

# THE NAPOLEONIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



October—November 2022

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### Cover Illustration

Portrait of Letizia Bonaparte with a servant dressed in the oriental style by Jacques Henri Sablet (1749-1803), Musée Fesch, Ajaccio, Corsica, France 48x59 cm, oil on canvas. Note the bust of Napoleon as First Consul in the background.

Welcome to the October-November 2022 issue of the NHS Newsletter.

The past issues have had many articles about Napoleon and St. Helena so I have gone back to Europe with a theme of (almost) all things Italian. We have had some great articles submitted and we are always thankful to our authors for providing them. Back are our usual articles, auction updates, conference reports, The Napoleon Blog and Collector's Corner. I hope you enjoy this issue and Vive l'Empereur!

*Edna Markham, NHS Editor and Membership Director*

# THE NAPOLEONIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

## NHS Annual Meeting Report—Quebec City, Quebec, August 12-14, 2022

by Hank Zucker, NHS President Emeritus

Champlain called us to hold our 2022 conference in his city.

The city welcomed us with fireworks!



The early arrivals enjoyed a fine dinner at a nearby restaurant Thursday evening.

Our conference was held in the beautiful Le Château Frontenac, a city landmark.

We held our annual Board of Director's meeting Friday afternoon.

### **Membership Renewal :**

August 15th is the yearly membership renewal date for the Napoleonic Historical Society. You can renew at this link [here](#). Please consider increasing your membership level to a premium membership to be eligible for our Napoleonic themed gifts. If you have already renewed your membership, then thank you for your continued support!

### **Important Email Notice:**

We are once again able to access to the mailbox for [president@napoleonichistoricalsociety.org](mailto:president@napoleonichistoricalsociety.org). But as before, if you have any articles or correspondence regarding the newsletter, please send them to [editor.nhs.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:editor.nhs.newsletter@gmail.com)

**Important Notice:** We are sad to report that the Fondation Napoléon will no longer publish their weekly newsletter in English. To subscribe to the French version, click on this link [here](#).

## NHS Annual Meeting Report—Quebec City, Quebec, August 12-14, 2022

by Hank Zucker, NHS President Emeritus

Our Friday dinner was a very fine buffet. After we ate, Alexander Mikaberidze gave a talk on the War of 1812 from the Russian perspective. Naturally, most of us mainly knew the French perspective, and so learned a lot.

Saturday was filled with talks. Many enlightened us on lesser-known aspects of the Napoleonic era. The complete list is below. The one inspiring the most intense reactions was a talk on Napoleonic erotica by Sébastien Larivée and David Markham.



The intensity of the audience reaction can be seen from the *Before* and *After* photos!

*Before*



*After*



## NHS Annual Meeting Report—Quebec City, Quebec, August 12-14, 2022

by Hank Zucker, NHS President Emeritus

Our Saturday banquet was a true five-course feast with bubbly and other wine included. After our traditional toast to the Emperor, NHS president Chris Sloan presented our long-time Executive Director Todd Fisher with a special medal designed by President Emeritus Cobe Grabenhorst in honor of Todd's many years of service to the Society. While Todd retired from that role, he will still be an active member.



David Markham, Mark Schneider, Todd Fisher and NHS President Chris Sloan.

After dinner Mark Schneider told us how he became one of the main Napoleon reenactors. He shared his early love for Napoleon and how he first started portraying him after starting his work at Colonial Williamsburg. He also shared some of his favorite times portraying the Emperor at battles and other occasions. We all much enjoyed his stories. A few of us were even present at some of the events! The rest were jealous.



Many Napoleonic discussions!

Mark Schneider as Napoleon!



## NHS Annual Meeting Report—Quebec City, Quebec, August 12-14, 2022

by Hank Zucker, NHS President Emeritus

Of course he wasn't the only one in period attire.



It was a most memorable conference!

### Saturdays Talks

- Martin Lancaster Video, *What is a Regiment?*
- Peter Twist, *French Cavalry*
- Todd Fisher, *The Directoire*
- Edna Mueller-Markham, *A View from the Saddle at Rivoli: Using Google Earth to Interpret Napoleonic Sites*
- Kevin Rodriguez, *Napoleonic Battles at Ground Level: Using Napoléon: Total War to Experience Combat Up Close and Personal*
- David Markham, Todd Fisher, Mark Billings Round Table, *Napoleon Won at Waterloo! Now What?*
- Sébastien Larivée and David Markham, *Erotica and Curiosa in the Napoleonic Era*



## Between Glory and Good Sense: Resistance to Conscription and the National Guard Experience in the States of Parma, 1805-06 by Doina Pasca Harsanyi

Doina Pasca Harsanyi received her Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2001 and is a professor at Central Michigan University. Her BA is from the University of Timisoara, Romania, in French Language and Literature. Her research interests include topics in French revolutionary and Napoleonic history, French-American relations, the movement of ideas across the Atlantic during the Enlightenment and the modern era, and the history of the nobility throughout the revolutionary era. Her current research project explores different aspects of Italy under Napoleonic occupation.



The Duchies of Parma and Piacenza, commonly referred to as the States of Parma, had a peculiar trajectory during the French-dominated period (1796-1815). Three Bourbon family pacts placed the duchies under joint French-Spanish custody and a Bourbon dynasty ruled Parma since 1748 when Philip, the son of Spain's king Philip V, became Duke of Parma, Piacenza and Guastalla. His marriage with Louis XV's daughter Louise Elisabeth consolidated the Spanish-French agreement over Parma which lasted until the beginning of the French Revolution when Spain became the default sole guardian of the duchies. In 1796, as he was leading the Army of Italy in the Piedmont and Lombardy, Bonaparte counted on the neutrality of the Spanish Bourbons to clear his way through Northern Italy. Consequently, he refrained from occupying the duchies, which remained untouched by the revolutionizing whirlwind that was rapidly changing their neighbors in the region. Instead, a peace treaty signed in Paris in September 1796 left Duke Ferdinand on the throne, while the French army was granted free passage and the right to requisition supplies throughout the Parmense territory. As First Consul, Napoleon continued to rely on Spain's neutrality and left Parma out of the administrative schemes that followed the second invasion of Italy. By the Treaty of Aranjuez (1801) the duchies were formally ceded to France in exchange for a large part of Tuscany, renamed Kingdom of Etruria.<sup>1</sup> Duke Ferdinand was allowed to remain in Parma. His unexpected death in 1802 gave Napoleon the opportunity to bring the duchies closer to the French administrative web, although their status remained undecided. Moreau de Saint-Méry, nominated Administrator General with

full powers upon the duke's death, was supposed to act as a prefect although he had neither the title nor the formal prerogatives of a prefect. With this nomination, Napoleon put the duchies out of his mind, or so it seemed to Moreau de Saint-Méry who governed unhindered for four years, until the summer of 1805 when the emperor spent 24 hours in Parma.

The short visit to Parma, a week after his coronation, left a bad impression: Napoleon found that the duchies were not contributing to the empire's coffers as he thought they ought to.<sup>2</sup> This conclusion prompted frequent subsequent working visits from financial inspectors who checked the administration's books and made sure its financial obligations were met. The pretense of autonomy evaporated in July 1805, when the duchies, henceforth referred to as the States of Parma and Piacenza, were included within the jurisdiction of the 28<sup>th</sup> Military Division, headquartered in Genoa under the command of General Louis Antoine Choin de Montchoisy.<sup>3</sup> Further up, the chain of command included General Jacques-François de Menou, commander of the Transalpine departments, *Architrésorier de l'Empire* Charles François Lebrun, Governor of Liguria, and finally Prince Eugène de Beauharnais, Viceroy of Italy as of Napoleon's coronation as King of Italy on May 26, 1805. Inclusion in the Military Division came shortly after the imperial decree of 8 Prairial, an 13 (28 May 1805) which ordered the formation of a company of gendarmerie under the command of Captain Lanault. The company was identical with those in the interior of the empire, with brigades distributed throughout

## Between Glory and Good Sense: Resistance to Conscription and the National Guard Experience in the States of Parma, 1805-06 , (continued)

the territory (each important commune had to accommodate at least one brigade of 6 men).<sup>4</sup>

These important changes indicated that Napoleon had decided to integrate the territory in the French state beyond the expectation of financial contributions, without formally changing Parma's status—it remained a nominally autonomous state under heavy French control, but still not integrated into the French administrative web. The presence of the gendarmes foreshadowed military recruiting, considering that gendarmes were primarily tasked with preventing desertions, arresting fugitives, and securing the smooth functioning of the conscription process. Indeed, as soon as the company was organized in Parma, the Imperial Decree of 27 Prairial (16 June 1805) stipulated that starting with the year XIV, conscription laws were to take effect there like in any department of the empire: The States of Parma (population about 300,000 in 1805) were to contribute 100 men in 1806, to be enlisted in the battalion of *Tirailleurs du Po*. Shortly, the numbers were revised upwards to 200 (Imperial Decree of 8 Fructidor, an 13 (14 August 1805), for a total participation of about 1,000 by 1809.<sup>5</sup> Administrator General Moreau de Saint-Méry was responsible for meeting these targets, with the aid of the newly formed company of gendarmerie.

The two hundred recruits were expected to join the French army sometime in 1806. In the nearer future, Parma and Piacenza were assigned behind the front

duties such as safe passage of troops, readily available hospitals and recovery centers, well organized lines of supply for food-stuffs, horses, and especially mules. The latter, essential for household the economy in mountain regions, turned out to be the one hurdle too many and shortly fueled the fires of rebellion as discussed later. For the better part of 1805 the various fiscal impositions and steady administrative reorganization failed to stir any notable opposition. Passive resistance in the form of avoiding taxation was probably the most widespread response: The *Gridario* for 1805 lists several stern reminders from Parma and Piacenza's governors that taxes must be collected hence citizens must pay their assigned contribution. Conscription, the main source of public discontent throughout French dominated territories,

was not set to begin before 1806; in terms of public order, the administration was more concerned with deserters crossing into Parma from the Kingdom of Italy than with potential domestic rebels. This relative calm came to an end in November 1805 when Prince Eugène demanded, almost casually, that the States of Parma contribute 12,000 men, recruited from the ranks of the local militia, to the reserve camp in he was organizing in Bologna. The effort to build two regiments of National Guards awoke an apparently placid country, to the dismay of French and Parmense authorities alike. A brief overview of the police structure in the states of Parma will help explain why this was the case.

### *Old and New Police*

On account of the duchies'



Image from the J. David Markham collection.

## Between Glory and Good Sense: Resistance to Conscription and the National Guard Experience in the States of Parma, 1805-06 , (continued)

peculiar status, Parma's law and order system remained outside the reorganization process at work throughout the kingdom of Italy. Upon his nomination Moreau found a tangled web of traditional practices that he did his best to ignore so long that domestic peace was not disturbed. After the events that shook the duchies and cost Moreau his job, it fell to Eugène Nardon, nominated prefect in May 1806, to untangle the complicated layers of local policing. Nardon's report to his immediate superior, Governor General Maréchal Pérignon, is a remarkable synopsis, the result of six months of assiduous investigation.<sup>6</sup> Nardon identified two main branches that continued to operate under Moreau's administration just as they had operated under the Bourbon dukes: A Military Department (*Département militaire*) headed by a Lieutenant General responsible for the security of the towns and the country side, including the supervision of foreigners, the strict observance of curfews, and the arrest of vagabonds, subsequently turned over to the Supreme Council of Justice in Parma. The Lieutenant General had under his orders the militias, the *Corpi delle Milizie Urbane e Foresi dei Ducati di Parma, Piacenza, e Guastalla*, consisting of the vast majority of able bodied male citizens, called to duty when needed in their local communities, for a period of 25 years starting with their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Typically, serving in the militia was not supposed to interfere with an individual's normal occupations. Since the Farnese era, these formations were organized in two companies (*Fucilieri e Canonieri*) for each main city (Parma and Piacenza) with a command structure comprising a captain, a lieutenant, and under-lieutenant each. The country-side was divided in 10 *terzi*, each headed by a colonel. The militia colonels and lieutenant-colonels were supported equally by the state and by the local communities; all men above 14 were responsible for owning a firearm and were supposed to report for duty when called by the colonel of their *terzo*. For rank and file members, service was voluntary, on a rotation basis, always uncompensated (although paying for replacements was acceptable)—and not an overbearing one, considering that no complaints were

registered until 1805.<sup>7</sup>

The second branch, described by Nardon as the Criminal Department (*Département Criminel*)—essentially the institution of the *sbirri*, of sinister reputation—performed more sustained, semi-professional police service. The *sbirri* were tasked with enforcing the penalties handed down by the Lieutenant General and the Supreme Council of Justice, carrying on arrests and even executions, and generally sniffing around public places in order to intimidate and arrest potential anti-government trouble-makers. This kind of police, concluded Nardon, could not be anything but “vicious, meaning abandoned in the hands of a class of individuals poorly paid, disrespectful and bereft of good character; [this police] could not but spark off a great number of abuses, so it was known to all that it had become a place where its different agents speculated at will.”<sup>8</sup>

Nardon wrote this report after the insurrection had been tamed. The picture of chaos and entrenched corruption in the duchies' old system served as justification for his own plans of revamping the police. Nardon's unabashed contempt for the old ways of doing things notwithstanding, his report describes accurately the lack of accountability and clear goals that made policing, rural policing especially, notoriously lax and haphazard; he was also correct to point to Moreau de Saint-Méry's acceptance of the status quo: Moreau left the old militia system in place and only transferred the functions of the Lieutenant General to the Governors of the two main cities, Parma and Piacenza. Therefore, the colonels and lieutenant-colonels of the *terzi* reported to the French place commanders (General Marion in Piacenza and General Le Soulier in Parma) who were also supervising their payments, but otherwise they carried on as usual. This was consistent with Moreau de Saint-Méry general policy of duplicating, rather than replacing traditional institutions. In fairness to Moreau, he had no mandate to dismiss local institutions. Placing them under the strict control of new French administrative

## Between Glory and Good Sense: Resistance to Conscription and the National Guard Experience in the States of Parma, 1805-06 , (continued)

units was a sensible but haphazard course of action for which Napoleon himself, rather than Moreau, was responsible considering that it took an insurrection for the Emperor to decide Parma's status.

### *Volunteer National Guards*

The relatively low number of recruits included in the conscription decree of 27 Prairial (16 June 1805) probably reflected Napoleon's doubts regarding the military potential of the duchies, since he did not trust the abilities of native officers who had not yet served under French command.<sup>9</sup> Viceroy Eugène, however, eager to have all Italian regions share in the war effort, had fewer hesitations: By the fall of 1805 he was counting on significant Parmense participation. While Napoleon weighed different strategies and accelerated the training of his *Grande Armée* at the Boulogne camp, his viceroy kept an eye on the Anglo-Russian forces landing in the Kingdom of Naples. To meet any possible threat, on 5 Frimaire, an 14 (26 November 1805) Eugène issued a decree establishing a Reserve Camp between Bologna and Modena. This camp was to be formed of the National Guards of the Kingdom of Italy reinforced by National Guards from the States of Parma and Piacenza, all under the command of General Pino, Minister of war of the Kingdom of Italy. Each department in the kingdom was expected to furnish between 500 and 1,000 men. A s s e m b l i n g t h e approximately 15,000-strong force in the Kingdom of Italy was an onerous task. Recruiting officers employed a mix of carrots (National

Guards who completed the 27-day training period were paid the same stipend as line troops) and sticks (arrests and various fines) to little avail.<sup>10</sup> This may be the reason why Viceroy Eugène hoped for greater success in territories not yet integrated into the Kingdom and thus less exposed to previous rounds of military conscription. The quota for the States of Parma was therefore set at 12,000 (for a population of less than 400,000). These men were to be recruited from the traditional militia. Lieutenant-Colonel Scipione Ferrante, Colonel to the Headquarter of General Fontanelli, named *organizzatore delle truppe parmigiane* for the occasion, was sent to Parma to shape the future 12,000 volunteer militia members into two National Guards battalions fit to join the viceroy's reserve camp. During the preparations for the decree, Eugène sent Moreau explicit instructions:

I heard, M. Moreau de Saint-Méry, how well organized are the national troops in the duchies you are administering. The moment has arrived when, these troops being used in the defense of their homes, they will also be offered the opportunity to demonstrate all their attachment to, as well as their zeal in the service of, the Emperor. I invite you to select and bring together, from the great number of National Guard troops, a corps of about twelve thousand men; they should be ready, as soon as possible, to execute the orders His Majesty might have for them so that they can defend their country and maintain it in peace and good order.<sup>11</sup>



Image from the J. David Markham collection.

## Between Glory and Good Sense: Resistance to Conscription and the National Guard Experience in the States of Parma, 1805-06 , (continued)

As soon as he received Eugène's directives, Moreau sent circular letters to all five regional military commanders asking them to expedite recruitment. The recruiting itself was delegated to the colonels of the *terzi*. Nowhere in his writings did he show any sign of hesitation concerning the feasibility of such plans. This was not the regular conscription into the army, which, as stated above, aimed to raise no more than 100 men initially. Still, that recruiting militia members—men of all ages, serving voluntarily in their immediate communities for routine policing duties—presented considerable challenges did not seem to have occurred to Moreau.

Prince Eugène's call to organize National Guards for joining the reserve camp at Bologna was answered in two ways: A relatively small number of volunteers enlisted and sought to become, openly and vocally, part of the French forces; a much larger number, unimpressed by the siren calls to glory, saw the appeal to serve as an unacceptable intrusion in their lives. Thus, Moreau's office was swamped with contradictory requests: One stream affirming the enthusiastic wish to join the French army and partake in its destinies via the National Guards regiments joining the viceroy's reserve camp, and another—soon to become a flood—amply showing that the very notion of an active National Guard serving under the command of French officers triggered resentment, revulsion, and ultimately active rebellion.

### *La Gloire*

The prospect of glory did warm a few hearts in the states of Parma. A number of former members of the dukes' guards and members of the militia corps called on the Administrator General nearly every day between mid-November and mid-December 1805, begging for his 'blessing.' On the surface, recruitment went smoothly at first: Lieutenant-Colonel Ferrante received the allegiance of a number of officers led by a certain *Colonel* Agostino Botti, a veteran of the ducal regiments and colonel of the *terzo* San Donino.<sup>12</sup> He turned out to be a ruthlessly ambitious character;

yet, all other officers seemed to accept his authority unconditionally and for the months of November-December 1805 and January 1806 he was the chief coordinator and most enthusiastic point man for Prince Eugene's planned Parmense battalions. He besieged Moreau with letters detailing his attempts to organize two battalions, Infantry and Cavalry. Each letter pledged his and his fellow officers' zeal to leave their mundane tasks in order to serve the viceroy. Moreau was all too happy to relay these proofs of enthusiasm to the viceroy, who in turn believed things were going so well that on 29 Brumaire (20 November 1805) he reported to Napoleon the upbeat news that: "In just a few days, thanks to the efforts of Moreau de Saint-Méry and to the great enthusiasm for Your Majesty, I will have at my disposal 12,000 men of good will and animated by the best of dispositions."<sup>13</sup> Prince Eugène sounded just as optimistic two weeks later when he informed Napoleon that several young Parmense officers had sought him out, eager to join the reserve camp: "I am especially pleased by the militia members of Parma and Piacenza; several young men, without being directed to do so, have approached me and asked me to call on them for service [in the reserve army]."<sup>14</sup>

Indeed, the freshly constituted National Guards marched from village to village, trying to persuade more men to join them and even collecting certificates of good behavior along the way.<sup>15</sup> On 20 December 1805, 64 officers and NCOs penned an official letter to Prince Eugène, calling on him to become the patron of their regiments:

The National Guard of Parma and Piacenza, called under the auspices of Your Serene Highness, cannot but feel moved by internal feelings towards your excellency, representative of a nation that only wishes to emulate the sons of the one at whose name Rome, Athens, Sparta and Carthage bow their heads. The honor bestowed on [us] to be able to serve the Homeland under the banner of the First Hero of the century and to see [ourselves] regrouped with other Nations from the ex-Venetian state, greatly

## Between Glory and Good Sense: Resistance to Conscription and the National Guard Experience in the States of Parma, 1805-06 , (continued)

prompts our souls to aspire to distinguish ourselves and to show to our August Sovereign that filial gratitude that we are eager to demonstrate, if You would accept our present plea and render to our nascent army the patronage that we are yearning for; without which we will see that our efforts would not be enough to reach the hoped for goal.<sup>16</sup>

The obsequious tone hardly concealed the creeping anxiety: The viceroy, surely, did not need renewed expressions of commitment and loyalty, he needed numbers. Botti and his fellow officers were unable to deliver such numbers because the vast majority of militia members did not share the same martial dreams and simply refused to sign up. Yet, the prince expected 12,000 men from the duchies at the beginning of January.<sup>17</sup> In a subsequent letter to Moreau (undated, most likely late December 1805) the enrolled officers took a moment to thank Moreau for having been: “like a father who... inspired us to leave our homes, who pulled us out of our inertia, who advised us to lead a useful life, and laborious, worthy of a man and of a citizen.” But, alas, the rolls had no more than 700 men—very short of the number requested by Viceroy Eugène—so the letter ended on a rather desperate note, beseeching Moreau to do whatever it took to motivate other young men to join.<sup>18</sup> Louis Duplessis, a French national living in Parma, offered solutions built on the pedagogical virtues of the French example. Sensing the bad impression the low number of recruits might make, he wrote directly to Prince Eugène with advice on how to portray National Guard recruiting as a benevolent gesture meant to benefit the very people currently resisting it: “His Serene Highness can, if He wishes, build in the States of Parma, in less than three months, a regiment of infantry of fifteen hundred men and one or two squadrons of cavalry.... The Parmense people are good, obedient and poor; they a martial soul and will make good soldiers when moved out of their habitual surroundings.” Why? Because Duplessis, relying on his insights into the Parmense character, was sure that: “*Le peuple Parmesan est*

*doux, docile, et pauvre, il a l'âme martiale il ne faudrait que le dépayser pour en faire de bons soldats.*” It would take no more than a small gesture of interest on the part of the prince and the perspective of a real military career to persuade peasants attached to their fields to join the French army; the example of French soldiers would do the rest:

It would be desirable that His Serene Highness be so good as to issue an address to the people of the three states where he will say that, deeply touched by their destitution, He believes extending a paternal gesture opening the military career to all. It would be beneficial to allow that the eager soldier be admitted, after a certain probation period, in the elite troops....<sup>19</sup>

Duplessis even managed, after more than a week of persistent knocking at the door, to obtain a brief audience with the prince who indeed expressed his lack of confidence in the Parmense and doubted that they could levy even 1,500 troops. “*Est-ce que vous ne savez pas qu'ils sont révoltés?*” Eugène asked, prompting Duplessis to put in his two cents and reiterate his call for a direct appeal to the Parmense people's dormant military aptitudes.<sup>20</sup> The Prince declined to get involved but Duplessis, Botti and their comrades pressed on; eventually, they persuaded Ferrante to approve the formation of a two-battalion regiment on the simple promise they will bring in new recruits.<sup>21</sup> On 19 January they all took the Oath to the Viceroy (*Giuramento*) administered by Ferrante, the minutes of which were sent to Prince Eugène the same day. Overjoyed, Botti reported their success to Moreau; it was a bad omen that he also felt compelled to add, in the very same letter, that an unidentified person from Piacenza had infiltrated their ranks and was spending his time asking recruits why on earth were they not deserting since so many have done so and returned to their homes, without having been disturbed in the least.<sup>22</sup>

Botti and his fellow officers were right to worry: Their regiment—and their joy—did not last more than a couple of days. Napoleon had severe doubts on

## Between Glory and Good Sense: Resistance to Conscription and the National Guard Experience in the States of Parma, 1805-06 , (continued)

the usefulness of National Guards in general and ordered Eugène to dismiss them in the entire Kingdom of Italy and especially in Parma-Piacenza:

The new levies of troops have to be executed with method and care; their force is not in their numbers, but in their suitable make-up. I recommend that you make sure to recover the weapons wherever possible.<sup>23</sup>

On the day Botti and his fellow officers took the oath, the Emperor ordered the repression of the insurrection and also reiterated his order that the National Guards be disbanded:

My Son, the 27 and 28 military divisions lack troops. Send the 3<sup>rd</sup> light infantry to Parma and the 67<sup>th</sup> to Alexandria. If the Hanover Infantry is under your orders, send it to Parma as well; finally all necessary forces, putting all these troops under the command of General , who leaves today for Parma with extraordinary powers. Expedite your orders by extraordinary couriers. I imagine you have already fired all the national guards.<sup>24</sup>

Shortly thereafter, Napoleon sent clear instructions on how any pretense of volunteer self-recruiting should come to an end and all Parmense military personnel placed under direct French command:

Among the individuals who are part of the military contingent of the States of Parma, Piacenza and Guastalla, those who are less than forty years of age will be admitted to serve in their grade; those of the same age who have not yet had the opportunity to serve and more generally those who are now under fifty years of

age will be assigned to the forts under the jurisdiction of the place commanders, with the same retribution they used to enjoy in their current position. Among those older than fifty years of age, the officers will maintain their wages and NCOs and others will be compensated according to the French laws.<sup>25</sup>

Accordingly, Prince Eugène dissolved the newly formed regiments and nullified their oath as soon as he received Napoleon's dispatches. "Just born and suddenly killed off" (*a pena nati e morti*) Botti sobbed, announcing the unbearable news in yet another desperate letter to Moreau, beseeching him to intervene and save their regiment.<sup>26</sup>

Moreau was in no position to intervene on behalf of others. General Junot, appointed to take over the duchies on January 19 had arrived in Parma on the evening of 25 January. He was amiable enough to allow Moreau to gather his possessions and leave with a few shreds of dignity left, but there was no doubt that, from that moment on, the only person in charge was Junot, who had no intention to go against Napoleon's wishes or give

any latitude to local military men. On the contrary, persuaded that Botti had roughed up many potential volunteers and thus destroyed whatever good will the French have been able to build in the area, Junot made a point of firing him and even issued a formal order taking away his very right to bear arms:

5 March 1806. The Governor General of the State of Parma, Piacenza and Guastalla orders that: Colonel Augustin Botti, who until now has fulfilled the functions of Colonel of the *terzo* of Val Tidone is removed from his functions, with



Junot

*Image from the J. David Markham collection.*

## Between Glory and Good Sense: Resistance to Conscription and the National Guard Experience in the States of Parma, 1805-06 , (continued)

special interdiction to carry any kind of uniform or military distinction. The General in chief of the Government is responsible for executing this order.<sup>27</sup>

The other officers had the option to reenlist in the new regiments reorganized by the new Administrator-General Nardon and serve under French commanders, an option that many took. Louis Duplessis's recommendation that the Parmense had to be *dépaysés* in order to become good soldiers was in the end followed to the letter, although not in the way he wished and anticipated.<sup>28</sup>

### *Personne ne Veut Marcher*

By the time the Parmense National Guard units were dissolved and melted into the French army, the insurrection was in full swing. From the very beginning, parallel with Duplessis' and Botti's vows of loyalty, requests for exemption crowded the Administrator General's desk: A doting father assured that his son was preparing for "studies at the academy" and should therefore be exempt; a village shopkeeper wrote a moving letter that painted the disaster likely to strike his family should their only son be called to volunteer; one Joseph Ferrari asked for an exemption for one son, on account of his other son already serving as dragoon Napoléon; another seemingly better off villager simply petitioned to have his son excused without giving a reason. An Antonio Ghirardelli, member of the militia, wrote on 27 January 1806 to ask to be relieved from service on account of being the head of a family with one daughter and two unmarried sister—and he pointed to Prince Eugène's stipulation that only members who volunteered for service will march to the reserve camp.<sup>29</sup> All in all, for the entire month of December 1805, until late-January 1806, Moreau could not doubt the general attitude towards joining the National Guards: *personne ne veut marcher* is the laconic, dejected conclusion for almost every entry of his angst-ridden diary during these frantic weeks. Not that the officers lacked the will to do all that was in their power, from flattery to threats—Junot detected

a real problem when he blamed muscled recruiting tactics for triggering the insurrection. Duplessis' penchant for soft power was not shared by his fellow National Guardsmen who generally believed fear worked best. Colonel Botti, the man in charge, repeatedly asked to be allowed to capture deserters and then enroll them forcibly; since arresting deserters was the job of the gendarmes, he was not granted permission—but he did so anyway.<sup>30</sup> Such abuses intensified wild rumors that Prince Eugène wanted to make the militia march in order to kill them off (as posters in the market warned citizens) or worse: Captain Dallasta asked Moreau to issue a special proclamation to dispel the fear that 'the Austrians will eat [the recruits] alive.'<sup>31</sup> Those who signed up—under duress most of the time—added the force of experience to the already negative image of the National Guards. Reports detailing an unstoppable wave of desertions from barely formed National Guard units, mutinies due to miserable garrison conditions (vermin was a recurring complaint) and uncertainty about the length of service hit the General Administrator's office daily, culminating with a dry note on 22 January 1806, from militia Lieutenant Colonel Giacopelli: Militiamen do not want to serve anymore and "declare themselves dismissed."<sup>32</sup> To better understand why, the Governor of Piacenza, Francesco Ferrari, sent a certain Leonardi, quartermaster (*maréchal de logis*) in an undercover mission through the villages around Piacenza. Posing as an ambulant seller of ribbons, Leonardi listened and took note; his report announced, in straightforward fashion, that the ordinary peasants who formed the bulk of the militia simply did not want to join and prefer to be killed at home.<sup>33</sup>

### *The Janus Face of Army Recruiting?*<sup>34</sup>

The contradictory responses the viceroy's call to arms reflect the inherent duality of the French occupation, at once inspiring and oppressive, reformist and exploitative. The eagerness of officers and NCOs who answered his call encouraged Viceroy Eugène to wax lyrical about the enthusiasm for the emperor amongst

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Parma's youth. He had reasons to believe this was true, considering the tone of the letters he was receiving. Two hundred years later, we may agree partially with Eugène's optimistic take on the situation. Nonetheless, as Eugène also knew, hostility to conscription was widespread in the Kingdom of Italy and the annexed territories. Yet, the ranks of the army were at least partially filled and while many joined because they saw no other choice, many harbored loftier sentiments. What may have moved the 700 volunteers in Parma? Through the unctuous obsequiousness of their letters transpires a yearning for adventure, for something bold to do, that may or may not have been stirred by love for a fatherland not their own—or for an emperor not (yet) their own. Napoleon made a point of sending all over the French controlled territories the famous *Bulletins* that brought to one and all the exploits of the French army.<sup>35</sup> Wide-eyed youth could read rousing stories about the great deeds of the Great Army, with the hardships of a soldier's daily life barely an afterthought. It is not at all surprising that the mystique of glory would appeal to young men long starved for action under Duke Ferdinand's stifflingly dull rule. In fact, 700 volunteers was not a bad record for the roughly 400,000 population of the States of Parma. The impression that the States of Parma were struggling to recruit volunteers was mainly due to Viceroy Eugène's unreasonably high demand and to the officers' ensuing overzealous push to meet the target numbers. (By way of comparison, volunteer service went considerably smoother in regions of the Kingdom of Italy where lower demands, adapted to local conditions, put less pressure on the population).<sup>36</sup> Had only the willing volunteers' letters and reports remained in the archives, historians could have easily concluded that the Empire was a welcome presence in the locals' lives, full of opportunities for self-fulfillment beyond the low horizons of their small country. Indulging, briefly, in counter-factual history, it is not unreasonable to question whether the rebellion would have even started in 1805, had recruitment been executed by more experienced officers rather than militia commanders, in less

callous and less antagonistic ways, hence less alarming for the affected communities. Napoleon certainly believed so when he scolded his viceroy for having set the Apennines on fire with his haste and misplaced expectations:

You have disbanded my camp in Alexandria and executed levies of national guard with so much haste that you have set the entire Italy aflame. Be more prudent and carry yourself with circumspection.<sup>37</sup>

But if recruitment methods grew more and more aggressive it was because, much to the chagrin of eager volunteers, enthusiasm for joining any branch of the French, or French-led, military did not carry the day. As everywhere else, across the States of Parma, conscription met with revulsion and defiance—and in the minds of most people, volunteer National Guard service was no different from mandatory enlisting in the army.<sup>38</sup> The overwhelming negative response to repeated calls to join the viceroy's reserve army illustrates perfectly Isser Woloch's observation that conscription replaced taxation as the main battleground between state and society, except that it could not be harnessed by revolutionary legislation the way taxation ultimately was:

In the old regime taxation had played such a (contentious) role, and thanks to that experience Frenchmen were more or less inured to shouldering their tax burden, especially as rationalized by the Revolution. With Napoleon, conscription became the battleground, the ultimate contest of wills between individuals and locals communities on the one hand and a distant, impersonal state on the other.<sup>39</sup>

It was a battle of wills that the citizens of Parma and Piacenza were bound to lose. Even so, they refused to give in and stubbornly built a wall of rejection, one 'no' at a time. When the pressure became unbearable, entire communities who had tolerated quite stoically French imposed higher taxes, requisitions and changes in the administrative structure, rose in

## Between Glory and Good Sense: Resistance to Conscription and the National Guard Experience in the States of Parma, 1805-06 , (continued)

rebellion and challenged not just military service, volunteer or not, but the very legitimacy of French rule in their part of the world. Proving that indeed, they preferred to die at home rather than chasing glory on military battlefields of the emperor's choosing, the lowly folks of the Apennines dared to defy the master of all Europe in a desperate move that Michael Broers aptly called the last stand of the Old Regime.<sup>40</sup>

The French authorities, beginning with General Junot, approached the rebellion as an instance of grave incompetence that enabled brigands in the area to disrupt a quiet region. Botti's punishment had a certain Machiavellian quality. Loathing of forcible enlisting - and it seemed that villagers saw little difference between National Guards and the army proper - could be blamed on inept and heartless local militia colonels such as Botti rather than on French army personnel. There is no doubt that Botti was a violent man who vastly overstepped his mandate; but in punishing him publicly, Junot gave a measure of satisfaction to local grievances and redirected the ire of the people away from the French while attempting to portray French imperial officials as agents of legality. He was following up on one thread of the official narrative which accepted as legitimate - if overblown - complaints over brutal recruitment tactics. This small concession prepared the way for the larger narrative of repression built on the assumption that French power generated the efficient rule of law and order.

### Endnotes

- To compensate for the loss of sovereignty, duke Ferdinand's son became king of Etruria under the name Louis I. In 1807, however, when Spain's neutrality ceased to be of any use to Napoleon's designs, the Kingdom of Etruria was dissolved and reorganized as three departments of the French Empire.
- A detailed account of this 24 hours visit in Mario Zannoni, *Napoleone Bonaparte a Parma nel 1805* (Parma: MUP Editore, 2006).
- Imperial Decree issued on 2 Thermidor, an 13 (21 July 1805) at Saint Cloud. The decree also lists the financial contributions Parma was supposed to raise and clarifies that the general administrator has the same functions as a prefect in France. *Décret Impérial sur l'Organisation des Etats de Parme, Plaisance et Guastalla*. No. 876 in *Recueils des Lois et Décrets*, 4<sup>ème</sup> série, no. 53 (Nancy: Vigneulle, an XIII /1805/): 419-27. This was a de facto annexation; the juridical annexation will occur in 1808. In several letters to Talleyrand, Viceroy Eugène and Maréchal Berthier Napoleon hesitated between maintaining some form of autonomy for the States of Parma and annexing the territories to the empire. The insurrection made him decide to put the states under a temporary military regime under the General Junot (*Notes pour le ministre de la Guerre*. Paris 5 Février 1806, in *Correspondance de Napoléon 1er*. Publiée par ordre de l'Empereur Napoléon III (Paris: Henir Plon 1858). Vol. 12, p. 9 #9754. Uncertainty over the status of Parma-Piacenza accounted at least partially for Moreau's inability to establish a coherent chain of command. In the only monograph on Parma under Napoleon, Leny Montagna underscored the confusion and endless possibilities for procrastination such uncertainty produced at all levels of the administration. Leny Montagna, *Il dominio francese a Parma (1796-1814)* (Piacenza.; Stab. Arti Grafiche G. Gavari di D. Forono, 1906), 35-49.
- Archivio di Stato di Parma, *Carte varie amministrazione militare 1804-1816*, Busta 67. The decree reads: Milan Palace, 8 Prairial year 13 (28 May 1805). "Napoleon, following the report of the minister of war, decrees: A company of imperial gendarmerie will be established in the States of Parma, Piacenza and Guastalla -salaried and administered in the same way as the companies of gendarmerie established in the interior of the empire."
- Details in Francesco Frasca, 'Parma' in *Reclutamento e Guerra in Italia Napolenica*. Prefazione André Corvisier. Introduzione Gabriele de Rosa (Padova: Editoriale Programma, 1993), 90-97. The decree was published in Parma in French the same day: "À compter de l'an 14 le Duché de Parme sera soumis aux lois de la conscription militaire comme les départements de la France. Le contingent est fixé à 100 hommes". Archivio Comunale Parma *Gridario*, 27 Pratile anno XIII (16 June 1805).
- Rapport Général sur la Police secrète des Etats de Parme et Plaisance, Parme, Premier décembre 1806. ANP F/1<sup>e</sup>/87.
- For details see See Ettore Carrà, *L'Ordine Pubblico nel Periodo Napoleonico*. (Piacenza 1806-1814. Piacenza: Tip.Le.Co, 2005), 91-107 and Mario Zanoni e Massimo

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- Fiorentino, *L'esercito farnesiano dal 1694 al 1731* (Parma: Palatina editrice, 1981), 119. Pietro Cavagnari explains the system of *milices payantes* in his *Exposé rapide sur la position actuelle de la ville et Etat de Plaisance* (14 Juin 1805): each male citizen over 14 owning a gun at home can serve in the militia. ANP F/ 1<sup>e</sup>/ 85
8. Rapport Général sur la Police secrète des Etats de Parme et Plaisance, Parme, Premier décembre 1806. ANP, F/1<sup>e</sup>/87. On the *sbirri* and the various layers of local policing in Italy see Michael Broers, "Sbirri and Gendarmes. The Workings of a Rural Police Force" in *Corpi armati e ordine pubblica in Italia (XVI-XIX secoli) a cura di Livio Antonelli e Claudio Donati*. (Soveria Manelli: Rubbetino editore, 2003), 203-11.
  9. Napoleon's correspondence with Prince Eugène throughout the months of August through December 1805 is interspersed with direct orders as well as advice on how to transition the armed forces in Parma, such as they were, into the French army. Most of the officers having served under the Bourbons and unwilling to join the French army were simply pensioned off. See Napoleon's letter to Berthier, on 13 July 1805 in *Correspondance de Napoléon 1<sup>er</sup>*, vol 11, p. 11 #8978: "The State of Parma is outside the military system of the Empire. The fortresses, the [military] places, the corps of engineers, all are run, commanded by Parmense officers; this must stop. Yet, my intention is to do no harm to any of these former military men, whose conduct towards us was correct throughout the Italian wars. Order the administration of the ammunition to take control over the powder factories in the State of Parma, as of those in Genoa, and to get them working at full capacity. Also, give orders that the corps of military engineers take over the fortifications of Parma, of Piacenza, of the Bardi castle and other small forts in the region. Compile a list of all the Parmense officers employed in these places; their pay is very mediocre; that of colonels is, I believe, no more than 80 or 100 francs; you will forward me this list so that I take a decision. In the meantime, they keep their pay, according to their grade and their employment."
  10. Resistance to enlisting was so widespread that by November 1805 officers limited the calls to very young men, less likely to have family or employment commitments. Even so, by January barely 8,000 recruits could be counted, in less than desirable shape. Pietro Crociani, Virgilio Ilari, Ciro Paoletti, *Storia Militare del Regno Italico (1802-1814)* (Roma: Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito. Ufficio Storico, 2004) II, 832-35.
  11. Letter to Moreau de Saint-Méry, dated 24 Brumaire, an 13 (15 November 1805) included in Prince Eugène's letter to Napoleon dated 19 November. *Mémoires et Correspondance du Prince Eugène publiés, annotés et mis en ordre par A. Du Casse* (Paris: Lévy, 1858) I, 445-46.
  12. Ermanno Loevinson, *Gli Ufficiali Napoleonici Parmensi* (Parma: Pubblicazioni del R. Archivio di Stato Parma. La Tipografica Parmense, 1930), 17.
  13. Letter to Napoleon 29 Brumaire, an 13 (20 November 1805), *Mémoires et Correspondance du Prince Eugène*, I, 449.
  14. Letter to Napoleon, 2 December 1805, *Mémoires et Correspondance du Prince Eugène* I, 463. He also reported that hospitals were organized in Parma, as planned. In Moreau's diary, the entry for 13 Frimaire, an 13 (1 December 1805) mentions a letter from Parmense officers under Colonel Botti's command informing him that they had called on Prince Eugene to allow them to follow him at Padova. Gabriela Tambini. *Moreau de Saint Méry. Journal III. Parte II*. MA Thesis. Università degli Studi Parma. Facoltà di Magistero. Corso di Laurea in Lingue et Letterature straniere. Relatore Carminella Biondi (1982/83), 977.
  15. A hand-written note dated Mirandola 16 December 1805 states that: "The municipality/Certifies to all concerned that the National Guard of Parma, consisting of two battalions of infantry and one squadron of cavalry and one company of sappers has passed through this town on the day of 25 and spent the following night; the troops have maintained a sage and good conduct without giving any reason for objections. Truthfully, Tabachi P(ietro) and Cuviani (Curiandegno) ... 30 December 1805 ... the Corps of National Italian Troops under the command of Honorable M. Ferrante with all his officers and soldiers have behaved with good discipline not giving any reason for the slightest objection, in virtue of which this certificate has been released." In fede Tabachi P(ietro) and Cuviani (Curiandegno) Same note (and exactly the same text) from the date 28 December 1805, from the Municipalità Saclatta , signed In fede Francisco Pellagazzi and amministratore municipali Manfredi ; from 29 December 1805 (in a similar text) from the municipalità di Badia, signed by Presidente B. Dente. Further afield, on letter-headed paper from the Municipalità Provisoria di Este, dated 30 December 1805, a report that the Corpo di Truppa Nazionale Italiana comandata dal Nob. S.or Ferrante con tutti li suoi ufficiali e soldati si sono diportati con tutta la morigeratezza non avendo dat occasione al

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- minimo ricambio per cui le viene rilasciato il presente; another note certifying good behavior by the Truppa Nazionale di Parma sotto la Commanda di Ten Colonello Scipione Ferrante is issued on 11 January 1806 by the Municipalità Provisoria di Conselvo. All these documents in Biblioteca Palatina, *Manoscritti Parmensi 543 passim*.
16. Letter published in the *Gridario* 1805. Archivio Comunale di Parma. Botti signed as commander and the letter was endorsed by Lieutenant-Colonel Ferrante.
  17. “*Je vais former un régiment d’infanterie d’une partie des gardes nationales et j’espère avoir douze cent hommes dans la Garde Nationale de Parme et Plaisance, qui a marché. Je pourrais lever un bataillon. Je vais prendre mes mesures pour qu’il en soit formé un autre dans ces états.*” Letter to Napoleon, Padoue, le 2 Janvier 1806, in *Mémoires et Correspondance du Prince Eugène*, vol. II, 45.
  18. Letter to Moreau, *Mss. Parm. 543*, f. 93. The letter is countersigned by Scipione Ferrante. Botti signs again as commander of all officers.
  19. Louis Duplessis à Son Altesse Sérénissime Le Prince Eugène, Vice-Roi d’Italie Padoue le 6 janvier 1806. Pushing the sycophancy even further, Duplessis even offered to carry such a proclamation around the country and read it in public himself. Signed: “*Je suis avec profond respect et une grande adoration, de son altesse sérénissime le plus fidèle et le plus zélé, le plus respectueux de ses serviteurs, Duplessis.*” *Mss. Parm. 543*, f. 11.
  20. Letter from Louis Duplessis to Moreau, Conselvo, 11 January 1806, relating this interview and asking Moreau to intercede with the Prince on their behalf: “*Tous les officiers vous proclament leur père, ils demanderont votre protection.*” *Mss. Parm. 543*, f. 49. Suggesting that indeed officers counted on future service, Botti wrote to Moreau, also on 11 January and also from Conselvo, seeking assurances that he will have the same military grade (Colonel) in the new regiments and intervened for one of his protégés, a certain lieutenant Gandolfi. *Mss. Parm. 543*, fos 34-35.
  21. This information comes from two letters from General Fontanelli to Lieutenant-Colonel Ferrante, dated: Piove di Sacco, 8 January 1806: Dal generale Fontanelli al Tenente Colonello Ferrante Comandante della Piazza e organizzatore delle Truppe Parmigiane a Conselvo: “*Per ordine di S.A. sarà formato delle Truppe Nazionale di Parma e Piacenza un Regimento di due Bataglioni che sarà completato mediante reclutamento negli stati di Parma.*” More details follow (on uniforms, for instance) the same day, from the same to the same, same signature. *Copie conforme* for both: Louis Duplessis, chef de bataillon. The cavalry battalion was scheduled to leave on 12 January to go to Piove di Sacco. *Mss. Parm. 543*, fos. 19-20. The final contingent lists by name all officers for 9 companies of 8 battalions of 80 men, Colonel Agostino Botti being again listed as commander. *Mss. Parm. 543*, fos 171-72.
  22. *Mss. Parm. 543*, f.226. Letters not dated, marked as received on 28 and 29 January 1806.
  23. *Correspondance de Napoléon premier*, XI, #9660, 8 Janvier 1806.
  24. Letter to Prince Eugène, Stuttgart, 19 janvier 1806. *Correspondance de Napoléon premier*, #9682, XI, p. 544.
  25. Notes pour le Ministre de la Guerre, Paris 5 février 1806. *Correspondance de Napoléon Ier*, #9754, XII, p. 9. The other three paragraphs of this brief order informs the minister of war that the states of Parma and Piacenza will have a separate military organization, under General Junot, for no more than three years, during which all work on military installations is to be suspended while regional commanders take their position in the territory.
  26. Letter from Botti to Moreau dated Piove de Sacco, 29 Gennaro 1806; letter signed by all the officers, dated Piove di Sacco, 3 March 1806. *Mss. Parm. 543*, f.236 and 240-41 respectively.
  27. Archives du Ministère de la Défense, C-4-41. According to a number of entries in Moreau’s diary, Moreau’s circle of friends suspected that Botti’s dismissal was part of a web of intrigues brewing among Parmense notables vying for the favors of the new French administration.
  28. Broers noted that Napoleon never considered even trying to rely on the Parmense forces ‘...whose officers were quickly replaced by Frenchmen, whose units were dissolved and whose ranks were integrated into French units, disappearing without a trace.’ Michael Broers, “Noble romans and Regenerated Citizens: the Morality of Conscription in Napoleonic Italy 1801–1814.” *War in History* (2001) 8, no. 3: 249-70 (253).
  29. Tambini *Moreau de Saint-Méry, Journal – III (1805)*, 880-906. Ghirardelli’s letter, dated Bussetto 27 January 1806, in *Mss. Parm. 543*, f. 215. There was one official exemption for the militiamen and the *sbiriri* guarding the salt mines at Borgo San Donino.
  30. There is one record of him arresting a Piacentino fugitive suspect, Giacomo Crespi, sometime in January 1806. *Mss. Parm. 543*, f.240-241. In a very obsequious letter to Moreau dated 21 January 1806 Botti asks Moreau to allow them to arrest deserters, or they will never be able to meet the target fixed by the viceroy; next day, he reported he

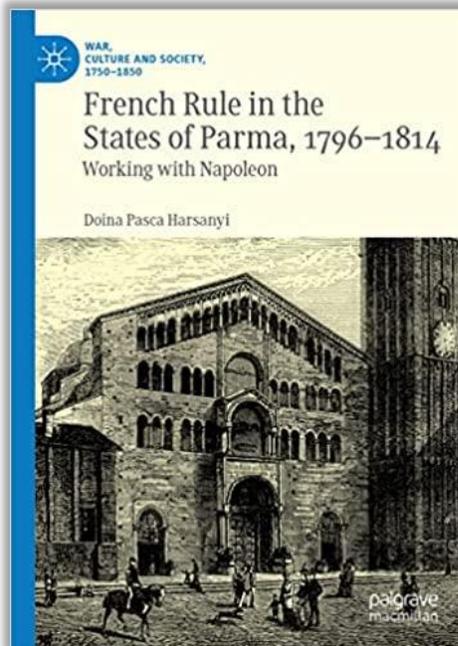
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was unable to stop a desertion, but: *siamo in campagna aperta*. Letter dated 22 January, 1806, *Mss. Parm. 543*, f. 182.

31. "President Crescini brings me the original of a hand-written poster placed this morning on a pillar in the wheat market... It is presented as a copy of a letter by His Imperial Majesty to Prince Eugene, with orders to send the militia on their way to massacres." Entry of 12 Frimaire (3 December 1805) in Moreau's diary. Tambini, *Moreau de Saint-Méry, Journal – III (1805)*, p. 993; Dallasta's request in the same entry, p. 887.
32. Several anonymous reports dated 26 January 1806, *Mss. Parm. 543*, f. 210; the daily entries in Moreau's diary throughout December 1805 and 1806, give summaries of messages from regional leaders, all reporting widespread resistance to the calls for enrolment in units meant to join the reserve camp. Dominique Faidherbe, *Moreau de Saint-Méry Journal IV- 1806 de parte I*. Università degli Studi di Parma. Facoltà del Magistero. Corso di Laurea in Lingue e Letterature Straniere. Relatore Carminella Biondi. 1982/83, 154.
33. Dominique Faidherbe. *Moreau de Saint-Méry, Journal IV Parte I*. MA Thesis. Università degli Studi di Parma. Facoltà del Magistero. Corso di Laurea in Lingue e Letterature Straniere. Relatore Carminella Biondi (1982/83), 38.
34. I borrowed the term from Alexander Grab: 'The Janus Face of Napoleon's Rule: Reform and Exploitation' in Alexander Grab, *Napoleon and the Transformation of Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 19-33.
35. It was well-known that the *Bulletins* offered a chronicle of glory not just factual information. Yet, there was always a public for this modern *Illiad*, as Jean-Bertaud termed the ensemble of the *Bulletins*' narrative. They were widely read and they certainly spoke to the imagination even though readers doubted their factual accuracy. For a recent analysis see Jean-Paul Bertaud, 'Napoléon journaliste: les bulletins de la gloire' *Le Temps des Média*, 2005/ I (no. 4): 10–21. In examining the emotional appeals to soldiers in the *Bulletins* Alan Forrest has noted that: "The soldiers listened because this was a language they wanted to hear, a discourse with which they could related. But also it was also the only language they were allowed to hear, such was the strict regime of censorship which Napoleon had instituted." Alan Forrest, *Napoleon's Men. The Soldiers of the Revolution and Empire* (Hambledon: Bloomsbury Academic, 2006): 74. The section on the *Bulletins*, Wayne Hanley has dissected the origins and formidable efficiency of the propaganda mechanism under Bonaparte before it became Napoleon: Wayne Hanley, *The Genesis of Napoleonic Propaganda, 1796 -1799* (New York: Columbia Press, 2005), 71-78.
36. After the failure of raising a Reserve Army based on National Guards, the viceroy enacted less ambitious and more pragmatic, case by case policies of mobilizing National Guard units for limited tasks. Crociani et al., *Storia Militare del Regno Italico*, II: 836.
37. Letter to Prince Eugène, dated Paris, 4 février 1806. *Correspondance de Napoléon premier*, #9745, XII, p. 5.
38. For quick reference on fierce opposition to conscription in Italy see Alexander Grab, "Conscription and Desertion in Napoleonic Italy 1802-1814" *Conscription in the Napoleonic Era. A revolution in military affairs?* Eds. Donald Stoker, Frederick Schneid, Harold Blanton (London and New York, Routledge, 2009), 122-34.
39. Isser Woloch, "Napoleonic Conscription: State Power and Civil Society," *Past and Present*, 111 (1986): 101-29 (101).
40. "The Last Stand of the Old Regime" in Michael Broers, *The Napoleonic Empire in Italy, 1796–1814. Cultural Imperialism in a European Context?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 80-93.

**Doina Pasca Harsanyi** has recently written a book titled: *French Rule in the States of Parma, 1796-1814: Working with Napoleon* (War, Culture and Society, 1750–1850). It

is available in kindle and hardcopy editions. A review published in the recent edition of *Napoleonica®* the journal is available to read [here](#).



## Napoleon's Police: Control by Other Means by Michael G. Stroud

The safety and security of a people is the bedrock of any successful society. To achieve this, structured governments establish laws to guide the society along with measures of policing to ensure that said laws are obeyed, be they the Constables of England to the police officers of the United States. French policing under Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821) utilized various forces to not only maintain the peace and to enforce its laws, but to ensure compliance with edicts and proclamations. Policing and security in Napoleonic France and its territories was an evolved extension of governmental control to suppress and eliminate political dissent while enforcing Napoleon's mandates.

In the years preceding Napoleon's political ascendancy, law and order was maintained by the authority of the *Maréchaussée* of the *ancien régime* of the Bourbon aristocracy which would be renamed the *Gendarmerie Nationale* around 1791.<sup>1</sup> The *Maréchaussée* were for all purposes a uniformed royal force, acting on the whims of the monarchy with their priorities being the safekeeping of the country's main roads and the occasional excursion into the countryside. The force in its entirety never numbered more than a 2-3,000 and was ineffective as to foreseeing the events of the coming Revolution and downfall of the French monarchy. Joseph Fouché (1759-1820), Napoleon's Minister of Police, would go on to say: "The Crown only succumbed in 1789 because of the inefficacy of the police, those in office being incapable of unmasking the plots which threatened the royal house."<sup>2</sup>

The *ancien régime* also made use of a secret police of sorts that had been put in place since the time of Cardinal Richelieu (1585-1642). Unlike the political motivations of similar organizations, this group was more focused on the "private affairs" of citizens and to "suppress private disorders, lest they should spread and give rise to scandal."<sup>3</sup> The members of this force, right up until the time of the Revolution, were closely intertwined with the judiciary and therefore were able to investigate matters ranging from those of a religious nature to those that were publishing books of political dissent.



"Portrait of Armand Jean du Plessis, Duke of Richelieu," *Wikipedia.org*, accessed August 9, 2022. [Cardinal Richelieu](#).

The rebranding and reinvigoration of the *Maréchaussée* into that of the *Gendarmerie Nationale* was extensively built upon under Napoleon. Upon assuming power in late 1799, Napoleon inherited a corps that numbered 10,564 men who were spread throughout 24 territorial divisions within France.<sup>4</sup> The gendarmerie needed to be greatly expanded for them to be properly effective, so Napoleon did so by adding over 200 new brigades in western France alone so that by 1801, they would number over 15,000 with a mounted-to-foot ratio of two-thirds to one.<sup>5</sup>

This newly expanded corps underwent vast quality changes as well to combat the rampant thievery and brigandage that was occurring throughout the

### **Napoleon's Police: Control by Other Means**, (continued)

country. Napoleon believed policing and security should be built upon a strong image of imperial power and to do that, he needed his gendarmerie to be as effective as possible. Immediately, Napoleon set stricter regulations and requirements for joining the gendarmerie to raise its status and trustworthiness among the people. A standard was set that gendarmes should be at least six foot tall, literate (which was extremely difficult early on), ideally be free of any previous disciplinary issues and have had experience in the regular army.

Taking this further, Napoleon set an expectation that these gendarmes would always present an air of impartiality to the locales they served and to raise the standard further established three guidelines for them to abide by. First, the Gendarmerie and their families would reside in barracks. Second, gendarmes would be from locations different than where they were policing, no locals. Third, gendarmes answered only to the Minister of War, taking civilian authorities out of any oversight. Additionally, the force was redeployed throughout the country in brigades of "units of six to ten men" which allowed the force to more effectively police and manage the vast parcels of rural towns and villages.<sup>6</sup> In centralizing the control of the policing components of the country, Napoleon could more effectively wield it as a personal extension of his power.

The concept of a police service separate from that of the gendarmerie was inherited by Napoleon as well. This civilian-centric force would grow to be in every town of at least 5,000 inhabitants and would have a commissaire de police appointed by the Paris-based, Ministry of General Police.<sup>7</sup> These civilian police were greatly enhanced in their authority under Napoleon as they could call upon the strength and power of the Gendarmerie to make arrests and to generally enforce their authority within their communities. Since commissaire de police were appointed by the State, this also afforded Napoleon and his officials more oversight of them, which allowed for more control, as its members were typically ex-Revolutionaries and those with strong and highly charged political pasts. Again, more centralized control and oversight of a critical security apparatus.

It was necessary to have someone of incredible drive and ruthlessness to directly oversee such an extensive civilian police operation and Napoleon did not have to look far. One of the conspirators of Brumaire that helped sweep Napoleon into power and whom he would retain as his Minister of Police (several times over) was that of the unscrupulous Joseph Fouché, duc d'Otrante. Fouché was a creature of opportunity, having gone from being a fervent member of the Convention who vociferously called for the execution of the king, to denouncing his Jacobin views during the coup of 9 Thermidor (July 27, 1794) to his appointment as Minister of Police in 1799 by the Directory.<sup>8</sup> Being on the "right" side of the coup ingratiated him with Napoleon, who retained his services as Minister of Police, albeit with a suspicious eye.

Fouché believed strongly that police should provide safety and security for all citizens which often required a strong focus on preventing situations from occurring. This emphasis on prevention served as his justification in applying any measure necessary in achieving this goal, often resulting in impositions on personal liberties including surveillance and detention. The ends justified the means with Fouché, which fit perfectly under the rule of Napoleon.

The Minister had deep and pervasive connections throughout Paris and beyond, having carefully cultivated and recruited spies that were made up of everyone from peddlers, butchers, and hairdressers to bartenders, royalists, and even Louis XVI's (1754-1793) former valet.<sup>9</sup> This network along with his singlemindedness to apply them to achieve the mission was a source of immense value for Napoleon who would go on to say that "Fouché, and Fouché alone, is able to conduct the ministry of police. We cannot create such men; we must take as we find."<sup>10</sup>

This network would prove useful many times over, but especially so on 24 December 1800. First Consul Napoleon Bonaparte, his wife, family, and friends were to attend the Opera not far from the Tuileries that night. The party took two coaches, one with Napoleon, Jean Lannes and others along with a cavalry escort proceeding first, followed by Josephine and her guests and entourage. In between Napoleon's

### Napoleon's Police: Control by Other Means, (continued)

coach arriving at the theater and Josephine's that was making her way behind, a massive bomb that was built into a barrel on a cart exploded. Missing Napoleon by mere seconds, its intended target, the bomb killed at least five people and injured up to fifty-two in the area, including one of Napoleon's escorts.<sup>11</sup>



“Joseph Fouché, duc d’Otrante, Napoleon’s ruthless Minister of Police,” *Napoleon-empire.net*, accessed August 9, 2022. [Joseph Fouché](#).

Fouché, though initially decrying it as an act of attempted assassination by Jacobines which led to more than 100 being exiled, put his network to work in uncovering the true culprits. His efforts soon discovered that the “Infernal Machine” plot as it became known due to the created bomb device, uncovered that the true masterminds were the French military veterans Pierre Robinault de Saint-Regent and Joseph-Pierre Picot de Limoelan and the royalist insurgent Carbon. Fouché soon had Saint-

Regent and Carbon in custody with both being guillotined on 21 April 1801.<sup>12</sup> Limoelan managed to escape Fouché and his dragnet and to never be seen again.

The police apparatus of France under Fouché had stayed busy in uncovering plots against Napoleon beginning in September of 1800 when seventeen men were arrested for plotting the assassination of the First Consul. Following this in early October a plot to stab Napoleon when he left the Opera was uncovered, followed by twelve people being arrested for plotting to throw grenades into his passing carriage just mere weeks later. Early November saw yet another foiled attempt when Fouché and his police arrested a royalist Chevalier who was plotting to kill the First Consul with a multi-firing gun. All told, Fouché and his police would go on to foil over ten plots against Napoleon within his first year in power alone, with the “Infernal Machine” coming the closest to succeeding.<sup>13</sup>

The internal security arms of France were utilized in other important measures in addition to uncovering anti-Napoleon plots and sentiments. Among them was the censoring or closing of dozens of newspapers that Napoleon determined were contrary to his interests and therefore could not be allowed to operate. Years later Napoleon would say that “a free press may become a strong ally” if it were “controlled by the government.”<sup>14</sup> Knowing the full power of the press to make or break a political figure such as himself, Napoleon took direct and strong action to exercise control of their messaging. In an age of no true sense of freedom of speech, Napoleon’s actions were very much standard practices of the time by someone in power.

The security measures of the Gendarmerie became increasingly important in their role of power projection and control in newly conquered territories. As France moved from a posture of stabilization and having pushed back its enemies from its borders during Napoleon’s time as First Consul to that of the aggressiveness of the First Empire, new areas would fall under its sway. These new lands presented an opportunity to bring the culture of the French to them, so the Gendarmerie were dispatched to these

## Napoleon's Police: Control by Other Means, (continued)



“Engraving of the explosion of the “infernal machine” assassination plot on 24 December 1800,” Nationalgeographic.co.uk, accessed August 9, 2022. Infernal Machine.

lands to establish French “cultural superiority.”<sup>15</sup>

The Gendarmerie were expected to exemplify Napoleons will and values throughout the empire, especially in new lands, but often were seen as colonial occupiers. Being that as it may, the Gendarmerie faced frequent and violent uprisings to French control, be it Piedmont, Tuscany, or the Papal states, which they would forcefully and with extreme prejudice, stamp out. In extreme cases, the police and Gendarmerie worked together to identify key instigators that had to be arrested and their followers defeated, with the help of the regular army, if necessary. Napoleon knew that “every nonconformist attitude represented an attack on [his] legitimacy.”<sup>16</sup>

These circumstances would find Fouché and his 1810 replacement and former bodyguard of Napoleon, Jean Marie Savary, Duke of Rovigo (1774-1833) working closely with the Gendarmerie to project the power and authority of Napoleon and the central government to all borders of the empire, no matter how obscure or remote.

As an evolving and growing Imperial state, France needed a constant supply of men to replenish its armies as well as a reliable tax base from which to fund its costly wars. Therefore, with the occupation and “French pacification” of newly won lands, the Imperial security forces led by the Gendarmerie were continuously tasked with enforcing conscription

## Napoleon's Police: Control by Other Means, (continued)



“Imperial Gendarmerie of Paris, 1813. A print by Francois Cudet, 1887,” Ageofstock.com, accessed August 9, 2022. Imperial Gendarmerie.

mandates while the police worked with local officials to identify and incarcerate (or eliminate) local troublemakers. This entire process would prove to be successful overall in exercising Napoleon's will into the reaches of the empire, especially in those locations where the French had a longer material presence such as in central Germany.

When a periphery of the empire showed a strong resistance to its new French overseers, such as that evidenced in the urban resistance of Zaragoza in 1808 to the open revolts that accompanied the annexation of Holland in 1810, the Gendarmerie developed new tactics to achieve success. It quickly became apparent to Napoleon that revolts to his rule had to be dealt with swiftly oftentimes with a counterinsurgency. Therefore, the French established a “*colonne mobile*”

shock tactic where Gendarmerie units, built around a “core of experienced regular troops” melded with less experience troops would engage and displace rebels with expediency and urgency.<sup>17</sup> These units were built around the regular French army corps model, containing infantry, mobile artillery and cavalry and were capable of engaging rebels in open combat or even limited sieges. This tactic and unit formation, while never intended to seek and destroy all opposition, became an effective tool in combating revolts and insurgents in French territories by constantly harassing key rebel units and destroying them where possible.

The Gendarmerie further combated political dissent within French territories by its very presence. When bigger revolts and organized units of resistance to Napoleonic rule became broken and splintered, their offshoots typically resorted to common banditry, thievery, and kidnapping. As the Gendarmerie were on constant and ever-present patrols within these territories, these broken counter-revolutionary guerillas and their brigantine actions worked against them with local populations. The erosion of public support for these guerillas would begin to enhance the standing of the occupying Gendarmerie who were regularly combating them to foster order and security for the locals.

Internal security, with its two arms of the Gendarmerie and police, were always vital components to Napoleon's wielding of power. Napoleon saw the Gendarmerie as a means to bind the parts of the French empire together through the imposing visage and presence of its men, while the police would serve to be the quiet, preferably unseen glue that kept it together.

The Gendarmerie became the great colonizers for Napoleon and the empire, bore the brunt of the visible pacifications and compliance issues required of the emperor. Whether it was in the dusty heat of the heartland of Spain, the mountainous terrain of Italy or the inhospitable environs of Russia, the Gendarmerie served as both the enforcers and the example of French civilization. Napoleon viewed the Gendarmerie as the preminent example of what represented French imperial greatness from martial

## Napoleon's Police: Control by Other Means, (continued)

glory to civic duty and as such, they were deployed throughout the empire. Their appearance in a territory was affirmation that Napoleon's rule was now the law of the land.

The legitimacy of the empire was seemingly always in question by the opposition, be they internal or external and therefore every function of policing was utilized to reassert it. In Fouché, Napoleon found a highly effective enforcer of the law (at least in as much as Fouché went along with it) who viewed the police as “the regulating power which is felt everywhere, without ever being seen and which, at the centre of the state, holds the place which the power which sustains the harmony of the celestial bodies holds in the universe, a power whose regularity strikes us although we are unable to divine the cause...”<sup>18</sup> Fouché, though morally pliable and self-aggrandizing, was ruthlessly effective in uncovering plots against the crown and state, be they the Directorate, Emperor Napoleon or the restored Bourbon monarchy with Louis XVIII (1755-1824).

As the turbulence of the Revolution subsided with the rise of Napoleon, matters of internal security took on a new and profound importance. Centralizing and forcefully applying the available aspects of policing from the Gendarmerie to the civilian police, allowed Napoleon to establish a security apparatus that first pacified France, policed its conquests, and most importantly, sought to serve as a direct extension of his political aims and influence of millions of people.

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### Notes

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## Napoleon on the Block

This section will be a bimonthly column of interesting Napoleonic items that have been featured in past and/or upcoming auctions. If you have seen something in

an auction catalog, newspaper or internet that would qualify, please forward the information to [editor.nhs.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:editor.nhs.newsletter@gmail.com)

### A Napoleonic glass tumbler – £8000

This glass tumbler, engraved with a crowned N over a band of diamond cutting, contained in a tooled leather cylindrical travelling case is of a type that accompanied Napoleon on his campaigns. According to the Fondation Napoleon, who hold a similar example in their collection, these glasses would likely have been used during Napoleon's last campaigns of 1814 and 1815, and only a handful of other examples are known.

The glass was made by Montcenis, the crystal manufacturer established in 1787 who produced the majority of the glassware for the imperial household, as they had for the monarchs of the Ancien Régime.

This example, from a family collection in the northwest of England, had an estimate of £1000-1500 at The Summer Fine Sale at Tennants in Leyburn on July 16. It made £8000.

A glass tumbler used during Napoleon's last campaigns of 1814 and 1815 – £8000 at Tennants.



**The Napoleon Blog** by Shannon Selin

## Napoleon's Mother, Letizia Bonaparte

Napoleon's mother Letizia Bonaparte was a pragmatic, stoical and domineering woman who saw the world from the perspective of a Corsican clan. She was devoted to her children and expected them to be devoted to her, and to each other, in return. Years of hardship left her tough and thrifty, with a keen business sense and a habit of hoarding money. She once told Napoleon, "It's not poverty I'm afraid of, it's the shame." (1)

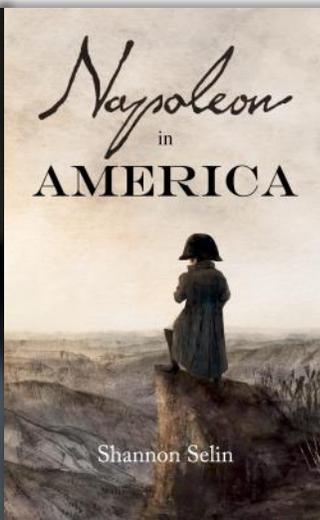
Though they had their disagreements, Letizia was the one person Napoleon always treated with respect. "[M]y mother ... is worthy of every sort of admiration," he said, and he seemed to mean it. (2)

### A Corsican beauty

Maria Letizia Ramolino was born on August 24, 1750 in Ajaccio, Corsica, which was then part of the Republic of Genoa. She came from a reputable Lombard family that had been in Corsica for generations. Letizia's father died when she was five. Her mother remarried and gave birth to two more children, including Letizia's half-brother Joseph Fesch, whom Letizia helped raise. Letizia received no



*Letizia Bonaparte by Jacques Sablet*



**Napoleon in America** is available from the following:

[Amazon USA](#)

[Amazon Canada](#)

More about her book [here](#) where you may read an excerpt.

Historical fiction writer Shannon Selin is the author of *Napoleon in America*, which imagines what might have happened if Napoleon Bonaparte had escaped from exile on St. Helena and wound up in the United States in 1821. Shannon blogs about Napoleonic and 19th century history at [shannonselin.com](http://shannonselin.com). She lives in Stratford, Canada, where she is working on the next novel in her Napoleon series.

## Napoleon's Mother, Letizia Bonaparte, (continued)

formal education.

On June 2, 1764, when she was not quite 14, Letizia married 18-year-old Carlo Maria Buonaparte (Charles Bonaparte), a law student from Corsica. He was attracted as much by Letizia's generous dowry as by her good looks. The couple went on to have 13 children, eight of whom survived infancy: Joseph, Napoleon, Lucien, Elisa, Louis, Pauline, Caroline and Jérôme (for their birth dates, spouses and children, see Napoleon's family tree).

In 1768, France gained possession of Corsica. Charles Bonaparte was a supporter of Pasquale Paoli, a Corsican patriot and revolutionary leader who fought the French attempt to take over the island. Letizia insisted on accompanying Charles and Paoli on their guerrilla campaigns, even though Joseph was still a baby and she was pregnant with Napoleon. She is said to have later recounted:

*I carried my Napoleon in my womb with the same joy, the same calm happiness, the same serenity that I experienced later, when I held him in my arms, and fed him at my breast. My mind was entirely occupied by the dangers of his father and those of Corsica. To gather news of the army, I quitted the safe retreat of our steep rocks, to which the women had been consigned, and ventured on to the very fields of battle. I heard the bullets whistling about my ears, but I knew no fear, since I trusted in the protection of the Holy Virgin, to whom I had dedicated my Napoleon.*  
(3)

Napoleon said of this time:

*She faced everything – the privations and the fatigue. She endured everything. There was a man's head on her woman's body.* (4)

The family eventually returned to Ajaccio, where Letizia gave birth (see my post about the myths and facts surrounding Napoleon's birth). Charles took a position with the new French administration. Through assiduous courtship of the French, he gained various appointments and favours. This rising income was not much help to his wife, as Charles had extravagant tastes and spent or gambled everything he earned. The burdens of looking after the house,

property and children fell entirely upon Letizia. She devoted herself to the duty. "When I became the mother of a family, I consecrated myself entirely to its proper direction, and I did not leave my house except to attend Mass." (5) She ruled her brood with a stern, but affectionate hand.

In 1784 she wrote Napoleon, who had written Charles from the military academy at Brienne complaining about never receiving any pocket money:

*I received your letter, my dear boy, and if the handwriting and the signature hadn't proved it came from you, I would never have believed that you were the author of it. You are the dearest of my children, but if I ever receive a similar epistle from you I will have nothing more to do with my Napoleon. Wherever did you get the idea that a son, no matter what a situation may be, is entitled to write to his father as you did? You can thank heaven that your father was away from home. If he had seen your letter, he would have set off for Brienne at once to punish an impudent and naughty son for such insolence....  
Your loving mother, Letizia Buonaparte (6)*

### Poverty-stricken widow

Charles died of stomach cancer on February 24, 1785, leaving the family in debt. With the four youngest children still at home, Letizia Bonaparte kept the family afloat. She managed this through a combination of thrift, charity and the small sums Napoleon sent from his meagre lieutenant's salary. In 1788, in a letter to the Minister of War in an unsuccessful attempt to secure Louis's admission to a French military school, Letizia wrote:

*Charged with the education of eight children, widow of a man who always served the King and the administration of the affairs of the Island of Corsica, who sacrificed considerable sums in order to further the views of the Government, deprived of resources, it is at the foot of the Throne and in your sensitive and virtuous heart that she hopes to find them. Eight children, Monseigneur, shall be the organ of the prayers which she will address to Heaven for your preservation.* (7)

In 1793, when Napoleon turned against Paoli, the

## Napoleon's Mother, Letizia Bonaparte, (continued)

family was forced to flee to the French mainland. Letizia and the younger children lived in poverty in Marseilles, relying on hand-outs for food. Napoleon bombarded military and civil authorities with entreaties to come to the aid of his "unfortunate family." Eventually Letizia benefited from a grant for Corsican refugees, as well as from Napoleon's rising fortunes. When Napoleon was promoted to the rank of general of brigade, he installed his mother and sisters in a comfortable country-house close to Antibes. When he became commander of the Army of the Interior in 1796, he sent some of his new-found wealth to his mother, enabling her to move into one of the finest homes in Marseilles. In 1797, Letizia was able to return to Casa Buonaparte, the family home in Ajaccio.

### Madame Mère

Though Letizia Bonaparte did not often intercede in political affairs, she took a meddling interest in her children's lives, particularly their choice of spouses. She was angered by Napoleon's marriage, in 1796, to the widow Josephine de Beauharnais, on which she was not consulted. Letizia regarded Josephine as a woman of easy morals, expensive tastes and indifferent character. She also thought Josephine was too old to bear Napoleon children (a matter on which she proved correct). The tension between his mother and his wife dogged Napoleon throughout his marriage to Josephine. Though Letizia did not object to Napoleon's second wife, Marie Louise, she did not particularly like her, and later blamed her for denying the Bonaparte family access to Napoleon's son, the King of Rome.

Letizia tried to mediate the many disputes between Napoleon and his siblings. Though she entreated her other children to display loyalty towards Napoleon, she often took his siblings' side when she felt Napoleon had been too harsh. She believed all her children should benefit from Napoleon's success. She did not hesitate to let Napoleon know when she disapproved of something he had done.

Letizia was affronted when Napoleon, on assuming the title of Emperor in 1804, did not grant her a title equal to or above that of those he granted to his brothers

and sisters, who became princes and princesses. Joseph Fesch wrote on her behalf to Napoleon in July 1804:

*Your mother has started for the waters of Lucca. Her health is undermined by moral affections, rather than any physical disposition... She was greatly distressed to learn, from the gazettes, the advent of the Empire.... She is under the impression that your Imperial Majesty prefers all the family to her. (8)*

Letizia was given the title "Madame Mère de Sa Majesté l'Empereur" (Madam Mother of His Majesty, the Emperor), an official place at Napoleon's right hand (ahead of all the princes), and an increased allowance. Still, she boycotted Napoleon's coronation in protest at his failure to include Lucien in the imperial succession (Napoleon objected to Lucien's marriage). Napoleon ordered Jacques-Louis David to include Letizia in his well-known painting of the coronation nonetheless.

Napoleon allowed his mother and uncle to exercise some supervision over the affairs of Corsica. The prefect of the island received orders not to make any appointment without consulting Letizia or Fesch.

*It is to be feared that this system can scarcely have conduced to efficiency, since the prejudice which Letizia and, in a less degree, her brother always cherished against those who had taken part against the Bonapartes in 1793 must have excluded from the administration many persons whose character and abilities would have ordinarily ensured their promotion; while, at the same time, others with nothing to recommend them save some distant relationship to the Imperial Family found themselves selected for lucrative and important posts. (9)*

Letizia amassed a large fortune by letting her children and patrons spend money on her, while she saved her own. She was always aware of the precariousness of Napoleon's position. She reportedly said:

*Rings adorn fingers but they may fall off and the fingers remain. (10)*

### Exile in Rome

When Napoleon's rule came to an end in 1814, Letizia travelled to Italy with Fesch. Pope Pius VII granted

## Napoleon's Mother, Letizia Bonaparte, (continued)

them refuge in Rome. The terms of Napoleon's abdication guaranteed Letizia 300,000 francs a year. She wisely liquidated her French property before it was taken from her. She joined Napoleon in exile on Elba, and helped to finance his retinue.

Napoleon's valet Louis Étienne Saint-Denis had this to say about Letizia on Elba:

*Madame Mère must have been a beauty of the first rank in her youth. Her face was well modeled, with regular features. Her mouth was neither too large nor too small, her lips were thin, her nose almost straight, her eyes brown, large, brilliant, and very expressive. There was always some haughtiness and severity in her look. But the beauty of her features lost part of its effect because of the thick layer of paint which she put on her cheeks. This did not harmonize with her age, which required great naturalness in the color of her skin. Too much rouge does not go well with wrinkles. On ordinary weekdays her dress was simple, though rich. She ordinarily wore a little bonnet ornamented with flowers. On Sundays and holidays, when she was in full dress to come to the palace, she had on a toque with feathers. On these occasions she wore very fine diamonds. I knew nothing about her household arrangements; I know that she was very religious and was said to be very miserly. When she spoke French she had a very marked Italian accent. She said very little. (11)*

The night before his escape from Elba, Napoleon allegedly asked his mother for her advice. She reportedly told him:

*Go my son, fulfil your destiny, you were not made to die on this island. (12)*

Letizia Bonaparte returned to France during the Hundred Days. In 1815, after Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo and second abdication, she returned to Rome. She still had considerable wealth, enabling her to buy the Palazzo Rinuccini (Rinuccini Palace) in 1818. She wanted to join Napoleon in exile on [St. Helena](#), or otherwise alleviate the hardship and isolation of his imprisonment. At [General Bertrand's](#) request, and after getting permission from the British, she sent two priests, a doctor and a cook to join Napoleon's entourage.

In early 1819, Letizia and Fesch became convinced by Madame Kleinsmuller – an Austrian clairvoyant who said the Virgin Mary appeared to her every night to bring news of the Emperor – that Napoleon had been removed from St. Helena and was doing well. On July 31, 1819 Fesch wrote to [Count de Las Cases](#):

*You must have gathered from all our letters how certain we are of the deliverance and the time it occurred; although the gazettes and the English still insinuate he is at St. Helena, we have reason to believe he is no longer there and, though we do not know where he is or when he will give signs of life, we have enough proof for persisting in our beliefs and even for hoping that, before long, we shall learn and be humanly certain of it all. There can be no doubt that the gaoler of St. Helena is making Count Bertrand write to you as though he still held Napoleon in his clutches. (13)*

As alluded to in *Napoleon in America*, Pauline and Louis attempted to persuade their mother and uncle of the falseness of these beliefs. Pauline wrote on July 11, 1821:

*I've had much to put with these last two years, through my uncle, mother and Colonna, letting themselves be guided by a scheming woman, a German and a spy for the Austrian Court, who says the Madonna appears to her and told her the Emperor was no longer there. It's all the wildest nonsense! The Cardinal [Fesch] has almost gone mad, for he openly says the Emperor is no longer at St. Helena, that he has had revelations as to where he is. Louis and I have done all we could during the past two years to eradicate the effects of this sorceress, but all to no purpose. My uncle hid from us the letters and news he received from St. Helena and told us that this silence ought to be enough to convince us. Mama is very devout and gives a lot to this woman, who is in league with her confessor, who is himself the instrument of yet other priests. It's all a horrible intrigue. (14)*

Pauline finally managed to convince Letizia of the error of her ways. It was too late. When, on July 22, 1821, Letizia learned that Napoleon had died on St. Helena on May 5, she apparently let out a sharp cry,

## Napoleon's Mother, Letizia Bonaparte, (continued)

fell to the floor unconscious, and then refused to see anyone for days. She wrote to British Foreign Minister Castlereagh asking for Napoleon's remains to be sent to her, but received no reply.

Letizia Bonaparte spent her remaining years quietly in Rome, rarely going out, except to attend Mass. She always wore black, in mourning both for Napoleon and for Elisa, who died in August 1820. She experienced more sorrow with Pauline's death in 1825. The death of Napoleon's son in 1832 was a further blow. By this time Letizia was an invalid (she fell and fractured her thigh in 1830, leaving her unable to walk) and totally blind. When, after the July 1830 revolution in France, a French Deputy proposed putting forward a motion to lift the ban on her residing in France, Letizia thanked him but refused. She did not want an exemption to be made for her and not her children.

Letizia Bonaparte died in Rome on February 2, 1836, age 85. In 1851 her body was taken to Corsica and buried in her native Ajaccio.

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4. Decaux, *Napoleon's Mother*, p. 19.
5. Williams, *The Women Bonapartes*, Vol. 1, p. 33.
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*Napoleon's Mother* (New York, 1961), p. 210.

13. Decaux, *Napoleon's Mother*, p. 249.

14. Gilbert Martineau, *Madame Mère, Napoleon's Mother* (John Murray, 1978), p. 159.



Letizia Bonaparte on her deathbed; Lithograph after a sketch by Joseph Ernst Tunner, 1836.



The Coat of arms of Letizia Bonaparte depicts an eagle, the head to the sinister in front of an azure background standing upon gold thunderbolts on top of which is the letter L for Letizia. The shield is surrounded by the red Imperial mantle, semé of bees. The shield is topped by the Imperial crown.

## Collector's Corner with J. David Markham

This section will be a bimonthly column of interesting Napoleonic collectables and antiques belonging to one of our society members. If you have an item or items that you would like to share with the Society, then please forward the article and

pictures to:

[editor.nhs.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:editor.nhs.newsletter@gmail.com)

to be included in an upcoming newsletter issue.

We want to hear from our members!

### An Italian Connection

In keeping with the Italian theme of this Newsletter, I offer several Italian related items from my collection.

The first is a pressed wood snuffbox with tortoiseshell lining showing a distraught woman with one exposed breast and her hands in the air clearly concerned that a lion is eating a child. The inscription reads LE LEON DE FLORENCE.



The melodramatic scene on the lid of this box reproduces a painting by Nicolas-André Monsiau, which was shown at the Paris Salon in 1801. It was titled 'Trait sublime de la Maternité au Siècle Dernier' or 'A sublime deed of motherhood in the last century'. However, it was soon re-titled Le Lion de Florence, and it is this title that is included in the decoration on

this box. The story depicted is of a lion's escape from the menagerie of the Grand Duke of Tuscany in Florence in the late 18th century. The lion carried off a small child, and its mother, heedless of her own safety, rushed at the lion to save her child. Unfortunately, we do not know whether her

brave act was successful. Reference: The Victoria and Albert Museum (museum number: W.34:1&2-1915). E.Pinto 'Treen and Other Wooden Bygones' Plate 365.



The second item is a pressed wood snuffbox with tortoiseshell lining a man in a Roman toga holding up three swords with three men, also in togas, saluting him. In the background three women and a child appear to be in despair. The top inscription reads: LE SEMENT DES HORACES (The Oath of the Horatii). The bottom inscription reads: ROME COMPTE SUR NOUS ET NOTRE ÂME RAVIE REEMPLIRA. ON ATTNETE OU QUITTA LA VIE.

## Collector's Corner with J. David Markham, (continued)

(Rome is counting on us and our delighted soul will fulfill her demand. One waits or leaves life).

A small paper with French text inside the box reads translated into English:

The Horatii. Three Roman brothers who, for the glory of Rome, fought against three Curiatii brothers of the duchy of Alba, in the presence of the two armies to determine which of the two peoples would rule the other. At the first clash, two Horatii were killed and the three Curiatii wounded. Fearing to succumb to the three united opponents, the last of the Curiatii pretended to flee in order to divide them. His plan worked out and he killed them in succession, thus achieving the triumph of his fatherland.



[Note: as two Horatii die, it was the last of the Horatii who killed the three Curiatii brothers ... A mistake in the description.]

The Horatii and the Curiatii, a drama/play by Pierre Corneille, in which we can read the sublime answer of the old Horace when he is told that two of his sons have died and that the third one has fled. He is asked: 'What do you want him to do against three enemies?' He answered: 'That he dies.'

*Oath of the Horatii* (1784) is a painting by Jacques-Louis David, painted during the French Revolution, depicting the Roman salute. The theme of the painting has an extreme patriotic and neoclassical perspective; it later became a model work for future painters. The painting augmented David's fame, and allowed him to rear his own students. The painting depicts the Roman Horatii, who according to Titus Livius' *Ab Urbe Condita* (From the Founding of the City) were male triplets destined to wage war against the "Curiatii," who were also male triplets, in order to settle disputes between the Romans and the city of Alba Longa. As revolution in France loomed, paintings urging loyalty to the state rather than to clan or clergy abounded. Although it was painted nearly five years before the revolution in France, the *Oath of the Horatii* became one of the defining images of the time. About 3" diameter.



## Collector's Corner with J. David Markham, (continued)



The third piece picks up on the same story. It is a gilt bronze clock showing one of the Horatii brothers holding up three swords as they take the oath to defend their homeland. It is about 12" wide and 18" high and is early to mid-19th century.

Finally we have a very large rare 18th century engraving by Cav. Giovanni Battista Piranesi showing winged Victory surrounded by Roman military items. The reproduction Empire frame measures about 24x30.5 inches. Piranesi (1720-1778) was an Italian Classical archaeologist, architect and artist, especially known for his engravings of ancient Roman sites.

The Italian inscription reads:

To His Excellency Prince D. Abondio Rezzonico, Senator of Rome, Lover of the Fine Arts. With profound reverence,  
C a v a l i e r e  
Giovanni Battista  
Piranesi, DDD

Ancient marble trophy displayed at the Clementine

Museum in the Vatican. It was found in the archeological dig (or archeological site) led by M. Gavin Hamilton near Cornazzano in an ancient location thought to have belonged to the villa of one of the Roman emperors or some other high-status Roman citizen. Since it was found among the most spectacular ruins of this grand building, it seems this monument was placed in a prestigious part of the house and was meant to honor a naval victory. The sculptor portrayed a winged Victory with the mask off; she simultaneously leans and steps on the enemy's suit of armor set against a large pillar. She holds in her right hand the victor's garland or crown of laurels; with the left she places the mask on her head, symbolically indicating that she favors the Romans. The naval rostrum laid at her feet together with other spoils from the enemy underscore the subjugation of the defeated.



**J. David Markham** is President of the International Napoleonic Society and President Emeritus of the Napoleonic Historical Society. He is also a Knight of the Order of the French Academic Palms, France's highest civilian-only award created by Napoleon in 1808. David has been a serious collector of Napoleonic art and artifacts since 1984. His collection was the focus of the exhibition "Napoleon the Great: Selections from the David Markham Collection at the Phoenix Art Museum 11/1989-3/1990. He has also contributed to Revolution in Print: France, 1789 (Phoenix Public Library, July-August, 1989) as part of the Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris traveling exhibition, Napoleon on the Nile: Soldiers, Artists and the Rediscovery of Egypt (Dahesh Museum of Art, Manhattan, NY, 6/2006-4/2007) and the same exhibition at the Frye Art Museum, Seattle, WA, 8/2008-1/2009). He presented lectures and tours for each exhibition. His collection consists of furniture, clocks, weapons, bronzes, engravings, miniatures and perhaps the world's largest private collection of Napoleonic snuffboxes.

## Napoleonic Travels

Have you visited any Napoleonic sites recently? If yes, why not share them with our NHS members?

Please send me your photos and a brief description to me at [editor.nhs.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:editor.nhs.newsletter@gmail.com)

### Rome

After saying goodbye to Napoleon, Madame Mère travelled from Paris to Rome to be under the protection of Pope Pius VII. She purchased the former Palazzo Rinuccini, renamed Palazzo Bonaparte (now Palazzo Misciatelli) on the corner of piazza Venezia and Via del Corso. The heirs, the Bonaparte princes of Canino and Musignano, ceded it in 1905 to the Marquises Misciatelli. The building is currently a museum hosting temporary art exhibitions.

“Various decorative elements of the facade pertain to the Bonaparte period, such as the inscription in the turret frieze or the imperial eagle above the central window of the main floor, and, an element characteristic of Letizia and closely connected to her memory – she was accustomed to pass time taking the air and watching the view of the Via del Corso – the corner balcony in green dyed wood. Much of the interior decoration also go back to these years: the floors in battuto veneziano tiles, with the letter B at the centre, the elegant marble mantles in neo-classical style, or the frieze in the antechamber, the pictures in the Reception Room, the suit of armour and the elegant grotesques inside the covered balcony. At the top of the stairs stands a large plaster model of Canova’s statue of the emperor, donated to Letizia by the artist himself.” — [www.museonapoleonico.it](http://www.museonapoleonico.it)



The green balcony where Madame Mère would watch the world go by.



## Napoleonic Travels, (continued)

### The Kingdom of Naples, now just known as plain old Naples.

While in Naples we visited the Royal Palace of Naples where King Murat takes his place among the Kings of this *Royaume de Naples*.

The Royal Palace façade has statues of the prominent rulers of Naples since the foundation of the Kingdom of Naples in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

**Joachim Murat** (King of Naples from 1 August 1808 to 19 May 1815 ) showing his usual humility.



### Background

In 1806, following decisive victories over the allied armies at Austerlitz and over the Neapolitans at Campo Tenese, Napoleon installed his brother, Joseph as King of Naples, he conferred the title "Prince of Naples" to be hereditary on his children and grandchildren. When Joseph was sent off to Spain two years later, he was replaced by Napoleon's sister Caroline and his brother-in-law Marshal Joachim Murat, as *King of the Two Sicilies*.



1806–1808 Flag of Naples changed after Joseph Bonaparte became king.



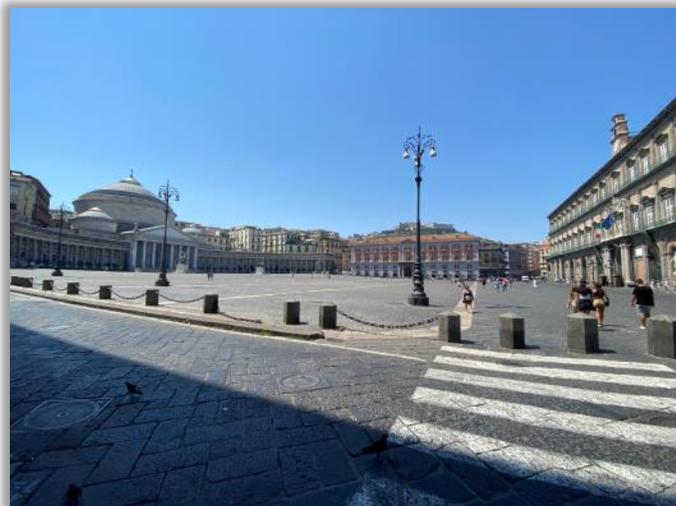
1808–1811 Flag of Naples changed after Joachim Murat became king.



## Napoleonic Travels, (continued)



Above, a view from the Gran Caffè Gambrinus. This coffee and gelato café was the meeting point of Oscar Wilde, Gabriele D'Annunzio, Ernest Hemingway, Matilde Serao, the Princess Sissi and Jean Paul Sartre, Guy de Maupassant, Émile Zola and Benedetto Croce. Below left is the view from the Palace gardens. Below right is a view across from the Palace façade of the Piazza del Plebiscito with the Basilica Reale Pontificia San Francesco da Paola.



## **Napoleon's Addresses: The Italian Campaigns**, compiled By Tom Holmberg from the Napoleon Series website available [here](#).

### **Napoleon's Address to the Army at the Beginning of the Italian Campaign, March, 1796**

"Soldiers, you are naked and ill-fed! Government owes you much and can give you nothing. The patience and courage you have shown in the midst of these rocks are admirable; but they gain you no renown; no glory results to you from your endurance. It is my design to lead you into the most fertile plains of the world. Rich provinces and great cities will be in your power; there you will find honor, glory, and wealth. Soldiers of Italy! will you be wanting in courage or perseverance?"

### **Napoleon's Proclamation to the Army, May, 1796**

"Soldiers: You have in fifteen days you have won six victories, taken twenty-one stand of colors, fifty-five pieces of cannon, and several fortresses, and overrun the richest part of Piedmont; you have made 15,000 prisoners, and killed or wounded upwards of 10,000 men. Hitherto you have been fighting for barren rocks, made memorable by your valor, though useless to your country, but your exploits now equal those of the armies of Holland and the Rhine. You were utterly destitute, and you have supplied all your wants. You have gained battles without cannon, passed rivers without bridges, performed forced marches without shoes, and bivouacked without strong liquors, and often without bread. None but Republican phalanxes, the soldiers of liberty, could have endured what you have done; thanks to you, soldiers, for your perseverance! Your grateful country owes its safety to you; and if the taking of Toulon was an earnest of the immortal campaign of 1794, your present victories foretell one more glorious. The two armies which lately attacked you in full confidence, now fly before you in consternation; the perverse men who laughed at your distress, and inwardly rejoiced at the triumph of your enemies, are now confounded and trembling. But, soldiers, you have yet done nothing, for their still remains much to do. Neither Turin nor Milan are yours; the ashes of the conquerors of Tarquin are still trodden underfoot by the assassins of Basseville.\* It is said that there are some among you whose courage is shaken, and who would prefer returning to the summits of the Alps and Apennines. No, I cannot believe it. The

victors of Montenotte, Millesimo, Dego, and Mondovi are eager to extend the glory of the French name!"

[\*Nicolas-Jean-Hugon de Basseville (1753-1793) was a French diplomat killed by a Roman mob on 13 January 1793.]

### **Letter to "The Directory"**

"Headquarters, Lodi,

May 11, 1796.

"*Citizen Directors*: I thought that the passage of the Po would be the most audacious performance of the campaign, the Battle of Millesimo the liveliest encounter, but I have yet to give you an account of the Battle of Lodi.

"At three o'clock on the morning of the 21st, we pitched our headquarters at Casal. At nine o'clock, our vanguard encountered the enemy defending the approaches to Lodi. I immediately ordered all the cavalry to mount with four pieces of light artillery which had just arrived, drawn by the carriage horses of the lords of Plaisance.

"The division of General Augereau, which had camped over night at Borghetto, and that of General Massna, which slept at Casal, were put in motion. Meantime, our vanguard had overturned all the posts of the enemy, and seized one of heir cannon. We pursued the enemy into Lodi, they having already crossed the Adda by the bridge. Beaulieu with all his army was drawn up in battle array. Thirty set cannon defended the passage of the bridge. I formed all my artillery into a battery. The cannonading was very lively for several hours.

"As soon as the army arrived it formed into a close column with the second battalion of rifles at its head, followed by all the battalions of grenadiers. On the run, with cries of *Vive la Republique*, they appeared on the bridge, which is over six hundred feet long. The enemy kept up a terrible fire. The head of the column almost seemed to waver. A moment's hesitation and all would have been lost. The Generals Berthier, Massna, Cervoni, Dallemagne, the Brigadier-General Lannes, the Battalion-Commander Dupas felt this, and rushing to the front, decided the fate of the day.

## Napoleon's Addresses: The Italian Campaigns, (continued)

from the Napoleon Series website available [here](#).

"This redoubtable column overrode all opposition, breaking Beaulieu's order of battle, capturing all his artillery, and sowing on all sides seeds of terror, flight, and death. In the twinkling of an eye the enemy's army was dispersed. The Generals Rusca, Augereau, and Beyrand crossed as soon as their divisions arrived, and completed the victory. The cavalry crossed the Adda at a ford; but the ford proving extremely bad, there was much delay, which prevented an engagement.

"The enemy's cavalry tried charging our troops, in order to protect the retreat of their infantry, but our men were hard to frighten.

"Nightfall and the extreme fatigue of the troops, many of whom had made more than ten leagues during the day, forced us to forego the pleasure of pursuit.

"The enemy lost twenty pieces of cannon, and from two to three thousand killed, wounded or prisoners. We lost but 150 men, dead and wounded.

"Citizen Latour, General Massna's captain aide-de-camp, received several sabre cuts. I want the place of battalion commander for this brave officer.

"Citizen Marmont, my aide-de-camp brigadier-general, had a horse shot under him.

"Citizen Lemarois, my captain aide-de-camp, had his clothes riddled by balls. The courage of this young officer is equal to his activity.

"If called upon to name all the soldiers who distinguished themselves on that extraordinary day, I should be obliged to name all the riflemen and grenadiers of the vanguard, and nearly all the officers of the staff. But I must not forget the intrepid Berthier, who was, in one day, gunner, cavalier, and grenadier. Brigadier-General Sugny, commanding the artillery, conducted himself creditably.

"Beaulieu fled with the remains of his army. Already Normandy may be considered as belonging to the Republic. At this moment Beaulieu is passing through the Venetian States, many of whose cities have closed their doors upon him.

"I hope soon to send you the keys of Milan and Pavia.

"Although, since the beginning of the campaign, we have had some pretty hot encounters, which the army of the French Republic have met with audacity, not one of them has approached the terrible passage of the bridge at Lodi.

"If we have lost but few good men it is due to promptness of execution, and to the sudden effect produced upon the opposing army by the size and formidable fire of our intrepid column."

### Letter to "The Directory"

"Headquarters, Lodi.

May 14, 1796.

"*Citizen Directors*: I think it most impolitic to divide the Italian army into two sections; it is equally contrary to the interests of the Republic to put two generals in command.

"The expedition against Livourne, Rome, and Naples is a small affair; it can be accomplished by arranging the divisions in echelon in such a manner as to enable them, by a retrograde march, to appear in force against the Austrians, and threaten to hem them in at the slightest movement on their part.

"For this it is not only necessary to have one general, but he should have nothing to hinder him in his march or in his operations. I have conducted the campaign without consulting anyone. I should have accomplished nothing worth the trouble had I been obliged to reconcile my ideas with those of another. I have gained some advantages over very superior forces while in an almost destitute condition; because I was persuaded of your entire confidence in me, my moves were as prompt as my thoughts.

"If you fetter me on all sides; if it is necessary for me to confer with the commissioners of the Government regarding each step; if they have the right to change my movements, to send me troops or withdraw them at their will, then look for no good.

"If you reduce your power by dividing your forces, if you break the unity of the military outline in Italy, with grief I tell you, you will have lost the most

## **Napoleon's Addresses: The Italian Campaigns**, (continued)

from the Napoleon Series website available [here](#).

favorable occasion for bringing Italy to terms.

"In the present condition of the affairs of the Republic in Italy, it is indispensable for you to have a general in whom you have entire confidence. If it is not I, I make no complaint, I shall only strive to redouble my zeal in order to merit your esteem in the past that you may confide in me. Every one has his own manner of conducting war. General Kellerman has had more experience and will do better than I, but together we would make a dire failure.

"I cannot render our country any essential service unless invested with your absolute and entire confidence. It requires much courage on my part to write you in this way, I could so easily be accused of pride and ambition. But I owe the expression of all my opinions on the subject to one whose many tokens of esteem I shall never forget."

### **Proclamation to the Soldiers on Entering Milan, May 15, 1796**

"Soldiers: You have rushed like a torrent from the top of the Apennines; you have overthrown and scattered all that opposed your march. Piedmont, delivered from Austrian tyranny, indulges her natural sentiments of peace and friendship toward France. Milan is yours, and the Republican flag waves throughout Lombardy. The Dukes of Parma and Modena owe their political existence to your generosity alone. The army which so proudly threatened you can find no barrier to protect it against your courage; neither the Po, the Ticino, nor the Adda could stop you for a single day. These vaunted bulwarks of Italy opposed you in vain; you passed them as rapidly as the Apennines. These great successes have filled the heart of your country with joy. Your representatives have ordered a festival to commemorate your victories, which has been held in every district of the Republic. There your fathers, your wives, sisters, and mistresses rejoiced in your good fortune and proudly boasted of belonging to you. Yes, soldiers, you have done much, but remains there nothing more to do? Shall it be said us that we how to conquer, but not how to make use of victory? Shall posterity reproach us with having found Capau in

Lombardy? But I see you already hasten to arms. An effeminate response is tedious to you; the days which are lost to glory are lost to your happiness. Well, then, let us set forth! We have still forced marches to make, enemies to subdue, laurels to gather, injuries to revenge. Let those who have sharpened the daggers of civil war in France, who have basely murdered our ministers, and burnt our ships at Toulon, tremble! The hour of vengeance has struck; but let the people of all countries be free from apprehension; we are the friends of the people everywhere, and those great men whom we have taken for our models. To restore the capitol, to replace the statues of the heroes who rendered it illustrious, to rouse the Roman people, stupefied by several ages of slavery, such will be the fruit of our victories; they will form an era for posterity, you will have the immortal glory of changing the face of the finest part of Europe. The French people, free and respected by the whole world, will give to Europe a glorious peace, which will indemnify them for the sacrifices of every kind which for last six years they have been making. You will then return to your homes and your country. Men will say, as they point you out, *'He belonged to the army of Italy.'*"

### **Proclamation to the Troops on Entering Brescia, May 28, 1796**

"It is to deliver the finest country in Europe from the iron yoke of the proud House of Austria, that the French army has braved the most formidable obstacles. Victory, siding with justice, has crowned its efforts with success, the wreck of the enemy's army has retreated behind the Mincio. In order to pursue them, the French army enters the territory of the Republic of Venice; but it will not forget that the two Republics are united by ancient friendship. Religion, government, and customs shall be respected. Let the people be free from apprehension, the severest discipline will be kept up; whatever the army is supplied with shall be punctually paid for in money. The general-in-chief invites the officers of the Republic of Venice, the magistrates, and priests to make known his sentiments to the people, in order that the friendship which has so long subsisted between the two nations may be

## **Napoleon's Addresses: The Italian Campaigns, (continued)**

from the Napoleon Series website available [here](#).

cemented by confidence. Faithful in the path of honor as in that of victory, the French soldier is terrible only to the enemies of his liberty and his government."

### **Address to the Soldiers During the Siege of Mantua, Nov. 6, 1796**

"Soldiers: I am not satisfied with you; you have shown neither bravery, discipline, nor perseverance; no position could rally you; you abandoned yourselves to a panic-terror; you suffered yourselves to be driven from situations where a handful of brave men might have stopped an army. Soldiers of the 39th and 85th, you are not French soldiers. Quartermaster-general, let it be inscribed on their colors, *"They no longer form part of the Army of Italy!"*"

### **Address to the Troops on the Conclusion of the First Italian Campaign, March, 1797**

"Soldiers: The campaign just ended has given you imperishable renown. You have been victorious in fourteen pitched battles and seventy actions. You have taken more than a hundred thousand prisoners, five hundred field-pieces, two thousand heavy guns, and four pontoon trains. You have maintained the army during the whole campaign. In addition to this, you have sent six millions of dollars to the public treasury, and have enriched the National Museum with three hundred masterpieces of the arts of ancient and modern Italy, which it has required thirty centuries to produce. You have conquered the finest countries in Europe. The French flag waves for the first time upon the Adriatic opposite to Macedon, the native country of Alexander [the Great]. Still higher destinies await you. I know that you will not prove unworthy of them. Of all the foes that conspired to stifle the Republic in its birth, The Austrian Emperor alone remains before you. To obtain peace we must seek it in the heart of his hereditary State. You will there find a brave people, whose religion and customs you will respect, and whose prosperity you will hold sacred. Remember that it is liberty you carry to the brave Hungarian nation."

### **Address to the Genoese, 1797**

"I will respond, citizens, to the confidence you have

reposed in me. It is not enough that you refrain from hostility to religion. You should do nothing which can cause inquietude to tender consciences. To exclude the nobles from any public office, is an act of extreme injustice. You thus repeat the wrong which you condemn in them. Why are you people of Genoa so changed? Their first impulses of fraternal kindness have been succeeded by terror and fear. Remember that the priests were the first who rallied around the tree of liberty. They first told you that the morality of the gospel is democratic. Men have taken advantage of the faults, perhaps the crimes of individual priests, to unite against Christianity. You have proscribed without discrimination. When a State becomes accustomed to condemn without hearing, to applaud a discourse because it is impassioned; when exaggeration and madness are called virtue, moderation and equity designated as crimes, that State is near its ruin. Believe me, I shall consider that one of the happiest moments of my life in which I hear that the people of Genoa are united among themselves and live happily."

### **Extract from a Letter to the Directory, April, 1797**

"From these different posts we shall command the Mediterranean, we shall keep an eye on the Ottoman Empire, which is crumbling to pieces, and we shall have it in our power to render the dominion of the ocean almost useless to the English. They have possession of the Cape of Good Hope. We can do without it. *Let us occupy Egypt.* We shall be in the direct road for India. It will be easy for us to found there one of the finest colonies in the world. *It is in Egypt that we must attack England.*"

### **Address to Soldiers after the Signing of the Treaty of Campo Formio, October, 1797**

"Soldiers: I set out to-morrow for Germany. Separated from the army, I shall sigh for the moment of my rejoining it, and brave fresh dangers. Whatever post Government may assign to the soldiers of the Army of Italy, they will always be the worthy supporters of liberty and of the glory of the French name. Soldiers, when you talk of the Princes you have conquered, of the nations you have set free, and the battles you have

## Napoleon's Addresses: The Italian Campaigns, (continued)

from the Napoleon Series website available [here](#).

fought in two campaigns, say: In the next two we shall do still more!"

### Proclamation to the Cisalpine Republic, Nov. 17, 1797

"We have given you liberty. Take care you preserve it. To be worthy of your destiny make only discreet and honorable laws, and cause them to be executed with energy. Favor the diffusion of knowledge, and respect religion. Compose your battalions not of disreputable men, but with citizens imbued with the principles of the Republic, and closely linked with the prosperity. You have need to impress yourselves with the feelings of your strength, and with the dignity which befits the free man. Divided and bowed by ages of tyranny, you could not alone have achieved your independence. In a few years, if true to yourselves, no nation will be strong enough to wrest liberty from you. Till then the great nation will protect you."

### Address to the Citizens after the Signing of the Treaty of Camp Formio, Dec. 10, 1797

"Citizens: The French people, in order to be free, had

kings to combat. To obtain a constitution founded on reason it had the prejudices of eighteen centuries to overcome. Priestcraft, feudalism, despotism, have successively, for two thousand years, governed Europe. From the peace you have just concluded dates the era of representative governments. You have succeeded in organizing the great nation, whose vast territory is circumscribed only because nature herself has fixed its limits. You have done more. The two finest countries in Europe, formerly as renowned for the arts, the sciences, and the illustrious men, whose cradle they were, see with the greatest hopes genius and freedom issuing from the tomb of their ancestors. I have the honor to deliver to you the treaty signed at Camp Formio, and ratified by the Emperor. Peace secures the liberty, the prosperity, and the glory of the Republic. As soon as the happiness of France is secured by the best organic laws, the whole of Europe will be free."

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Edouard Detaille, "Napoleon Bonaparte in Italy, 1797" (1883)



## Excerpts from *The Gentleman's Magazine*

In line with our Italian theme, I have transcribed the Foreign News from Italy from the June 1805 issue describing the events of Napoleon's coronation as the King of Italy, the annexation of Genoa into France, the Creation of the Order of the Iron Crown and some gossip. The scan by Google Books was difficult to read.

No, not that type of Gentleman's Magazine!

This section will be a bimonthly column of interesting articles from over 200 years ago from a series of magazines know as "The Gentleman's Magazine" or "The Monthly Magazine". These magazines were scanned by Google Books and available through this site [here](#) if you search using the magazine title(s). You can download them as a PDF and they are searchable (well, mostly).

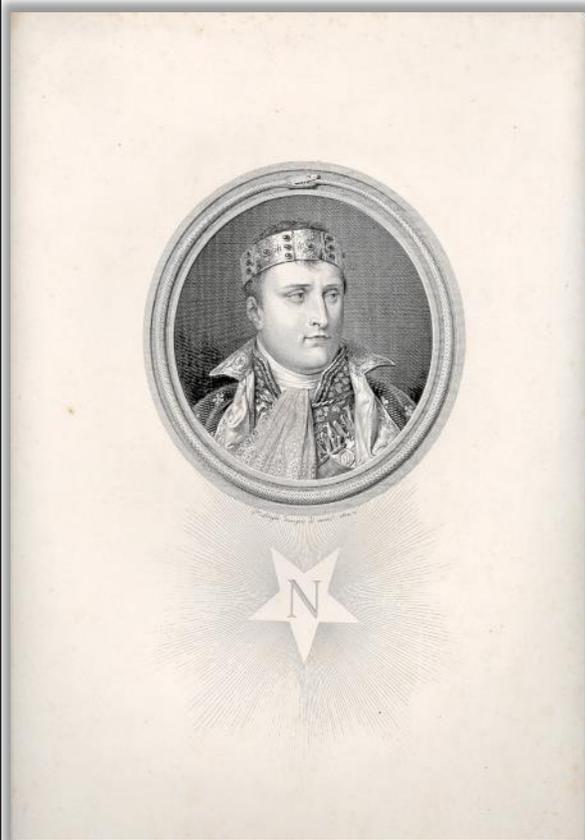
### Foreign News - Italy

#### Coronation of the King of Italy.

*Milan, May 27*

Yesterday the ceremony of the Coronation of the King of Italy was performed with the greatest pomp, and the most imposing grandeur.

At half past 11, her Majesty the Empress, preceded by her Imperial Highness the Princess Eliza, repaired to the Cathedral, along a gallery elegantly adorned, and was conducted under the canopy to her tribune, amidst the liveliest applause. At 12 o'clock, his Majesty the Emperor and King left the palace by the same gallery, wearing upon his head the Imperial Crown and that of Italy, holding in his hand the sceptre, and the hand of Justice of the kingdom, and clothed with the royal mantle, carried by the two grand gentlemen of the horse. His Majesty was preceded by the hussars, the heralds at arms, the pages, the aides-de-camp, the masters of the ceremonies, by the grand master of the ceremonies, by seven ladies carrying offerings, by the honours of Charlemagne, of the Empire and of Italy, carried by the grand officers of France and Italy, and the president of the three Electoral Colleges, accompanied by the civil officers of his majesty. All the ministers, grand officers, French counsellors of state, and the officers of the royal household, followed the Emperor and King. The cardinal archbishop came with his clergy to receive his Majesty at the portal, burned incense before him, and, after a speech, in which he tendered the homage of his clergy, conducted his Majesty under the canopy to the sanctuary. The Emperor seated himself in the chair, upon a throne, having upon his right the honours of the Empire, upon his left those of Italy. The honours of Charlemagne were at the entrance of the sanctuary, in front of the altar. The cardinal legate was upon an arm chair, with the Gospel at his side. The grand civil officers were behind his Majesty, the grand master and masters of the ceremonies upon the right and left of the altar and the civil officers in the choir. After the prayers and usual interrogations, the grand officers of Italy laid upon the altar the ornaments delivered to them by his Majesty, and the cardinal blessed them. – The Emperor then went to the foot of the altar, to receive from the hands of the archbishop the ring, the mantle, and the sword, (which he delivered to his Highness Prince Eugene,) the sceptre,



*Napoleon crowned as the King of Italy, May 1805.  
Image from the J. David Markham collection.*

## Excerpts from *The Gentleman's Magazine*, (continued)

and the hand of Justice; and finally he ascended the altar, and took the crown of iron. Placing it on his head with defiance, he said in a loud voice these remarkable words—*Dieu me la donne, gare à qui la touchera!* “*God has given it to me; let them beware who would touch it!*” Having then laid the crown upon the altar, he took that of Italy, and placed it upon his head, amid thunders of applause from the spectators. – After this ceremony, the Emperor, proceeded by the same procession, crossed the church, receiving at every step numerous and lively acclamations. His Majesty placed himself at the bottom of the nave, upon an elevated and magnificent throne. – The honours of Italy were placed behind the throne. His Highness Prince Eugene was seated upon a chair on the right of the Emperor. Below him, on the same side, were the honours of Charlemagne; and, on the left of the throne, the honours of the Empire.

[Here follow the disposals, around the throne; of the masters of the ceremonies, civil officers, etc.] – The galleries were filled with the most distinguished personages of the realm. In one of the boxes were the Doge, two members of the Ligurian legation, 40 ladies richly dressed. The diplomatic corps occupied another box. The Empress and princess Eliza occupied a box in the choir. The wall, ceiling, and columns of the cathedral, were covered with silk and crape, ornamented with golden fringe. Nothing could equal the magnificence of this superb picture. His Majesty afterwards read the oath with a loud voice; and the chief of the heralds said, *Napoleon, Emperor of the French, is crowned and enthroned. Long live the Emperor and King!* Te Deum was then chaunted, and his Majesty returned to the Palace with the same procession.

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### Annexation of Genoa with France

On the 4th of June, at mid-day, the Emperor received the Doge, and the deputation of the Senate, and people of Genoa, introduced by the M De Legue, and presented by his Serene Highness the Doge addressed the Emperor. In the course of his speech he said:

“Deign, Dire, to hear the wish of a people which has been attached to France in times of the greatest difficulty. – Reunite to your empire that Liguria, the first theatre of your victories, and the first step to that throne on which you are seated, for the safety of all civilized societies. Deign to grant us the happiness of being your subjects. Your Majesty cannot have a people more devoted to more faithful.”

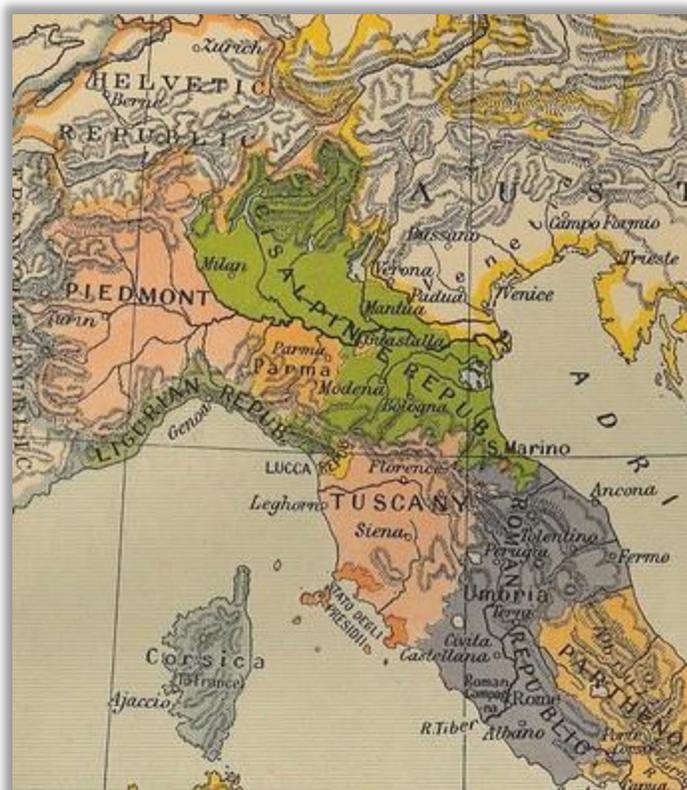
His Majesty replied to the discourse of the Doge in these terms:

“Mr. Doge, and Gentlemen Deputies of the Senate, and people of Genoa.

Circumstances, and your desires, have several times called me with the last ten years to interfere in your internal affairs. I have always brought with me peace, and fought to promote those liberal ideas which alone

could give your government that splendour which it had many ages since; but I soon convinced myself of the impossibility of your being able alone to perform any thing worthy of your ancestors. Every thing is changed. The new principles of maritime legislation which the English have adopted, and obliged the greatest part of Europe to recognize; the right of blockade which they can extend to places not blockaded, and even to entire coasts and to rivers, which is nothing else than the right of annihilating at pleasure the commerce of nations: the continually increasing ravages of the Barbary States; all these circumstances presented to you nought but desolation in your independence. Posterity will be grateful to (...) for having exerted myself to render the (...) free, and obliged the Barbary corsairs not to make war on weak naval powers, but to live among themselves as cultivators and honest men. I was animated only by a sense of the interest and the dignity of man. At the Treaty of Amiens, England refused to co-operate in these liberal ideas. Since that, a great power of the Continent has shewn quite as much disinclination to them. Alone, to sustain these legitimate principles, it would have seen necessary to have recourse to arms; but I have not the right to shed the blood of my people,

## Excerpts from *The Gentleman's Magazine*, (continued)



Location of Genoa and the Ligurian Republic in 1799, Adolphus William Ward, *The Cambridge Modern History Atlas*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1912, Map 86.

except for interests that are peculiar to them. From the moment that Europe could not obtain from England that the right of blockade should be restrained to places really blockaded; from the moment that the flag of the weak was without protection, and delivered to the fury of the corsairs, there has been no maritime independence; and henceforth men of sense foresaw what has happened to-day. Where there does not exist a maritime independence for a commercial people, there arises a necessity for uniting itself to a more powerful flag. I will realize your wish; I will unite you to my great people. It will be to me a new means of rendering more efficacious the protection I have always loved to grant you. My people will receive you with pleasure. They know that in all circumstances you have affected their arms with friendship, and have supported them with all your means and your strength. They find besides, with your ports, an increase of maritime power, which is necessary to them to sustain its lawful rights against the oppressor of the seas. You will find in you

union with my people a Continent. You have only ports and a marine. You will find a flag, which, whatever may be the pretensions of my enemies, I will maintain on all the seas of the universe, constantly free from insult and from search, and exempt from the right of the blockade, which I will never recognize, but for the places really blockaded as well by sea as by land. You will find yourselves sheltered under it from this shameful slavery, the existence of which I reluctantly suffer with respect to weaker nations, but from which I will always guarantee my subjects. Your people will find in the esteem I have always had for them, and in the paternal sentiments I shall entertain for it henceforth, the guarantee that every thing which can contribute to its happiness shall be done. Mr. Doge, and Gentlemen Deputies of the Senate, and people of Genoa, return to your country. I will repair thither in a little time, and there I will seal the union in which my people and you will engage. Those barriers which separate you from the Continent shall be removed by the common interest, and things will be placed in their natural state. The signatures of all your citizens placed at the bottom of your wish which you present to me, answer all the objections that I could suggest: they constitute the only right I can acknowledge as legitimate. In making it respected, I will only cause to be executed the guarantee of your independence which I promised to you.”

The terms in which the Senate of the Ligurian Republic decreed the union of that Republic with the French Empire, are in substance as follow:

“That the Ligurian State, without any partition, shall from in its whole a district of France; that the public debt shall be liquidated on the same principles as the French debt; that the port of Genoa shall continue a free port, with all the stores attached to it; and that the laws regarding the military conscription shall not be applicable in the United Province, except to seamen.”



*The Coat of Arms of the Ligurian Republic, 1797-1814.*

## Excerpts from *The Gentleman's Magazine*, (continued)

### Institution of the Order of the Iron Crown

*Milan, June 7*

The Session of the Legislative Body opened this day. At six in the morning, his Excellency Gen. Duroc, grand marshal of the Palace, took the command of the Palace of the Legislative Body. The members of the Legislative Body assembled in grand costume in the hall of their setting at one o'clock. The Council of State proceeded at one o'clock from the Palace to the Palace of the Legislative Body, where they were received by a deputation of three legislators, who conducted them to the places destined for them. At half past one the Emperor arrived at the Place of the Legislative Body, accompanied by his Imperial Highness the Princess Eliza, by her ladies, and the officers of her household. Her Majesty was received at the outer door of the Palace by the president and deputation of thirty members of the Legislative Body, and conducted to the tribune prepared for her. His Majesty's train set out from the Place at two for the Palace of the Legislative Body. His departure was announced by the discharge of artillery. The way through which his train passed was lined with troops. The procession was arranged with the usual pomp, and preceded and followed by a detachment of the French and Italian Guards, and by squadrons of Mamelukes. His Majesty's arrival at the place of the Legislative Body was announced by a second discharge of artillery. He was received at the outer door by a Deputation composed of 30 members of the Legislative Body, with the President at their head. The procession assembled in one of the halls of the palace, whence it proceeded in order to the hall of sitting, where the places were arranged in the following order: his Majesty the Emperor and King on a throne; on his right his Serene Highness Prince Eugene in a chair, two steps lower than the throne; behind his Majesty on the right and left, two Colonels, Generals of the Guards, the Grand Marshal of the Palace, the Grand Major Domo, the Grand Almoner and Marshal Moncey; back of the throne the Chamberlain and the French and Italian Esquires. The other officers of the court were stationed according to their rank. Opposite the throne the Legislators were disposed in a circular form, their President in the centre, without and distinction of place, but having two State Messengers of the Legislative Body, one on his right, the other on his left. Before the Legislators sat the Council of State in chairs, half on the right and half on the left. When his Majesty was seated on his throne, the whole were uncovered. The Grand master of the Ceremonies took the orders of his Majesty. The Legislators, summoned individually by the Chancellor, took the oath, after which the Secretary of State read the

Statutes of the kingdom.

These Statutes are eight in number. The eighth respects exclusively the establishment of a military order, under the denomination of "The Order of the Iron Crown," and is divided into five titles. The order is to consist of 500 Knights, 100 Commanders, and 20 Dignitaries. The motto is to be " *Dieu me la donne, gare à qui la touchera.*" Vacancies are to be filled up every year, on Ascension day. Four hundred thousand Milanese livres are to be appropriated to the order. Each Knight is to have 300 livres yearly, each Commander 700, and each Dignitary 3000 livres. One hundred thousand livres of this revenue to be set apart for such extraordinary life pensions as the Grand master shall think proper to grant to any Knights, Commanders, or Dignitaries. The King of Italy to be Grand master; but the Emperor and King, NAPOLEON, in consideration of being founder, to retain, during his life, exclusively the title and functions of the office. The Statutes were signed by all the Public Functionaries, and directed by order of the Emperor and King, NAPOLEON, dated June 6, at his Palace of Milan, to be transmitted into the registers of the Tribunals, and Administrative Authorities.

Prince Eugene then was summoned by the Grand master to take the oath as Viceroy. He made a profound bow to his Majesty, and placed himself on his knees on a cushion at the left of the throne; where, putting his hand upon the Gospel, he pronounced the following oath:

"I swear to be faithful to the Constitution, and to obey the King; not to resign my functions till the moment I shall receive the King's directions thereupon; and to give up immediately the authority with which I am invested, to any person that shall be deputed by him."

His Majesty then addressed the Legislative Body; and, after alluding to the various objects of internal regulations, which are by no means interesting, he proceeded thus:

"I have neglected none of the objects upon which my experience in administration could be useful to my people of Italy. Before I return across the mountains, I shall go over a part of the Departments, to become better acquainted with their wants. I shall leave depository of my authority this young Prince, whom I have brought up from his infancy, and who will be animated with my spirit. I have besides taken measures to direct myself the most important affairs of the State. Orators of my Council will present to you a project of law, authorizing my Chancellor Keeper of the Seals, MELZI, to act for four years in the quality of depository of my authority, as Vice-president; a domain

## Excerpts from *The Gentleman's Magazine*, (continued)

which, remaining in his family, may attest to his descendants the satisfaction I have felt from his services. – I think I have given fresh proofs of my constant resolution to fulfil towards my people of Italy everything they expect from me. I hope that in their turn they will be desirous of occupying the place that I destine for them in my thoughts; and they never will attain it, but “by persuading themselves that the *force of arms is the principal support of the States*. It is time that youths should cease to fear the fatigues and dangers of war, and that they should enable themselves to make their country be respected, if they wish their country to be respectable.

“Gentlemen of the Legislative body, vie in zeal with my Council of State; and by that concurrence of wills towards the sole aim of the public prosperity, give to my representative the support he should receive from you.

“The British Government have received with an evasive answer the propositions I made to it and the King of England having immediately rendered them public by insulting my people in his Parliament, I have seen the hopes considerably weakened, which I have conceived of the re-establishment of peace. However, the French squadrons have since obtained access, to which I attach importance only because they must farther convince any enemies of the inutility of a war, which affords them nothing to gain, and everything to lose. The divisions of the flotillas and the frigates built at the expense of the finances of my kingdom of Italy and which at present make a part of the French forces, have rendered useful services in many circumstances. I preserve the hope that the peace of the Continent will not be troubled; and at all events I am in a position to fear none of the chances of war: I shall be in the midst of you the very moment my presence may become necessary for the preservation of my kingdom of Italy.

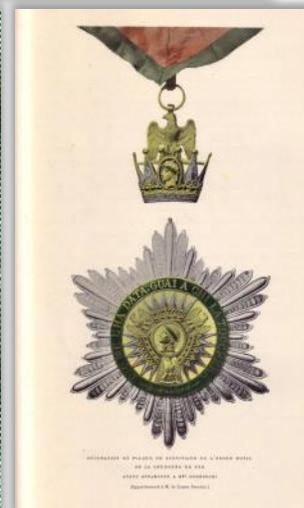
### Other News

The residence of the King of Italy will, it is said, be fixed at Rome, and the Papal See be removed from Rome to Avignon.

Some late private Letters from France state, that Buonaparte has at least 120,000 troops of the line upon his Italian territories. It is thought that he meditates nothing less than the conquest of the whole of Italy.

A deputation had arrived at Milan from the Queen of Etruria, in consequence of some aspersions which had been thrown upon her character, for declining to marry Prince Eugene Beauharnais, the son of the Empress Josephine. –

the mother, it seems demanded, in a letter, the hand of the Queen for her son. The answer was a polite refusal, on account of the youth of her young son the King, and a promise given to her relatives, the Kings of Spain and Naples, never more to marry. It is stated, that Buonaparte has, in consequence, demanded an interview with these Princes. Eugene Beauharnais is a great favourite with this father-in-law.



Obituaries from the Gentleman's Magazine

Note that these "interesting" deaths were selected from only one issue (June, 1805).

DEATHS.

Feb. 19. At Verdun, in France, Lieut. Wm. Fitzgerald, second son of the Vice-provost of Trinity-college, Dublin, late of the frigate *La Minerve*, which, on the 2d of July, 1803, went aground in a fog near Cherbourg, and was taken by the enemy, but not till after a gallant resistance, while resistance was of any avail. He and his brother, a young midshipman, only 12 years old, who shared in the danger of this disastrous event, were marched several hundred miles into the interior of the country, to different places of confinement, and ultimately to Verdun, where the despair of an exchange of prisoners, and consequently of any farther opportunity of distinguishing himself in the service of his country during the remainder of the war, is supposed to have preyed upon his spirits, and to have produced a decline, which at length released him from his earthly captivity. This promising young man, cut off in the prime of life, had fought on the memorable 1st of June, 1794, as a midshipman on-board the *Marlborough*, which, next to the *Invincible*, suffered most in that glorious action: though severely wounded, he refused to quit his station till the battle was over, and he saw his country triumphant. A society of London merchants, who afterwards met for the purpose of rewarding the officers who had chiefly distinguished themselves on that glorious occasion, presented him with a valuable piece of plate with a suitable inscription. These honourable testimonies of his merit are the only consolation now left to his afflicted relatives and friends.

At Courrock, in Scotland, aged 107, Archibald Campbell, watch-maker.

24. Dropped down in a fit, and expired immediately, Mr. John Mountain, of Huttoft, co. Lincoln.

In his 74th year, Joseph Wilkes, esq. of Measham, co. Derby; who may be considered almost as the father of inland navigations in this country.

Mr. Foote, banker, one of the firm of Martin and Co. Lombard-street, who fell a sacrifice to his passion for sailing, and was considered one of our first-rate amateurs in that science. He had just got a new pleasure-boat built, one of the most elegant of the day, and, accompanied by his sister, and two servants, went the beginning of the week to Gravesend, to indulge in his favourite amusement. This morning they embarked, as usual, and sailed up and down, under the most flattering auspices of wind and weather; when, on a sudden, a breeze from the land upset the boat, which instantly sunk. Miss Foote was buoyed up by her cloaths, and floated on the water until she was taken up in a state of insensibility. The servants were also saved. Mr. Foote was a very handsome and amiable young man, about 28 years of age, and brother to Capt. Foote, of the Royal Navy. He was very athletic, and considered the best amateur rower on the river. On the evening of the 31st, two watermen of Gravesend picked up his drowned body. On Sunday, June 2, about one in the afternoon, his boat was found by a gentleman's pleasure boat, and the mast standing.

4. At his house in Bond-street, Mr. Brown, sea. oilman to his Majesty.

Obituaries from the Gentleman's Magazine, (continued)

*May . . .* At Verdun, in France, chiefly, as it is supposed, for want of medical assistance, Mr. James Parry, late proprietor of "The Courier" news-paper, one of the persons detained at the commencement of hostilities. Great pains were taken, applications made, and large sums of money paid to persons high in office, to have him removed to Paris, but in vain.

Aged 98, David Morrison, a native of Scotland, born at Aberdeen in the year 1707, the period when England and Scotland were united. He remembered perfectly well the rebellion in the latter country in 1715; and, till within a short period of his death, enjoyed a tolerably good state of health.

*June . . . .* A poor man, named Jepson, 74 years of age, hung himself at his residence in Pittsmoor, near Sheffield.

Mr. Richard Motton, of Falmouth, a respectable and worthy character. Whilst walking to his farm, he was suddenly seized with a faintness, and obliged to be carried home, but before any medical assistance could be procured he expired.

In his 19th year, Mr. John Blagden Neale, an under-graduate of Pembroke college, having taken a sailing-boat with a boy from the boat-house at Oxford, was crossed by another boat, and forced by the bowsprit under the water and drowned. He had been warned of his danger by the gentleman in the other boat, who jumped in to save him, but without success. The accident arose from Mr. N. not understanding the management of a sail.

At Mr. Pitt's house in Downing-street, Westminster, Mr. Robert Betty, steward and groom of the chamber to Mr. Pitt, and an Exchequer messenger.

Mr. James Thompson, aged 10; Elizabeth, his wife, aged 41; and William, their son, aged 7; were all unfortunately drowned in a large brick-pit at Bristol. The son was playing with a hoop, near the brink of the pit, and, endeavouring to stop it from rolling into the water, fell in. The mother ran to his assistance, and over-reaching herself to lay hold of his cloaths, got also out of her depth. The father, hearing their cries, ran to the spot, and seeing the dreadful situation of his wife and child—in the very act of sinking—he, in a state of distraction, plunged into the water (about 11 feet deep), in the hope of rescuing them; but missed his aim, and they all perished. When the bodies were found, about an hour after the accident, the mother had her son clasped in her arms.

Mrs. Watkins, of Radcliff-hill, near Bristol. She had a large evening party, and appeared in more than usual health and spirits, but, while receiving some of her guests, she suddenly sank down, and expired immediately.

In the Fleet prison, where she had been confined about four years, for debts contracted in fitting-up an elegant house at Blackheath, in Kent, aged 32, Miss Elizabeth-Frances Robinson (or Robertson), of swindling notoriety. Her remains were deposited in St. Bride's church-yard, attended by her father, mother, and one of the turnkeys of the Fleet.

Suddenly, while in bed with her husband, Joan, wife of Robert Monday, of Crowless, in the parish of Ludgvan. On the discovery of her death, her husband, who had been some time rather indisposed, removed to another bed, and died in about six hours after.

## Napoleonic Eagle-Eye Award

If you spot Napoleon or something Napoleonic in a movie, television or some other type of media, then get a image of it and submit it to [editor.nhs.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:editor.nhs.newsletter@gmail.com)

This issue's winner is NHS Board Member,  
**Dan Fenner!**

Dan spotted a bust of Napoleon in the screen shot (below) from the movie "The Fighting Kentuckian". It looks like the bust created by Renzo Colombo (Italian, 1856-1885). The movie's plot actually has a real Napoleonic historical basis.

### The Fighting Kentuckian (1949)

**Historical Setting** — The story is set in Alabama in 1818, including the city of Demopolis, which was founded by Bonapartists. The Bonapartists had been exiled from France after the defeat of Napoleon I at the Battle of Waterloo. Congress authorized the sale of four townships in the Alabama Territory in March 1817 at two dollars per acre, and Marengo County was created on February 7, 1818 from lands



that had been taken from the Choctaw Nation under the Treaty of Fort St. Stephens. It was named after Spinetta Marengo, Italy where Napoleon defeated Austria in 1800 in the Battle of Marengo. The county seat, Linden, Alabama, was named after Hohenlinden, Bavaria where Napoleon won another victory against the Austrians. The Bonapartist colony did not succeed overall, in part due to surveyance issues that contribute to the plot of the film and in part due to practical difficulties in establishing the vineyards.

**Movie Details** — starring John Wayne and Oliver Hardy (of Laurel and Hardy fame!)

While writing up this newsletter, I had Turner Movie Classics playing during a Humphrey Bogart movie marathon. My ears perked up during **King of the Underworld** (1939) when Bogart quotes Napoleon! "*A good General needs to know when to be just, severe or mild.*" Just after this quote, he shoots someone. The film quotes (and misquotes) Napoleon throughout since Bogart's character, Joe Gurney (a gangster), is an admirer of Napoleon. He meets a writer, Bill Stevens (played by James Stephenson) who has written a book about Napoleon. The Napoleonic part of the plot goes like this:



"...While on his way to free his men, Joe has a flat tire. He and his amateur gang initially suspects nearby wanderer Bill Stevens of having shot at him, but then a nail is extracted from the tire. When Bill mentions that he has written a book about the mistakes that brought about Napoleon's downfall, Joe becomes very interested, as he is a great admirer of the French dictator. He offers Bill a ride. Bill makes the mistake of accepting, and soon finds himself shot in the shoulder when Joe and his gang rescue their comrades from the sheriff. Bill is caught...Joe has Bill kidnapped in the middle of the night so that he can ghostwrite Joe's autobiography. Joe likes Bill's suggestion for the title, *Joe Gurney: the Napoleon of Crime*, but Bill overhears his plan to kill him after the book is finished..."

You can watch a clip of it [here](#) where Joe Gurney (Bogart) meets the Napoleonic writer on the road.

## Napoleonic Bits and Pieces

### Huge LEGO HMS Victory

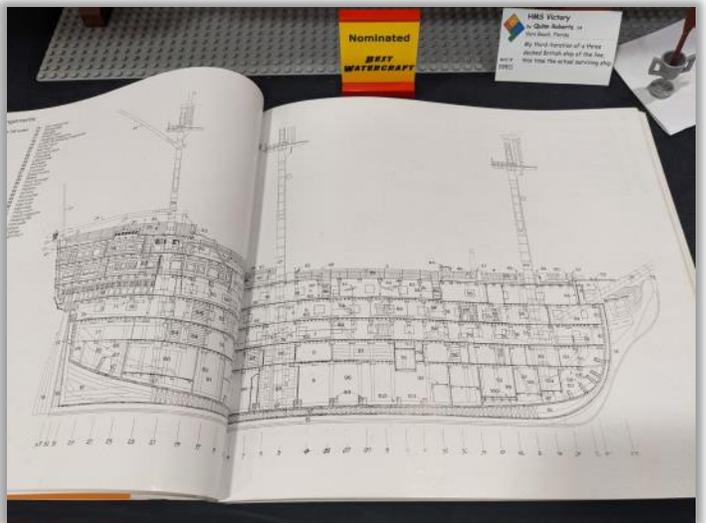
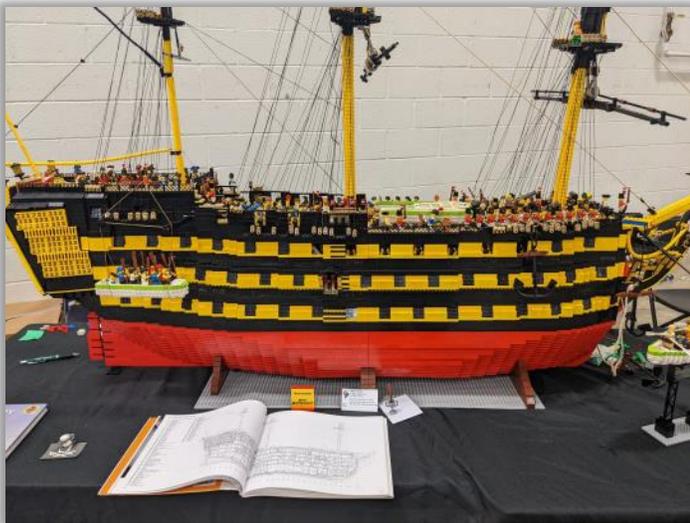
by 14-year-old Quinn Roberts

The model also has a full interior, too!

An interview with Quinn can be seen [here](#).



Napoleonic Bits and Pieces, (continued)



## Napoleonic Bits and Pieces, (continued)

*File this under things that make you go “ewwww!” - Editor*

### **Have historians finally solved mystery over why only TWO skeletons have ever been found at Battle of Waterloo? Experts say bones of 20,000 British and French soldiers were ground down and used to make white sugar.**

- Research was carried out by Dr Bernard Wilkin and historians Professor Tony Pollard and Robin Schäfer
- The team discovered dozens of contemporary written accounts in Belgian, German and French archives
- They suggested bones were plundered from 1834 and used for burgeoning sugar industry in Belgium
- The findings of the study have been shared exclusively with MailOnline in the UK

*By Harry Howard, History Correspondent for MailOnline, Published 17 August 2022*

The mystery of what happened to the bodies of more than 20,000 men who were killed at the Battle of Waterloo has dogged historians for decades.

Despite the passing of more than 200 years since the Duke of Wellington's triumph over Napoleon's forces in 1815, only two skeletons of fallen men have been found, with the most recent discovery coming last month.

But now, bombshell new research suggests the remains of men and tens of thousands of horses are missing because they were ground down and used to filter brown sugar beet into refined white sugar.

The gruesome practice likely took place at other Napoleonic battle sites, with sugar factories existing close by.

The factory at Waterloo, in Belgium, was just three miles from the sites of mass graves from which the bones of fallen men and animals may have been taken.

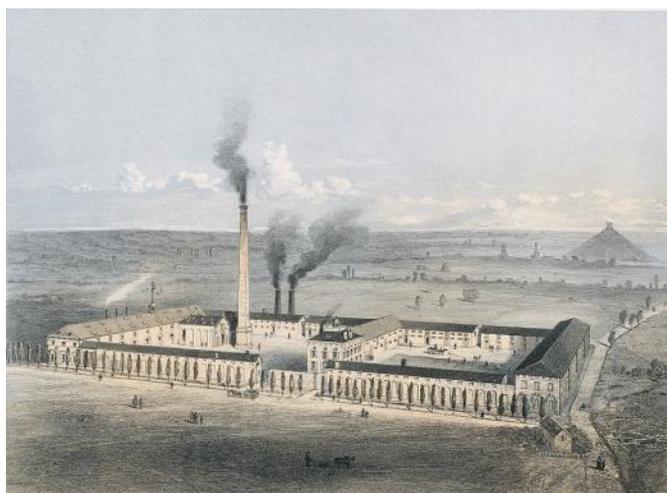
The new research, which has been shared exclusively with MailOnline in the UK, was carried out by respected historians Dr Bernard Wilkin and Robin Schäfer, along with archaeologist Professor Tony Pollard, from the University of Glasgow.

The team discovered dozens of contemporary written accounts in Belgian, German and French archives that suggested the bones were plundered from 1834 onwards and used for the burgeoning sugar industry in Belgium.

Some of this sugar could also have ended up in Britain, for use in the production of sweet treats or to



Bombshell new research suggests that only two skeletons of men killed in the Battle of Waterloo have been found because mass graves were plundered so that bones could be ground down and used to filter brown sugar beet. Above: The most recent skeleton discovery was made in July.



This illustration shows the sugar beet factory and refinery that was set up just three miles from the Waterloo battle site.

## Napoleonic Bits and Pieces, (continued)

sweeten tea and coffee.

One written account, in the German newspaper Prager Tagblatt in 1879, noted that using honey to sweeten food avoided the risk of 'having your great-grandfather's atoms dissolved in your coffee one fine morning'.

Another, written by a French traveller who had visited Waterloo in the 1830s, complained how the 'greatest memory of modern history' had been 'mutilated... for sugar'.

A third reveals how the mayor of Braine-l'Alleud - the area where the Waterloo battle site was located - issued a decree in 1834 slamming 'excavations' to dig up bones of Waterloo dead.

Dr. Wilkin said of the research: 'It is without any doubt, the most exciting discovery on the battle of Waterloo in recent times.'

Professor Pollard said the work is a 'game changer', adding that the local sugar industry had a 'profound' impact on the landscape and graves at Waterloo.

The research also builds on previous work by Professor Pollard showing that some of the bones of the Waterloo dead were ground down and used to make valuable phosphate fertiliser.

As many as 20,000 men were killed on June 18, 1815, when an allied army under the command of Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington met forces being directed by Emperor Napoleon on the battlefield at Waterloo.

Napoleon, fresh out of exile off the coast of Italy after defeat to a coalition of his European neighbours the year previously, was once again trying to establish a French empire on the continent.

Outnumbered by his opponents, he was trying to divide and conquer: First by engaging and defeating the Prussian army led by Field Marshal Gebhard von Blücher at the Battle of Ligny on June 16.

Blücher suffered heavy losses and was forced to retreat, before Napoleon turned his attention to armies under the command of Wellington which had withdrawn to Waterloo.

June 18 dawned calm as Napoleon waited for the



As many as 20,000 men were killed on June 18, 1815, when an allied army under the command of Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington met forces being directed by Emperor Napoleon on the battlefield at Waterloo. Above: The corpses of soldiers are seen being collected by locals in this contemporary illustration.



The trade in bones took off in Belgium in 1834, after a new law had liberalised the practice. Figures taken from Belgian parliamentary debates show how whilst no bones were exported from Belgium to France between 1832 and 1833, the trade exploded from 1834, when there were 350,000kg sent. Above: Locals are seen piling the dead of Waterloo into mass graves .

## Napoleonic Bits and Pieces, (continued)

muddy battlefield to dry out before attacking - a tactical mistake as, unbeknownst to him, the Prussians were regrouping close by and only needed Wellington's men to hold up the French for long enough for them to rejoin the fight.

Wellington withstood multiple attacks by the French against defensive positions at Mont-Saint-Jean that afternoon before the Prussians were able to arrive in sufficient numbers to inflict heavy casualties.

A last-ditch attack on allied positions with the Imperial Guard that evening failed and ended with the route of Napoleon's army, the capture of the Imperial Coach, and the end of the French dictator's wars in Europe.

The men and horses that were killed in the battle are believed to have been piled into mass graves, but these have never been discovered.

Dr Wilkin's research uncovered documents and publications in the Belgian state archives and other stores of documents, most of which are closed off to most researchers.

The trade in bones took off in Belgium in 1834, after a new law had liberalised the practice.

Figures taken from Belgian parliamentary debates show how whilst no bones were exported from Belgium to France between 1832 and 1833, the trade exploded from 1834, when there were 350,000kg sent.

More than two decades earlier, French entrepreneur Charles Derosne found that ground down and heated bone - known as bone char - was a more effective filter of sugar beet than charcoal.

The discovery prompted a huge demand that was fueled in part by the set-up in Belgium.

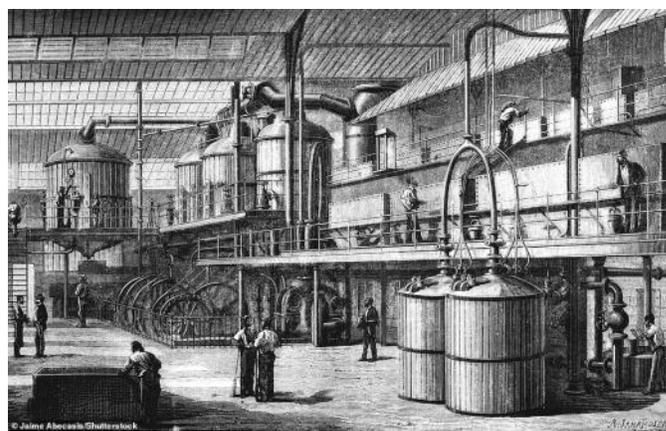
When the sugar industry was established in the Waterloo region in 1834, sugar beet overtook other crops that had previously been dominant.

The phenomenon was recounted by a traveller in a French newspaper, who noted that beets were growing 'where the great secular trees once stood, under which the nations clashed to make the destiny of a great man!'

They added: Man has to eat, and in his insatiable need



The Battle of Waterloo was part of Napoleon's attempts to establish a French empire on the continent. He was fresh out of exile.



To make refined sugar, beets were cut into shreds before being cooked and pressed until their juice came out. The juice was then filtered through bone charcoal. Above: A 19th century sugar factory.

he would plough to Calvary. But for sugar! To have mutilated the greatest memory of modern history for sugar!

'He who has fought by the beet will perish by the beet. This is the fruit of your continental blockade, O great Napoleon.'

As well as the cultivation of beets, a huge sugar production factory was built in Waterloo, just three miles from the battlefield.

Another factory was set up west of Waterloo. Nearby there were factories for making bone charcoal.

To make refined sugar, beets were cut into shreds

## Napoleonic Bits and Pieces, (continued)

before being cooked and pressed until their juice came out. The juice was then filtered through bone charcoal.

An 1835 article from French newspaper L'Independent that was found by Dr Wilkin's team recorded how industrialists had been given permission to 'excavate the battlefield of Waterloo, in order to remove the bones of the dead, which are piled up there in such large numbers, and to make bone char.'

Another title, La Presse, said: 'One experiences the feeling of disgust and shame with which the peasants of Waterloo blush, when they see speculators who sell noble bones scattered on the battlefield, and which they intend to transform into bone char.'

A third, the Echo du Commerce, said that the convoys were 'heading for the animal coal factories, whose products are necessary for our beet sugar factories.'

The researchers found further evidence in Belgium's national archives. One report concerned the illegal digging of battlefields, whilst others revealed illicit excavations of mass graves.

The mayor of Braine-l'Alleud said in his decree: 'Excavations to dig up bones in the battlefield of 1815 having been carried out, the undersigned has been enjoined to inform the inhabitants of his commune and neighbouring communes that these acts are one of those contained in article 360 of the penal code and punishable by imprisonment for three months to one year and a fine of 10 francs to 200 francs.'

'Consequently, the owners and cultivators of the land situated in the battlefield must not violate or allow the violation of the burials made on their property and the administrative authorities and the judicial police officers are invited to watch for offences of this kind which could still be committed in the future.'

Accounts from foreign witnesses provide further evidence as to what was going on.

One, Dr Karl von Leonhard, a renowned German geologist, visited the battlefield in 1840.

He noted how he encountered open pits with several people working in them.

He saw 'deep trenches stretched far out, filled with corpses of humans and animals (...) From time to time,



The new research comes after the discovery in July of extremely rare remains of a man and horses killed during the Battle of Waterloo. The man is believed to have been a soldier under the command of the Duke of Wellington.



The horses were used by mounted soldiers and to pull cannons and ammunition. Above: The horse's skull.

## Napoleonic Bits and Pieces, (continued)

the graves had been dug up; Brussels merchants had been trading in 'Waterloo bones' for some time.

'The natives, however, only admitted to selling the bones of horses to the speculators. One of the workers, wielding his shovel however, praised the bones of the Guard Grenadiers as particularly worthy of a prize as; according to his assurance, they weighed as much as those of horses.'

Another account, written by a French citizen and published in a respected French journal in 1858, noted that: 'I do not forget to have seen the same excavations carried out at Waterloo, where I had the misfortune to lose a brother.

'And the bones, transformed into animal black, went to clarify the beet sugar of Belgium and the northern departments.'

The account in Prager Tagblatt said: 'Seen in the light of day, sweetening food with honey seems much more poetic than with sugar, for the clarification of which, as everyone knows, bone is used.

'With honey, you don't risk having your great-grandfather's atoms dissolved in your coffee one fine morning, which is possible with sugar, after all.'

The exploitation of the Waterloo battle site and similar ones would have come to an end when the large bone deposits were gone. The sugar factory at Waterloo closed in 1860.

The team also laid out further evidence suggesting that some of the bones were collected and turned into fertiliser. They said there was 'no doubt' that human bone was used to make fertiliser.

One 1822 article, from The Times, quoted an individual using the alias 'a living soldier', who claimed that bones had been imported from Waterloo and other Napoleonic battle sites, including from Leipzig and Austerlitz.

They wrote: 'It is estimated that more than a million of bushels of human and inhuman bones were imported last year, from the continent of Europe, into the port of Hull.'

The 'soldier' then added: 'Thus collected from every quarter, they have been shipped to the port of Hull, and thence forwarded to the Yorkshire bone-grinders,



A map of the Battle of Waterloo, showing the opposing sides with the French in blue and the Anglo-Dutch forces in red. The battle halted Napoleon Bonaparte's expansion across Europe.

who have erected steam-engines and powerful machinery, for the purpose of reducing them to a granular state.

'In this condition they are sent chiefly to Doncaster, one of the largest agricultural markets in that part of the country, and are there sold to the farmers to manure their lands.'

Professor Pollard added: 'Our understanding of the processes which impacted on the survival of graves on Napoleonic battlefields has been dramatically enhanced by this new research.

'At Waterloo, the discovery of a pit containing horse skeletons and human remains recently grabbed headlines, but as yet this is the only evidence for burial on the battlefield to come out of the intensive investigations carried out since 2015 by the veteran's charity Waterloo Uncovered.

'Removal of bones for use as fertilizer back in the Britain over the years following the 1815 battle has been suggested as probable cause for a lack this lack of evidence, but the research into sugar beet is a game changer.

'This new crop took up land on which the battle was fought and its processing involved the bones of those

## Napoleonic Bits and Pieces, (continued)

killed in it.

'These findings throw more light on the fertilizer issue and also clearly demonstrate that it was the local sugar industry which had a much more profound impact on the landscape and the graves within it.'

The study written by Dr Wilkin, Professor Pollard and Mr Schäfer is due to be published in expanded form in an academic journal later this year.

The new research comes after the discovery in July of extremely rare remains of a man and horses killed during the Battle of Waterloo.

The man is believed to have been a soldier under the

command of the Duke of Wellington. The horses were used by my mounted soldiers and to pull cannons and ammunition.

The discovery was made by members of Waterloo Uncovered - a project to support military veterans and current servicemen who are struggling due to experiences in the armed forces through field work.

The researchers were led by Professor Pollard.

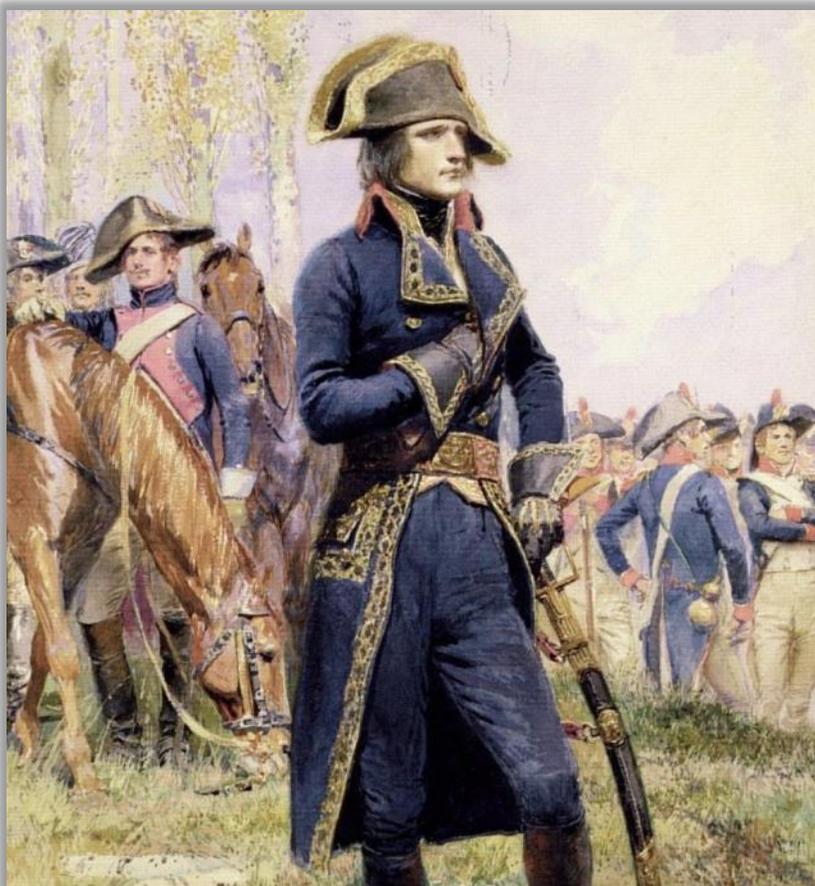
Created in 2015, Waterloo Uncovered takes a team to Belgium for two weeks each year to excavate sections of the battlefield including the field hospital and Plancenoit village, where some of the bloodiest fighting took place.

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**4 August 1796** marks the Deception of Lonato when General Napoleon Bonaparte tricked an outnumbering Habsburg Army into surrender. On 3 August, Napoleon thwarted Lieutenant Gen. Petar Gvozdanović's attempt to break the Siege of Mantua. Napoleon was now at Lonato with 1,200 men. Colonel Knorr's 3,000-man column was cut off from Gvozdanović's retreating force. He dashed southeast.

He reached Lonato in the morning. He outnumbered Napoleon 2.5-1 & could easily have captured him. Quite calmly, Napoleon told Knorr his whole army was nearby & "if in 8 minutes his division had not laid down its arms, [he] would not spare a man." To support the ruse, he turned to his aide, Division Gen. Louis Berthier. He vocally ordered grenadier & artillery units (that both knew didn't exist) to move into position.

Knorr was fooled. He surrendered a battalion each of Nos. 37 & 42 Infantry Regiments - totaling 2,000 men & 3 guns. Only after being disarmed & secured did he realize the deception. Lonato was the climax of a week's hard fighting that drove 2 Imperial Habsburg armies apart, letting Napoleon defeat each in turn. — from a Facebook post by Garrett Anderson in *La Grande Armee of Memes & Francophile Themes*.



“General Bonaparte in Italia”  
by Edouard Detaille, 1907

## Napoleonic Bits and Pieces, (continued)

*File this under things that make you shake your head! - Editor*

### French MP sued for allegedly adopting aristocratic family's name

**Emmanuel Taché de la Pagerie, a member of Marine Le Pen's far-right party, faces legal action by descendants of the Tascher de la Pagerie family**

*From Agence France-Presse*

A newly elected MP for Marine Le Pen's resurgent far-right National Rally party has been sued by the descendants of one of France's oldest aristocratic families who accuse him of adding their name to his own.

Emmanuel Taché de la Pagerie, 47, was one of dozens of National Rally MPs voted into the National Assembly on Sunday, with his official ID verified and approved by the local authorities in the southern city of Marseille.

Born Emmanuel Taché in the working-class Paris suburb of Montreuil, he told *Le Monde* newspaper this week that he added "de la Pagerie" to his passport 30 years ago, when he worked in fashion and broadcasting before entering politics.

"It's perfectly normal in the art and communication sectors to use a pen name or preferred name. The only restriction is that you can't pass it on to your children," Taché de la Pagerie's lawyer Alexandre Varaut said in a statement.



The Coronation of Napoleon and Empress Josephine by David. Descendants of the Tascher de la Pagerie family, whose members included Josephine, are suing a French MP. Photograph: Joel Robine/AFP/Getty Images

He said his client's use of the name "has been public knowledge for several decades".

The male line of the Tascher de la Pagerie family died out in 1993, but three descendants sued the deputy this week, alleging their historic name had been appropriated.

The most famous member of the family was the Empress Joséphine de Beauharnais, who married Napoléon Bonaparte in 1796. Her full name was Marie Joséphe Rose Tascher de la Pagerie.

While not illegal under French law, the use of aristocratic surnames can be a prickly subject.

Critics of former president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing sniped about his grandfather's acquisition of the noble-sounding "de" ("of") particle, though few ever did for fellow commoner Charles de Gaulle.

It was an unwelcome dispute for Taché de La Pagerie's party days after it scored a major parliamentary breakthrough.

"We have filed a complaint to protect the family name," Frederic Pichon, a lawyer for the three women, told AFP, adding that a date for hearings would be set on 8 July.

They are seeking a symbolic one euro in damages, and a fine of 500 euros a day if Emmanuel Taché continues to use their name.

"The fact that he's in the National Rally or France Unbowed or the Republic on the Move isn't the problem," he said, referring to the far left and the centrists of President Emmanuel Macron.

He said the aristocratic name was rare and noted "a risk of confusion in the eyes of the public," even if the Taché and Tascher spellings are different.

"My clients are from Normandy but live in Paris, and are the sole heirs to have this name since the death of their father in 1993 – and one of his final wishes was that his name be protected," Pichon said.

Emmanuel Taché de la Pagerie did not respond to requests for comments, but told *Le Monde* that having just been elected, "I don't have time to waste on this type of stuff".

## Napoleonic Bits and Pieces, (continued)

### 200 year old Crystal Flute from the Library of Congress

In recent news, Lizzo (an American singer and rapper), had the opportunity to play a crystal flute originally belonging to President James Madison. The flute was a gift from its French maker, Claude Laurent, in 1813. Lizzo visited the flute collection of the Library of Congress which numbers 1,700 flutes!

#### The flute bounced between owners before landing at the Library

The flute is exceptionally rare: the Library of Congress has 20 Laurent-made flutes in its vault, but it's only one of two made of crystal, according to the Library. Madison's custom-made flute contained a silver joint, engraved with his name.

But its journey to the Library's collection was circuitous and took over 100 years. The flute may have been saved by first lady Dolley Madison during the White House fire in 1814, the Library said. It came into the possession of Dolley Madison's son from her first marriage, John Payne Todd, who bequeathed it to Washington-based Dr. Cornelius Boyle.

Boyle's descendants allowed the flute to be displayed in 1903 at the US National Museum, an original part of the Smithsonian Institution, until Dayton C. Miller, another physician and woodwind enthusiast, purchased it. He later donated the crystal flute, along with 1,700

instruments, to the Library in 1941, where the flute has remained until its stage debut with Lizzo.—*CNN*

Lizzo is a very accomplished flutist and I was very impressed by her playing. I know nothing about playing the flute or the different constructions so in case it is not impressive enough, I found the following Facebook post that described the type of flute and how it is played:

“A little bit more about Lizzo and the crystal flute: normally she plays the modern Boehm concert flute, cylindrical bore, pitched in C with the keynote played with seven fingers down and extensive keywork for the accidentals. The Laurent crystal flute is a pre-Boehm simple system instrument, pitched in D, tapered bore, keynote played with six fingers down, only a few keys. Their playing characteristics are therefore markedly different, to the point where they are not at all interchangeable; imagine for instance handing a 16th century vihuela to a modern guitar player. I play simple system and am totally useless with a modern Boehm flue, for the record. In the footage from the Library on Congress Lizzo clearly demonstrates that she knows her way around a simple system flute and has almost undoubtedly studied historical performance. The people who are complaining are ignorant dunderheads.”



Lizzo plays James Madison's flute at Library of Congress. Watch the YouTube video [here](#).



Lizzo played James Madison's 200-year-old crystal flute at her Washington, DC concert. Watch the video at CNN [here](#).

## Napoleonic Bits and Pieces, (continued)

I was intrigued so I thought I would dig into the history of these crystal flutes a bit more. I came across the following blog from the Library of Congress about this flute and Napoleon's flute!

### If Only Flutes Could Talk – A Tale of Science, Music, and Napoleon's Flute!

September 28, 2021 by [Tana Villafana](#)

*This is a guest post by Lynn Brostoff, a chemist in the Preservation Research and Testing Division. Her research interests include the characterization of iron gall ink, verdigris pigment, and glass deterioration.*



Carol Lynn Ward-Bamford (left), Curator, and Lynn Brostoff (right), Chemist, examining a Laurent flute in the Music Division's Flute Vault. Photo Credit: Larry Appelbaum.

Besides the millions of books that the Library of Congress (LC) holds, the collections contain untold numbers of rare gems. Often, scientists in the Preservation [Research and Testing Division](#) (PRTD) are called upon to perform technical studies in order to better understand the collections. One such collaborative study involved twenty rare and exquisite flutes of glass made in Paris by Claude Laurent from 1805-1848; these are part of the Music Division's renowned Dayton C. Miller collection (DCM) of flutes. Our research team not only included scientists from PRTD and the Library's Music Division, but researchers from George Washington

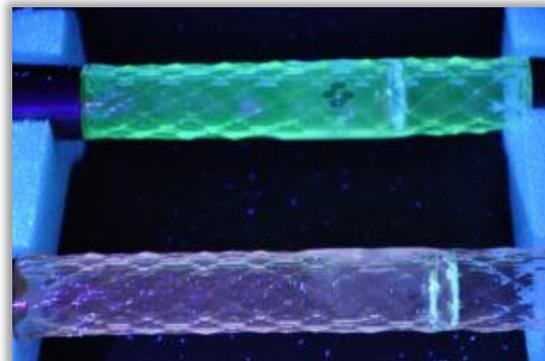


Photo Credit: PRTD.

University and the Catholic University of America as well. To find out more about the collection and the study, see [Laurent Glass Flutes](#) and [Technical Study of Claude Laurent's Glass Flutes](#).

A major finding of our research uncovered, for the first time, that a good portion of Laurent's flutes are made from potash glass, which can deteriorate from exposure to high humidity, including a player's breath. The distinction between potash glass and lead crystal glass, crystal being extremely durable, can be quickly ascertained using ultraviolet (UV) light. Potash glass glows green under UV light, while lead crystal glass is purple. The identification of potash versus lead crystal glass has a large impact on the likely state of the material and its preservation needs. Through the course of this study, we created a decision tree examination protocol for Laurent flutes. For the first step in the decision tree, we incorporated a UV light into a simple viewing box, developed in-house. In addition to the decision tree, we also published articles and created a [dedicated website](#) to help other institutions identify 19<sup>th</sup> century glass at risk.

It has been truly wonderful to experience the delight with which people respond to these historic instruments. While not widely known to the general public, Laurent flutes have been highly prized and collected over time. Following Miller, there are many passionate

## Napoleonic Bits and Pieces, (continued)



Claude Laurent, Napoleon flute, private collection. Shown in original case and disassembled into head joint, upper body joint, lower body joint, and foot joint. Photo Credit: PRTD.

collectors today and they appear to have taken notice when PRTD and the Music Division started speaking about our work with the Laurent collection. It was with great pleasure that the research team had several occasions to invite collectors of Laurent flutes to the LC. During these visits, we successfully tested our newly developed decision tree examination protocol for Laurent flutes and we were able to collect additional data from flutes that are not part of the DCM collection. We also had the opportunity to discuss the collectors' interesting points of view. Historic musical instruments are often maintained in performance condition, in accord with the current movement to recreate historical soundscapes and perform on period instruments.

One such visit involved two collectors spending the day with the research team while we examined four of their Laurent flutes. One of the collector's flutes



During the collectors' visit, there was a collective gasp when the Napoleon flute was observed under UV light. Napoleon's flute glowed a definitively green color, revealing it is not made of lead crystal glass, but of the common, inherently unstable, potash glass! Photo Credit: PRTD.

originally belonged to none other than Napoleon Bonaparte. Napoleon's flute is quite similar in appearance to two DCM flutes, including President James Madison's flute ([DCM 378](#)); Madison was gifted this lead crystal glass flute from Claude Laurent himself.

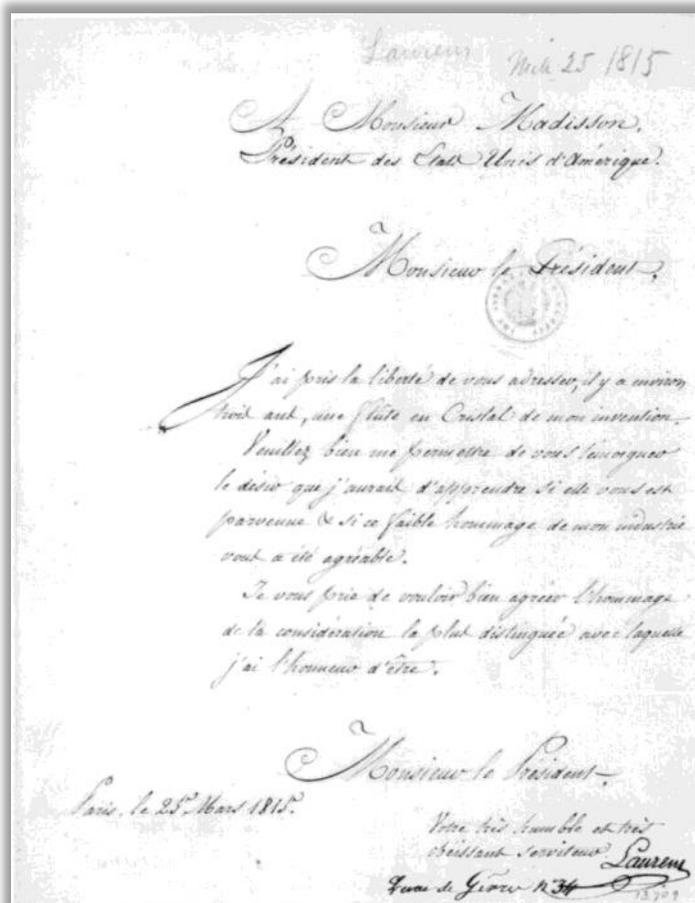
Laurent's flutes were owned by many aristocrats and heads of state, being quite expensive and considered fashionable for high society salon concerts. It is interesting to note in this regard that Napoleon

## Napoleonic Bits and Pieces, (continued)

promoted the manufacture of French luxury goods at the famous Paris Expositions, as well as the elevation of specialty crafts to “beaux arts,” along with their makers’ status.

Provenance, the journey from maker through owners until the present, is always an important aspect of cultural heritage objects and items. We know a reasonable amount about the provenance of the LC’s DCM flutes. Miller carefully documented how he acquired each item, including all relevant information and correspondence. Lapses in these records are unavoidable, however, and it remains the work of curators and scientists to uncover missing documentary and material evidence. For example, we can now trace the Madison Flute all the way back to its original gift in 1813, due to the discovery of a letter from Claude Laurent to President Madison asking if the flute had arrived safely. In addition, our research uncovered details that help explain the flute’s survival of the White House fire of 1814. Check out LC’s blog post about [the mystery of James Madison’s crystal flute](#) to learn more.

During our examination of Napoleon’s flute, the owner regaled us with stories of its possible provenance. While these cannot be confirmed, they do provide interest and intrigue. One story he related entails a robbery: in 1814, with 100 carriages ready to journey to the southern coast for Napoleon’s embarkation to Elba, the flute was purportedly stolen by an Irish officer, Ralph Mansfield, in whose family it remained until 1952. However, Mansfield claimed that he obtained the flute as legitimate loot from Napoleon’s carriage after the Battle of Waterloo (1815), but a hidden note was discovered by Manfield’s heirs inside the flute’s original case that was signed “Jean-Pierre Tahan, 1814.” The mystery deepens because there are two engraved identification marks on the instrument’s silver ferrules, one of which was partially filed off at some point. The remaining inscription on the head joint ferrule shows Napoleon’s coat of arms, and one can still make out “[...] Paris, 1812.” A second inscription on the upper body joint ferrule reads: “Laurent / à Paris 1813.” The latter mark is commonly found on Laurent flutes, but usually on the head joint ferrule. The Madison flute is



Letter from Claude Laurent to President James Madison, dated 1815. Photo Credit: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, James Madison Papers. Digital ID: [//hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mjm.17\\_0228\\_0230](https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mjm.17_0228_0230)

engraved with “Laurent / à Paris, / 1813” on the head joint ferrule, and with “A.S.E. James Madison / President des Etats=unis” on the upper body joint ferrule. The provenance of Napoleon’s flute remains an enigma for now. The flute did find its voice when we were treated to an impromptu rendition of Greensleeves!

This research project focusing on Claude Laurent’s flutes is an excellent example of the type of work we do. We translated scientific results into an accessible tool that can assist collections care staff to identify glass at risk. As part of this, we worked with collectors so that they could also understand and integrate this knowledge to their collection items.

## Napoleonic Bits and Pieces, (continued)

### Help needed from the Napoleonic “Hive Mind”

I received an email from Peter Chadwick, as follows:

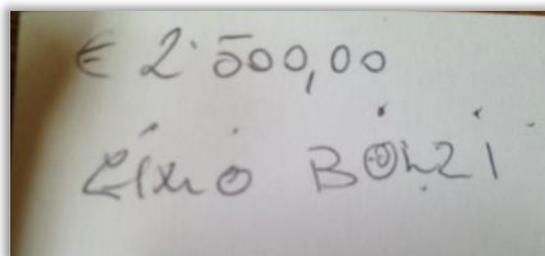
“Your recent Napoleonic travels in Italy prompted me to send you this triptych of pencil and charcoal portraits of Napoleon which I bought from an antique dealer in Lucca in 2012. I don’t dare open the frame as the nails and backing are so old and frail.

I do not know if Gino Bolzi was the artist, whether they were drawn from life (late in life, if so it would

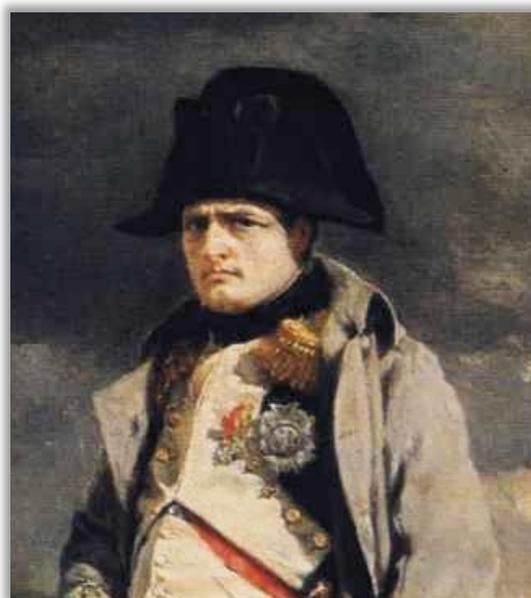
appear) and the dealer was unable to (or chose not to) give me any provenance. She spoke little English and my Italian was about as good, so communication was at a minimum.

I thought it may be of interest to your members. Someone may be able to shed some light. Failing that it must remain on the wall in my collection of Napoleon prints and paintings as an enjoyable mystery.” - Peter

Peter Chadwick <peter\_chadwick@bigpond.com>



I think I recognize the central sketch of the head and upper torso from a painting by Jean-Louis-Ernest Meissonier (1815-1891), **Napoleon I in 1814** (painted 1862). The face and expression is very similar, but with less of the “bling” such as the gold epaulets, medals and crests. What do you all think? I do not recognize where the left and right images are from. — *Editor*

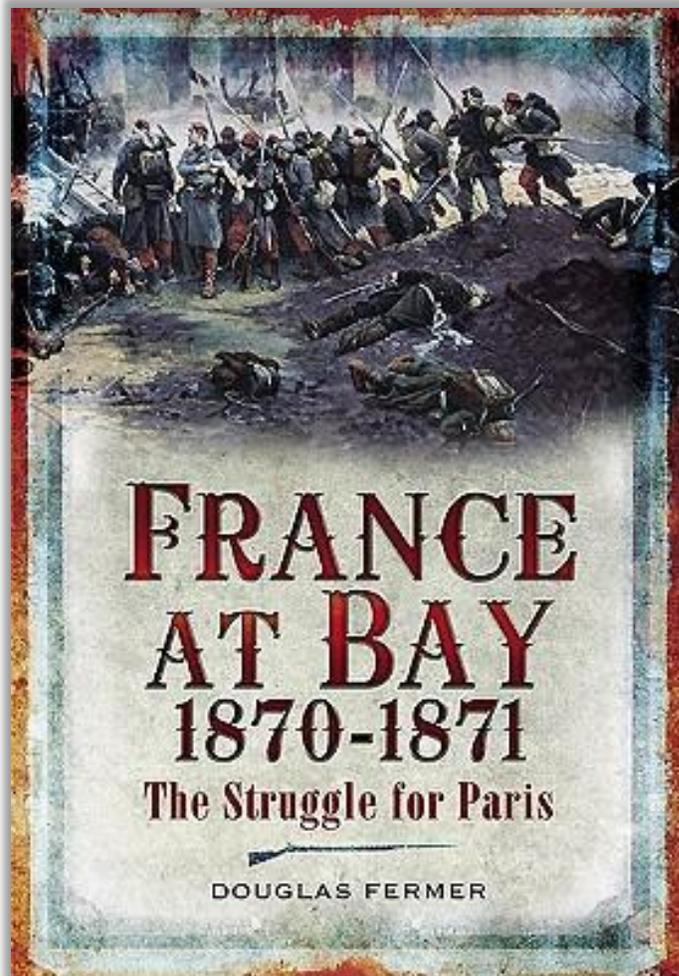


### Book Review: *France At Bay 1870-1871, The Struggle for Paris*,

by Douglas Fermer, Pen and Sword Books Ltd., Barnsley, South Yorkshire, Hard-

*France at Bay*, Douglas Fermer's second volume on the Franco-Prussian War, takes up the eclipse of France following Napoleon III's surrender at Sedan on September 2, 1870. Upon reaching Paris, the news of the emperor's capitulation brought on the fall of the Second Empire and the formation of a provisional Government of National Defense. The author describes step by step the military reorganization of a new French army by the Republican government. The real architects of that French resurgence were Léon Gambetta, an official of Italian origin from the city of Nice, and his deputy, Charles Freycinet, an engineering genius. Between September 1870 and the end of January 1871, they created a dozen new army corps, numbered from XV to XXVI, theoretically mustering more than 90,000 troops to continue prosecuting the war outside Paris. Freycinet had been impressed by the citizen armies raised to fight the American Civil War and he was determined to apply the same formula in France. By a series of decrees France had adopted a universal military obligation that it had strongly resisted in the last years of the empire. To supply the new army, Gambetta looked to the huge stacks of weapon left in the United States after the Civil War. To address the urgent need for money, he arranged a loan of 250 million Francs at an interest rate of 7 per cent in London with American banker J. Pierpont Morgan. His faith in the citizenry was reflected in his development, as quickly as possible, battalions of National Guard.

In the case of Paris, the results of these efforts were different from what was expected. Reading the book, the reader may well wonder how a great city with more than 600,000 men in arms, surrounded by a great network of fortresses, with great supplies of food that Empress Eugenie arranged to bring in, enjoying superiority in heavy artillery (which the Germans lacked), an a war industry to produce ammunition and cannons for the garrison, could allow itself to be encircled by an army less than 180,000 strong. One explanation is that the officers in charge of Paris had different political beliefs from those of Gambetta and the members of the National Guard. General Louis Jules Trochu, for example, was Royal Catholic,



whereas other generals, like Joseph Vinoy and Auguste Ducrot, were Bonapartists.

Fermer describes the Germans' brutal bombardment of Strasbourg and the capitulation of Metz, where Marshal Achille Bazaine surrendered more than 170,000 men without serious resistance. The German camp had its own differences of opinion, as when Otto von Bismarck found Helmuth von Moltke opposed to the bombardment of Paris. Ultimately, however, the French provisional armies failed to save Paris, crowned by General Charles Denis Sauter Bourbaki's attempt to cut the German lines of communication and unite his army with the isolated garrison of Belfort. Out of all their efforts the only minor success was achieved by Giuseppe Garibaldi's international volunteer Army of

## Review: *France At Bay 1870-1871, The Struggle for Paris*, (continued)

the Vosges, which seized Dijon and repulsed the German army that tried to retake it with heavy losses. Of course, Fermer also mentions the Uprising of the Paris Commune on March 18, 1871, and the subsequent bloody establishment of order in the city by the army.

For a century after the traumatic Franco-Prussian War, Paris would function without a mayor. The names of Trochu, Ducrot and Vinoy are forgotten, while many streets throughout France bear the name of Gambetta. France under the Third Republic recovered from her defeat with remarkable speed and in 1875 an alarmed Bismarck considered the possibilities of a new war against her, but at that time Britain and Russia would not permit it. Bismarck was content to assimilate Alsace and Lorraine into his new united German empire, but trapped it between France's desire for vengeance and Russia's pan-Slavic

expansionist ambitions.

Author Fermer believes that the war's horrors and embarrassing defeat promoted antimilitarism among French intellectuals, citing the short stories of Guy de Maupassant as an example. In reality, however, in his last disease-induced delirium, de Maupassant's servant, while trying to keep him steady, heard him scream: "Revenge...we will take revenge...revenge will be ours." Indeed, revenge would rule French policy until 1918 and continue further until 1933. Readers will find *France at Bay* a very interesting and informative account of the last phase of the Franco-Prussian war.

**Thomas Zakharis**  
Davaki 9  
56121 Thessaloniki  
Greece

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**Napoleonica® the journal** by Fondation Napoléon  
Free English online journal available at this link [here](#).

**Napoleon, slavery and the colonies** Volume 1, Issue 1, September 2022

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London, 2022, xii-285+ index; ISBN 978-3-030-97339-1C

Review by Peter Hicks



## Book Review — *Kutuzov, A Life in War and Peace*, by Alexander Mikaberidze

In our June-July 2022 issue, we had a review of Alexander Mikaberidze's book from the Publishers Weekly. Here is a review from the *Wall Street Journal*. If you haven't purchased your copy, you should now!

Available at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and [Amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca) now.

### 'Kutuzov' Review: Russia's Beloved General

Westerners know him via 'War and Peace,' but the soldier did far more than face down Napoleon in 1812.

By Sara Wheeler

In a recent poll ranking the world's top historical figures, Russians voted Mikhail Kutuzov No. 15, behind his enemy Napoleon (No. 14) and several places ahead of Mikhail Gorbachev (No. 20). Kutuzov was the general who saw off Napoleon's Grande Armée in 1812; in the West, he is chiefly known through Leo Tolstoy's portrayal in "War and Peace." Hence the subtitle of Alexander Mikaberidze's enthralling "Kutuzov: A Life in War and Peace."

Tolstoy's blubbery Kutuzov falls asleep in front of the allied commander at the council of war on the eve of the Battle of Austerlitz in 1805. Mr. Mikaberidze reveals how the novel's portrayal "cast a shadow that endures" and writes that he wishes to lift Kutuzov "out of Tolstoy's novel" and "place him in the world he helped to shape." And so he does. The reader sees Russia spooling by as Kutuzov stands, always, center stage.

Mikhail Illarionovich Golenischev-Kutuzov was born into nobility in 1747, probably on the family estate in the Pskov region of Russia's northwest. His father was an engineer and distinguished soldier. Young Mikhail passed his early years among what Ivan Turgenev calls "nests of gentlefolk," and was destined for military service: the family coat of arms depicts a shield and an eagle clasping a sword in its claws.

Mr. Mikaberidze, a professor of history at Louisiana State University Shreveport, has published a trilogy on Napoleon's invasion of Russia, as well as "The Napoleonic Wars: A Global History," which won two military-history awards. In "Kutuzov" he deftly marshals colossal amounts of primary material to chart his subject's path to glory.

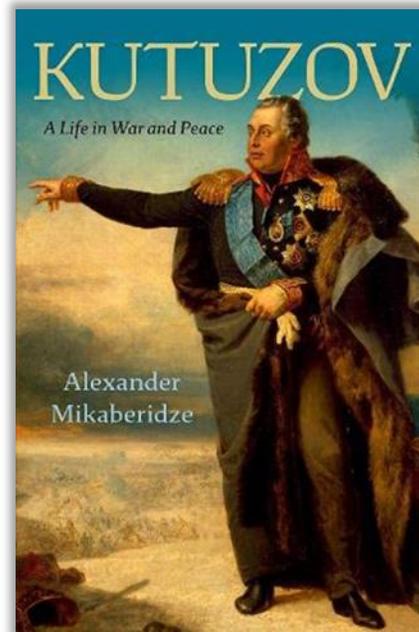
Kutuzov was a 15-year-old freshly graduated ensign when Peter III lost his throne in a coup led by his wife, Catherine. As a general—Gregory Potemkin, Empress Catherine's lover, supported the promotion—Kutuzov emerged from the Russo-Ottoman wars a six-time decorated hero. He was twice seriously wounded,

once when a musket ball smashed through his skull. Part One of Mr. Mikaberidze's substantial volume closes these wars, but it was not the end of Turkey for Kutuzov. In 1772 Catherine sent him to the Sublime Porte as ambassador. His entourage of more than 600 included 24 singers and five cobblers.

Upon Catherine's death in 1796, her son Paul ascended the throne. The new emperor was godfather to one of Kutuzov's grandsons; the younger of the general's five daughters were maids of honor at court. In 1801 Paul was assassinated, and his 23-year-old son Alexander became czar. Had Kutuzov been in on the murder plot? Mr. Mikaberidze concludes only that he "must have seen or heard something." The account of this imperial transition is gripping.

Onward and upward then, but with setbacks. Abruptly relieved of his command as military governor of St. Petersburg in 1802, amid the swirling instability of the new czar's court, Kutuzov spent three years in exile on his estates in western Ukraine. He owned 15,000 serfs and moaned constantly, in his letters, about money ("I am haunted by the fear of spending my old age in penury and want").

Napoleon, who glowers at the emotional heart of the book, enters around the turn of the century in Part Three as Kutuzov, by then serving as governor general



### Book Review — *Kutuzov, A Life in War and Peace*, by Alexander Mikaberidze

of Lithuania, danced the mazurka in Vilna “till [his] head hurt.” (You would have thought it would be his feet.) In 1805 Alexander selected Kutuzov to head the First Army in the looming war against France. Tolstoy depicts Kutuzov, after Napoleon’s victory at Ulm, with wrinkles that “ran over his face like a wave.” The famous campaign is thrilling, with its retreats, carnage and cavalry attacks as darkness descends. Defeat at Austerlitz casts a long shadow. (Mr. Mikaberidze shows that Kutuzov had not wanted to fight the battle.) Part Four begins with Kutuzov serving as the military governor of Kyiv during “The Wilderness Years, 1806-1808.” “I am not happy here,” he writes home.

The author calls his man “an inveterate womanizer.” In Bucharest in 1811 a contemporary reported that a very young girl often sat on his lap “playing with his aiguillettes.” His wife, Catherine, comes to life occasionally through her letters, but on the whole remains an indistinct figure. Mr. Mikaberidze mentions depressions and lassitude, but the inner Kutuzov never comes alive in these pages. It would be a lot to expect. This is more a work of military history, with Kutuzov at its center, than it is a biography. The prose is clear and the narrative drive never slows even when the fighting does.

Kutuzov negotiated a peace treaty with the Ottomans in May 1812, and three months later John Quincy Adams, then America’s ambassador to Russia, watched as the czar honored the general at Kazan Cathedral. Part Five opens in June 1812, as Napoleon surveys his men marching across the Nieman River. Alexander appoints the 65-year-old Kutuzov (“much stouter” now) supreme commander of Russia’s armed forces. Borodino beckons in a superb climax. The fabled battle does not constitute a Russian victory, but the French fail to achieve the outcome they had hoped for, and Mr. Mikaberidze, in a nuanced assessment, casts Borodino as an important step on the road to Napoleonic defeat. Kutuzov’s subsequent decision to withdraw from Moscow and prepare to fight a war of attrition is among the most controversial military decisions ever made, and is described vividly in these pages.

Mr. Mikaberidze is a formidable researcher. Few will

ever match his scholarship in a field he has made his own. He has mined Kutozov’s voluminous papers, the diaries and correspondence of contemporaries, and archives in Lithuania and France. Diagrams and maps of battles and defenses help guide the reader through the fog of war as units and battalions disband and reform, theaters shift and chronic problems of logistics confound.

He teases historical truth from mythmaking and challenges Tolstoy’s traditional image of Kutuzov as a morose and passive observer of historic events. Contemporaries often reckoned that Kutuzov shielded himself from outsiders with a small circle of officers, and many felt he had missed opportunities to defeat Napoleon outright. Soviet historiographers, on the other hand, lionized him. Stalin, we are told, “was instrumental in the amplification of the Kutuzovian legend.” He was a tool of Soviet propaganda, notably during World War II.

The author is always quick to defend his subject. Kutuzov “was said to have done his best to rein in the pillaging” at the storming of Izmail, a victory that “conferred an aura of martial glory that followed him for the rest of his life.” Mr. Mikaberidze concedes that there is “some truth” in the claims that Kutuzov’s age and poor health “clouded his judgement” and that he “feared confronting Napoleon.” But only one-tenth of a Grande Armée of 600,000 survived to recross the Nieman in December 1812.

Kutuzov died in his bed soon after, in April 1813. Most Russians at the time hailed him as “the Savior of the Nation.” Others perceived the old soldier as “a relic of a bygone era.” This book presents a thorough reassessment.

*Ms. Wheeler is the author, most recently, of “Mud and Stars: Travels in Russia With Pushkin, Tolstoy, and Other Geniuses of the Golden Age.”*

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## Consortium on the Revolutionary Era, February 2-4, 2023

The Consortium on the Revolutionary Era (CRE) will be held February 2-4, 2023 at Fort Worth, Texas. A link to the announcement can be accessed [here](#). The conference will be an in-person event only.

### Call for Papers: The 53rd Annual Meeting of the Consortium on the Revolutionary Era

The Consortium on the Revolutionary Era (CRE) invites proposals for its 53rd annual conference to be held February 2-4, 2023, at Fort Worth, Texas coordinated by Louisiana State University in Shreveport and the University of North Texas. Conference hotel is the Sheraton Fort Worth Downtown. The CRE welcomes papers on any topic related to the period 1750-1850 in any geographical location. While the conference has traditionally welcomed scholars focusing on Europe, the United States, and the Atlantic World, we would also welcome panels that expand our understanding of the Revolutionary Era in the Pacific, Latin America, Africa, and all places in between.

The coordinators invite submissions of both individual papers and fully formed sessions from faculty, graduate students, and independent scholars working in any discipline and on any topic exploring the Revolutionary Era. For the 2023 meeting, the coordinators will consider paper and panel proposals on all aspects of the era. Submissions of pre-organized panels and roundtables are strongly encouraged. Panel and paper proposals will clearly explain their topics and questions in ways that will be understandable to the broad constituents of the CRE, not only to those interested in the specific topics in question. Additionally, the CRE encourages the representation of the full diversity of its constituents and values panel and roundtable proposals that reflect the organization's diversity of institutional affiliations, various career paths and ranks, gender, race, and ethnicity.

#### Submission Instructions

Session proposals should include a panel description; a brief abstract for each paper (no more than one page); a brief CV for each participant (no more than two pages); and AV needs if any.

Individual paper proposals should include a brief abstract (one page), brief CV (no more than two pages), and AV needs if any.

Proposals from graduate students and independent scholars are welcome.

Roundtable proposals must include a session title, the full name and institutional affiliation of each participant, a brief abstract (one page) summarizing the roundtable's themes and points of discussion, a brief CV for each participant (no more than two pages), and AV needs if any.

The coordinators urge panel organizers to consider diversity of presenters and topics as they build their sessions.

#### Please submit proposals to:

Dr. Michael Leggiere  
([Michael.leggiere@unt.edu](mailto:Michael.leggiere@unt.edu))

The deadline for submission is 1 November 2022.



## Coloring Napoleon



One of our NHS members, Kevin E. Smith, is quite the artist! He has created some wonderful black and white comical drawings of Napoleon and his Imperial Guard.

Feel free to print them out and color (or colour) as you wish! Get your kids or grandkids involved too! Send me a picture of your completed drawing and we may showcase it in a future issue.

If you would like to contact Kevin, his email address is: [phinnias\\_j\\_w@hotmail.com](mailto:phinnias_j_w@hotmail.com).

We will try to include a colouring page each of the future issues.

Thank you, Kevin!

copyright Kevin E. Smith

# THE NAPOLEONIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



**to write an article for the  
NHS newsletter!**



The New Yorker cartoon caption contest by  
Felipe Galindo (a.k.a. Feggo)

## Summer Reading Reviews

Did you read any good Napoleonic books over the Summer? How about writing a review for us?

You will have noticed that there are many hyperlinks included in this newsletter (blue text). If you are receiving this newsletter by mail and can not easily find the links via Google, please contact me and I will send you the complete URL links.

### NAPOLEONIC CALENDAR 2023

Feb. Consortium on the  
2-4, Revolutionary Era  
2023

If you know of any other  
conferences, meetings, etc.  
happening within the next few  
months, please let me know and I  
will include it in the calendar.

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