the two. Suffering, danger, repression, sacrifice, conflict, heroism, exile are to be endured by soldiers and family members alike. After the death of his brother, Niccolò's youngest child, Bindo, a boy of 15, joins the defense of the city. In an emotionally charged scene, Niccolò says to his son: "Ascoltami, Bindo! Sappi che d'or in poi questi (additando il capitano) è tuo padre. Questa (additando la bandiera) è casa tua. Costoro (additando i soldati) i tuoi fratelli" (d'Azeglio, 1895: 35).

The ties that would link Bindo to the Florentine army were the same ties that linked him to his family. This contrasts strongly with the mercenary model of military organization (which was in fact very common in the period in which the novel was set). D'Azeglio chooses instead to focus on the volunteer who fights for a cause in which he believes and to which he is emotionally linked, and this choice must be clearly seen in a nineteenth-century context.⁸

National mobilisation was a key element of the success of the Risorgimento and the ability to convince people to risk everything in the cause of Italian unity, to volunteer to fight for the Italian cause, was a central concern of nationalists. There have been wide-ranging discussions on how this national mobilization was achieved but one of the most compelling arguments made recently has been that of Alberto Banti, who points to a Risorgimento

⁸ On volunteering and the Risorgimento, see Cecchinato & Isnenghi, (2007: 697-720).

canon that forms the “core of a ‘national-patriotic’ discourse” (Banti, 2000)⁹. The historian argues that through key texts, a canon of deep images were created for the Italian people which ultimately helped in the national mobilization (2000: 53). Banti has claimed that through people such as Manzoni, Guerrazzi, d’Azeglio and Hayez, both patriots and the wider reading public discovered a national community and a common past, with an appeal which was all the more potent because it was heard in novels, paintings and songs. For Banti there is a single continuum that ties the images, metaphors and narratives of these texts to the national-patriotic discourse of Risorgimento politics. The nation is a community established by the bonds of affection, nature, kinship and history. Opposing this view, David Laven has argued that “[...] when popular insurrections broke out in 1848, those on the barricades were not prompted by reading Foscolo or looking at the canvases of Hayez, or even an artistic engagement with Dante” (Laven, 2006: 257). However, I would argue that d’Azeglio’s novel does indeed pave the way for involvement in popular insurrection by providing examples, models of behavior and emotional tension. In *Niccolò de’ Lapi*, d’Azeglio presents a family with a dilemma similar to that of nineteenth-century patriots: whether to risk everything for a cause in which they passionately believe or whether to save themselves. They choose the former option, and in exploring the emotional and personal impact of their actions, d’Azeglio shows his nineteenth-century readers how it was indeed possible to risk everything for a love of patria. The war is used to furnish examples of virile behavior, of sacrifice and of bravery, and the backdrop of the siege provides tension and an emotional setting where passions are increased and people’s characters are put to the test. The novel gave examples, showed precedents, and highlighted the passions and sacrifices of previous generations in the hope of galvanizing the emotions and character of nineteenth-century

⁹ See also the subsequent reaction to his theories, especially the varied discussion contained in the special issue of *Nations and Nationalism*, 15 (3) 2009.

contemporaries. D'Azeglio emphasizes the redemptive power of sacrifice and, although the novel is a tragedy, the didactic messages are none the weaker for this.

Niccolò de' Lapi thus highlights the emotions of the sixteenth century in order to provide the possibility for empathy and emulation. The author says in his introduction:

[...] non ebbi tuttavia per iscopo dipingere il quadro completo dell'Assedio del 1529-1530, ed il titolo stesso di questo racconto basta forse a mostrare che più degli eventi, mi sono proposto descrivere le passioni che in allora agitavano il popolo Fiorentino. (d'Azeglio, 1895: 5)

These passions are regularly contrasted in the volume with the emasculation of contemporary Italians, their indolence and indifference:

Tutto quanto si vorrebbe sapere sul fatto di quegli antichi uomini, che negli umori, nell'ire, nella fede, nei sacrifici e perfino nei delitti, mostrarono una ferrea natura tanto lontana della moderna fiacchezza? (1895: 6)

The desire to mobilize contemporaries is evidenced in the appeals for action in the novel and d'Azeglio contrasts the attitude of the sixteenth century to that of his own age:

Il soffio avvelenato dell'indifferenza, del dubitare, ammesso come un principio, non aveva agghiacciato quei cuori, essi poteano palpitare liberi e sicuri, per quella fede che s'aveano scelta, poteano sacrificare tutto per seguirla e farle trionfare, potean dire colla fronte levata: "Noi crediamo che al mondo vi sian le cose più alte, più degne, più stimabili delle ricchezze, de' comodi, de' piaceri" senza il sospetto che l'ironia rispondesse alle loro parole, che il loro nobile sacrificio venisse accolto col sorriso dello scherno e della compassione.

Fortuna per Lamberto di non esser nato 300 anni dopo, e per conseguenza di non aver avuto la tentazione d'imitare certi eroi che la letteratura moderna sembra

offrirci quali modelli di forza, di pensar magnanimo e di ardito operare. (1895: 205)

In contrast, d'Azeglio is writing a work of literature, which, taking advantage of the form of the historical novel, aims to include a contemporary message in a historical story. By focusing on the stories of war-torn sixteenth-century Tuscany, the author addresses contemporary issues such as a divided country and the need for action. In a region famed for internecine conflict, one of d'Azeglio's lead characters, Lamberto, enunciates the following plea for unity:

Qual demonio dell'inferno ci saetta ne' cuori il suo veleno, che sempre tra noi ci abbiamo a lacerare! tra noi fratelli! Tra noi d'un istesso sangue, d'un'istessa lingua, d'un'istessa famiglia!... E una città coll'altra, o coll'armi, o colle frodi e co' maneggi, e sempre in ogni modo, pensare a nuocerci ed a rovinarci tra noi? (1895: 456)

The conflict in Tuscany and the siege of Florence, thus provided d'Azeglio with a vehicle to advance his formation of the Italian national character into a virile, united, mobilized people, passionate and emotionally involved in the fate of their homeland.

It must be added at this point that, although d'Azeglio focuses much attention on the virile attributes of the lead characters, he does not ignore the role of women in support of the patria and national mobilization. In keeping with many female typologies in the Risorgimento, d'Azeglio's novel features a loving mother nurturing a soldier, a loving wife encouraging her husband into battle, a wise mother teaching her son about virtue and duty, and a loyal daughter virtuous and supportive towards her father. D'Azeglio values the various roles that women played and he compares the sacrifices made by women for the cause of the patria to the men's sacrifices on the battlefield: "La patria ne' suoi pericoli assai

chiede agli uomini, ma forse più talvolta alle donne. Agli uni il sangue e la vita propria, alle altre quella de' loro cari." (1895: 347)

Women are essential for d'Azeglio in linking love, sacrifice, honor and virtue and in providing emotional potency at key stages of the novel. From her deathbed, Nunziata writes to her son Lamberto, saying:

Ora mi vien meno la vita: poche parole dunque. Tieni a mente, figliuolo, che il tuo primo debito è verso la tua patria: nell'amore di essa è racchiusa ogni virtù, che i virtuosi cittadini, e non altro fanno le città felici e potenti. (1895: 203)

Nunziata had been willing to allow her only son Lamberto become a soldier despite the risks because she knew that it was a virtuous choice; her actions are as exemplary as those of her son. In the novel, women are also valued as teachers and moral guides for children and d'Azeglio addresses his female readers directly at one point and says:

Se sapeste quanto stia in vostra mano il bene dell'umana società, che tutto è posto alla fine nel bene delle famiglie! Se sapeste quanto da voi dipenda far gli uomini generosi, arditi, amanti della patria, farli umani, operosi, sapienti, farli gentili e costumati. (1895: 108)

As there is such a flow in the novel between the family and the military, the domestic role and behavior of women impacted not just on their families but also on society at large. Many studies of Italian nationalism in recent years have pointed to the importance of family and the role of women in creating links to an idea of patria; research has revealed the impact of nationalism on the private realm and subsequently on gender delineations in society (Bonsanti, 2007). Women's involvement in nationalism has been seen to vary from the biological reproducers of the nation's children, to transmitters of national culture, to symbolic signifiers of national difference, to active, sometimes militant participants in

national struggles (Yuval-Davis, *et al.* 1989). D'Azeglio appears to tick all of these boxes in writing *Niccolò de' Lapi* which features women as mothers, teachers, exemplary figures, and even in one case, a soldier. The value he places in women (and their role in the nationalism) can be captured in his declaration:

Ah care le mie donne! [...] se sapeste quanto vi rende grandi, nobili, importanti ai miei occhi, l'incarico a voi commesso dalla provvidenza nel mondo! Se il vero bello, il vero grande, l'importante finalmente ha a misurarsi dall'utile e dalla virtù, chi potrà credersi più importante d'una buona moglie, d'una buona madre? [...] Chi al par di voi è capace viver vita di sacrifici, immolarsi del tutto al bene, alla felicità della persona cui donaste il vostro amore? Gli atti di eroismo presso gli uomini sono sempre sostenuti dagli applausi e dalle lodi: per voi invece quanto può operar d'arduo e di grande la virtù in un cuor umano, resta il più delle volte ascoso ed obbliato tra le pareti domestiche. E se ciò non ostante siete virtuosi ed utili, qual gloria, qual merito maggiore! (1895: 107)

Women are thus key in *Niccolò de' Lapi* as conduits of nineteenth-century ideologies and as links between the domestic and the military, between the private and the public. Their actions in the novel cement the family as a central emotional yardstick for patriotism, especially in the challenging circumstances of sixteenth-century Tuscany.

D'Azeglio, who stated in his memoirs that he wrote his historical novels to instil virtue in Italians, clearly values this in both the domestic and military spheres. For Italy to be united in the nineteenth century, *all* of society has a role and an example of this involvement is, for d'Azeglio, to be found in sixteenth-century Tuscany:

E cosa che stringe il cuore, veder tanta moltitudine di cittadini, insieme colle donne e persin co' fanciulli, resolver tutti con tanto ardore di volger il viso alla fortuna,

affrontar con tanta prontezza d'animo i rischi d'una lotta cotanto impari, i disagi, la fame, le ferite, la morte, piuttosto che soffrire un'ingiustizia. (1895: 54)

From the military hero, to the brave child, to the women of the city, for d'Azeglio, these are all part of society and he presents them in his novel at a time of war and suffering, when their characters are tested to the extreme. In order to highlight the exemplary nature of the 'virtuous' characters, the author of *Niccolò de' Lapi* presents for each of them an 'evil' opposite where the lack of virtue has 'deformed' their character. Thus we meet with Malatesta, the leader of the Florentine troops, who betrays the city and Troilo, who tricks one of Niccolò's daughters, Lisa, into a sham marriage, abandons his 'wife' and their son, and attempts to rape his 'wife's' sister, Laudomia. The extreme nature of these characters serves as a counterpoint to the virtue and honor of Lamberto and Ferruccio. Similarly, with Niccolò's two daughters, one, Laudomia, is angelic in her virtue and flawless in her character. The other, Lisa, foolishly falls for Troilo and sneaks away to marry him – she ends the novel by descending into insanity and disappearing into the hills of Tuscany forever. Such juxtapositions serve d'Azeglio's end of impacting on the Italian national character through models of behavior.

While a certain amount of attention has been paid to the thematic content of the Risorgimento novel, rarely is the reception and the impact of these examined. Different forms of media, many of which were interconnected, served to diffuse the themes advanced by d'Azeglio and encourage the discovery of a national community, even among a largely illiterate public. D'Azeglio was happy with the "esito prospero" of *Niccolò de' Lapi* (1891: 520) and the siege of Florence became a very popular theme in the nineteenth century.¹⁰

¹⁰ Two other novels were published on the topic in this period: Francesco Domenico Guerrazzi's *L'Assedio di Firenze* (1836) and Agostino Ademollo's *Marietta de' Ricci* (1840). Guerrazzi's *Assedio di Firenze* in particular enjoyed huge success and went through more than fifty editions between 1836 e 1916. (Scappaticci, 1978: 10)

D'Azeglio became involved in contemporary commemorations of the siege and specifically, was involved in the promotion of the cult of Francesco Ferruccio in this period. *Niccolò de' Lapi* proved to be a very successful novel, not quite matching the success of *Ettore Fieramosca*, but certainly nationally acclaimed.

D'Azeglio was aware of changing patterns of readership in Italy and particularly of the success of the historical novel in reaching out to an expanding reading public (d'Azeglio was, of course, Alessandro Manzoni's son-in-law). In his memoirs, he speaks of how he abandoned a painting career in order to write his first historical novel, a move which was motivated by his desire to adopt the most effective means of communicating with the public.¹¹ Although literacy rates in Italy were in this period still low by European standards (Genovesi, 1998; Marchesini, 1991; Soldani & Turi, 1993), there was nonetheless a sense of a broadening readership: d'Azeglio at various points in the novel addresses his female readers and is at pains to point out the importance of having a wide cross-section of the Italian population read his oeuvre. Not all Italians would have been able to read his work, but the proportion that could access it was nonetheless increasing, particularly among the middle classes. D'Azeglio himself described how he wrote historical novels as part of a plan to impact on the character of Italians as part of a *national* literature and therefore a wide reception of his work was important to him (1891: 483)¹². As Laven has pointed out, Italy still lacks a comprehensive study of readership patterns in the nineteenth century and therefore the popular dissemination of d'Azeglio's work is very important in gauging the book's

There were plays, operas, artwork, memorials, mementos, commemorations based on the siege that served to diffuse the central messages in the nineteenth-century appropriations of the event.

¹¹ "Un giorno, me ne ricordo come fosse ora, stavo terminando quel gruppo di cavalli azzuffati che sta nel mezzo; e mi venne considerato che, data l'importanza del fatto, e l'opportunità di rammentarlo per mettere un po'di foco in corpo agli Italiani, sarebbe riuscito molto meglio, e molto più efficace, raccontato che dipinto. Dunque raccontiamolo! Dissi. E come? Un poema? Che poema! Prosa, prosa, parlare per esser capito per le vie e per le piazze, e non in Elicona!" (1891:464).

¹² For a recent discussion of the debate on D'Azeglio and 'making Italians', see Gigante, (2011a: 5-15) and Hom (2013: 1-16)

impact: the operas and plays which were performed on the theme of the siege of the Florence diffused the book's central messages to a wider (and not necessarily literate) nineteenth-century audience. Furthermore, events such as d'Azeglio's erection of a monument to Francesco Ferruccio drew greater attention of the public to the heroics of the siege. Felice Turotti wrote a book on the novel just after its publication and said that d'Azeglio's work "svegliò curiosità, e lo spaccio fattone prova che in Italia si legge, quando almeno la fama dello scrittore è giusta e meritata" (Turotti, 1842: 2). Commenting on d'Azeglio's second novel, Turotti said of the author: "egli imprese a descrivere un fatto non meno nazionale, ma più grande, meno fortunato ma più strepitoso, poichè non è una lotta combattuta fra pochi individui, ma è un esercito composto di varie genti, contro una città splendore d'Italia" (1842: 16). Through historical novels, d'Azeglio and other writers made nationalism respectable among the educated middle classes of Italy and these works were important tools in advancing the Italian national discourse throughout the nineteenth century.

Conclusion

In his memoirs, d'Azeglio had said that it was important to form Italians "che sappiano adempiere al loro dovere; quindi che si formino alti e forti caratteri" (1866)¹³ and his novel *Niccolò de' Lapi* can be seen as an early attempt at this outcome. Through this work of historical fiction, he sought to highlight virtue in a previous generation, set against the backdrop of war and conflict. Ultimately the author aimed to use such examples (both positive and negative) in order to mobilize nineteenth-century Italians into action. In his novel he created an ancestry of sixteenth-century Italians who were noble, who had Italy's aims at heart and who were only thwarted by internal betrayal and the perfidious foreigner.

¹³ Quotation is from the autograph version of the memoirs; the subsequent posthumous published version of d'Azeglio's memoirs contained an altered text; for the history of these alterations see Hom (2013: 1-16).

D'Azeglio deliberately chose to write in the form of a historical novel because it was the most popular literary form of that decade, and by doing so he hoped to appeal to the people and to engage them in the cause. He attempted to translate elite aspirations into mass enthusiasm and claimed that, "La storia per un pezzo fu storia de' grandi; è tempo che diventi la storia di tutti" (1891: 456). *Niccolo de' Lapi*, was an attempt to show Italians their duty and how to act in a noble and virtuous manner. Through the example of characters and situations set in the conflicts of sixteenth-century Tuscany, d'Azeglio demonstrated his ideas on how to form the Italian national character and to "make" Italians.