The Napoleonic Empire in Italy, 1796–1814
Also by Michael Broers
THE POLITICS OF RELIGION IN NAPOLEONIC ITALY, 1800–1814
NAPOLEONIC IMPERIALISM AND THE SAVOYARD MONARCHY, 1773–1821
EUROPE UNDER NAPOLEON, 1799–1815
EUROPE AFTER NAPOLEON
The Napoleonic Empire in Italy, 1796–1814

Cultural Imperialism in a European Context?

Michael Broers
Fellow of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford
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This is Sue’s book, from start to finish, in the New World and the Old, and from ‘Albert onwards and evermore’
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Preface

*The Napoleonic Empire in Italy* was largely conceived of at the same time as my *The Politics of Religion in Napoleonic Italy: The War against God, 1801–1814* (Routledge, London and New York, 2001); indeed, the former work was first envisaged as a segment of the present book, and should be considered its partner in a wider œuvre. Thus, many of the debts incurred in writing the first book are the same as those for this one. They cannot go unsung, however, and many new friends were made – and help received – as this book drew to its close.

I owe deep intellectual debts to several scholars whom I have never met, and do not expect to meet, but whose impact and influence on this book are all too obvious. The marks of Nathan Wachtel, James Axtell, Mona Ozouf, Frédéric Bluche and the late Edward Said on *The Napoleonic Empire in Italy* are deep and profound. They – and John Dickie, whom I do hope to encounter – gave me concepts and structures that have illuminated and made sense of my very empirical ferretings. Among those I have had the pleasure of knowing – Colin Lucas, Roger Dupuy, Don Sutherland, Alan Forrest, Isser Woloch, Livio Antonielli, Tim Blanning, Paul Ginsburg, John Davis – will all find their insights at work in these pages. The late Richard Cobb taught me the things that kept this book down to earth. He put the stress on the ‘human’ in ‘humanism’, and he is right. The faults in my work, alone, belong to me. What is worthy could only emerge from the work of others.

Thus, my friends saw me through the many years I have chipped at this project. To my friends in Paris: Jean-Michel and Hélène Chevet, Cécile Urbain, Bernard and Catherine Moissey, the closest, among so many. M. and Mme Charles Bonis lubricated the wheels of work in Paris, for many years. *Le Petit Berry*, sadly gone these 12 years, saw this project born, and became almost a figure of its own right, in the author’s life! Woe betide so many who came there to lean an elbow, but were forced to lend me an ear. To Alex Grab, Howard Brown, David Barclay, Steven Hughes and John Merriman in the USA. To Susan and Robert Darnton, in Princeton, especially. To Dani and Vittorio Scotti-Douglas – whose ancestors haunt these pages. To the many bravi Piemontesi.

Finally, there are debts that can never be repaid, those of faith born of long friendship. They belong to Marj Cassells, to Jim McMillan, to Bill Speck, to Allan Macinnes and Tom Devine, to Bill Doyle. Without Alan Dabbs and Jenny and Martin Stephen, I don’t quite know what I would have done, sometimes. Latterly, my wonderful friends at the IAS. That is, the whole ‘cohort’ of the School of Historical Studies of 2003–4. Where to
begin? Who to single out? Above them all, there is Sue, my wife, who not only lived with the book since we first met, but gave up her well-earned rest to be my copy editor and conscience, during our splendid time together in Princeton. This is not just for her, it is because of her love for me. For once, I’m stuck for words. Now, there’s a funny thing!

8, Albert Grove, Headingley,  
St Patrick’s Day, 2004
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Seldom can an author have such pleasure, and conjure so many happy memories, from a list of acknowledgements, but each one carries one such, and all are deeply felt.


Several archival trips to Italy were financed with the help of Small Grants in Aid of Research from the British Academy, and the generosity of the Friends of the Firestone Library in Princeton, who gave me a Fellowship in September 2003, enabled me to explore the valuable holdings of the Beauharains Papers there, with the friendly help of Don C. Skinner and Meg Rich, two of the finest archivists I have yet to meet. Above all, I owe inestimable debts to the Leverhulme Trust, for the award of a Research Fellowship for 2002–3, and to the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, who honoured me with a Visiting Fellowship for the Fall Term of 2003, and to Professor Jonathan Israel first and foremost. It was thanks to these estimable bodies that the bulk of the writing was done. Over the many years of archival research, and in the course of many costly sojourns abroad, I wish also to acknowledge the patience and professional help always accorded me by my bank, the University Branch of Lloyds-TSB in Leeds, who always let me ‘carry on’.

The staff of many archives and libraries gave me far more help than their duties required. Warm thanks are owed to the staffs of the Archivii di Stato of Turin, Cuneo, Genoa, Bologna, Parma and especially Florence, where many vital sources were uncatalogued and located thanks only to their expertise. The staff of the Archivio Comunale of Genoa were outstanding. The Archives Nationales de Paris yielded their riches thanks to my friends and colleagues Gérard Hérmisse, Philippe Béchu, Emmanuel Rousseau, Pierre Portet, Jacky Plaut, Eric Dufour, and many more now retired. There are three ‘formal debts’ of no singular importance. Luciana O’Flaherty first
signed a version of this book for the late UCL Press, and had the faith in me to do so, again, at Palgrave Macmillan. She accorded me a freedom that I hope has been justified, but Luciana stands out, in these times, as an intellectual and the most civilised of editors, and that is deeply appreciated. A lasting ‘institutional debt’ – for it is far more than that – is owed to the late Michel Fleury and to Mme Auffray of the now departed Institut de la Francophonie. It was a home from home, and the generous shelter it provided helped the research for this work progress faster and more agreeably than might otherwise have been the case. Its passing is a reminder that the barbarians are always at the gates. A final mention must be made of my close friend and colleague, Claire Béchu, the Director of the CARAN in Paris. She has fought the good fight, to maintain a viable, professional service to the readers of the Archives Nationales through some of the most difficult days in its long history. It is all too often only the faults and problems that readers see. Had it not been for her imagination, determination and – the word is not inapt – courage, all of us, and the work of this reader, most certainly, would be the poorer. Hommage à Claire.
# List of Abbreviations

## Archives

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANP</td>
<td>Archives Nationales, Paris</td>
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<td>AG</td>
<td>Archives de la Guerre, Vincennes</td>
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<td>ASF</td>
<td>Archivio di Stato, Florence</td>
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<td>ASG</td>
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<td>ACC</td>
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<td>ACG</td>
<td>Archivio Comunale, Genoa</td>
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<td>FLPBA</td>
<td>Firestone Library, Princeton: Beauharnais Archive</td>
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## Journals

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<td>AHR</td>
<td><em>The American Historical Review</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JMH</td>
<td><em>The Journal of Modern History</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P&amp;P</td>
<td><em>Past &amp; Present</em></td>
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<td>RSI</td>
<td><em>Rivista Storica Italiana</em></td>
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Map I  The states of the old regime in Italy
The Kingdom of Italy

Frontier of the empire

Department boundaries

- Principal town of department (chef-lieu)
  In the Illyrian Provinces the towns given are those where intendants were posted

Map II  The départements réunis
Map III  Centre and periphery: areas of anti-French revolts, 1799–1814
Introduction: Never the Twain Shall Meet

Imperialism and its contexts

This is a book about Europeans treating each other badly under the first Napoleonic empire, in roughly a third of what is modern-day Italy. It was an imperial relationship. To study France and Italy under Napoleon in this way seems sensible, and the definition of imperialism by George Lichtheim best encapsulates the forced, unnatural relationship that developed in Italy: ‘If a country is invaded by a stronger power and its political institutions are destroyed or remoulded, that country is under imperial “domination”, the corollary of which is “a primary division” between state and society.’\(^1\)

The *raison d’être* of this oppressive condition was essentially ideological, and fits a wider pattern of imperialism. Frank Ninkovich believes of America, ‘…the ideology that underlay imperialism to be…actually much deeper and more durable in the end than the economic and geopolitical strategies of successive administrations’.\(^2\) Ronald Robinson, too, saw the limited applicability of economic motives to imperial expansion, even during its ‘classic’ phase.\(^3\) More often, the modernising or civilising mission fuelled the practical work of imperial officials, as in the Philippines under American rule,\(^4\) or in the missionary zeal that marked an earlier Spanish imperialism in the New World.\(^5\)

Although often at pains to challenge the version of ‘cultural imperialism’ defined by Edward Said,\(^6\) the centrality of ideology to imperialism is undeniable. Nor should reservations about Said’s thesis entail rejecting his framework for the study of imperialism, in any geographic or historical setting. The present work imports many of these preoccupations directly into a European context. Cultural imperialism is an explosive concept, but Napoleon had explosive intentions for his Italian subjects. On Saint Helena, he told the half-truth, that the annexation of a third of Italy to France had ‘no other end than to oversee, guarantee and advance the national education of Italians’.\(^7\) At the height of imperial expansion, in June 1805, he openly willed *franciser l'Italie*; in a later discourse, his was a policy of acculturation that became
a constant in Italian history. The desire to ‘educate’ Italians was first conceived in the cause of French imperialism; reinvented in exile, it became nineteenth-century nationalism. Napoleon was, perhaps, better at reading the future than his own times, for nationalism, especially as practised in post-Unification Italy, was usually about the smashing of square regional pegs into round, centralising holes. It was, arguably, the bastard child of Napoleonic cultural imperialism.

When Napoleon’s first utterance is placed in the context of his second, the deployment of ‘cultural imperialism’ as a method of analysis – indeed, as an organising principle – becomes necessary, rather than problematic. There was sustained, determined support for ‘Frenchification’ among the Frenchmen serving in Italy, possibly more than Napoleon himself continued to feel, in the shifting circumstances of his career as an empire-builder. It is also a study in failure, for Italy was not ‘Frenchified’ in the intended way. This is not to argue that had it been so, Unification would have been achieved earlier, but to speculate that, after Napoleonic rule – pre- and post-Unification – the central tenets of French political culture, and the institutions and practices of the modern state it represented, might have been more easily absorbed into Italian society, had the French pursued a different set of policies. The Napoleonic Empire in Italy, then, is a study in the failure of ‘acculturation’ in a quasi-colonial context, to employ this concept as formulated by Nathan Wachtel. This failure and its complex impact on Italians, is a concrete reminder of Wachtel’s warning that:

Acculturation does not reduce itself to a single path, to that of a simple shift from the indigenous culture to western culture...acculturation should not be reduced to the diffusion, in space and time, of arbitrarily isolated cultural traits: it is a question of a global phenomenon, which involves the whole of society.9

This is also an attempt – albeit belated – to provide one such ‘concrete study (which) will expand the bases of a theory, perhaps to undertake a generalised notion of acculturation beyond its place of birth’.10 This work owes a fundamental debt to Wachtel’s work, and is informed throughout by the possibilities of expanding his ideas about acculturation back to Europe, as well as refining the process, to embrace the effects of failure.

This failure was emphatically not the result of French weakness. There were always thousands of troops in Italy; the new state proved capable of crushing every major revolt from 1800 onwards; it ruled even its most remote Italian domains with a forceful, direct presence hitherto – and possibly even henceforth – unknown. The failure was to adapt French rule in ways that suited Italians enough to acculturate, not one caused by a lack of effective control of the periphery by the centre, at least in the obvious sense of preponderant state power. Yet fail they did.
This work does not argue against the demonstrable truth that the Napoleonic state provided a template or inspiration for many future nationalists. Nevertheless, the research presented here does not support the view that French rule broke the mould of the ancien régime political cultures it first encountered in Italy, beyond the narrow circles of indigenous revolutionaries and intellectuals, and it is too often forgotten how marginal these groups were. Even many who sought to serve the French failed to accept – or, often, to sufficiently grasp – the essence of the new order. If this is a study of the failure of an imperial vision, it is also about the failed attempts of adaptable Italians to exploit an unbending state to their ends, and about the conclusions they drew in the process.

As this is a study of a negative experience, so it may be appropriate to outline what it is not about. The Napoleonic Empire in Italy is not a general history of the years 1796–1814; it is limited to those areas that became 14 French departments: the mainland territories of the House of Savoy (Piedmont), Liguria, the duchies of Parma and Piacenza, Tuscany, and the Papal States excluding the Legations (which passed to the Kingdom of Italy). There is no direct treatment of the two Napoleonic satellite kingdoms of Italy and Naples, although they often enter into comparative discussion. The proposal is to examine an explicitly imperial relationship, because the very condition of those parts of the Italian peninsula ruled at one remove, the kingdoms of Italy and Naples, mediated, to some degree, the impact of imperialism, although this is not necessarily to argue that their experience was ultimately different from the départements réunis. Neither does it attempt to explore every aspect of French rule in its chosen territory. Rather, it is a narrative of a process of imperial acculturation. The French repeated, in its essentials, a policy of cultural imperialism in each state they annexed, and the stages of this process, rather than the chronology of its application, dictate the book’s structure.

Much of what follows foreshadows the view of globalisation as a predatory annihilator of cultures. At a time when the great forces of amalgamation begin to perceive that they can indeed triumph, but only at the price of conflict, it is well to remember the complexities of empire, at the historical moment when modernity became a conscious force in the educated European mind. Imperialism was part of that process of modernity, at least in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Beyond the confines of their continent, European practitioners of empire-building believed themselves increasingly able to understand, and so to rule ‘the other’ without recourse to the savage coercion of an earlier imperialism, born of greed and religious zealotry. In many cases, they may well have been correct. The imperialism of the East India Company or Bourbon Spain was, perhaps, more adept at orchestrating the different cultures under their rule than earlier or later generations, although it would go beyond the scope of this study, to say nothing of the professional competence of its author, to offer a real opinion.
However, if a European wild cat is set among the imperial pigeons, so much the better. Here, then, is this book’s sense of its own perspective: as a study of imperialism, first and foremost, and as an essay in the origins of a universalist, holistic view of the world translated into imperialist action.

Contemporary Europeans in positions of power often assumed they shared more similarities than differences, a unity central to the assumptions of many proponents of cultural imperialism. Whatever its roots, the wholeness of Europe was assumed by the nascent poles of Right and Left, at the dawn of the revolutionary conflagration. As the Brissotin ministry declared ‘war on the chateau and peace on the cottage’, it presumed not only the universal righteousness of its cause and political culture, but a uniformity of social structures across the continent. Nor were the politically raw revolutionaries alone in this. In 1789, their would-be nemesis, Edmund Burke, asserted the underlying truth of an ancient common law of Europe, of a shared – if now faded – European civilisation which the French Revolution threatened to shatter. Whether in attack or defence, the new Prometheus power of the French revolutionary state, and the critical mass of the old order – or, at least their respective spokesmen – cleaved to the notion of Europe as, essentially, a unity. It need hardly be laboured that, for the Left, the founding belief remained, even under its successor the Napoleonic empire, that the values of the French Revolution were those of all mankind. Parallel to this, counter-revolution too developed a cohesive ideology based partly on Burke’s vision of the past, but increasingly reliant on the less tangibly political, yet seemingly immutable pillar of the Roman Church.

There is nothing remarkable in these observations. Nevertheless, the discovery for contemporaries of both Left and Right, that the world was not as they thought, came as a traumatic shock. That shock conditioned their behaviour and, when in power, their policies. One generation’s hackneyed cliché is often an apocalyptic cataclysm for those who live through it. Initially, the contest seemed to be won by the Right. The impossibility of universal revolution was already conceded by the increasingly cynical foreign policy of the Second Directory, with its stipulations that ‘liberation’ be spontaneous and self-financing. It was then incarnated in the mass revolts of 1798–99. From Belgium, the Rhineland and Switzerland, to the whole length of Italy, the liberators faced a violent, undeniably popular rejection of French rule, supporters and reforms. The legacy of 1799 dogged the French henceforth, at least in Italy. The unpopularity of the new order was established from the outset in the most emphatic fashion imaginable, but this was a negative unity that did not, itself, prove the alternative concept of European wholeness propounded by the newly born Right. Disillusionment came later, as the survivors and scions of the French ancien régime found, on the close inspection made possible by imperial expansion, that they had more in common with ex-revolutionaries than their noble ‘cousins’ beyond the hexagon, so antithetical had their old orders been. The voyage of the Left was public,
political and so belongs to the mainstream of historiography. That of the Right was usually predicated on personal and cultural affinities – or lack of them – and so less obvious. Both fed into the kind of solidarity required of imperial agents in the field, however. By their different routes, Left and Right in Napoleonic France came to dislike ‘abroad’, especially Italy.

The Napoleonic empire provides a test case for the difficulties of empire-building in Europe on the revolutionary, universalist terms with which it never broke. It was unthinkable for the French to do other than impose their administrative system, based on prefects, departments and an all-powerful Council of State, on their non-French possessions. The same logic applied to the introduction of legal reforms: first, their system of professional, hierarchical tribunals and, after 1804, the Civil Code, to say nothing of the Concordat. Where modifications to these norms were introduced, they were French in form, and enacted for their convenience, not in response to any indigenous requests. The new French imperial order was mutable only in terms of detail and for reasons of expediency; it brooked no compromise with any ancien régime it inherited. This could only herald difficulty. These difficulties are the core of this study, and the validity of any assumption that European societies are fundamentally similar – and so able to acculturate to each other – must be questioned.

This work has constantly encountered the incongruity of a holistic, centrally driven imperial project in this, specific European context, all the more so because these inquiries have not been confined to overt resistance to those aspects of French rule that any common-sense approach would deem loathsome to society, such as conscription, which provoked ferocious resistance within the French ecumene itself. Failed attempts at collaboration have an equal place, at least, in this experience, alongside overt resistance, both violent and passive. As the French penetrated Italy – the closer they got to the local nexus of its political and social structures – the harder their task became, not only for them, but for Italians prepared to engage with the new order. This seems to reveal more than hostility rooted in the traumas of war from the 1790s, or even a fundamental loathing of the new order the French sought to impose. The Italian experience of undiluted French rule might also undermine the conservative, counter-revolutionary vision of a deeply rooted, overarching European culture. What emerges is something more akin to – if not quite identical with – a confrontation between ‘others’. All this took place within Europe, between societies apparently well known to each other, yet as imperial rule entrenched itself, those involved seemed to grow further apart, not closer together, in so seemingly familiar a setting.

If an ‘empire of Britain’, forged among ancient nations, has proved tenuous over the last half-century, that between Napoleonic France and its Italian territories need not be automatically excluded from comparable consideration, however nuanced the ultimate conclusions. Interest in this approach is
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sharpened by the application of the concept of Orientalism to the Ottoman empire, in the nineteenth century, as part of its drive for modernisation in the face of western domination. The recent work of Ussama Makdisi, in particular, has drawn attention to two contradictory currents within Ottoman Orientalism. The Ottomans sought to create an imperial, inclusive identity, ‘in a hierarchy of modernity, but that eventually came to identify itself exclusively with Turkish nationalism, leading to a clash between the centre and periphery of the empire’. These parallels are far from exact, but this research has led to the feeling that there is more in common between the Napoleonic empire and these historical phenomena, than there are differences.

Owen Lattimore observed, ‘… whether two communities that are set apart from each other … are similar in a general way like France and Italy, or notably dissimilar like India and Tibet, the maximum difference is to be sought near the centre of gravity of each country and not at the frontier where they meet’. These words have served as a warning and a spur on several levels, throughout this work. That France and Italy are generally thought of as similar was important to remember in the course of the research, mainly because contemporaries involved most directly in empire-building did not really concur. From their vantage point, Lattimore probably had it the wrong way round. Nevertheless, his chosen analogy shows how awkward – to resort to understatement – is the inclination to assert that cultural imperialism emerged in Europe, almost simultaneously with its non-European variants. The empirical evidence for applying this concept to the imperial departments of Napoleonic Italy seems too strong to ignore. A pervasive theme in the contemporary sources is the sense among those Frenchmen – and women – closest to Italian life, that their administrés would never belong properly in the French imperial order as its active servants, nor as citizens aware of their roles and responsibilities, or even their rights. Italians, too, increasingly drew away, well before the spectre of military collapse spread over the lands under Napoleonic hegemony in 1812. Much of the explanation begins from Lattimore’s profound observation that the maximum difference is to be sought near the centre of gravity of each country. At the most basic, human level, the experience of Napoleonic Italy revealed the potential of Lattimore’s dictum, for as the representatives of the French and Italian centres were brought into very close contact, they found less in common, not more. If perhaps less different from each other than their counterparts in India and Tibet, they were still too different to forge a shared polity, despite some signs of a desire to do so.

Counter-revolutionary ideology tends to attribute all hostility and sources of incompatibility between the French and their administrés, to the nature of the new state shaped in the 1790s, and such judgements are often probably close to the mark. The practical manifestations of the Napoleonic state, and many of its imitators and successors, were loathsome, and not just to the popular classes; modernity in this guise had few friends in ‘revolutionary’
Europe. Italians were exploited, not just for the practical ends of war, but their own supposed good. This was, indeed, a product of the Revolution. However, a deeper, older estrangement emerges in those relationships founded on a degree of mutual goodwill even more than those marked by irreducible antagonism. The Napoleonic regime prided itself on having blended the energy and enlightened principles of the Revolution with the high culture of *le grand siècle*. There is certainly much in the comportment of the French in Italy to link them to the Voltaire present in the work of John Pocock, the Voltaire who saw an autocratic, enlightened monarchy as the only effective instrument for civilisation, the only form of government capable of recovering the classical past from Teutonic barbarism and Latin degeneracy driven by Baroque Catholicism.\(^{19}\)

Quite consciously, the men of the *ancien régime* who served Napoleon were Voltaireans in this sense. Many were sent to Italy specifically because they stood for an older, more royalist French tradition, but they rejected the Italy they found, for they were plunged into a very different *ancien régime* heritage from their own, and became conscious of their predilection for a moderated neo-Jansenist religion, their conviction that French theatre was superior to the Italian love of operatic spectacle, and their contempt for Italian society women. These were no trivial matters, for they prevented the ‘royalist’ elements in the French ranks from effecting what they had been sent to achieve, a *ralliement* of the established Italian elites to the new order. They soon demanded Napoleon transform himself from a ruler in the mould of Louis XIV, a ‘natural prince’ drawing on a civilised cultural heritage, into a ‘new prince’, in the manner of Peter the Great, obliged to force a degenerate society into civilised modernity.\(^{20}\) This incompatibility of traditional elites exposes entrenched differences across a truly *longue durée*, thus compromising the view that the problems facing Napoleonic empire-building in the *départements réunis* were purely the result of the Revolution. Here is the most potent aspect of Lattimore’s insight into how to assess the differences between political cultures or, in the terms of a later discourse, the degree to which societies detect ‘the other’. In earthier terms, familiarity bred not just contempt, but resigned bewilderment. This is, obviously, quite different from the popular resistance to blatant state exploitation and oppression or to the predictable disillusion of the *giacobini* with Napoleonic rule.

It is all the more intriguing because significant components of the new order were welcomed by influential elements of Italian society, if not immediately, then in the decades after 1814. Here, the lessons passed on by the ethnohistorian of colonial America, James Axtell, have had a decisive influence.\(^{21}\) Contemporary Italians took much from the French after 1814, but not the essence of their state. Mazzini uttered the clearest rejection of the experience of French rule as any but a functional model for Italy, be that vision of the Right or the Left. Only the skeletal framework of the modern state was of use to Mazzini; the Revolution was but ‘the exhaustion of a principle’, incapable of
addressing the deeper question of ‘the bonds among men’.\textsuperscript{22} Gioberti, the apostle of federalism, stressed the incompatibility of French and Italian political traditions: the radical reforms of the Constituent Assembly had worked only ‘because the state had been politically united for a long time’, which was not the case in Italy.\textsuperscript{23} Their ‘borrowings’ did not alter Italian identities.

Clientelismo, campanilismo and a culture rooted in Catholicism that traversed class and region, even if it did not transcend them, evaded the French, in no small part because Italians who otherwise did not oppose French rule, wanted it that way, thus demonstrating the resilience of the ancien régime in the face of Napoleonic reform. Fundamental parts of the French political system were often found incompatible: too many aspects of the Civil Code, from its aversion to dowries to its insistence on public trials, proved alien. Napoleonic centralism was, at best, indifferent to the survivals of municipal republicanism, while its administrative structures were unresponsive to the dictates of local geography. The whole concept of a physically immobile society was utterly at odds with local economies built on transhumance. The Concordat was little short of a declaration of cultural war on one of the few binding elements of Italian society. Napoleonic rule altered Italian life in many important ways, and effected deep-rooted changes in some regions, yet seldom did it alter its foundations as the French intended, and their sense of failure was palpable. It bred an outlook – universally shared, rather than consciously collective – of disillusion in the inability of Italians to reform and adapt to a political and social order whose superiority they took for granted.

The tendency to speak of ‘the French’, ‘the Italians’ and, perhaps most of all, of ‘Italy’ is often unavoidable, and less out of place at times than it might appear. Artificial – but influential – ‘lumpings together’ are pervasive to most imperial relationships, and it is useful, at a preliminary stage, at least to trace the contours of the protagonists, the geography and the dynamic processes which constituted the relationship between the French imperialists and their Italian administrés.

The protagonists

Cultures are not abstract entities; they exist only because they are supported by groups of human beings, adapted to a geographic situation, engaged with a history. In other words, cultural contacts do not directly involve every representative of a society….[The colonisers] incarnate only certain aspects of the societies they come from.\textsuperscript{24}

Wachtel’s sage warning applies to most imperial contexts, and certainly to Napoleonic Italy. Many different Frenchmen came to rule the Italian departments, but post-revolutionary France was a society torn asunder.
These bitter divisions were only frozen by Napoleon, and this seminal insight by Gwynne Lewis\textsuperscript{25} is reinforced from quite another ideological source, in François Furet’s assertion that there is no clear date for the end of the French Revolution.\textsuperscript{26} There were more counter-revolutionaries than supporters of Napoleonic France, and none of this substantial body of Frenchmen served in imperial Italy. Only a handful of women and children followed their men over the Alps. Above all, it probably took special men to volunteer to go to the edge of empire. Equally, ‘Italy’ is a debatable term when applied to the several states and myriad of highly diverse local communities the French annexed. If ultimately unfair, Metternich’s quip that Italy was a geographic expression cannot be dismissed out of hand. Simple truths, perhaps, but ones more than capable of frustrating any attempt to formulate general trends.

Conquest was followed by the introduction of French institutional and administrative norms, a process which, by its very nature, meant that men of various backgrounds and political outlooks would rule imperial Italy, both sequentially and together. Conquest usually entailed revolt and counter-insurgency, as in Piedmont in 1800–2, Liguria and Parma-Piacenza in 1805–6 and Tuscany in 1808, which necessitated the presence of hardened soldiers and gendarmes, of military satraps who favoured the army and police over civil authorities, whether French or Italian: Menou in Piedmont and then Tuscany, Miollis in Rome, Junot in Parma. The security forces were usually composed of men with republican sympathies, some with Terrorist pasts, for the Napoleonic state found niches for such men in its ‘enforcing institutions’. As the frontiers of the empire advanced, new areas in need of taming were acquired, and these commanders moved on. However, the gendarmes stayed behind – military veterans, almost all either French or Piedmontese – thus ensuring the permanent presence everywhere of men of republican, often anticlerical, stamp. Imperial Italy was always policed by the forces of the radical revolution, in the service of the empire.

However, the \textit{fonctionnaires} and magistrates who followed the satraps and their troops were, if older, the ‘men of 1790’ so coveted by the regime: moderate revolutionaries who had created the framework of the Napoleonic state, who often had had notable careers under the monarchy, such as Jourde, who organised the first French tribunals in Piedmont, or Legonidec, the procurator of the Cour d’Appel of Rome. Almost all the French bishops sent to Italian dioceses conform to this pattern. There were former royalists, and this was deliberate policy – that of \textit{amalgame} – but even among them, there was variation. Menou had transformed himself into a fervent Bonapartist, whose ferocious counter-insurgency tactics had been turned on Chouans before he crossed the Alps; beside him were young \textit{fonctionnaires} like Tournon, the aristocratic prefect of Rome, who had fled Collot d’Herbois’ assault on Lyon in 1794 holding his mother’s hand for dear life,\textsuperscript{27} but trained wholly in the Napoleonic system. Others still were ‘men of Brumaire’, usually republican intellectuals whose ambiguous relationship with the regime has
been explored with such dexterity by Isser Woloch, such as Lebrun, Moreau de St Méry and Degerando.

The prefects and procurators of the higher courts were often younger men, if of different political backgrounds, bred wholly in the ethos of the new order, often drawn from the ranks of the auditors of the Council of State. Antoine Roederer – the son of a *brumairien* father – as prefect in Umbria, was typical. His equivalent in the judicial order might have been Boucher, the son of a former *parlementaire* who served successively in Parma, Tuscany and Rome. There were also prefects and magistrates of an older generation, some infused with Jacobinism, such as Nardon in Parma or Robert in Sarazana. Their political pasts apart, the French often also turned to their own connections and networks at home, in search of useful subordinates in Italy: Jourde, an Auvergnat, brought many of his protégés or their sons onto the tribunals of the Italian departments. Other French, and later Piedmontese, networks soon followed, as imperial expansion created ever more professional openings. The most powerful civilian policemen in the Italian departments were the Directors-General of Police of Turin, Florence and Rome, who formed a kaleidoscope of the political world of the 1790s: D’Auzers in Turin, an aristocrat of moderate republican politics; Lagarde in Florence, an ex-Terrorist, followed by Dubois, a young professional policeman; Norvins de Monbreton in Rome, a former émigré and future hagiographer of Napoleon. The ‘French in Italy’ were a diverse group, so it is all the more striking that their profound differences and backgrounds shrank almost to nothing in the face of the task of ruling Italy. Perhaps even more remarkably, they forged a common vision of an ideal France, in an Italian environment they came to consider as alien.

The French came in small numbers, under specific orders, to carry out defined official tasks. To speak of the other side of the imperialist equation, of the Italians, is to confront Wachtel’s warning of the complexity of acculturation and imperialism as the business of a whole society and, in this case, a society marked more than many by its diversity. This was apparent even in the differing responses within Italy to the French Revolution, as the literate public sought to come to terms with so unheralded a series of events. Thus, the French were a known quantity, even in the most seemingly remote parts of the periphery. Or they seemed to be. Sophisticated Italians in the former centres of the old states would find that French culture, official or otherwise, was more revolutionary than many had imagined, when it came to absorbing them.

The reception of the new order on the periphery was still more complex. Here, the French and their *administrés* had first met on brutal but all too familiar terms; 1799 – *l’anno nero*, ‘the black year’ for Italian Jacobins – made the *montagnardi* simply ‘Vendéans’ to the French, no more, no less. They were brutes, misled by their clergy, steeped in visceral ignorance; they had no politics. The imperial officials sent to rule them after 1800 never really
learnt to feel differently, but that does not mean they were right, just as many communities and individuals on the periphery took the French to be more astute and receptive than they actually were. It was impossible for them not to see how obsessed the French remained by the spectre of 1799, and so they often assumed they were still dealing with an essentially revolutionary regime, an impression confirmed by the Napoleonic Concordat’s destruction of the regular orders and decimation of the Church calendar. Nevertheless, they never quite grasped the degree to which all post-Thermidorean regimes sought, however imperfectly, to proceed through the rule of law.32

These are all the questions and dilemmas born of interaction between a foreign regime and an old web of political cultures. Its newness for both rulers and ruled must be grasped. Imperial expansion is a process of mutual discovery, however unpleasant it usually proves for all concerned. Robinson sees the presence or absence of effective mediators as crucial to if or when a ‘European beacon’ occurred: ‘The breakdown of informal connections in a local crisis in many instances led to the transition to an imperial take-over.’33 In French Italy, this equates to 1799; after their return to the peninsula in 1800, the trauma of this crisis determined how any annexed region would henceforth be run. Mediation was not the method that prevailed.

The territory: centre and periphery in Italian history

Napoleon was not the first foreign overlord in Italy. The *pax hispanica* c.1555–1610 brought Naples and Lombardy firmly into the Habsburg imperial orbit. Successive generations of Lombard elites worked through a Senate modelled on French *parlements*, and with a Spanish executive council; in Naples, Spanish viceroys established absolutist principles which found resilient support among the magistracy.34 Their very different experiences gave them both political cultures centred on formal institutions, thus creating a structured ‘public sphere’, which endured after the end of Spanish rule. In contrast, the Spanish controlled Genoa, Tuscany and the central duchies indirectly.35 In Rome, they exercised powerful influence through a policy of ‘entryism’, the informal infiltration of traditional or semi-official bodies by members of the ruling elite,36 well attuned to a Baroque state built on informal patronage.37 Thus, the elites of the future *départements réunis* escaped Spanish absolutism, unlike their counterparts in the cores of the future satellite kingdoms.

During the Spanish hegemony, a group of states linked by the Apennine spine, independent because they were weak enough to ignore, escaped imperialism. Left to themselves, the internal geographies that underpinned the continuities of *ancien régime* political culture also endured, and let the political culture of ‘government at one remove’ develop over time, as well as space. In the 1670s, the Spanish viceroy in Naples launched determined campaigns against bandits38 and, however transient their success in the *longue durée*, no equivalent undertakings were made in the states of the future
départements réunis. The best the Genoese patricians could muster were a few ambulant judges with escorts of Corsican crossbowmen, just capable of terrorising a village; faced with mass smuggling in its Apennine provinces, the Savoyards waged war on these provinces, rather than police them.

Philip II and Napoleon inhabited different political worlds, but Philip traced an Italian political geography the essence of which Napoleon inherited, an achievement so fundamental it often escapes a historiography focused on finding the origins of the Risorgimento in the *epoca francese*, rather than assessing it in a longer continuum.

**Defining a region**

Historical geography is essential to Italian history. Fernand Braudel charted the fundamental role of topography in the history of the Mediterranean; Chris Wickham has put it at the centre of several important studies of mediaeval Tuscany. The work on the Apennine regions of several ancien régime states by Osvaldo Raggio on Liguria and Giovanni Tocci on the Piacentino have traced many of the foundations upon which this study is built. The growing importance of geographical concepts for historians of post-Unification Italy is witnessed in the influential collection of essays by Carl Levy, and in the work of political scientists led by Sidney Tarrow.

By pegging so much of its framework, and of the discussion within it, around concepts drawn from historical geography, *The Napoleonic Empire in Italy* attempts to make two intertwined, but distinct, contributions. One is to provide a possible model for the relationship of geography to any imperial context. The most obvious, however, is to the shape – quite literally – of the history of modern Italy. Its first sections outline the contours of a macro-region within the peninsula, formed by the small and middle-sized states along the Apennine spine. This geographical feature – which cursed all these weak governments with a swathe of rugged hinterland – played a cardinal role in the evolution of their political cultures. In turn, these shared, permanent configurations and problems moulded political cultures more similar than different, their outward, institutional variety notwithstanding.

There were two Italies in the early modern period, but they were defined by the *pax hispanica*. This undermines the assumption that the fundamental division in Italy is a broad north–south divide, or, more correctly, that the north–south divide has long been its fundamental division. It would be ridiculous to attempt to argue that the division enshrined as truth by Gramsci is untenable in contemporary Italy. Rather, the point is that in the *epoca francese*, the regional configuration of the peninsula was different. At the moment the French occupation set in motion important processes for the political evolution of Italy, well before the full impact of industrialisation and urbanisation, we should not really expect the Italian macro-regions to look as they do today. This study cannot judge the claims of some Italian politicians that a northern bloc – Padania – is a contemporary reality or
not. However, such a concept has no relevance to Italy in the century before Unification. The roots of regionalism – seen by many as the best antidote to the myth of nationalism – may be very shallow indeed. So, too, might the notion among some proponents of ‘Orientalism’, of Europe itself as a cultural whole. In a powerful article, Sadik Jala al-‘Azm has delineated the dangers of ‘Orientalism in Reverse’ for the Islamic world. Part of the present study’s aim is to show a form of ‘Orientalism’ at work within a purely occidental context, and its complex, unhappy results.

The Apennine spine defined a macro-region within Italy. Braudel saw this when he distinguished the very different characters of the Alps from the Apennines. He rightly insisted on the uniqueness of the Alps among the mountains of the Mediterranean basin as exceptional ‘from the point of view of resources, collective disciplines, the quality of its human population and the number of good roads’. Although vital for local trade, the Apennines did not stand at any of the great crossroads of Europe. Neither were they drawn into the wider pattern of European politics, as were many Alpine communities in the Napoleonic period: whereas the great Tyrolean revolt of 1809 spread to parts of the Kingdom of Italy, the much larger risings in the central Apennines later that year had no wider affiliations, nor, indeed, any readily identifiable epicentre or leadership. The contrasting characters of these two revolts are emblematic of the different relationships of the Alps and the Apennines to the outside world in general, and of their different political relationships to their respective ‘centres’, in particular. The Alps were a busy crossroads; the Apennines – the core of ‘French Italy’ – are much closer to Braudel’s general dictum, ‘mountain freedom’. In this, too, is a defining element of the political culture of the Apennine periphery, and its relationship to the urban cores of the states of the ancien régime.

Thus, the primary working assumption is the existence of a macro-region, formed by the Apennine spine. Its secondary corollary is the clear division between definable centres and peripheries within. Piedmont, Liguria, Parma-Piacenza, Tuscany, and – in a more diffuse sense – the Papal States shared this common internal geography. Each was centred on well-established urban zones, either surrounded by plains or along coastlines, behind which were the valleys of the Apennine highlands. The longevity of all these states as territorial entities – quite separate from their changes of dynasty over the early modern period – allowed this geography to shape their political cultures over several centuries.

This underlying common denominator remained hidden from view until they were ‘lumped together’, out of pure expediency, by Napoleon. When independent, the states of the Apennine spine displayed remarkable diversity in their public life, differences that increased, rather than diminished, in the last decades of the eighteenth century. While Tuscany made concerted efforts to become a model of Enlightenment in the 1780s, Parma-Piacenza had already set its face against such reforms with the failure of Du Tillot’s
ministry. Genoa stood aside from all structured, institutional reforms, although its magistrates often responded to particular demands for an enlightened approach in legislation. The Savoyard and papal monarchies were far from inert, but they followed paths of reform in keeping with their own absolutist traditions, which were utterly different from each other. Seen on this level, it is the variety of these states that most strikes the observer. Indeed, they provide a neat compendium of European responses to the new political culture engendered by the Enlightenment. The vibrancy of literary life, caffè society and its growing journalistic culture show that Italians, themselves, were very conscious of the laboratory in which they lived. However, paradoxically, intellectuals were close to power everywhere, if in vastly different ways. This was true not just of Tuscany, Lombardy or Naples, the avowed centres of enlightened reform, but also the more conservative states. There was a true noblesse de robe at the helm of the Savoyard state, educated in the University of Turin; in both Liguria and Parma, government officials and magistrates alike were the products of the Jesuit noble colleges and the great law faculties of Parma or Bologna. Even the most conservative of states could claim highly cultivated – and often, commonly educated – ruling elites.

The question remains, to what extent these learned, civilised men, whether of enlightened outlook or not, were actually able to rule, and this is the prism through which the achievements of the Napoleonic state in Italy acquire their true magnitude. The two great reforming impetuses of the Italian ancien régime were enlightened reform and, before it, the moral, spiritual zeal of the Catholic Reformation. The latter exerted far more influence on Italian life than the former, but neither could move mountains, and neither acculturated the hinterlands, still less were the highland peripheries reduced to direct control by the public institutions of the centre. The French changed this, if only for a time, and their power to break the mould of geography was, indeed, earth shattering. For their predecessors, however, beneath the shifts in political and elite culture from the Baroque to the enlightened, seigneurial patrimonialism to absolutist centralisation, lay the harsh realities of geography – no weak state could overcome the independence of the mountains. This was a powerful, determining constant in the lives of these states; their political culture – universally shared, if not yet collectively acknowledged – was that they could exert only influence on their hinterlands, not institutional control. This formative common experience emerged from behind their outward differences, when the states of the Apennine spine became the Italian departments of the French empire.

The imperial nature of Napoleonic rule means that the concept of ‘centre and periphery’ must be applied on two very different levels: macro and micro, pan-imperial and local. At the macro-level, a polity with as assured a cultural identity, and as heavily centralised an administrative system as Napoleonic France possessed a well-defined centre, from which its will radiated to the rest of the empire. However, beside the self-defined imperial
centre and periphery, were the traditional, pre-imperial Italian centres and peripheries.

**The imperial macro-centre**

A crucial aspect of French cultural confidence after the Revolution was the sense held by the elites of their place in a linear concept of history, an outlook deeply embedded in Enlightenment thought. To Voltaire’s four golden ages of civilisation, the consolidation of the advances of the Enlightenment and Revolution by Napoleon added a fifth: France was now, once again, the ‘torch-bearer’ of European civilisation, inheriting the Greco-Roman mantle from Renaissance Italy and the France of *le grand siècle*. Faith in a comprehensive regeneration of society was also central to the revolutionaries; although much mutated, it survived to guide the Napoleonic regime in even greater measure. This sense of superiority and mission was heightened, at least among those with lingering republican sympathies, by the failure of the rest of Europe to respond to the Girondin call to arms of 1792, and the emphatic, almost universal vindication of Robespierre’s prediction that no one would love armed missionaries. Following the house-of-cards-like collapse of the sister republics in 1799, the French re-entered Italy with a sense that regeneration was their unique achievement, and its diffusion would be their work alone.

Here, Axtell’s concept of ‘borrowings’ and their two broad categories, are instructive: ‘adaptive changes’, which were practical, temporary borrowings for predetermined ends, and ‘reactive changes’, ‘spurred by the ubiquitous presence of...cultural foils’. However shallow and functional Italian ‘borrowings’ might have been, they were still prepared to make more accommodations with the French than the French were with them. Of ‘adaptive changes’ among the French, there were none. The very notion of ‘borrowing’ from Italian culture was unthinkable. Even colonial North America was more of a ‘two-way street’ than French Italy. However, ‘reactive changes’ were a powerful element in their experience. Close contact with their *administrés* sharpened the French sense of difference, and heightened their own sense of identity, based on a civilising mission. The French had come to Italy to regenerate what they found, to save it from the abyss into which its unfortunate peoples had fallen. Colonial analogies are not forced or artificial, when this close to the evidence. The instruments and institutions of Napoleonic imperialism were designed to prevent exactly this, for France was the guardian of civilisation, although they felt that certain Italians were better prepared to receive it than others. Expressed in terms of realpolitik, ‘horse-trading’ was anathema to the Napoleonic regime.

The French sense of cultural exclusiveness – even if stripped of its innate sense of superiority – blinded them to much of their success. French institutions and practices were absorbed into other parts of the empire to a considerable degree. It is arguable that Piedmont, Lombardy and much of the Rhineland
were more integrated into the imperial centre than the *Vendée militaire* or much of the Midi. This is the reality of *la longue durée*, however. For the imperialists there was only one centre of reference, France.

The Italian micro-centres

In a practical sense, the French accepted what they found. Their territorial reorganisation maintained the old administrative centres as *chefs-lieux* of the imperial departments and the French military divisions, so acknowledging the power of Italian geography over politics; where they attempted to alter the pattern of administration at communal or cantonal level, they often fared badly. Thus, the geographic theatre remained as nature had long decreed.

The spirit of government was to change utterly, however. The history of the occupation of the *ancien régime* centres is essentially the relationship of the French with their elites. The French detected an Italian ruling class more closely tied to its people than in France. David Bell’s vision of a French elite imbued with ‘the perception of God’s withdrawal from the world’ and their belief in ‘society’ as an autonomous arena of human activity, finds its fullest expression in their abhorrence of Italian culture in its traditional centres. The French saw an elite that still cherished the great festivals of the Church, bound by the morality of the Catholic Reformation, whose proponents hovered around the Courts while their own clients hovered around them. In modern parlance, the new rulers beheld an elite in thrall to the most crass, populist aspects of its society; worse still, they saw before them a ‘dependency culture’ of the most fawning, craven variety. Their first work was to undo it, a project that did, indeed, mark a vital and sudden lesson in the political education of Italy. There is much truth in the judgement of an older, nationalist historiography, that Napoleonic rule really did bring the modern state to Italy.

Yet, in a manner worthy of Burkeian rebuke, they failed to see beyond this. The French missed a very great deal. Their own version of political culture – the arena of the public sphere – was all that mattered. They saw only superstition – religion – and decadence among the Italian elites. Beside this, however, sat the rich intellectual life of the urban learned academies, the *caffè* and many of the finest universities in Europe, several of which the French would shut, although Turin actually became the direct model for the Imperial University. That these cultural institutions were so vibrant and widespread denoted the existence of a sophisticated, highly evolved public opinion. It had deep roots in the traditions of municipal republicanism, both in the larger capital cities such as Florence or Genoa, and in many provincial centres beyond the direct grip of the political centre. Even in the most absolutist of Italian states, Piedmont, civic republicanism was far from dead in the provincial towns, or in Turin itself. As early as the 1660s, contemporaries felt that the apportioning of praise and blame by public opinion was an effective influence over rulers. Oral culture was widely informed by more formal, written culture
in the early modern period, to the point where it would be wrong to assume that most Italians were actually ignorant of politics.

The French often failed to grasp the sophistication of Italian public opinion, or its power in the public sphere, because it did not correspond to their norms. It was not as thoroughly secularised as their own, even among many of those giacobini most well disposed to them ideologically. Unlike the French ancien régime, the drive for greater social control in much princely legislation drew on the same cultural sources as the currents of religious reform and renewal. Nor could the French countenance the collective rituals that studded the Italian public sphere as legitimate forms of political expression, because they were not fundamentally secular. The influence of the guilds and confraternities in urban public life was intolerable; even more were those ritual elements centred on religious processions and festivals that were the motors of patron–client relations, and so of practical politics in large and small centres alike. All this was less alien to the French – or, at least those who remembered a world before 1789 – than outside their conception of what constituted political culture. They considered such things primitive, and it is arguable that, in so doing, they seriously misjudged the world they had entered, equating the increasingly archaic with the inarticulate and ignorant. There could often be just enough superficial familiarity to breed instantaneous contempt. The salons of Roman and Florentine society in the eighteenth century – unlike Milan, where they centred on Austrian patrons – were more social in character than political or intellectual, and this often led to a French condemnation of the traditional elites as frivolous and even averse to reading.

Post-revolutionary French political culture did not readily approximate true politics with the use of extra-institutional sources to influence and manipulate government. This was the ‘bread and butter’ of the Italian old order, but the rejection by the French of the manoeuvrings of clientage and patronage – clientelismo – or the binding force of campanilismo among local factions, of the workings of corporatism, as constituting legitimate forms of politics, simply denied them real engagement with the indigenous public sphere. A politics geared to the often informal manipulation of a courtly central government, was abhorrent to the revolutionary generation, and simply alien to the younger men, reared after 1789.

During 1796–99 – il triennio – the French were somewhat buffered from these complexities, as they chose deliberately to rely on the narrow cliques of Italian giacobini, although a very diverse range of political outlooks existed even within their narrow ranks. The brief life of the ‘sister republics’ did not allow these differences to undermine either their own internal politics or relations with the French; these would emerge after the permanent reconquest of Italy in 1800. The French, predictably, developed a confused attitude to the giacobini. They were, at turns, an embarrassment to a more authoritarian regime, and its most loyal supporters, the backbone of local
government, especially the police. Indeed, collaboration was riven with contradictions and ambiguities in the early years of French rule. Ideologues mixed with men of the ancien régime, determined only to see law and order restored, steeling themselves to work with the new regime. Most collaborators were those who simply found their factions and families on a particular side at a particular time, and were thus committed to the French, as if to any other patron, in the past. Giacobini were, more often than not, part and parcel of the political culture of the old order, bringing their clients with them into the French camp.

However, chronology exercised a seminal role in collaboration, too often overlooked, but central to a real understanding of the politics of the period. The unsettled international climate is an explanation often advanced for the hesitancy of large sections of the elites in supporting the French; the administrators of Piedmont and in the Kingdom of Italy said that many simply feared Napoleon’s hegemony would not last. Indeed, those who most doubted the solidity of Napoleonic hegemony were the rulers and their collaborators – the French and the patriots – not the ruled. As the only parts of the peninsula under full French control in the early years of Napoleonic rule, it is an argument – whether true or false – that can be applied solely to these two regions before 1805. The major expansion of direct French rule came after 1805, in the wake of the Austerlitz campaign. Liguria, Parma and Piacenza (both 1805), Tuscany (1808) and most of the Papal States (1809) effectively came under imperial rule when the empire was at its height. Hesitancy through caution – and caution was often attributed to all the Italian elites by the French – was not a factor in their reticence. Therefore, their hesitancy stemmed from reasons other than international instability for such refusal took place against a background of Napoleonic triumphalism. In this one respect, at least, the range of complexities inherent in Italian relations with French imperialism is somewhat reduced. It is always dangerous to extrapolate general currents of thought or behaviour from the reactions of an acknowledged genius, but the powerful argument put forward by Christopher Johns for the essentially principled but cautious opposition of Antonio Canova to the occupation – which stresses its hopelessness in the context of the international climate – may, on this occasion, reflect a much wider set of attitudes among his contemporaries. Both his caution, and carefully expressed distaste, did not exist in the isolation of an exceptional life and talent.59

As the French settled to the business of ruling and attempting to acculturate their administrés, even the complex question of collaboration – of degrees of ideological commitment to the Revolution – paled into relative insignificance, as the regime confronted whole polities. Italian jurisprudence and the place of the law in civil society form a striking case in point. There was a strong current of thought in the conservative Enlightenment that the law should, and usually did, embody the collective history and character of the society it served, views expressed most clearly by Montesquieu and Jovellanos. Ancien
**régime** Italy reflects this judgement, in that its states offer a bewildering range of legal codes and traditions. The harsh nature of the Piedmontese Costituzioni contrasted with the progressive criminal legislation, strongly influenced by Beccaria, in Tuscany and Habsburg Lombardy. Genoa stayed largely aloof from reforming currents, and did not evolve a professional magistracy as such; the duchies of Parma and Piacenza witnessed a failed attempt to reform their legislation along French lines under Du Tillot. Beyond the precepts of Roman law, there were few general or systematic influences, not only when compared with each other, but often within their own national contexts. The small state of Modena contained polyglot influences from the spasmodic pursuit of legal reform in the eighteenth century, residues of the initiatives of successive dukes, born of whatever intellectual influences they fell under at a particular time; the result was a shifting admixture of Farnese and Roman tradition, Austrian cameralism and Bourbon absolutism. The hallmark of the ancien régime centre was intellectual diversity and – as reforming impulses gained momentum only to crash on the rocks of tradition – instability.

Perversely, a common legal tradition existed on the periphery. Two fundamental approaches to the administration of justice characterised local justice: its inquisitorial methods, and the reliance of magistrates on arbitration in legal disputes, as opposed to forceful, regulated state intervention. This was just as true below the level of the provincial capitals, in absolutist Piedmont, as in the more avowedly decentralised Republic of Genoa, or the more patrimonial polities of Parma-Piacenza and the Papal States. Nor did the ambitious reforms of Peter-Leopold in Tuscany, in the 1780s, break these traditions at local level. Magistrates on the periphery relied on arbitration; indeed, their reputations often rested on negotiating skills, as much as on the authority vested in them by the state, when it came to dealing with local disputes. Their methods of assessing evidence also followed a broad pattern that showed more common features than fundamental differences. Lay and ecclesiastical authorities alike, depended on individual, often anonymous denunciations as evidence and they did so not through open, public trials with or without juries, but by privately assessing written testimony and examining witnesses and suspects in camera. The working routines of Italian justice did not involve debates, whether in public or between counsels before judges.

These salient facets of Italian legal culture were genuinely alien to the French, and utterly inadmissible in an imperium rooted in the legal precepts of 1789, reinforced by the binding focus of the Civil Code after 1804. Inquisitorial procedures were distasteful, if never wholly anathema, to a regime that associated denunciation with the methods of the Terror and whose whole court system was predicated on open, public trials. Juries were never introduced into the Italian departments, and Napoleon’s own distrust of them is well known, but since 1789, every French regime had maintained that the criminal code of procedure should protect individual liberty by
The Napoleonic Empire in Italy, 1796–1814

public trial, oral testimony and the right to counsel, all directly at odds with the inquisitorial tradition. Arbitration was a device the French had embraced in the early years of the Revolution, through the new justices of the peace, only to restrict and regulate this ever more tightly. The 1806 Code of Civil Procedure established precise guidelines for arbitrators, and advised them to find according to law, not to equity. Thus, the concept itself, if not abandoned, was increasingly out of favour in France. Transferred to Italy, the alien nature of the tradition of judicial arbitration emerges as an aggravated question of degree. Even in the early phases of the Revolution, only relatively minor civil cases were reserved for arbitration, never criminal cases, whereas in much of Italy local feuds, often very violent and long-standing, were dealt with in this way, and by very senior magistrates. Such an approach to serious offences not only ran against a growing French suspicion of the use of arbitration, but counter to the survival from their own ancien régime of rigid, determinate sentencing. No compromise was ever contemplated by the French, anywhere, despite their desire to employ prominent Italian magistrates. These circumstances only increased the sense of ‘otherness’ between the French and the indigenous elites, from the pinnacle of the old states, down to village level. Whereas prospective Italian collaborators might choose to enter imperial service in the spirit of Mosca, believing that what mattered was who was in control, rather than the structures of the system itself, the French held no such brief.

The Italian periphery

In the Apennine highlands, the French thought they had found communities which, however barbarous and dangerous, comprised a spirited people of whom something might be made. The degeneracy, passivity and worldliness of the centre were to be pitied; its denizens were to be regenerated through the obliteration of their own culture. The savage energy of the hinterlands was to be harnessed, rather than destroyed. Yet again, the French were at once right and mistaken. The Vendée and its multitude of cousins in the Midi had readied them – mentally, if not militarily – for the ferocious revolts of 1799, and those after 1800. Their battering of the Apennine valleys for the bodies of live conscripts and dead bandits ran in tandem with identical operations within France.

The process of pacification – or internal conquest – of the centre by the periphery, was common to the whole of the inner empire, the Apennine spine included. Wachtel discerned that new empires inherit the internal frontiers of the polities they conquer, which usually fall into two zones: a densely settled, well-administered core, dominated by lowland, urban centres and areas of commercial agriculture; then pockets of subsistence agriculture grouped around small, localised family units – the hinterlands of the indigenous administrative and economic centres. In general terms, this is as true of the Massif Central, as of the Apennine spine. Napoleon had little trouble
absorbing or controlling the great urban centres of northern Italy, western Germany and the Low Countries, or the adjacent countryside along the river plains. He found support within the ranks of these urban elites, and subservience from the vulnerable, usually landless peasantries near by, who became ready sources of conscripts. Only the great ports, devastated by the blockade, deviate from this pattern.

The inner empire contained marginal zones of scattered village societies, hostile to – and relatively remote from – the pre- and post-conquest urban centres of power, but too weak and dispersed to resist the new regime. This second zone was composed of isolated pockets which were ‘picked off’, and subsequently became more intensely policed than the lowland, urban core: the Ardennes, parts of the Black Forest, the northern Apennines from Piedmont to Tuscany, and the Massif Central were areas of fierce resistance to all external authority before and immediately after the Napoleonic conquest, but they were brought to heel definitively as a result, being surrounded – cornered – within more easily controllable areas. The adherence or forcible submission – the difference, if real, is not crucial in this specific context – of the great arteries of western Europe to Napoleon produced two changes in the spatial circumstances of the hinterlands. The creation of a wide and powerful political hegemony weakened the importance of frontiers between states, where it did not abolish them altogether, and even where it actually created them. The result was that many lawless areas were reduced to compliance to external authority for the first time in their histories, well before the end of Napoleonic rule in 1814. Nor did they return to their traditional ways thereafter. The Rhenish, Belgian and north Italian frontiers were transformed from centres of banditry into ‘domesticated’ frontiers and well-policed communities. This was achieved not only through military force, but also because the more developed urban centres around these pockets of resistance wished it. As Michael Rowe has said of the Rhineland, ‘In many cases, the new regime received substantial local support from all social levels. The fight against banditry in the early years of the Consulate is just one example.’  

Nevertheless, there was much about the communities of the Apennine hinterlands that would take the French unawares. Although they were alert to local revolts, they were caught napping at the political sophistication of a periphery long schooled in the politics of arbitration and capable of wielding its own version of influence, through the control of the flow of information to the centre. ‘Government at one remove’, and the whole culture of arbitral politics, was interactive and reciprocal. The mountains were not as isolated from political realities as their recourse to violence and taste for religious archaism had led the French to suppose.

The perennial problem for the states of the ancien régime was pitting their meagre forces of coercion against mountain topography. This hard
The geographical reality helped to ingrain reactive information gathering; it blunted the cultural currents of Tridentine Catholicism and inured urban elites to the reciprocal traditions of *clientelismo*. Influence made the world go around, not brute force or reforming initiatives, and there were many complex, intricate ties through which it could work. Henry Kamen concluded his seminal study of the Spanish Inquisition by observing that it ‘was only a product of the society it served, and evolved in tune with that society’. In this respect, the Italian branches of the Inquisition were no different, and the secular magistracy worked parallel to it, in method and spirit. They had to wait for the communities of the periphery to supply them with information, and even then, they possessed only the feeblest instruments of coercion to act. When that information came, it was usually in the shape of denunciation, sometimes anonymous, sometimes very public, but seldom extorted or paid for by the authorities.

The French inherited this living tradition. Denunciation and its place in relations between the state and its subjects have only recently become the focus of significant scholarship, and much has turned, in the first instance, on its role in modern totalitarian states. However, *ancien régime* Italy represents an instance of denunciation built into the policing fabric of weak, rather than powerful states, corresponding closely to Sheila Fitzpatrick’s structural explanation for its prevalence in Stalinist Russia: ‘Law functioned poorly, the bureaucracy worse. There were few mediating institutions to deal with government on the individual’s behalf.’

However astute, Italian denouncers never quite grasped the extent to which post-Thermidorian regimes sought to turn their backs on the politics of denunciation. Colin Lucas has shown incisively how pre-Terror regimes wrestled with the problems of denunciation, attempting to untangle the ‘virtuous’ denunciation equated with Roman *civisme*, from the baser spying of the monarchy. Their first hopes were pinned on the transition from the corrupt old order, to the purer atmosphere of the Revolution: denunciations made in one set of social conditions could not equate with those made in another. The Napoleonic police amassed denunciations for their information, but were circumspect in acting upon them. Here, as in so many other ways, they chose to set about ruling their Italian provinces on their own, less because they were confronted with a wall of silence, than because they did not like what they heard. The Apennines shouted at them, but in voices the French felt were vile, corrupted and archaic. There was not a lot left for them, after all this.

**Cultural imperialism: from integration to assimilation**

What remained was the raw power of the Napoleonic state, and the vast human and material resources it could use to fill the gap left by the failure to acculturate, and so acquire intermediaries. It marched on, revealing its
power, rigidity and self-belief. The very existence of such power, and the manifest evidence of its continued triumph over the rest of Europe until 1812, fostered an abiding cultural confidence within the French ranks. Confidence, indeed, is essential to any imperialist polity when it seeks to take this state of domination and subjection a step further, to reach beyond military, technological and economic control, beyond the practical acceptance of its legal and political institutions, to absorb its new subjects into its own way of life. This is ‘cultural imperialism’.

To survive, to put down roots in what is avowedly foreign soil, the imperialist state must, at some point, draw on deeper wells of confidence than material superiority; thus, the triumphant imperialist is forced down a quite different road to domination. Here, cultural imperialism is regarded as a dynamic, working through four concepts, which are not just organisational, but the agents and ramifications of imperial rule. They impose themselves on the structure of this book, rather than being conscripted to render it manageable. The concepts of integration and assimilation developed by Wachtel have found their way quite naturally into the context of Napoleonic Italy. For Wachtel, integration means the incorporation of foreign elements into the indigenous society; even where they effect change, they take place within indigenous models and in the context of unaltered native values. In Axtell’s discourse, these represent ‘borrowings’ by Italians; the relevance of the concept of cultural imperialism to that of integration, is that the French borrowed nothing from Italian culture in return. The other pole of the process of acculturation, for Wachtel, is assimilation: the adoption of alien, foreign elements by the subject society, accompanied by the elimination of indigenous traditions, and total submission to the values of the dominant culture, leading to the disintegration of ethnic identity.

These were the goals of French policy, reflected in its workings. The French hoped that integration would go hand in hand with assimilation, as reflected in their own avowed policies of ralliement and amalgame, as drawn together by Frédéric Bluche, and few analyses of the Napoleonic ideology have done more to reach the essence of the regime. Ralliement – by far the more successful policy – meant the regrouping of both pro- and anti-revolutionary elements of the French, and later imperial, elite under the umbrella of Napoleonic rule; it indicated an acceptance of the regime. Amalgame proved more problematic, entailing active participation in the regime and, thus, submission to its mores. In Napoleonic Italy, ralliement and amalgame become working agents of assimilation because integration failed, yet they were intended as quite the reverse. Above all, they become agents for the exploration of limits, checks and failures. The French originally hoped for integration, as did many Italians. In reality, assimilation was ultimately the social and political implementation of ralliement and amalgame, the framework within which French cultural imperialism emerged in Italy.
The dangers posed to the subject culture are clear enough. Imperialist culture must be arrogant, not just in its perception of its innate superiority to the subject ‘other’, but in an ability to be blind to the subtleties and complexities of the cultures it seeks to efface. The shift from the singular to the plural is deliberate, at this point, for cultural imperialism must, perforce, hound cultural variations and, indeed, real differences, into one, inferior lump, if its mission is to succeed.

Cultural imperialism must, in effect, adhere to the model created by the theoreticians of Romanticism, and so effectively demolished by Jean Molino, of a dominant elite culture confronting and eroding an original popular culture. This is exactly how the imperialist must see the process of assimilation, when integration stalls or fails to occur. That his claims to cultural superiority are political, as much as intellectual, do not negate the point that the process of ‘imperialist acculturation’ is from the top down; imperialists have no need to engage with either the nuances or the real differences among subject cultures, as their goal is less domination, than complete effacement. In this sense, cultural imperialism, even though it prefers cultural mediation to brute force, imposes a false coherence on the subject, however convenient it may be for the historian. It creates a world of clearly defined boundaries of ‘them’ and ‘us’, between the imperial whole and the ‘other’ of the defunct ancien régime, where no such simplicity had existed hitherto. A world of overlapping cultures, of interaction among distinct social systems, becomes irrelevant to all concerned, under such political arrangements. The reduction of the real complexities of the indigenous cultures requires different tactics – different forms of mediation – from the imperialist, but never an adaptation of the ultimate goal of complete conformity. It is all made easier still, when the imperialist already perceives himself as ‘otherly’ among the newly conquered.

To couch the workings of the French policy of acculturation in terms of cultural imperialism is also to expose the stark contradictions involved in imperialism. If the French needed their sense of superiority to endure the hazards of the imperial venture, they also needed to blunt it – at the very least – if cultural intermediaries were to be found. They did not do so. There are four basic typologies of imperialist intermediary, two of them defined by their origins, two by the nature of their functions: the indigenous collaborator; the official sent from the imperial heartland; the intermediary who sets an example by his presence; the intermediary who works actively for the imperial power, as a transmitter of its cultural values. Napoleonic Italy reveals how limited the options open to the imperial power actually became, as it sought to establish itself. The giacobini represent the first category; the French officials, the second, and there were many among the French who lived up to the third category, seeking to lead their administrés by example, both personally and professionally. The paucity of Italians in the fourth category, working to transmit French cultural values in their own communities, points to the
deeper problems of occupation. There were few people, certainly not among those with influence, who were prepared to abandon their culture – to block their own narratives – to the extent the French demanded. Ralliement was one thing; amalgame, clearly, was too much for most, for it entailed little short of the loss of identity.

The French, in their turn, looked increasingly inwards; they developed a deep sense of the Italians as ‘the other’. Loathing alternated with an ‘incidental’ relationship to their surroundings, akin to Said’s powerful analysis of Camus’ approach to Algiers in *La Peste*. As in Said’s Algiers, the French in Italy did not perceive themselves on the frontier of their world, but beyond that frontier, finding themselves thrust into ‘the heart of another geographical entity’,75 and they drew comparisons with everywhere but France. The complex implications of a policy of cultural colonisation put at risk the initial confidence of the imperialists. With the transition from crude conquest to permanent rule, their position became more precarious than it might appear, for alongside their requisite sense of superiority sat a clear perception of their deeper isolation from the society they dominated, and the growing awareness that they were now stranded in a foreign environment. They moved from certainties to a strangeness, ‘somehow divorced from, because transcending, the everyday world’.76

Translated into policy, the results were twofold. The most obvious manifestation of their sense of superiority, intensified by the seeming impossibility of amalgamating Italians, was to rule the départements réunis themselves, to an extent simply not possible in the satellite kingdoms. Italians were thus confined to subordinate roles in the administration. Intermediaries were to set examples; conformity was the key to French imperialism, and it had to be imposed at whatever cost to the survival of the indigenous culture. This equates to assimilation, in Wachtel’s terms. A premeditated, thoroughgoing change in the style of leadership was initiated by imperial rule. Assertiveness replaced the ancien régime practices of negotiation and arbitration. The need for a ‘firm hand’ applied to the upper classes was a recurrent theme among French administrators. Experience of local affairs brought those French ‘on the ground’ to the unshakeable conclusion that the only effective imperial mediator was *le maître absolu du pays*. Only in this way could a complete transition be effected from the old order to the new. Thus, cultural imperialism had a very practical application in the circumstances of Napoleonic Italy. It determined both who governed – the French – and how they did so firmly. This is why the cultural, even personal, tastes of imperial officials are so important: French domination of the Italian public sphere was all but complete in the départements réunis, in that the French alone controlled who among their administrés did or did not enter the ranks of the state, and who, among the ruled, was protected, punished or rewarded by that state. This was the real sense of power accorded by Napoleonic centralisation.
However, the French did not give up hope – officially, at least – of their Italian administrés. The heritage of the Revolution, and at least some aspects of enlightened thought, allowed the new masters the right to exasperation – to the point of vicious repression – but not despair. Thus, the second reaction was to pin their hopes on ‘regeneration’. This concept has been developed brilliantly by Mona Ozouf in the context of the 1790s, but her assertion that it was ‘killed by the coup of 18 Brumaire’ must be gainsaid by the experience of Napoleonic Italy. French responses to Italian society reveal quite starkly that the concept of regeneration described by Ozouf as ‘a program without limits, at once physical, political, moral and social, which aimed for nothing less than the creation of a “new people”’, had been rekindled by imperial expansion. If the French were now no longer in need of regeneration, their new subjects most certainly were. An ‘imperial mission’ emerged that set itself firmly in the context of previous movements for spiritual, social and cultural regeneration in Europe. Le fardeau du franc was very much a reality in these conditions.

For the French, cultural imperialism meant the extension of their own national identity. It was rather different for their Italian administrés. The weight of evidence from many contemporary Italian quarters indicates that the fundamental objection to French rule was neither that it was foreign nor French, but lay in its basic nature. They rejected the essence of the modern state, as developed in Revolutionary and Consular France, thus giving the disparate, often incongruous, sources of opposition and resentment inner coherence. French methods were both alien and repugnant to many Italians. This was as true of learned magistrates and urbanite patricians as of conscripted highland peasants; it baffled and antagonised radical giacobini and integrist clergy alike. Indeed, the small numbers involved in the ideological collaboration of the giacobini appear less a puzzle, than a miracle. At several points in his Storia d’Italia and his longer history of the Western world, Carlo Botta, the disaffected Piedmontese patriot-turned-dissident, seems to have found it rather easy to describe Napoleon’s two Italian campaigns as the last in a long line of barbarian invasions. Botta had a closer acquaintance with the French than many. His biographer describes Botta’s response to the realities of French imperialism as ‘the aversion for “government by geometry”, imported by the French and prepared over a century of Cartesianism and enlightened culture, [which] excluded Botta from feeling any sense of progress . . . and drew him to a sort of empirical politics’.

Italian patriotism was rooted in the same world of campanilismo as the champions of the old order; their mutual infighting stemmed from a shared political culture of local independence. The arena rival ideologues fought over was highly localised; the natural theatre of regeneration and renewal for giacobini was not the centralised state, but their own municipalities. Ranza proclaimed the ideals of that revolution in – and for – his own paese, Alba. Whatever the importance of classical republicanism to the revolutionaries
in their reformulation of French national identity,\textsuperscript{82} they did not like the vestiges found in its Italian homeland. Although contact with an elite culture perceived as degenerate bolstered a French belief in the need for stern republican virtues, it also exposed the fact that their vision of them was, truly, frozen in time. French love of classical republican civisme came from schoolboy brushes with Plutarch; the agents of the new Rome recoiled in horror and contempt from its living Italian remains. Its vivacity ensured that the French version of the modern state did not find deep wells of acceptance, even among many patriots.

When placed in the context of the rejection of the modern state, and perhaps even the questionable applicability of the Enlightenment project on which it was based, popular resistance to French rule, as well as elitist, reactionary resentment, becomes significant, rather than merely predictable. Thus, anti-revolution was the real weathervane for the future of Italy. Little popular resistance in the départements réunis was of a specifically ‘Church and King’ nature, but its objections should have been far more worrying for the progenitors of the future unitary state. The substitution by the French of intervention for arbitration, professionalism for patronage, centralisation for campanilismo, were all rejected. The weakness of the state, in the face of the defiant durability of a host of private and localised loyalties, is central to modern Italian history.\textsuperscript{83} Gramsci expressed it through the concept of stato civile/stato reale\textsuperscript{84} – the ‘official’, as opposed to the ‘real’, state. As for Gramsci, so for historians of every ideological hue and none, ‘The central problem was always the state, and the variety of forms which political power might take within the state.’\textsuperscript{85} Everyone, from Machiavelli to the Italian signatories of Maastricht, has always known this.\textsuperscript{86} In an influential essay, almost desperately concerned to illustrate the resilience of Italian democracy in the crisis of the 1990s, Paul Ginsborg still admits a ‘deeply deformed relationship between state and citizen developed over time, based on the inefficiency of the civil service and its consequent discretionary power’, producing a clash between everyday practice and official morality which ‘proved the undoing of the Italian political class’.\textsuperscript{87} In the wake of the ‘moral revolution’ of the 1990s, he rightly concludes:

The long-standing political anthropology of parentela and clientela… was not called into question. Ordinary Italians were never forced to ask questions about their own behaviour – of how much the dominant culture of Tangentopoli… [clientism, corruption, nepotism tax evasion etc.] – was in fact their own.\textsuperscript{88}

The roots of this persistence lie, in no small part, in Napoleonic cultural imperialism.
Part I

The French Invasions, 1796–1809
There have been two guiding assumptions about the advent of Napoleonic rule in the Italian peninsula. The first is that the three-year period between the French invasion of 1796 and its temporary reversal in 1799 – the triennio – represented the first enduring rupture with an old order based on privilege, localism and adherence to a culture rooted in Tridentine Catholicism. The second is that this rupture was incarnated in the political experience of the short-lived ‘sister republics’ founded in these years, and modelled on Directorial France. The most important aspect of the triennio, in both the short and the long term, was the emergence of the patriots – the misnamed giacobini – as the vanguard of a new order, and the political and social institutions they created, in which a new Italian political culture was fostered. However, the chronology and geographic shape of the French occupation, and so of patriot rule, reveal a far less decisive picture. Before the triennio can be usefully placed in a wider context, certain assumptions must be challenged and modified. The power of regionalism always present in Italian life also exerted itself now, just as it always had. The sister republics did not have the same influence throughout the peninsula, nor did that influence overturn the mentalités formed over centuries, even among the patriots themselves. Save in the Cisalpine Republic, Piedmont and Liguria, the French did not return to rule, either directly or by proxy, immediately after Napoleon’s victories in 1800. In Tuscany, Parma and the core of the Papal States not ceded to the Cisalpine Republic, the old order restored in 1799 persisted, with little appreciable change, in the terms under which these states were governed. The restoration here – and even, arguably, in Liguria – lasted a very long time, indeed until overthrown by imperial expansion after 1805.

The only durable sister republic, able to create its own political institutions or frame its own constitution more or less according to its own lights, or to reach out effectively beyond the ranks of a narrow band of collaborators, was the Cisalpine. Thus, the impact of the triennio, as habitually enshrined in the classic historiography, was, in fact, a highly regionalised phenomenon, engaging only Lombardy and Emilia-Romagna, at least in the all-embracing,
earth-shattering manner so often assigned it. Elsewhere, beyond Bonaparte’s personal fief, the triennio seldom lived up to its title; French occupation was often shorter than three years, and the moment of patriot rule even more fleeting, or absent altogether. This does not diminish its significance, or deny the importance of the patriots in these regions. It is, however, greatly to change the history of the triennio in such places. There was no patriot republic at all in Piedmont, between 1796 and 1799, save for a few months during the Austro-Russian invasion; for most of the period, the area endured an uneasy partition between the Savoyard monarchy, in the north, and the French army, in the south and east. The duchies of Parma and Piacenza knew only military occupation, becoming ‘an obscure corridor’ for the passage of French troops who devastated its lowland regions; what civil power there was remained with its duke. Tuscany witnessed similar uncertainty, with Napoleon’s violation of its neutrality in late 1796. Although the port of Livorno was occupied and a heavy ‘indemnity’ was levied on Tuscany, there was no attempt to ‘democratise’ on the Cisalpine model, and little sign of local support for it. The Roman Republic of 1798 was exactly that, a regime whose power did not extend much beyond the city, and although there were small, if articulate, patriot elements throughout the provinces, particularly in Perugia, the Republic lacked popular consensus. More to the point, its institutions and constitution were hastily – and slavishly – borrowed from France, in telling contrast to the Cisalpine Republic. It rose and fell with the French occupation, between 28 December 1797 and September 1798.

Only Liguria – the Republic of St George – lives up to the Cisalpine model in any appreciable way, for here the French occupation was complete – in contrast to Piedmont – and endured for three years, in contrast to Tuscany and Rome. However, the life of the Republic was riddled with paradox, and challenged by a lack of popular consensus. The French gave sustained support to the Ligurian patriots in their efforts to secure this strategically important part of Italy. When faced with popular revolts during 1796–97, the French commissaire, Faypoult, expelled prominent reactionaries and armed the most pro-French patriots. However, the old order was never thoroughly uprooted. French support turned more on subverting and infiltrating the existing institutions of the old Republic, than the coherent, comprehensive exercise in state-building undertaken in Milan. Even the pro-French elements did not wish to emulate the Cisalpine example; the core of Ligurian ‘patriotism’ was drawn from those who had lost faith in the old order to reform itself, as opposed to those driven by a desire to emulate revolutionary France. Thus, when they retreated in 1799, the French did not leave an institutionalised political legacy anywhere in the future départements réunis, with the partial, debatable exception of Liguria, where the Austrian advance was checked longer than elsewhere, and their occupation in 1800 was brief.

This is not to say the French left no traces, but the triennio in most of Italy was not a mould-breaking experience of patriot rule. The nature of its collapse
was the real point. The French entered, galvanised and then abandoned the complex world of local Italian politics; they exploited – and so changed fundamentally – the myriad of factional struggles which were the essence of *ancien régime* political culture, by attracting one such faction to themselves, and by forcing others to collaborate, whether from necessity or conviction. Rather than creating a new order for their future provinces, the French became a major element in the struggles of a pre-existing public life. They left behind, not the foundations of a new political culture, but groups of exposed collaborators who had to pay the traditional price of clients whose patrons failed them. The crucial difference was the height of the price. The patriots had turned to ruthless outsiders, to thieves, rapists and profaners; they had inserted themselves into an ideological and diplomatic power struggle that stretched far beyond their *campanili*. However, that collaboration, as of 1799, had brought them neither tangible political experience of the new Revolutionary order, nor escape from the old order they had challenged. The French left vendettas of a deeper, more ferocious intensity than most communities had known hitherto, but they had not broken the mould of the political culture from which they sprang. Thus, the *triennio* over most of north-western and central Italy did not school enlightened Italians in the ways of political modernity, but intensified the vibrancy of the most archaic elements of the old order. It left the future rulers of Italy a loyal core of patriot support, but this experience did not leave the patriots with an apprenticeship served in the ways of ‘the New Regime’. Rather, it taught both the patriots and the French, the potential power of reaction; all contemporary protagonists drew from the *triennio*, less the example of patriot rule, than the brutal, comprehensive nature of its collapse. The truly pan-Italian, mass revolts of 1799 were judged the seminal event of these years by all concerned, and they were correct. The cumulative experience of 1796–99 was to give the French a clear map of the dangers and sources of potential support they could expect when they returned to Italy to stay. The most important point for the implementation of Napoleonic rule after 1800 was not the advances made during the *triennio*, but the harsh reality that it had changed almost nothing.

The *triennio* and the emergence of Italian patriotism, 1796–99

The salient phenomenon of the *triennio* for all contemporary Italians was the devastation of war. Everywhere, it turned the masses against the French, making the exhortations of reactionary activists superfluous, rendering the entreaties of patriot collaborators obscene and crippling the finances of every government in northern and central Italy, whether friendly, hostile or neutral. The Army of Italy used southern Piedmont – under its direct control after the Treaty of Cherasco, April 1796 – as a larder. The convention of Mombello, June 1797, which proclaimed the Ligurian Republic, saved the
territorial integrity of the state at the price of heavy French financial demands, and soon curbed French support for the Ligurian patriots, as Napoleon came to recognise the importance of the traditional aristocracy in levying taxation. To preserve its neutrality, the Tuscan government not only had to ‘ransom’ Livorno on its evacuation by Napoleon, but was ordered to reimburse its municipality for the costs of the French occupation of late 1796. In Parma-Piacenza and the Papal States, French exploitation was less formalised, but equally rapacious. Conditions were little different in the territories of the Cisalpine Republic, but the important point for the future governance of Napoleonic Italy was that, in the territories of the future départements réunis, the French chose increasingly to rely on either the structures of the old order to extort money and provisions, or solely on their own arms, as in southern Piedmont, whereas in Cisalpine territories, they seized on the new administrative machinery of the sister republic – and its indigenous patriot bureaucracy – for the task. In the devastation of the moment, such differences appeared trivial, but they would weigh heavily on the future.

The geographical configuration of French rapacity is also not without significance for the later pattern of their rule. In their first conquests in southern Piedmont and Liguria, the instinct of the commissaires of the Army of Italy was to turn to indigenous patriots for support, only to find they were too weak, locally, to assure the continued extraction of hated, traditional taxes such as the Gabella. In Liguria, the French soon realised that the collapse of the old Republic they had helped to engineer actually caused the collapse of traditional taxation, culminating in the abolition of the Gabella on wine and grain by the new government in July 1797. By the end of the year, however, the patriot regime was siding with its aristocratic enemies against local communities in struggles over common lands and feudal dues, driven by a desperate need for funds to meet French demands. The policy of destabilisation first practised in Liguria was not exported over the Alps into the territories of the House of Savoy, where the dynasty and its local administrators were retained as long as possible. When Charles Emmanuel IV abdicated and fled his realm in 1798, it was because of diplomatic double-dealing with the Austrians, not through French harassment; the result was intensified chaos, not tighter French control.

The lesson seemed obvious, and when the war moved east and south, into Parma and Tuscany, the Directory and Napoleon agreed that the effective model for exploitation created in the Cisalpine Republic was no longer for export. The short-lived Roman Republic, created in Bonaparte’s absence, stood in contrast to his policy. At the most fundamental level, the difficulties of controlling the future départements réunis in the interests of the Army of Italy made a lasting impression on Napoleon, evidenced by the fact that there were no more French advances in Italy until 1805, beyond Piedmont – where the King had created a political void for himself – and Liguria, which
had never been completely lost in the fighting. Even when the ruler of Tuscany physically abandoned his state in 1799, there was no recourse to a patriot republic, nor were the duchies of Parma and Piacenza annexed when their duke was transferred to Florence by Napoleon in 1801. Military occupation became ever less synonymous with patriot rule, outside the Cisalpine Republic, as time progressed. Only in the much altered circumstances of the world post-Austerlitz did Napoleon return to a policy of direct political domination. Thus, the process of state-building on the French model would not extend beyond Piedmont and the Cisalpine Republic, until the Napoleonic state had reached its apogee.

Nevertheless, the emergence of the patriots, and their harrowing experience of the triennio, were deeply important for imperial rule, if not in quite the ways the classic historiography has emphasised. The French did, indeed, find an old order in deep crisis throughout its future Italian provinces, and their coming induced high hopes among a small, but significant, segment of the indigenous elites. The claims of the classic historiography, that Italian patriotism was not a mere foreign import, are all too true, if not always vindicated in ways that later nationalist centralisers would approve. French rapacity triggered a war between town and country for basic resources in southern Piedmont; their arrival as a destabilising force at the centres of power released the factional enmities of local politics upon themselves. When pre-existing factions turned to the French, in the name of reform, as well as in the context of local power struggles, patriotism was defined. The patriots were part and parcel of the old order. However, they were a very particular part of that order. In Tuscany, a state with unpopular reforming traditions, they had already been the victims of the systematic reactions of the early 1790s; elsewhere, within the parameters of ancien régime politics, they had identified themselves with attacks on seigneurial privilege and with a more subjective assault on manifestations of popular piety. Above all, their commitment to free trade in grain, and their attempts to reform the annona system, brought them popular odium.

The violence in Tuscany, in the 1790s, was a foretaste of what awaited concerted, coordinated attempts at reform, but until the Italian states were enveloped in a European war, and the new element of French power was injected into local politics, the reformers remained players in a well-established game. In Liguria, those who had lost faith in the old order knew that they were not powerful enough to overthrow it, but with French help, it became more than possible, and they were swifter to grasp this than their opponents. As in Liguria, so across all the future départements réunis, but this changed the intensity and the parameters of local politics faster than it changed their fundamental nature. If the ‘French model’ increasingly attracted patriots immediately before and during the triennio, it was, at least in part, because it appeared to offer them a quick route to power and the potential to realise their own plans. The other side of this coin was that they did not fully
understand the levels of centralisation or uniformity that collaboration would entail, or how utterly uncompromising French rule would be in such matters.

The local roots and geographic distribution of Italian patriotism proved a decidedly mixed blessing for the invaders. In the first months of the French advance into Piedmont and Liguria, there were forceful patriot revolts in the provincial centres of both states that revealed two cardinal elements in the nature of patriotism. First, these revolts were not centred in provincial towns by circumstance; the rebels appealed directly to instincts of localism – to *campanilismo* – thus revealing the roots of patriotism in the ‘ancient’, as well as the ‘modern’, liberties. The short-lived republics of Asti and Alba, in 1797, expose the survival of classical concepts of republicanism beneath the edifice of Savoyard absolutism, to the point that radical patriots such as Ranza in Alba, or the young *notabili* in Asti, came to feel that the best route to a national political renewal would stem from a revolution whose roots were atomised and particularist, drawing on the power of *campanilismo*. They may have been mistaken in the scope of their hopes, but they showed themselves rooted in traditional politics, just as their actions proved the power and vitality of *campanilismo* to the French. Similarly, in Liguria, the collapse of the old Republic led to a host of secessionist movements in provincial centres in May–June 1797, many of which had been in ferment well before the invasion. On the eastern Riviera, La Spezia went as far as making overtures to the new Cisalpine Republic, to free itself from the domination of Genoa, while to the west, San Remo sought French support to recover its autonomy, which Genoa had repressed brutally after a revolt in 1753; Savona, Novi and Noli all saw similar protests.

Although it is difficult to assess how truly popular these movements were, local patriots were usually at their forefront. These provincial patriots did not have obvious difficulties in reconciling the need to reform taxation or abolish seigneurial privilege along French revolutionary lines, with the reassertion of traditional local allegiances. Provincial demands for autonomy, always linked to seething discontent at Genoese ‘oppression’, resurfaced at the point of annexation to France in 1805, and are reflected in the reports sent to Lebrun, the French *commissaire* in Genoa, by the provincial officials of the republican regime, the *provveditori*, who were themselves patriots. The patriot deputies of the town of Albegna, on the western Riviera, showed themselves steeped in ‘the ancient liberties’ in their petition to the new French authorities, probably framed in 1805. After reminding the French of their antiquity – the town had been an ally of Hannibal – and their more recent help during Napoleon’s crossing of the Apennines, they expressed their *campanilismo* with remarkable candour:

> Reduced, by the upheavals of time, by wars and outsiders to becoming part of the Republic of Genoa, the town of Albegna nevertheless has
preserved the right to elect its governor, its tribunal, and it still has its episcopal see, whose origins go back as far as the fourth century.\textsuperscript{18}

The patriots of Albegna, a reasonably large coastal town, here displayed as much ignorance of the nature of the new order as the most reactionary populations of the high valleys, if not more. Their entire political culture was still predicated on a very localised republicanism. Even when determined to overthrow vestiges of noble and clerical privilege, and to reform taxation, these bastions of patriotism in the provinces still thought in terms of ‘borrowing’ useful elements from the French republican paradigm, rather than any wholesale absorption into a new, imported political order.

Patriots would carry the spirit of campanilismo with them into the heart of the Napoleonic state. Their encounters with a very different, highly professional public sphere would transform some into its disciples, but for many, the deep-rooted mentalités of the ancien régime sat side by side with newer political loyalties bereft of any sense of incongruity, with a genuine commitment to enlightened reform. The French found few supporters more loyal or amenable to their mores than the Florentine intellectual, Giovanni Fabbroni. An enthusiastic supporter of the reforms of Peter-Leopold, he served the Napoleonic state in several useful capacities, yet he used his posts as director of the Mint in Florence, and head of Ponts et Chaussées for the Italian departments, to create a very traditional network of clients in Tuscany and Umbria. He had a particular ‘hold’ over the sub-prefect of Pisa and enjoyed strong connections in Tuscan higher education, securing places for the sons of friends on the imperial Polytéchnique; he supported several prominent aristocrats in disputes with the regime, which ensured his network was not dismantled after 1814.\textsuperscript{19} In the Roman departments, annexed under the cloud of Napoleon’s excommunication by the Pope, it proved notoriously difficult for the French to recruit any public officials but those with patriot pasts from the triennio. Even among such committed partisans, the French procurator of the Cour d’Appel of Rome lamented that: ‘As for the department of Rome, I am of the increasingly uncomfortable conviction that it will be very hard to root out the unfortunate custom of accepting presents from parties to cases.’\textsuperscript{20}

Patriots could behave with the same clannish, narrow horizons as any other faction. The Negro family of Bra and Alba in Piedmont proved their political loyalty to the French time and again, both during the triennio and in the early, convulsed years after annexation. However, they behaved with all the nepotism and narrow campanilismo that belonged to ‘the ancient liberties’. An outsider in their midst, the sub-prefect of Alba declared in 1805:

The Negro family [has] strengthened the position and the influence it has achieved over a great many men in office, and it was now able to seize control of the direction of public opinion, and from then on, the Negro
brothers...have been assumed to be the core and the rallying point of the faction [which] has mastered and overturned the town of Alba.21

The lesson was twofold. Where patriots put down the firmest roots under the French, they did so by very traditional means; more than this, they did so quite naturally, acting from instinct rather than reluctant expediency. This gap between the mores of the new French professional state and the realities of Italian political life is encapsulated by the career of the Piedmontese, Ferdinando Dal Pozzo, one of the most distinguished magistrates to emerge from the départements réunis. As a judge on the French civil tribunal of Alessandria, Dal Pozzo played a minor part in driving out the only French magistrate on the court.22 He went on to occupy senior positions, on the Cour d’Appel of Genoa, and then of Rome. In each instance, he brought his Piedmontese colleagues with him; the ringleaders of the tiny coup in Alessandria in 1803 were quickly rewarded with senior posts in Genoa, while his attitude in Rome provoked open disparagement from his senior French colleagues. The French procurator of Cour d’Appel of Rome, over which Dal Pozzo presided, warned his superiors in Paris that, ‘I feel obliged to take my guard, rather, over the praise that the Piedmontese heap on each other.’23 This was as diplomatic as such comments got. In 1812 he exploded that Dal Pozzo had created ‘a league that unites the Piedmontese [in Rome] that nothing seems to be able to break’.24 All this represents a powerful reminder that the currents of mentalité seldom outstripped l’histoire événementielle, even among those who regarded themselves – and have come to be regarded – as in the vanguard of radical change. This was how the French, however hypocritically in practice, viewed such behaviour among the patriots.

The Piedmontese and Ligurian patriots were deeply imbued with a form of classical republicanism that found little response in the political culture of the Directory, and none in the Napoleonic regimes that succeeded it. It is against such a background that Napoleon insisted on a centralised Cisalpine state. The patriots were very much a part of the political universe of the Italian ancien régime, however isolated and loathed by their own communities, and would have considerable difficulty in adjusting to the new regime thrust upon them after 1800. These problems would stem not just – and perhaps not in the main – from the authoritarian character of the Napoleonic state, but from its centralised, uniform institutions. During the triennio, they did not come into direct contact with that new order, as it was still only taking shape within France itself, and even its embryonic forms were not exported much beyond the Cisalpine Republic.

The second central characteristic of patriotism in Piedmont and Liguria – and in the Papal States – was the very fact that its wellsprings were in the provinces, however thinly disseminated; patriotism was not the preserve of an urban, intellectual elite. Indeed, its ‘heartlands’ were quite specific, often a phenomenon of the provincial towns caught between the great urban
centres and the hinterland. It stood on the edge of, or even outside, networks of patronage that linked rural communities to their aristocratic landlords, as in eastern Liguria, where the coastal towns were – literally – caught between the rebellious peasantry of the highland valleys, and the Genoese patricians who were their absentee landlords and the instigators of the great rebellions of 1797 and 1799. The firmest resistance to the counter-revolution in Liguria came not from Genoa – which saw a popular rising of its own – but from the coastal cities.25 Similarly in Piedmont, the provincial towns at the head of the Apennine and Alpine valleys offered spirited and spontaneous resistance to the peasantry of the high valleys over the summer of 1797,26 and the ‘inquiry’ carried out by the restored royal government of 1799–1800 later revealed the relatively strong patriot presence in these centres.27 Thus, geographically, and in the context of clientelismo, the patriots formed part of those ‘in the middle’; however awkwardly this may fit with the concept of a bourgeoisie, the patriots were less the nucleus of a new ruling class, than a faction within those most marginalised from influence under the old order. A sense of this frustration at being marginal is clear in the outburst of Paolo Perazzo, a Ligurian patriot serving as the provincial provveditori – a provincial governor – in Levanto, a city on the eastern Riviera. Perazzo felt the real obstacle to the reform of taxation was less the power of seigneurialism, per se, than lines of clientage running from powerful Genoese families into the hinterland, through which many ordinary people could also evade taxes, even after the Republic’s abolition of feudal privilege:

A very great abuse of the system persists because… people know that all it takes to have a Senator for a friend, is an attractive wife, or a little money to buy off a doctor, a lawyer or a notary: In this way, everyone contributes to the problem, and they go on doing so; everyone is involved and they draw others into the game, moving them around like pieces of wood.28

The rather sordid, overdrawn portrait he paints is revealing of the isolation of a politician of the ancien régime, as much as of a frustrated reformer hoping for better things from the French. Although they shared the major characteristics of an ancien régime municipal faction, the patriots’ common denominator was their position as the weaker group in local politics. It is not without significance that, during the triennio, and in areas with a tradition of anti-Semitism, pogroms got subsumed into the persecution of the patriots, the most notorious incident being in Siena.29 In neighbouring Montepulciano, the counter-revolutionary authorities firmly believed the Jews were plotting a pro-patriot rising; they were, simply, ‘odious to the people, and almost all of them are pro-French’.30

Patriot adherence to the French placed them in a metaphorical ghetto, comparable to the very real Jewish equivalents. Unlike the Jews, their diffusion
across the territories of the Italian states proved useful to the occupiers, but it also rendered them dangerously exposed to rural counter-revolution. The harrowing experience of the revolts of these years welded the patriots to the French for ever, whatever their political differences. Fear remained with them to the end. Indeed, far from seeing themselves as the vanguard of a popular reform movement, Tuscan Jacobins felt themselves isolated and threatened to a degree that even the French police often refused to believe:

...they would feel vulnerable, were we to evacuate [Tuscany] as happened in the past [1799], they are afraid for their circumstances, they exaggerate the supposed dangers because they feel so far away. They see a long-standing conspiracy of hatred [against them] in what is really only a surliness born of enforced obedience to necessary, if disagreeable, policies.31

The Tuscan reformers had served a long and particularly bitter apprenticeship in persecution. They were almost all drawn from those who had supported the earlier reforms of Peter-Leopold in the 1780s, whether Jansenist clergy attached to the rulings of the Synod of Pistoia, or secular reformers behind the abolition of internal free trade and many guilds and corporations. They had all been targets of the Viva Maria risings of those years, and would be the targets of counter-revolution again, in 1799. Tassoni, the representative of the Kingdom of Italy in Florence, noted in the wake of the anti-French revolts of 1808 that people still ‘brazenly insulted all those who were persecuted as Jacobins in 1799’.32 Indeed, at the height of the crisis, he agreed, ‘From any view, the position is critical at the moment, and truth to tell, I don’t see those in government as very secure, even though the capital is quiet.’33 Their fears grew over time, rather than diminished, especially in those parts of Tuscany that had been the hubs of earlier revolts. The maire of San Sepulero, in the Aretino, told his sub-prefect in 1813 that, ‘We are on the point of being slaughtered; the government will probably avenge us. But we shall be no more.’34 He did not trust the local landowners any more than the bandits, and stood out against arming his own National Guards, especially in wartime, as the landowners ‘will turn them on us, at the first opportunity’.35

There was enough evidence of brigandage in the area at that time to justify such fears, but the real point is, perhaps, their persistence and that suspicion extended to the ‘respectable classes’.

The legacy of 1799 was everywhere in the years following annexation. Participation in a revolt during 1799 became almost a staple of denunciations. Equally, to have ‘suffered for the cause in 1799’ was never left out of any application for a post in the French administration, nor did the French forget their friends from that defining moment. The French procurator of the Cour d’Appel of Rome often despaired of his Roman colleagues, but he admitted their dangerous position, even at the height of French control in 1810:
Those who have, by accepting [judicial posts] exposed themselves to all the resultant dangers of a return of the old order, which they are continually menaced with as being near at hand. . . . [T]hey must be allowed into the new reorganisation, at least unless there are powerful reasons to exclude them. This opinion will not prevent me closing my eyes to any rebukes that must be made.\textsuperscript{36}

The same feelings of insecurity persisted in Piedmont, the region of Italy longest under French rule, and generally considered the most secure. Barrocchio, the \textit{maire} of Alessandria, was jailed as a patriot in 1799.\textsuperscript{37} As late as 1809, he still felt the need to define his loyalty to the regime thus: ‘My political existence depends on the fate of the government, its enemies are mine.’ He feared for himself, should the Austrians win the war then in progress.\textsuperscript{38} Insecurity made for strong ties, rooted in the power and all-pervasive character of the tide of popular revolution that swept the whole of Italy by 1799.

\textbf{The counter-revolution}

\textit{1799: ‘The Black Year’}

For the French, the shock of 1799 might compare to the impact of the Indian Mutiny of 1857 on the British. Both regimes emerged with a deep suspicion of indigenous religion, both imposed more centralised rule on populations they had come to fear. The differences are equally instructive, however, if not more so. The Mutiny had come after half a century of British contact with India, a long period over which much local knowledge had been obtained. Thus, the British decided to set about ruling through traditional local elites, and however mistaken they were in their vision of a ‘pure’ grass-roots Hindu village society, they did not attempt to turn their backs on the culture they had worked with for so long.\textsuperscript{39} The revolts of 1799 were probably more frightening for the French than the Mutiny for the British. They had been hit everywhere, not just in a few places, as in India; 1799 had exposed how weak and thin their base of support actually was; it had shown them how well coordinated and prepared to seek foreign support were even the most isolated peasant communities. Above all, the trauma came at the outset of their rule. They re-entered the peninsula with these fears fresh in their minds, even before they settled to the task of permanent government. The French state was moving towards unflinching centralisation of its own accord under the Second Directory, but it also spurred the French to introduce their own system of government into their reacquired Italian territories, without any debate or recourse to local traditions, even when under patriot direction. What is striking about the post-1799 approach of the French to the annexation of the Italian states is perhaps less their insistence on the centralised uniformity of their own administrative and judicial systems, but
their refusal to countenance any appreciable period of transition between the new order and the old. French norms and institutions were to be established as quickly as possible; any delay was the result of technical problems, not a policy of gradual integration. Much of this haste stemmed directly from the memory of 1799, but just as often from a desire to keep rival factions apart, as in the interests of self-protection.

For all the trauma they left behind, the revolts of 1799 did not come suddenly from the blue, as an immediate lashing-out against the arrival of the French. They were heralded by those of the summer of 1797 in southern Piedmont and Liguria, and by much earlier revolts during the ancien régime, in Tuscany. Indeed, in those areas of Italy longest under French occupation, a more accurate assessment of the prevailing circumstances would be to see 1799 as the culmination of a continuous series of rebellions stretching back at least to 1796, similar to the configuration of prolonged agitation in the Aretino region of south-eastern Tuscany – or further north, around Pistoia – which linked resistance to the Leopoldine reforms with the later anti-French risings. Nevertheless, there are two aspects to the 1799 revolts that mark them out as singular, and so justify the dread with which they were henceforth imbued. They were not confined to regions like southern Piedmont or the valleys of eastern Liguria, or the Aretino, which had long histories as unruly peripheries under the old order; the wholly urban rising of the Neapolitan lazzaroni is almost the leitmotif for the revolts of 1799, as a whole. One of the fiercest centres of resistance to the French was the hitherto peaceful backwater of Tolfa, in the Papal States.40 They also embraced lowland areas, known more for grinding poverty and its attendant apathy, as in the Vercellese lowlands in eastern Piedmont. These areas were agitated, organised and mobilised in ways very different from the traditional centres of resistance on the peripheries of the old states. They all rose, nonetheless; they were universal, unlike anything the French would confront again, but the French did not have such benefit of hindsight.

The all-embracing nature of the revolts notwithstanding, the French discerned, and never forgot, their epicentres. They kept forever in their mind’s eye, a precise geography of Italian discontent: Tolfa in the Papal States, the Aretino in Tuscany; Narzole and Mondovi in Piedmont; the town of Novi and the valley of the Fontanabuona in Liguria. All these places were on the peripheries of the ancien régime states, little governed under the old order, and often with long histories of recalcitrance to what meagre authority the centre ever tried to exert over them. Narzole and Novi were the crucial axes of a network of smuggling and banditry that criss-crossed the Apennine borderlands between Piedmont and Liguria, a fact which made a mockery not only of the Colbertian protectionism of the Savoyard monarchy, but its pretensions to absolutism as well. Mondovi, further west, had a troubled history of relations with the monarchy. A century before, it had been the target of open warfare, waged from Turin, provoked by its blatant salt
smuggling. Savoyard ruthlessness was spectacular, but transient, and the trade persisted, if in a less blatant form, throughout the eighteenth century. The valley of the Fontanabuona, in eastern Liguria, was also a centre of smuggling, and enjoyed important patronage among the Genoese elite as a result; it had a long history of resistance to all authority, unless mediated by its patrons, and was always under the – impotent – eye of the old Republic as an uncontrollable area, and a drain on revenue.\footnote{The behaviour of the communities of southern Piedmont during the crisis of the triennio provides a valuable corrective myth of an all-pervasive Savoyard absolutism in the eighteenth century, while the revolts in the Fontanabuona reveal that the relationship between ancien régime centre and periphery was all the stronger for being informal and elusive, as understood in terms of the modern, bureaucratic state.}

The valleys of the Valdarno and the Valdichiana, in the Tuscan Apennines, had a different, if equally serious, history of defiance before the triennio. Their rebelliousness had much more recent roots, provoked specifically by the Leopoldine reforms of the 1780s, but manifested in mass revolts, a pattern very different from the deep-rooted, but atomised semi-criminality typical of the Piedmontese and Ligurian peripheries. The Aretino had been prominent in the Viva Maria revolts of 1790, which spread from urban centres to the countryside, as reactions to the religious reforms of the Synod of Pistoia; they showed signs of more spontaneous resistance in the unrest of 1795, which was directed against attempts to reliberalise the grain trade.\footnote{These were areas with well-developed traditions of resistance to authority. Indeed, although the southern region of the Aretino has always been depicted as the standard-bearer of counter-revolution in Tuscany, it was not alone. Northern Tuscany saw substantial, widespread peasant militias attack the French around Pisa and Pistoia, areas which were the first to see anti-Leopoldine disturbances in 1790; they rose again in 1808, and remained a thorn in the side of the French thereafter. The valleys around Arezzo were not the first to rise, even in 1799,\footnote{The reactionary senators were first to arrive, and raised the montagnardi and some of the townsmen, who faced the French on 18 October 1800. The French had come with artillery, which they turned on the town. Arezzo surrendered only after a heavy bombardment, but the French were attacked again, the following day. Their response was to sack the town for seven hours, unchecked by their officers. Three hundred prisoners were marched off to Florence, and a ‘punishment tax’ of 50,000 scudi was imposed.\footnote{If Arezzo had, indeed, been the first victim of the counter-revolution, the French did not discern the fact. Henceforth, it became the chief target – and victim – of the new regime. This represents both the culmination of years of revolt and resistance to a purely indigenous} but they were the first to fight again, on the return of the French in 1800. Both the Florentine senators who had headed the purge of the patriots, and the avenging French, headed straight for Arezzo, when the military tide swung back in favour of Napoleon. The reactionary senators were first to arrive, and raised the montagnardi and some of the townsmen, who faced the French on 18 October 1800. The French had come with artillery, which they turned on the town. Arezzo surrendered only after a heavy bombardment, but the French were attacked again, the following day. Their response was to sack the town for seven hours, unchecked by their officers. Three hundred prisoners were marched off to Florence, and a ‘punishment tax’ of 50,000 scudi was imposed.\footnote{If Arezzo had, indeed, been the first victim of the counter-revolution, the French did not discern the fact. Henceforth, it became the chief target – and victim – of the new regime. This represents both the culmination of years of revolt and resistance to a purely indigenous}} of the modern, bureaucratic state.
ancien régime, on the one hand, and the confirmation that Arezzo and its new French rulers would never come to terms.

Tolfa is a different case. This remote, mountainous area had been an administrative backwater even by the lax standards of the Papal regime, a community where taxation was negligible and the presence of the state, ephemeral. The financial demands placed on the patriot Roman Republic brought French troops into the area, bent on requisitions; they met unprecedented, collective resistance. Tolfa was transformed into a battlefield, where French regulars were repeatedly defeated by local peasant militias, organised, led and motivated in complete isolation from other centres of revolt. All these risings were terrifying for the French and the patriots, but at least those in Piedmont, Liguria and the Aretino were predictable. Tolfa set a new, deeply troubling precedent: revolt could erupt anywhere, but more worrying still was the potential, evident in the example of Tolfa, for successful resistance in the communities of the periphery. It did not require long traditions of recalcitrance to engender serious, collective resistance; such potential existed wherever geography and certain social structures coexisted. In the cases of the Ligurian valleys, the Aretino and southern Piedmont, particularly, economic pressures on the upland peasantry have been proved to be major causes of unrest long before the upheavals of the triennio, making the 1799 revolts something much more complex than contemporary French and patriot assertions that they were the work of the clergy, nobility and Allied agents.

In all these cases, however, a crucial factor in the power and coherence of the revolts was not just the economic pressures on the system of peasant smallholding, mezzadria, but its survival into the revolutionary period as in Piedmont. In the course of the eighteenth century, the emergence of consolidated landholdings, devoted to the commercial production of rice and maize, destroyed mezzadria in the valley of the Po, in eastern Piedmont, and with it the cohesive local communities capable of offering organised resistance to authority. The lowlands of the Po valley, dominated by day labourers and lacking social cohesion or local leadership, had to await external support from the Allied armies and direction from professional agitators, like Branda di Luciano, to effect anti-French risings. Branda’s commanders were always Capuchine friars or Austrian officers. In stark contrast, the upland centres all generated local leadership, from the parish clergy, small landowners and peasants who had seen military service. In Narzole and the Fontanabuona, smuggling families were also directly involved. Economic pressures made these areas volatile, but the structure of their communities and their relatively isolated positions on the periphery were what made them formidable, and able to rise again when the French returned for good. The periphery lacked ‘the natural leadership of the local community by its nobles in the interests of staving off civil disorder, not promoting it’. There was no one with the financial resources or inherent authority throughout the northern
and central Apennines to provide leadership for such ends, for even the links of *clientelismo* between the Ligurian valleys and the Genoese *Magnifici* did not amount to real authority.\(^5^2\)

Here, feudalism served a very different function from many parts of the Mezzogiorno, contributing to an atomised political structure, rather than imposing authority on it. Southern Piedmont and the Ligurian valleys were studded with imperial fiefs, as was the Piacentino, theatre of the 1806 rising; much of the Aretino had been lands of the Order of St Stephen. The Order had been a reasonably popular landlord, at least when contrasted to many of the allodial *signori* in Tuscany in the wake of the Leopoldine reforms.\(^5^3\) In fiefs such as Narzole, or the countryside around Novi and in the Fontanabuona, the importance of the fief was not the presence of seigneurial authority, but the absence of any direct judicial controls. In smuggling communities, this freedom was a small price to pay for the mediocre revenues such upland areas could yield. In a report of 1805, Isengard, the patriot *provveditore* of Novi, said of the three imperial fiefs there, that ‘a certain attachment still reigns to their old ways in these places, and to their old masters, whom they would probably wish back’. The local merchants, all involved in smuggling, felt exactly the same, he added.\(^5^4\) During the *triennio* in Liguria, the pressure to abolish these enclaves did not come from local *jacqueries* on the model of 1789, but from the bourgeoisie of the provincial towns and the central authorities.\(^5^5\) In Piedmont, the hostility of the Savoyard monarchy to such places stretched back to the late seventeenth century, and the series of enquiries into seigneurial titles, the *Perequazione* – begun by Victor Amadeus II.\(^5^6\) Seigneurialism meant freedom in this context, if not *liberté*, as recently defined in France.

The trauma of the *triennio* and the collapse of what indirect external authority existed, left the atomised political world of the periphery to its own devices. The limits of the *ancien régime* state – self-imposed and otherwise – ensured that these devices were far from moribund. However, lack of imposing leadership did not mean there were no sources of leadership. In southern Piedmont and in the Aretino, the villages of the valleys descended on their regional centres, such as Cherasco and Arezzo, and consolidated their grips on their regions; indeed, the Aretino rising is a misnomer, for its real centre, both in 1799 and earlier, in a revolt over grain prices and free trade in cereals, was the uplands around the town of Cortona, on the border with Umbria. Arezzo was less the source of the revolt than its first victim,\(^5^7\) although the alliance was soon sealed between the urban artisans and the peasants, particularly in forcing a reluctant municipal government to provision the town.\(^5^8\) A similar pattern emerged in Mondovì, where the artisans of the town made common cause with the peasant rebels, and the civil guard opened the gates to the rural militias.\(^5^9\) In Liguria, in 1796 and again, with less success in 1799, the rebels of the Fontanabuona followed a traditional path, marching on Genoa as they had during the Austrian invasion of 1746.\(^6^0\) The Aretino
rebels provided the most innovative and, for the French, frightening example of revolt. Whereas the Ligurian rebels had been checked in 1799, and those in southern Piedmont and Tolfa had shown no inclination to carry the struggle beyond their own areas, the Aretini marched on and took Florence without the help of Austrian troops or formal leadership from the official bureaucracy; indeed, such hesitancy as they displayed came because Ferdinand III, now in Vienna, would give them no indication of his wishes.61 At the French return in 1800, the most prominent reactionaries among the Florentine senators fled to Arezzo, thus emphatically reversing the roles of centre and periphery.62 In all these cases, local leadership was crucial and, significantly, the French usually found it impossible to root it out.

‘The long, little wars’: resistance and disorder after annexation

The rebel leaders were still prominent in their communities, and always remained a source of concern to the French. The authorities, themselves, provide the most conclusive evidence for the tenacity and longevity of counter-revolution, the length and breadth of the départements réunis. The ‘architect’ of the Narzole rising that led to the fall of the strategically important neighbouring town of Cherasco, in 1799, was Giovanni Batista Ciravenga, an ex-Grenadier officer from Narzole’s most prominent family. He worked closely with the Trona brothers, one of whom was the parish priest, and the other an ex-cavalry officer.63 This represents more than the usual pattern of collective, local resistance led by the village notabili, however. Ciravenga’s brother was bailiff of both the royal domain lands in the commune, and the imperial fief of the Marchese di Barolo. He transferred from these duties to that of mayor for most of the French period, a post from which constant police checks could not dislodge him.64 The Ciravenga family was loathed by the French authorities and the patriots, but they survived even the fall, in 1807, of Narzole’s other leading family, the bandit clan headed by the Scarzello brothers. Resistance in Narzole did not abate after 1800, but it altered its outward shape; in 1800, Alba was besieged by peasant bands, by 1801 – and well into 1803 – the patriots faced selective murder, rather than open revolt.65

Once French policing asserted itself, banditry, centred on profitable smuggling, became an important focus for collective loyalties. By 1807, the Narzole band was finally defeated; that centred on the Spinetta, further east near Alessandria and led by Giuseppe Mayno, was broken in 1805, and with them, a powerful tradition of disorder ended in this part of Italy. Mayno, certainly, displayed counter-revolutionary loyalties; Scarzello and his men had fought in 1799, and had close links to the feudal baron of Narzole, Faletti di Barolo. Their main activities were criminal rather than political, strictly speaking, but it can safely be said that they drew on counter-revolutionary traditions, and in 1799, had displayed anti-French sentiments. If they – and
the communities behind them – were politicised, it was in the cause of the old order. Nevertheless, the Piedmontese bandits represent a clear case of degeneration, from collective insurgency in 1799, to organised social banditry with a political background between 1802 and about 1805, ending in vicious criminality. In the two years before the definitive destruction of his band, Scarzello turned to kidnapping wealthy local notables, and was eventually cornered and taken by local national guards. His career later demonstrates – through a negative example – the truth of Hobsbawm’s concept of the social bandit, the primitive rebel. By depriving Scarzello of his role as a primitive rebel, the French won a definitive victory they could not reproduce elsewhere. The extirpation of organised banditry in southern Piedmont was, arguably, their greatest achievement in taming the Italian periphery, for it never arose again. It is also a striking replication of the process of the degeneration of counter-revolution in the French Midi, under the Directory. These regions had seen the beginnings of a process of pacification in which the Piedmontese departments, under effective French control from 1800, would share.

Things were never this assured across the mountains, in eastern Liguria. Siste Quaglia, a notary of Arquata, a former imperial fief near Novi, is a striking example of a man who reinvented not himself, but his methods of resistance to the new regime over more than 15 years, if the French police are to be even half-believed. In 1795, having married the daughter of an Austrian officer, he recruited troops for Austrian service; he was among the leaders of the 1796 revolt of the imperial fiefs against the French, which was quelled only when Lannes burned down Arquata. Quaglia fled to Austria, returning home only in 1801. After annexation to France, Quaglia used his skills as a notary to help men avoid conscription, building a fortune for himself and a strong local following, before he was stripped of his notarial status and sentenced to a year in prison for ‘conscription frauds’. In 1813, the Director-General of Police in Turin, not a man to panic in the face of local denunciations, still felt there were grounds to fear that, ‘pushed to desperation and by his hatred for the French, he will try to raise the imperial fiefs again…’. He can count on the refractory conscripts and the deserters, and start his lying, again.

The commandant of the French Gendarmerie in Genoa had no doubts about the collective base disorder could build upon in the Fontanabuona. In 1806, he demanded – unsuccessfully – the application of the dreaded Law of Vendémiaire, year IV – which provided for the military occupation of an entire village, at local expense – against Trebogna, a commune in the valley, following several acts of banditry, because ‘most of these people have been found guilty by the courts at some time or other’. During the Wagram campaign of 1809, the maire of San Cypriano, in the valley of the Polcevera, denounced not only a group of men who had been leaders of the 1796 and 1799 revolts, but indicated they were forming a new generation, as they
tried to foment trouble during the war period. The ‘old guard’ comprised men like Antonio Dellepiani, *sindaco* (mayor) of the commune during the *triennio* – who was a leader of the rebels and who ‘still holds a dread influence over the Polcevera’ – and Gaetano Zino, ‘covered in human blood’, and loyal to the Austrians during the siege of Genoa. Beside them were new leaders, like Stefano Grondana, an influential notary with a record of conscription frauds, who used his position to undermine recruitment, and kept an anti-French cleric as tutor to his children, and – at the other end of the social spectrum – Giuseppe Lombardo, ‘a miserable butcher’s boy, who has done well from banditry’.74

The shadow of counter-revolution during the *triennio* hung over future crimes in this valley, too. When one of the rebel leaders of 1796, Bruno Levrero, was sentenced to death for killing a tax collector in 1810, he not only declared the police had blamed him because of his past, but displayed the fighting spirit of his valley in full court. When his sentence was read out, he broke loose from his guards, fought his way out of court with the help of his supporters, and was only captured later when cornered. It was the collective support for Levrero that most worried the French, however, not his unbroken defiance. The prefect of Genoa demanded of Paris that the whole area be held responsible for the murder. D’Auzers was concerned by the support he got from his lawyers, who ‘made exceptional efforts for him’.75 The police *commissaire* of Genoa felt the sentence would make a considerable impact on the Polcevera, ‘where a section of the local population is still turbulent, indisciplined and inclined to seek vengeance’.76 If this was the case, it did not have the lasting impact the French sought. In January 1814, during the death throes of the empire in Italy, reports streamed in of attacks on tax collectors and risings against conscription.77 The clergy were no more tamed than their flocks. Gerolamo Ferretto, the parish priest of Cicagna, the main commune of the Fontanabuona, had come to the area from the coastal port of Rapallo in 1787, and earned a reputation as a peacemaker among feuding families. However, he proved an enemy of the new Republic, and his church was sacked by the French in 1799; in 1810, he was arrested and gaolred for two years.78 Others took his place, at least in the eyes of the authorities. In 1813, two priests from the valley, Cuneo and Biggio, were arrested for sedition, something D’Auzers regarded as ‘useful, because I know the people of the Fontanabuona, always and at all times, to be of unruly character, and their priests to be ignorant, and several of them to be fanatics’.79 Cuneo was obviously among the latter, having ‘in the time of the anarchy, marched at the head of the rebels’ and would be capable of using his influence in such ways again, should the opportunity arise.80

Annexation galvanised the traditional centres of Tuscan resistance into new life. There were attempts at rebellion in both the Aretino and in the mountains around Pisa and Pistoia in the autumn of 1808; the former shook the French more, perhaps, than its scale merited, such was the shadow of
1799. Their fears were justified less by the threat posed to them in 1808 than the persistence of counter-revolution these risings exposed. Indeed, their aftermath unleashed unrest that continued until 1814. As in Piedmont and Liguria, the definitive arrival of the French spelt the end of overt, collective insurgency around Arezzo and Pistoia, but – again as in Piedmont and Liguria – the installation of a more powerful regime also led to that tradition of resistance altering its forms, rather than abating. The return of the French reignited old fires that were never again extinguished; with them came the threats of conscription, the Concordat and the return to influence and local power of the patriots, the former Leopoldine reformers. Tassoni was quick to tell Milan of the sense of dread hanging over all Tuscans at the prospect of military service, ‘... and I think that getting them used to it will cause no little difficulty’. These dread spectres helped to provoke the risings, but equally important is the very fact they occurred where they did. In late January 1808, the President of the Buon Governo, Piamonti – who would serve the French well – saw the signs, and sent secret scouts into Siena and Arezzo.

The French could not accuse either the Tuscan authorities, or the rebels themselves, of leaving them unforewarned. Indeed, a week earlier, two incidents triggered serious disorder in the Aretino. The Order of San Stefano, a powerful and wealthy lay order that had long been a target of the Leopoldine reformers, had owned 4,200 of the 8,000 hectares in the Valdichiana, before many of these properties were seized and confiscated by Peter-Leopold. Legislation in 1784 allowed these private holdings to expand still further, and with privatisation came the end of important local privileges for the peasantry, particularly over hunting and fishing in the marshlands, and gleaning, ‘...inherent civic usages...which disappeared when drainage and cultivation were introduced, and which provoked local protests, supported by the clergy’. One of the first acts of the French administrators – prior to actual annexation – was to investigate the Order. In the light of this, a major charitable project of public works that it sponsored in the Valdichiana was suspended, and its remaining properties put under the provisional administration of a known patriot, Gamorini. The Aretini knew the French were to blame, and when troops were sent into the valley to restore order, they were met by fierce resistance, led by the sbirri, a rare example of solidarity between local people and this generally hated police force. The French were beaten back. Shortly afterwards, the Tuscan vicar of Borgo San Sepolero, another stronghold of the 1799 revolt, allowed missionary friars from the Papal States to hold a series of missions, the result of which was ‘to re-fanaticise these people, and to hear resounding around the countryside again, the words “Viva Maria – reunite”, words through which the Aretino revolt had once before been incited and organised’. The proximity of the Aretino to Papal territory has generally been regarded as a crucial factor in all the revolts from 1790 onwards. The clergy
of southern Tuscany had close, frequent contact with the Papal States, and were notoriously loyal to Rome. In April, Tassoni, the representative of the Kingdom of Italy, spoke of ‘the open and brazen Ultramontane talk that is circulating around Arezzo, and the frightening attitudes of those who have always been violent’. A month earlier, in March, several weeks before the first risings, it was reported that an Augustinian friar, Giuseppe Colognori, had been given access to pulpits in the area by local clergy, to put ‘the fear of God’ into their flocks. He declared that self-flagellation was in order, as a response to annexation, citing recent earthquakes as evidence of divine wrath. By August, there were many in the region who preferred to flagellate their old enemies instead.

The first of a series of explosions in the Aretino came in August 1808. Tassoni, who seems to have given the fullest account, blamed the introduction of conscription, adding that they had been put down quickly, by 300 French troops. It was only a foretaste of what would come. Then, on 22 October, a force of rebels attacked the tax collectors’ houses in Poppi, and Monte Varchi, near Arrezzo. Although they were beaten back by the newly installed Gendarmerie brigades, and failed to inspire a parallel rising within Arezzo itself, the disorder was far from over. The rebels first melted away into their own highland communes, then regrouped into a larger force, and moved towards Siena. When the French reinforced Siena’s defences, the rebels turned to the wild territory of the Maremma, where they found support, and the local authorities took flight. In the first days of November, by which time Tassoni felt much less assured, large bands of insurgents re-emerged in the Casentino and the Valdarno, well armed, and led by veterans of 1799; many were deserters from the first conscription levy. In the neighbouring Valdichiana, their ranks were also swelled by many artisans from the smaller communes, angered by the introduction of the French droits réunis.

However, it was not the Aretino that gave either Tassoni or Menou the most concern. The countryside around Pisa and Pistoia also rose in November, in considerable force. It began in Pontadera, a hub of the 1799 revolt. By the end of the month, a considerable influx of French troops had contained both revolts, but there were two worrying signs, at least in the Aretino. The bulk of the rebel force had not actually been brought to action and defeated; it had again melted into the Maremma and avoided capture, although the area was calm. Perhaps more worrying for the future of French rule, however, had been the support and leadership given the rebels by the notables of the Casentino. Its local elite did not lead the fighting, but many former ducal office holders had organised arms and other support. A collective tax was imposed on all the property owners of the commune by Menou, in a relatively rare French attack on a local elite. This left them embittered, and Tassoni saw that hauling many of the relatives of the rebels before the newly created Special Military Commission in Florence, was not the real solution to the problem.
The course of French rule on the Tuscan periphery, between 1808 and 1814, perhaps proved him right. As in Piedmont and Liguria, mass revolt would not rear its head again, yet neither could French nor patriot heads ever rest easy in these areas. In 1809, the prefect of the Arno reported that the ‘authors of the greatest disorders of 1799–1800’ in Pistoia had regrouped, and allied themselves to brigands in the surrounding area known as ‘the infernal legion’. In January 1810, in the Valdarno, it emerged that one Del Bene, a capo in 1808, had managed to keep a small band around him. In 1811, the leaders of a series of attacks on tax collectors in the Casentino, and in Anglieri and San Sepulero were found to be capi of the 1799 revolt. The extent of the French failure to subdue the Aretino emerged in 1813, when the authorities took an unprecedented step in the history of the départements réunis, by granting an amnesty to Bonaccia and his 21 men, the major brigand band in the Aretino, on condition they joined the army as a unit. The comments of the Director-General of Police in Florence are an open admission of defeat, and the longevity of collective resistance in the area: ‘It is probably shameful of us to have entered into these kind of negotiations with a bandit chief, but the area is such that there was, perhaps, no other way to stop what began long ago as Chouannerie.’ His choice of words is very revealing of how, after five years of direct rule, the French had come to see the Aretino as a bulwark of politicised brigandage. Bonaccia and his men rode into Arezzo freely, where the notables of the town lodged them, and were made responsible for their good conduct, until they could be enrolled in the First Foreign Regiment, and sent to Spain via Corsica. It changed nothing, however. By November, tax collectors were being attacked throughout the Casentino.

By the time they annexed the rump of the Papal States, in 1809, the French were ready for trouble, and their initial attitude to their new Roman administrés was markedly different from the trust they had placed only the year before in the traditional stereotype of the tranquil Tuscans. As in all the regions they annexed, the French found their old foes waiting, in the same places. However, after annexation, Tolfa’s remoteness, a particular strength as a centre of resistance in 1799, proved a limitation, illustrating something common to the other bastions of revolt, with Tolfa as the exception that proves the rule. Whereas southern Piedmont, the Ligurian valleys, the mountains around Pistoia and, to a lesser degree, the Aretino, were all route centres – what Giovanni Tocci has termed ‘the criss-crossed country’ referring to Liguria and the Piacentino – Tolfa was an isolated mountain range behind the port of Civitavecchia. It led to nowhere, and its resistance in 1809 set no real example. The real hub of disorder in the two new ‘Roman departments’ shifted to the border with the Kingdom of Naples, where new patterns of disorder, usually stemming from resistance to conscription, and deeply ingrained traditions of banditry, merged into an uncontrollable quagmire. Typical of the latter was the town of Supino, perched on the
mountains separating the Pontine marshes from the valley of the Sacco, ‘which has been the usual repair of brigands and thieves who have infested this area for centuries’, according to Tournon.\footnote{98} Banditry along the border, like that further north, centred on fiefs and demanded a high degree of communal solidarity, but its rationale was not based on smuggling. Rather, the bands of this area were, essentially, retained by feudal barons as quasi-private armies, and their activities lurched from acting as ‘strong-arm’ troops in local disputes to highway robbery.

There were certainly counter-revolutionary currents at work, often ignited by French policy, but if the intention was to move from words to deeds. One such was a rare example of clerical ‘militancy’ for the Papal States. In September, 1811, gendarmes were sent to close a Trappist house near Frossinone, a district notorious for banditry under the Papacy. The monks and their abbot, Perelli, escaped, and were later captured while fighting with brigands operating from across the Neapolitan border.\footnote{99} A year later, politicised banditry was taking shape along the border in Rieti, under the command of a new generation of conscious counter-revolutionaries. A plot to unite several bands was thought to have been hatched by two students at the seminary: de Sanctis, the son of a cattle merchant from over the border, who had been prominent in 1799, and Bernardini, the secretary to the Bishop of Rieti; they hoped to start the revolt in September, to take advantage of the unrest always present during the conscription levy. De Sanctis was tonsured, and went about in his habit, when recruiting.\footnote{100} In both these cases, the clergy were sucked into traditional sources of rebellion, rather than fomenting revolts under their own leadership. However, the rugged border with Naples was a unique resource for armed resistance in the Roman departments.

Set in this context, the continued resistance of Tolfa after annexation, and the fear it could still arouse, is all the more striking. Tolfa transformed itself from a centre of mass insurgency into a notable example of collective, unswerving passive resistance. There were no bandits there to effect a blend of established criminality and new expressions of anti-revolution. Instead, the lead came from the local clergy, most of whom were eventually arrested and deported to Corsica,\footnote{101} and the notables of the town. The French always had great difficulty recruiting local officials in Tolfa: in 1809, they had to appoint an Administrative Commissioner from their own ranks, and send him out from Rome to run the commune until, at last, the leading clergy virtually put in their own man, Costanzi, as maire.\footnote{102} When Costanzi died in 1811, he denounced the regime on his deathbed; as a result, the three clerics considered responsible were deported, causing one police official to remind his superiors that ‘…it would be easy enough to find other equally powerful people here among the inhabitants of Tolfa, who are in the main fanatical people, wholly devoted to the Pope’.\footnote{103} When Costanzi was finally replaced by Bonizi, the brother of the vicar-general of the diocese, he promptly fled
the area. Norvins concluded that even wealthy landowners – of whom Bonizi was one – could not be trusted, so dominant were the clergy. His insistence on ‘effective measures of repression’\textsuperscript{104} did not go unheeded in Paris, where Bonizi’s refusal of office was regarded as reprehensible, revealing him as an enemy of the regime.\textsuperscript{105} Three more priests, including the Vicar-General, were arrested and ordered to Corsica, but they evaded capture.\textsuperscript{106} Spectacular acts of violent revolt shifted away from Tolfa, to their traditional home on the Neapolitan frontier after annexation, but events there offer an example of persistent, durable collective defiance, able to survive and adapt with concerted local leadership.

The most singular manifestation of counter-revolution in Napoleonic Italy was, arguably, the passive resistance organised on a mass scale in the Papal States, following the French occupation of 1808. The term is not one imported by later historians. Miollis used it when he had to defend himself to his superiors: ‘Set down amidst opposition of almost every imaginable kind, having found all power and authority in the hands of priests, paralysed in all our work by a passive resistance we found difficult to defeat…’\textsuperscript{107} The passive resistance he railed at amounted to nothing less than a national campaign, spanning the urban centres and highland peripheries. Resistance turned on the clergy, and their refusal to take the oath of allegiance to the new regime.\textsuperscript{108} Non-violent refusal to serve the French quickly spread well beyond their ranks. In the first days of the occupation, Miollis reported priests ‘circulating in private houses, recommending that specific prayers be said for the Holy Father’.\textsuperscript{109}

His first months in Rome revealed to Miollis both the ability of the Papacy to organise acts of passive resistance with its leadership under house arrest and, even more striking, the degree to which the Pope’s orders were obeyed by the laity, and the length of his reach. In contrast to the ease with which Reille incorporated the Tuscan troops into the French forces, Miollis found the papal regulars very loyal to Pius. When several Roman officers tried to resign on grounds of health, Miollis had one of them, Gabrieli, arrested and sent to Mantua. Pius did not leave such loyalty unsupported. He managed to get a letter to Gabrieli’s father, ‘a letter of felicitation for his son’s resignation’ which led to 20 more resignations. ‘And they have all been worked on’, seethed Miollis. It did not stop there. Somehow, Pius had thousands of cockades made in the papal colours, and distributed to his guards and household by his major-domo. Then when ‘the most fashionable people in Rome’ took to wearing them, Miollis was forced to allow the papal troops to do so, too, ‘in order to neutralise the problem and avoid violence, which is just what His Holiness is trying to provoke’. Miollis was certain that the cockade was designed to set the new, pro-French civic guard – a numerically weak force – against the papal regulars.\textsuperscript{110}

Incitement to violence was a rare accusation against Pius, but the other tactics it set in motion were firmly in keeping with the long, peaceful – and
The Napoleonic Empire in Italy, 1796–1814

very clever – campaign ahead. On 7 February 1808, Miollis was shocked to learn that copies of the Pope’s condemnation of the invasion, and his call for civil disobedience, were still circulating. He warned the governor of Rome that, if he found as many as ten copies in the city, after two days, he would haul him away to prison in France; on 20 March, he arrested the governor of the province of Todi, who had somehow reprinted it, and distributed it across the Papal States. It was in their irony that the prelates excelled, however. As what amounted to an official act of mourning for the invasion, the Vatican banned the normal celebrations of the Carnevale. Canoni, the papal secretary of state, told Miollis – in seemingly snide terms – that it was done to keep order in the tense circumstances caused by the French presence. Seeing all this for what it was, Miollis urged Pius to change his stance, although the French loathed Carnevale as a mixture of popular disorder, Baroque vulgarity and an abuse of religious sentiment. Indeed, they would soon ban it themselves, but in 1808, Miollis was forced to beg for its retention, to preserve order, but even more, to preserve some face for the French. He failed, and was duly hoisted by his own petard. Even this was as nothing when set beside the readiness of the governor of Rome, the Piedmontese, Caralchini, to follow Pius’ instructions to the letter, even to the point of allowing public order almost to collapse. Miollis had no choice but to send him to Fenestrelles. No one came forward to replace him, forcing Pius into one of his rare acts of collaboration, and he appointed a pro-governor to spare the Romans – briefly – the full force of a wholly military occupation.

Miollis never denied how powerful the long, hidden hand of the Pope could be, and clamoured for his exile. When asked by Eugène what he made of the esprit public of Rome, he said frankly, ‘it is swallowed by uncertainty’. This was probably optimistic. He got closer to the shape of things to come when he asked for ‘some real experts’ to help the police combat the papal campaign. ‘I can only employ those with some real ability, here, or at least people unafraid to compromise themselves as long as circumstances remain as they are.’ Surely this ranks as an early tribute to the effectiveness of the passive resistance being orchestrated from the Vatican, as well as a frank confession of Miollis’ failure to crush it. Things did not really improve in the years ahead.

The campaign of passive resistance was remarkable in the unanimity and solidarity displayed by the laity not just after the rude shock of the French invasion, but in the years that followed. They continued to adhere to the Pope’s call to boycott the new French civil service. The most spectacular such movement was in the three Umbrian dioceses of Assisi, Foligno and Norce. In 1810, when their bishops refused the oath and were arrested, they called upon all lay civil servants to resign at Easter, which coincided with the conscription levy. A year later, the French prefect admitted that the result had been chaos. Only one out of 390 civil servants in these dioceses
initially took the civil servants’ oath. It took over a year to rebuild the basic civil administration of these cantons. However, as the Easter of 1811 approached, and the influence of the clergy reached its annual peak, the resignations flooded in yet again. Roederer had no doubt that any papal appeal to turn their backs on public service would be obeyed by ‘...those who fulfil civic functions in the Roman states, who [the Pope] can summon as if called to prayer by the Koran or to the Synagogue’, not least because such orders were backed by the threat of excommunication.

The events in these Umbrian dioceses constitute a well-defined, regional act of defiance, but it was not at all an isolated phenomenon. There was a mass refusal to comply with the requirements of the French État Civil in the major coastal city of Civitavecchia in 1810, where clerical orders to do so were followed in organised fashion by civil servants and the population alike. In November 1810, the customs officials of the city of Rome refused to take the oath, to a man. This dumbfounded Norvins, because the customs men were drawn from the poorest ranks of the population; their posts were almost charitable bequests of the papal government, which the French had honoured from a sense of obligation. He confessed their example was followed by others. It continued to be, thereafter. In October 1811, 23 of the 54 employees of Rome’s Monte di Pietà, the main financial prop of charity in the city, resigned en masse, rather than take the oath, and lost their jobs because, they said, ‘their consciences demanded it’. The French prefect was astounded, as well as fearful of a breakdown of public relief. They were all arrested and deported to Corsica within days.

The prefect admitted these lowly men had set a powerful example, at the very moment their ‘betters’ – les plus imposés of Rome – were being called upon to take the oath for the meeting of the first cantonal assemblies; only 100 out of 300 electors participated in the departmental assembly. Nor did this abate, and in 1812, Tournon said openly that the delegates of the electoral college of the ‘second city of the empire’ was composed ‘of people of very little consequence by name, and wholly devoid of any real influence; the great houses persist in their refusal [to participate], it will probably be necessary to take steps against them’. By 1812, Tournon requested permission to choose the assemblies himself. Only 127 out of 200 electors presented themselves in Rome, and there were even lower turnouts in the other arrondissements of the department. The names of the great families may have been duly inscribed on the lists by the French, but many did not participate in their assigned duties. This is a remarkable example of an elite being incited, initially, by elements of the popular classes, in a path laid down by a very unconventional ruling class. Pius VII and the exiled prelates continued to give clear orders to the laity, and those orders were obeyed to an astounding degree, when it is remembered that they were in prison, far removed from their territories, and possessed of no coercive force. This obedience was enforced through the confessional and
an underground postal service; its only real sanction was excommunication, but it worked.

These circumstances greatly limited the choices open to the French in staffing the new tribunals, and the only trained jurists available to them were lawyers, drawn from the Roman bar, not experienced judges, who had been prelates. The handful of senior lay magistrates in the papal system, the curiali, by and large refused to take the oath and bore severe consequences for it. This was collective resistance at the apex of the elite itself, and a reminder to the French that true counter-revolution existed at the centre, as well as on traditionally recalcitrant peripheries. The lack of adequate replacements for the clergy made the impact of such passive resistance more powerful than it might have been in other Italian states, and the French never really felt the Roman tribunals were properly staffed. However, even more remarkable, is how sustained and widespread refusal to serve the new regime remained, between 1810 and 1814, and how much support the Roman legal classes received in their stance from the propertied classes of the metropolis. The French in Rome told Paris bluntly, that any who accepted judicial appointments were bound to lose their private clients as a direct result. Depretis, a candidate for a place as president on the Cour Impériale in 1811, was very frank that, if he took public office, when he eventually retired, he would lose the five leading Roman families as his clients. He spoke in the context of the times. One of the few active patrician collaborators in Rome, the Prince Corsini, actually worked with the minister of justice in 1811, to retain as many ‘early supporters’ as possible in the coming reorganisation, regardless of their merits, ‘[T]hey were the first to offend public opinion when it had a certain coherence. I will observe, yet again, that these judges have lost their clients and their friends and, through these losses, their livelihoods, as well.’ Cavalli, the Piedmontese first president of the Cour Impériale, agreed completely, asserting that the government had an obligation to them; they could not be cast back into private practice.

This offers one of the clearest, and ultimately, the most effective instances of traditional patron–client networks being transformed into a source of resistance to the new order in imperial Italy. The conventional view of the Roman bourgeoisie under French rule is that of a class coming into its own, yet this continuing adherence to the line of passive resistance set out by the upper clergy, and supported by their noble clientele, suggests a pattern of behaviour based on relationships to the clergy and nobility that were almost akin to domestic service. In the changed circumstances of imperial rule, when forced to choose between old masters and new, a significant – and for the French, a crucial – element of the Roman professional classes defied the new order. Initially, it descended into farce, as when a respected curiale, Vaselli, was actually appointed to a presidency on the Cour Impériale, while still imprisoned in Castello Sant’Angelo, for his refusal to take the oath, in the hopes a prestigious appointment would tempt him to give in, which it
did not.\textsuperscript{130} Just as the French might lament, ‘having had to leave out people far more capable than many of those who have been appointed’ to the new courts in 1810,\textsuperscript{131} so in 1811, the procurator told Paris that, ‘Outside the Cour, among the refractory lawyers are many talented men, who regrettably are not serving as presidents on the Cour.’\textsuperscript{132} At the lower levels, there was trouble recruiting enough \textit{juges suppléants}, because of their ‘loathing of the oath’, thus creating a shortage of capable replacements for serving judges.\textsuperscript{133} As late as 1812, there was a serious problem in finding enough translators willing to take the oath, without whom the courts could not function.\textsuperscript{134}

Quiet, but public and emphatic withdrawal of support for the new regime extended to upper-class women, and the informal institutions of the state, when the French attempted to introduce them. In 1810, Tournon admitted to Paris his utter failure in launching a Société Maternelle in Rome. He felt he had persuaded the leading society women of its practical advantages, and urged them to set an example to other women. When it came to adhering to it, however:

\begin{quotation}

\ldots most of them, and unfortunately all those belonging to the greatest families, have been silenced by feelings of another sort. They have listened to the voices of older prejudices, as opposed to those of utility and good-works. This repugnance estranges the leading people of the country (from us) \ldots Your Excellency can be assured that, although I have always minded my manners, I have not neglected to point out to them that their noted regrets can only be attributed to support for principles directly opposed to those of any good subject of His Majesty \ldots I hope Your Excellency will take good note of the particular circumstances of this city.\textsuperscript{135}
\end{quotation}

An aristocrat himself, Tournon was not fooled by Roman female \textit{politesse}, and readily acknowledged the reality of their actions for the passive resistance it was. They had to wait their chance to show their will to resist, but when Tournon presented it to them, the noblewomen of Rome seized it, as one.

The campaign of passive resistance initiated by Pius VII was probably the only way to unite and coordinate centre and periphery, across class lines in a sustainable form of opposition to French rule, particularly in its initial stages, 1809–11, when the international climate offered little real threat to Napoleonic hegemony. Banditry was a risky form of resistance for even an exiled, imprisoned government to encourage and, in any case, although durable, it was too localised to provide a basis for national resistance. The example of Tolfa showed that open, collective revolt could be crushed by the forces of the new order. However, the resentment it betokened was transferred to passive resistance. As Nehru commented on Gandhi’s campaign of non-violent civil disobedience, a degeneration of the movement into violence would have led to bloody repression ‘which would have thoroughly
demoralised the people’. Pius saw that Rome was heavily occupied by French troops, and made a specific appeal for non-violence in his ‘Farewell to His People’. Nevertheless, it would have been an empty gesture had Pius not been heeded, as he was, not only at the moment of his arrest, but in the years that followed. Nehru observed, noting the success of the campaign of civil disobedience in 1932, in contrast to its collapse ten years earlier, that: ‘The leaders must take the lead in going to prison, and trust to others to carry on. All that can be done is to train the masses in some simple kinds of activity and, even more so, to abstain from certain other kinds of activity.’

Pius and his cardinals took a subtler, if comparable approach to confrontation with imperial power. Mass civil disobedience was confined to religious activities, but refusal to serve the new regime in an active capacity proved a durable tactic of resistance. Romans were enjoined to concentrate on abstaining: Pius told them not to rebel, and they did not; later, he told them not to serve the new regime, and crucial segments of the elite did not. The comparison with British India cannot imply any tangible link with events in the Papal States. Rather, what makes such a reference significant, is the similarity of political and, indeed, diplomatic circumstances in which Indian nationalists and the deposed papal regime were constrained to work. Both were essentially powerless in the face of the occupiers, and adjusted their reactions accordingly, and both had long cultural and intellectual traditions of martyrdom and non-violent resistance to draw upon. To take the comparison further, Judith Brown has said that Gandhi’s arrest in April 1931 was not a true reflection of his leadership strength. ‘Willingness to follow his plans was more significant.’ The same was true of Pius VII. In 1809, in the weeks leading up to his arrest, Radet exploded that Pius ‘governs more powerfully with his little finger than we do with our bayonets’. Passive resistance was, of itself, a strategy, but only a shared ideology could have sustained it, in the difficult circumstances following the arrest and exile of Pius VII.

The ideology of resistance: counter- and anti-revolution

The legacy of 1799, particularly in its peripheral strongholds where the revolts were genuinely local in origin, makes it difficult to draw a clear line between truly politicised counter-revolution, and those more spontaneous forms of resistance, designated as ‘anti-revolution’. More appropriate might be an extension of the term ‘counter-revolution’. In the départements réunis, counter-revolution ought not to be identified by too rigid a definition of politicisation, but by a conscious defence of the political status quo, and a simultaneous rejection of the new political order imported by the French. Counter-revolution is not defined by the wearing of black and gold Habsburg cockades, links with English agents, or even religious symbolism, although all these things were present, and the last, especially, of great significance. Rather, to defend
localism against the new, centralised state, to uphold the values of the political culture of ‘government at one remove’, is to veer more towards the pole of counter-revolution, than the narrower, more personal, yet equally more diffuse protest represented by the concept of anti-revolution. It cannot be argued, in the context of the centres of revolt on the Italian peripheries, that insurgency was divorced from politicised counter-revolution.

If the defence of the old order is interpreted as a defence of localism, and broadened from the defence of elite privilege – if the meaning of ‘politics’ is recast to embrace this – then the range of anti-revolution contracts, accordingly. The judgement of Donald Sutherland that Chouannerie was an ideological protest ‘against the destruction of the moral unity of the peasant community’,\textsuperscript{141} has great relevance in the Italian départements réunis. In Liguria and Tolfa, at least, the valligiani were aware that their local liberties depended on the survival of the old order at the centre. They certainly understood ‘politics’; it is arguable, too, that they had an ideology. This entails a reconfiguration of ancien régime political culture that sees its essence in campanilismo and clientelismo, in local solidarity and in reciprocity with the seigneurial elites. Once the ancien régime is defined in this wider, more accurate sense, the reassertion of local values and consciousness, subsumed in the term campanilismo, and of the informal political constructs of clientelismo, the parameters of formal counter-revolution expand, and many forms of resistance need not be separated from a conscious desire for a restoration.\textsuperscript{142}

This corresponds more readily to the realities of the peripheries of the départements réunis than the view of both counter-revolution and political culture where ‘Counter-revolution, ultimately, is only to be found at the top of society, at the level of politics.’\textsuperscript{143}

The distinction between counter- and anti-revolution is not without value on the peripheries of the départements réunis; French rule would bring resistance to conscription to every part of the imperial departments, and provoke unrest in hitherto peaceful areas. Nevertheless, the sources indicate a clearer line of descent from the ‘Church and King’ revolts of 1799, to collective resistance to taxation and conscription after annexation, than was the case elsewhere. In the French Midi, the birth of anti-revolution has been discerned at the moment when ‘the revolutionary state showed itself to be rather more dangerous than the old (order)’ to the survival of local solidarities.\textsuperscript{144}

The process was different in Italy, for the counter-revolutionary origins of the struggle were not lost quickly, if at all. The crucial, rejuvenating link is provided by the organised risings, post-annexation, which drew fighters of 1799 out of retirement, and inculcated their traditions into a new generation, who fought not invading foreign armies, but gendarmes enforcing conscription. Throughout, their local enemies remained the patriots; their local allies, the parish clergy, as the terms of the Concordat struck at both Church and community. Their greatest ally, however, remained their oldest: topography.
The atomised nature of authority, and the very complexity and informality of clientelismo proved invaluable to the survival of counter-revolutionary currents on the Apennine peripheries. The French would long fail to grasp the reasons behind resistance. Their appraisal of unrest in these regions, post-annexation, lurch between an official discourse that classified all violent confrontation on the periphery as ‘brigandage’, thus lumping together traditional banditry, collective resistance to conscription and common crime,\textsuperscript{145} and a paranoid belief in English-inspired conspiracies. In the Piacentino, the theatre of a revolt in 1805–6 that rocked the French badly, a judgement of the Special Military Commission reveals this confusion. In the séance of 28 April 1806, the Commission dealt with ‘all those accused of having taken part in the insurrection, whether as leaders or accomplices, and of having committed crimes during the rising, and of armed robbery on the main highways’. Cheek by jowl with Gianni Cordani, ‘convicted of having been a leader of the revolt’, were Andrea Cavazzuti and Marco Villa, ‘convicted of armed robbery on the main highway’.\textsuperscript{146} The prosecutor of Genoa’s criminal court was adamant in his view that ‘the barbarous policies of the cabinet in London . . . has spent some of its gold on bringing rebellion to these people, who are about to receive the goodness of the Emperor’.\textsuperscript{147}

At one moment, the bandits of southern Piedmont were mere highwaymen, at another, Mayno and Scarzello were part of a vast plot spanning a revolt in the Piacentino and British landings in Genoa, although there is no evidence they ever even liaised with each other, despite operating almost side by side.\textsuperscript{148}

These polarised explanations for the persistence of opposition to their rule expose a deeper failure to understand the atomised nature of the political culture they had provoked. Counter-revolution was not the work of English agents; 1799 proved that the periphery had its own politics, and would revolt in their name, without prompting. The observations of the Director-General of Police in Florence, made near the end of French rule in 1813, are closer to the mark. Following a spate of raids on tax collectors in the Aretino, ‘[T]hese trouble makers who so often appear at different times and in different places [do so] when and where they are supported by people in those places.’\textsuperscript{149} Closer still may be the observations of several historians of the Indian colonial experience under the Raj. The events of 1799 correspond in no small measure to Gayatri Spivak’s dictum that a violent event produces change, however gradual, but that ‘the change itself can only be operated by the force of a crisis’. The Aretini already knew this, before 1799, but for Apennine communities in unreformed states, ‘the functional change from the religious to the militant’ and ‘from crime to insurgency’ came with the triennio. Spivak’s theory that the moment of change in the relationship between coloniser and colonised turns on confrontation, rather than transition, is not out of place in the events of 1799, and would appear to be underpinned by the evolution of the patterns of resistance in
the subsequent years of imperial occupation. Above all, his assertion that ‘the agency of change is located in the insurgent or the “subaltern” seems applicable to the course of counter-revolution in the communities of the Apennine spine.\textsuperscript{150}

The French official who came closest to grasping this was Moreau de St Méry. Although castigated for his failure to deal with the revolt in the Piacentino, he discerned a wider meaning in the confrontation between rulers and ruled than the immediate issues of conscription or even the behaviour of his own, rapacious agents: ‘[T]here is still something else in this. [The rebels] are out to terrorize the men who are working for the French; they want to curb the courage of those who make open war on the smugglers.’\textsuperscript{151} Moreau may have interpreted this as the resistance of a criminalised society to the normal forces of order, but he did at least sense a deeper import to the revolt than just a set of immediate causes. He perceived that the people of the Piacentino were set to reject the state itself; they did not want to be policed, but this realisation was only crystallised for them through direct confrontation with an alien, imported, interventionist state.

In contrast to the Indian examples examined by Ranajit Guha, the rebels of 1799 did not have to turn their backs deliberately on ‘those familiar signs which [they] had learned to read and manipulate in order to extract meaning out of the harsh world around them’. Indeed, they rose in great part to defend those very signs. However, his assertion of the reality of a coherent and resilient sphere of local, popular politics, independent of elite political culture, and the ability of the former ‘to operate vigorously in spite of the latter, adjusting itself to the conditions prevailing under the Raj’, fits closely with the history of counter-revolution on the Apennine periphery.\textsuperscript{152}

Thus, the French always knew where potentially politicised trouble would begin. The topography of the peripheries of the old states was the natural springboard for all resistance to central authority. There, independent – if increasingly impoverished – communities had contained the traditions of collective resistance to authority and sources of local leadership that kept the fires of counter-revolution alive when the French returned. The police records, themselves, denote their failure not only wholly to pacify the major centres of disorder after annexation – with the notable exception of southern Piedmont – but even to root out many of the ringleaders of the rebellions of 1799 and those post-annexation. Their Special Military Commissions, which they believed to be so feared by their new \textit{administrés}, were obviously no substitute for a detailed knowledge of the periphery. Referring to a spate of murders around Arezzo, instigated by rebels in 1808, the prefect of Florence confessed that ‘the gendarmes and the French [procurators] strike with the speed and severity of a dragon, but it takes prudence and information, together, to move against brigands’, a guarded admission of continuing support in these areas for changing, but still collective, disorder.\textsuperscript{153}
The ‘ancient liberties’ were very real in these places, and were quickly perceived to be directly threatened by the ‘modern liberties’, incarnated by enlightened reform, whether brought by the French or by indigenous currents. Narzole and many centres of Ligurian unrest were imperial fiefs, islands of juridical independence in hinterlands where the administration of justice was in any case slack. It was no coincidence that they were also the centres of a lucrative smuggling trade, from time immemorial, between the Ligurian coast and the Po valley. The persistence of seigneurial justice was crucial to this criminalised society, because the seigneurs seldom enforced criminal justice. The Aretino had learned to oppose the purest form of enlightened reform, as it saw its economy battered by well-intentioned Leopoldine economic policies, which in practice, only worsened the lot of the coloni – the Tuscan mezzadri – as the advance of capitalist agriculture effectively impoverished them. In Tolfa, the shock was simply being governed at all, and then brutally. This crystallised a political outlook in these communities, based on the defence of local rights against the encroachments of the centre. Counter-revolution became, in great part, an armed protest for the right not to be ruled; 1799, at least in its fortresses, represented a defence of the political culture of government by mediation, rather than administration, of the political culture of ‘government at one remove’.

These areas were far from the only places to see mass, collective risings in 1799, over the territories of the future départements réunis, to say nothing of the invasion of Calabria led from Sicily by Cardinal Ruffo. The rebellion of Lugo, in the Emilia-Romagna, and of Pavia, in the pianura padana, became infamous in French eyes; the revolt led by Branda in the Po valley has already been noted. However, it was not from such places that further revolt could spread. This was the preserve of the old centres of lawlessness. In the immediate aftermath of the Aretino revolt of 1808, with an eye on those of the 1790s, Tassoni said of the Casentino that ‘Whoever can control this place can tell himself, without fear of contradiction, that he can then lead every other part of Tuscany.’ During the 1809 revolt in central Italy, the French police commissioner of Genoa declared it essential to impress on ‘these turbulent, unsubmitting valley folk’ that ‘we are no longer in the age when a handful of peasant rebels from the valleys could frighten the city and dictate laws to the government’. In a crisis, the tail of the periphery wagged the dog of the centre, and the triennio and the first years after annexation were, indeed, such times. It was part of a fundamental configuration of ancien régime political life, based on the relationship between centre and periphery. Each of these hard cores of resistance told a story emblematic of the particular nature of its own state, but taken together, they also expose wider, more general truths about the nature of all the ancien régime states the French would come to rule.

The revolts of 1799, if stoked by economic dislocation, swiftly became true ‘Church and King’ risings. The 1799 revolts have been regarded as the
last, desperate gamble of an old order on the verge of collapse, and much is made of the fact, particularly in Tuscany, that the return of the French in 1800 was not met with an equivalent popular outburst. 158 This is both to narrow the territorial scope of resistance too much, and to cut the chronology of resistance too short. Perhaps a more instructive illustration of the politicised nature of the 1799 revolts came during the Allied occupation of these areas which followed the defeat of the French. The Allied occupation was at least as harsh as Napoleon’s for these communities, and there were numerous confrontations from Piedmont to southern Tuscany between the Italian occupied and their ‘liberators’. 159 Compounded by bad harvests, unrest continued, and there were grain riots and local risings in many places. The point, however, is that they did not become politicised; they were not directed at the restored regimes, nor did they ever become so, in Tuscany, the Papal States or Parma, between 1799 and annexation. After 1800, the nature of the French occupation outside Piedmont was purely military; it involved economic hardship, but not a change of regime; when this position changed, so did the nature of popular disturbances, in contrast to events in 1799. In southern Piedmont, the traditional animosity between the high valleys and the provincial centres, so clear in 1797, gave way to cooperation against the French; 160 Florence, Siena and Naples all opened their gates to peasant armies, if usually with severe reservations. 161 In Genoa, this had already been the case, as early as 1796.

Perhaps the most illustrative case of sustained resistance came in exactly that area the French held out in, throughout the retreat of 1799. The Fontanabuona, in eastern Liguria, continued its revolt, unabated, from 1796 to 1800, despite repeated incursions by French troops; in the spring of 1800, with the help of Allied forces, they actually broke out of their region and took the coastal town of Rapallo. 162 The southern uplands of Piedmont also remained in open revolt for almost two years after the return of the French. 163 Resentment against the Allied occupation never assumed the collective, organised forms of 1799 or of later revolts, following annexation – as opposed to occupation – by the French. This was not because the only source of local leadership available to the rural masses was counter-revolutionary in character, for the dissemination of patriot sympathisers over the periphery is well demonstrated. There was a pro-French alternative to the organising intelligence of the local clergy and feudal agents who led the crucial phases of resistance in Narzole, Cicagna and Arezzo, but it was emphatically rejected. The rebels of 1799 could choose between factions, and they chose opposition to those who rejected ‘the ancient liberties’ for the ‘modern’.

The geographic scope and sheer violence of the revolts of 1799 taught the French about the actual danger they faced in the early years of their rule, and the intensity of feeling against them in Italy. Topography had shaped the atomised, archaic, but vital political culture of the heartlands of counter-revolution on the periphery. More orthodox ideology sustained it at the
centres of the *ancien régime* states and, at certain moments, linked those centres to the periphery in opposition to the new order. The ideological character of the revolts should have taught the French the complex nature of that opposition, but their own discourse exposes their inability to appreciate this. Many of the deeper problems of integration that would confront them after annexation were present in the composition of the counter-revolutionary coalitions ranged against them. Religion proved powerful cement among the rebels, at every level, but the 1799 revolts were also ‘King’, as well as ‘Church’ revolts. The paradox of such traditionally unruly areas such as the Aretino, Narzole, the Fontanabuona, or Mondovì, or ungoverned ones such as Tolfa, showing devotion to the regimes of the old centres appears as such only in the terms the French Revolution has bequeathed to modern political culture. The hard core of rebellion in 1799 which remained loyal to Ferdinand III in Tuscany, to the House of Savoy, or to the Republic of St George, was based on the continued – if increasingly reluctant – adherence to the old order. It hinged on official obligation to preserve ‘the ancient liberties’, which – unlike the patriots – the counter-revolutionary masses and their leaders were quick to see as antithetical to the ‘modern liberties’. Perhaps they put it best, themselves, as in a song of the Aretino ‘army’, which echoed in the streets of Florence after they occupied it in July 1799:

> And at the sound of the drum  
> As it resounds around us,  
> O together we will die  
> For our Good Ferdinand,  
> Our swords in hand,  
> We’ll cure this foreign,  
> Modern liberty!164

The Provisional Government of Montepulciano put it more directly, if also more prosaically, in a letter to their acknowledged leaders in Arezzo, ‘We have come out to fight for the alliance we have contracted to defend the common cause of our Religion and the Throne.’165

The fragility of these alliances must never be underestimated, however. Even Cardinal Ruffo, the leader of the most successful rebellion of 1799 in Calabria, still had great problems in holding his *sanfedisti* together, once outside their own areas.166 It was little different in the future *départements réunis*, where the French were actually present and knowledge of the enemy – and his atrocities – was tangible. Having driven the French from their own area, the rebels of Narzole and Mondovì, despite their expressed loyalty to the House of Savoy, did not march on Turin.167 In this context, the achievements of Ruffo and of the Provisional Government in Arezzo, especially, emerge as truly miraculous. The Aretino rebels were forced to operate without official sanction, but they made themselves respected beyond Arezzo by a combination
of ruthlessly provisioning their own area to make collaboration worthwhile,168 and pure success. An example of the latter was the fear of the authorities in Montepulciano of the demands for grain made on them by Arezzo, which was allayed when the Aretini were able to provision Montepulciano with salt, a task normally fulfilled by the higher authorities.169 The fragility engendered by localism emerges in the open admission of the counter-revolutionary deputation of the town of Sinalunga, in southern Tuscany, that although they were more than prepared to fight beside the neighbouring town of Asciano, the latter would never take orders from them, even in the face of the French advance. Only the deputation of Arezzo commanded such authority.170 The rebels’ political awareness centred on their local rights, which worried even the Florentine politicians who shared their desire to chase out the French, and this fact should not be forgotten.

For all that, Florence was taken and occupied, as was Genoa. The rebels’ opposition to the French was part of a long tradition of defying an interventionist centre; their loyalty to Ferdinand, or to the Genoese Magnifici, turned on the respect these regimes had shown their communities. The solidarity shown by the Ligurian valleys against the patriots and the French endured, but it overlay the tradition of vendetta and inter-family feuding – faida – that characterised them for centuries.171 The French police archives are a guide to the persistence of these feuds, yet, when faced by the new order, they were subordinated to communal resistance. The Ligurian insurgency was a clear response to incursions by a very politicised ‘other’, and as a defence of a traditional political culture. As the tides of war and international diplomacy turned against them, the French were increasingly forced to admit the resilience and power of such relationships, even if they did not dignify them as ‘political’ in nature. In 1813, the police commissaire of Genoa admitted to his superiors:

It is, above all, in the Ligurian mountains, in the valleys of the Polcevera and the Bisagno, which have always been unruly, where people are still most angry. The nobles have their properties there; their influence in these areas is enormous; they hold the choice of war or peace in their very hands.172

Many patriots discovered this common ground with their persecutors all too late; for the French, this ‘King’ side of the counter-revolutionary equation was less evident – or overtly persistent – than the ‘Church’ element, but as they began to introduce their institutions, its residue – campanilismo – would prove a subtle, but real barrier, to the integration of their state edifice in Italy.

Campanilismo formed the bedrock of counter-revolution and later anti-French resistance on the peripheries, and clientelismo was the umbilical cord
The Napoleonic Empire in Italy, 1796–1814

between the elites of the centre and the communities of the periphery. The former provided the motive for opposition first to the French invasion, and then to French rule, while the latter, when mobilised for military purposes, provided a crucial link between two differing elements within the counter-revolutionary coalition. Through *clientelismo*, aristocratic and clerical opposition found a natural, well-established connection to the particularist revolts of the peasantry. Links between centre and periphery need not be formal or direct to be real or pervasive, and these structures pose an alternative structure to a ‘centre-based analysis of political acculturation’, broadly in line with the thinking of Catherine Ford in the context of Brittany.\(^{173}\) However, none of this should be allowed to diminish the role of religion in the counter-revolution, either in 1799, or later, under French rule. *Campanilismo* was the prime motor of insurrection only in those areas where localism survived; it did not possess the same force in the urban centres of the old states, nor in the lowland areas that surrounded them. *Clientelismo*, for its part, did not have quite the same power to mobilise and sustain alliances between the elites and the urban or lowland masses, that it had for property-holding peasant communities.

The defence of the Catholic religion was the highest common factor in the Italian counter-revolution, able to unite urban and rural masses to the traditional elites like nothing else. Religion was the most readily ‘exportable’ motive for resistance, from the periphery to the centre but, as Ford has put it, religion equally played ‘an integrative role by mediating cultural conflicts between centre and periphery’.\(^{174}\) In the Breton case studied by Ford, this was a mediation between a peripheral region of ancient origin, and a relatively new political culture evolved at the centre. In this context, it was a mediation between two traditional entities, the centres and peripheries of the states of the Italian old regime, along the Apennine line. For the first time in centuries, the societies of these states had to respond to a crisis that embraced them all, and they did so in ways both particular and also remarkably similar to their own histories. The revolt of the periphery, subsequently supported by the centre, was common everywhere, and the prominence of religion in these revolts was a second ubiquitous element.

This is not to argue that Italian Catholicism at the end of the eighteenth century was a monolith, for the influence of the structures of centre and periphery assured this was not the case. The fragmented, fragile nature of the counter-revolutionary coalition was reflected in its varying interpretations of Catholicism. When T.C.W. Blanning asserted that ‘From Cadiz to Moscow, the counter-revolutionaries adopted the cross in the struggle’,\(^{175}\) the deeper truth of his argument must still be nuanced by his choice of iconography. The counter-revolutionaries had a whole panoply of Catholic iconography to choose from, and choose they did, usually between the Cross and the Madonna. It is an irony coincidental on an objective level – but not wholly by chance – that the Madonna was not taken as the symbol of the largest,
most coherent counter-revolutionary movements of the time, who fought under more orthodox, Christo-centric banners: Ruffo’s Santafede, the Royal and Catholic Army of the Vendée and Hofer’s Tyroleans, chief among them.\(^{176}\) Mary’s was the counter-revolution of the guerrilla, who fought – splintered, incoherently, but tenaciously – only for hearth, home and harvest, even if it took them to Genoa, in the Ligurian case. This iconography has a wider meaning than any politicised struggle, however. In the age of enlightenment and revolution, the Madonna – more splintered than the Cross – remained close to the people. The judgement of the leading historian of the place of religion in the Hidalgo revolt holds just as good for Napoleonic Italy: ‘An ardent veneration of the Virgin Mary served to justify both preserving the political and social status quo and mounting pressures against it.’\(^{177}\) The Madonna had led the atomised counter-revolutions of the *triennio*; that ‘the Virgin has favoured . . . rocky uplands – areas of sheep and goats . . . not the fertile European plains’,\(^{178}\) makes her a fitting patron of guerrillas. It is equally interesting that the French saw exactly this, and made a point of attacking – assaulting – the Madonna wherever they found her. Their experiences of the revolutionary decade in France predisposed them to such reactions.

Its power and ubiquity notwithstanding, the complexity and deeply regionalised nature of counter-revolution did not wholly respect Catholicism either, for the Church had had differing relationships with most states of the *ancien régime*. Its involvement in Tuscan resistance had been shaped by the internal history of that polity, in the decades prior to the French invasions; in Liguria and Parma, to say nothing of the Papal States, its relationship with the state could not have been more different. In the territories of the House of Savoy, it had been more different still. Leopoldine Tuscany is usually held up as a laboratory of enlightened reform. It is, perhaps, not coincidence, that in the 1790s and afterwards, it also became a textbook example of counter-revolution. Here, every conceivable element of enlightened reform had been tested, and those aspects that were rejected so violently in the 1780s and 1790s would again be fought and detested under the French, with religion to the forefront, if by no means alone, or even paramount. Tuscany, then, produced a genuine ‘Church and King’ revolt, thanks to the reactionary policies of Ferdinand III and his Bourbon successors. Religion, as opposed to clerical leadership, was much less explicit in the Piedmontese revolts, with the notable exception of that orchestrated by Branda di Lucioni in the eastern lowlands. The revolts in upland Piedmont demonstrate the contradictions of *ancien régime* loyalties more clearly than any of the others for, just as the representatives of the universal faith could be very local Madonnas, so deeply held loyalty to the House of Savoy seldom translated into carrying the fight beyond a particular province.

Ultimately, the Catholic Church was the only truly pan-Italian institution of the era, and it set itself against the French, more often than not, so providing
counter-revolution with a remarkable uniformity, if seldom more than regional coherence. Madonnas proved themselves counter-revolutionary activists all over Italy. The defence of traditional religious practices had already proved a powerful force for unity between the urban and rural masses in Tuscany, when they united against the reforms of the Synod of Pistoia in the late 1780s and early 1790s. Pistoians had allied with the mountain peasantry in their anger, even if the townsmen rose largely to protect the oratories of their confraternities, dedicated to their patron saints, and the mountains fought for the Virgin. Livorno, too, saw rioting, and it all happened again in 1790. Their unity of purpose was a terrifying example of the one issue sure to weld centre and periphery together, and the threat of its reappearance in 1808 was probably what persuaded Tassoni that the revolt in northern Tuscany was more dangerous than that in the Aretino. Such a town–country alliance seemed more than capable of taking the port of Livorno, where they were assured more support by ‘the thoroughly bad disposition’ of the city, thus involving the English directly.

When faced with this kind of reform, the revolt of 21–22 May 1787 in Prato was a warning that, even in lowland urban centres, violent revolt was possible – if containable – because of the alliances between the upper and lower classes afforded by religious issues. Prato was an early lesson in how clientelismo, the defence of popular religion, and inter-class loyalty to the latter, could explode in places far less recalcitrant, and so used to the exercise of authority, than the periphery. In 1799, the gates of Siena had been opened to the Aretino rebels largely through the influence of the archbishop, Chigi-Zondadari. For the future of French rule in these places, the writing was on the wall, even before their own revolution had begun, and every aspect of the reforms of Pistoia assailed between 1786 and 1790 would be reintroduced after annexation under the Concordat. Once French rule was entrenched, opposition to their religious policies actually grew stronger and more coherent within the ancien régime centres of power, as witnessed by the thinly veiled but stubborn passive resistance mounted to the Concordat in Liguria by Cardinal Spina, and the intensification of conventional piety among the urban elites.

There can be few doubts about the power of religion to mobilise both the centre and periphery throughout Italy, but its status in its own right as a force for revolt and other forms of opposition is still a ferocious bone of contention. Popular religion, through the veneration of local Madonnas in both town and country, loyalty to confraternities and their collective devotions, and the persistence of pre-Tridentine archaism on the periphery, all make religion an integral part of campanilismo, and campanilismo must stand as a form of political culture able to define, express and defend itself against the concept of the professionalised, centralised state proffered by the French. The stark challenge put so clearly by Blanning remains, however, even when the important place of religion in the world of campanilismo is fully acknowledged, ‘[I]t is unacceptably reductionist to maintain that
religion was never anything more than the symptomatic wrapping for material grievance and class hatred.\textsuperscript{184} The power of religiously inspired resistance to French rule endured longer than any other, whether violent, during the early years or, as their grip on Italy tightened, purely and deliberately passive.

For the process of implanting the Napoleonic state in Italy, the real point is that the French themselves politicised religion – and the Madonna, above all by initiating sacrilege. Liguria was a region where the cult of the Virgin was especially strong in the late eighteenth century, and one of its major centres was at Cicagna, in the Fontanabuona; the French repeatedly sacked the shrine there, in 1797, 1798, 1799 and 1800.\textsuperscript{185} Across the border in Piedmont, the Madonna of Vico, the greatest shrine in the region, was duly sacked by the Army of Italy in 1797, and its crown of pearls – a present from the royal family – was carried off to Paris, along with all the other treasures of the Grotto.\textsuperscript{186} When the Army of Italy launched itself at habitual targets, it anticipated trouble, and so, with the notable exception of Tuscany, it politicised religion for the future Italian administrés of its commander. If the core of Italian popular culture – one still shared by the majority of the elites as well – was a target of the new state, religion, and with it, culture, became a large, conscious part of politics. Unlike the course of events in Revolutionary France, where the ‘blow’ against the Church did not fall immediately or all at once, the future départements réunis of Italy experienced no respite from revolutionary anticlericalism, be it through the crude ravages of the Army of Italy, or the systematic dismantling of the cornerstone of their popular culture, under the Concordat.

All this went far beyond the inter-clerical controversies of the eighteenth century, and clergy and laity alike responded accordingly, with politicised forms of resistance. Peter Burke, in a penetrating essay, distinguished the role of religion in rural revolts between an ‘end’ and a ‘means’ of justification, and then doubted that any early modern peasant revolts in the Catholic Mediterranean actually had religious ends.\textsuperscript{187} His reasoning serves to reveal how seminal were the revolts of the triennio and subsequent resistance to the French occupation in the process of politicisation. There was, probably, a strong element of the justifying ‘means’ about the first revolts of the triennio, save in battle-hardened Tuscany, but it gave way to the role of the defence of religion as an end in itself, first as a defensive response to the conduct of the Army of Italy, but then, more clearly, as an ideological stance, as the reality of cultural war embodied by the Concordat reached into Italian society. A ubiquitous, widely shared culture was now set in opposition to the new order. It was still bound to the spirit of the ancient liberties, of campanilismo, on the peripheries; it still had the loyalty of the majority of the urban elites and masses, when the French returned to Italy in the course of the period 1800–9. No patriot sister republic had had the strength either to rout the Church or to tame the periphery in the short span of existence the ebb and flow of the wars had allowed them.
The most dangerous aspects of the ancien régime were still intact when the French annexed each part of the départements réunis in turn. The most turbulent parts of the periphery were still capable of revolt, and proved it, sequentially, at the moment of annexation. Afterwards, if their recalcitrance mutated into forms of violence that did not readily equate with politicised insurrection, resistance was still evident, and remained collective in character. This is what would continue to worry the French.

However, the dangerous periphery was not the only aspect of the Italian regime that remained largely intact, at annexation. The short, impotent lives of the sister republics ensured that little had changed in society as a whole, at the moment the old order finally gave way to the new. The traditional, almost eternal protection afforded the periphery by its topography enabled conscious forms of resistance to survive there after annexation, at least for a time. It was the delay between 1799 and reoccupation by the French that enabled traditional political culture to reassert itself and live to confront them, save in Piedmont and the Italian Republic. These years witnessed a restoration of the old order in much of Italy, the consequences of which the French would have to confront, along with the recalcitrance of the periphery. In common with most peasant-based, peripheral sources of resistance to imperial domination, those of the Apennine spine were tenacious, and able to achieve mobilisation horizontally, without recourse to vertical leadership from the traditional elites. They endured, but could not spread. The result corresponds with the judgement of Guha, on peasant revolts under the Raj, that ‘The outcome of it all was that numerous peasant uprisings of the period, some of them massive in scope and rich in anti-colonialist consciousness, waited in vain for a leadership to raise them above localism.’

The French seemed determined to invest them with exactly this, at times, and it is as well for them that such accusations were rooted in fantasy. As under the Raj, the exception to this history of failure – or, at best, very localised tenacity – was broken by a campaign of passive resistance, although in Italy its secular impact was largely confined to one ancien régime state.

The experience of counter-revolution in the Papal States was unique, and so justifies the oft made assertion by many French administrators in Rome, that they were confronted with an old order like no other. Pius VII wielded a singular kind of authority, and he used it with great imagination against the new order. The campaign of passive resistance disrupted the administration of justice and lowered confidence in the imperial regime throughout the Papal States. It posed an undramatic, but potent, threat to the establishment of the new order across space, in that it encompassed the whole nation, and over time, as it did not seriously abate during the five years of the French occupation. Non-violence was the only path open to Pius VII, and it worked. Yet such success could not have sprung from astute tactics alone. It was underpinned by the nature of Pius’ own leadership, and the aura he created around passive resistance. All the sources are agreed on the spiritual,
highly principled character of Pius VII, and the deep impression this made even on the troops sent to arrest him. He drew deeply on his Jansenist and monastic background to great effect.

However, even this personal example does not account for the longevity and tenacity of Roman passive resistance. Pius was able to portray his arrest and exile in the familiar terms of martyrdom, in a way not possible for the secular rulers of the other states. Only the House of Savoy could summon anything akin to the devotion Pius evoked among his subjects, and the Savoyard arsenal of dynastic loyalty did not include passive resistance or the halo of martyrdom; quite the reverse, and the result was nebulous attempts to convert banditry into revolt. The temptation to draw comparisons between the Roman counter-revolution and the campaign of civil disobedience waged by the Congress Party against the British Raj in the 1920s and 1930s becomes irresistible. Gandhi always insisted that he was acting within Hindu tradition, that 'non-cooperation and civil resistance are nothing but new names for the law of suffering'. In this way, a single individual could 'defy the might of an unjust empire'. Pius could count on the Tridentine traditions of discipline within the ranks of the clergy during the French occupation, and they did not disappoint him. In the case of the laity, the threat of excommunication proved effective because it drew on deep wells of cultural, collective unity that bound the elite to the popular classes, as well as to religious orthodoxy. The role of Pius as martyr was central to the Roman counter-revolution, but would have counted for much less, had it not rested upon deeper traditions that were readily acknowledged by the laity. Above all, it provided a direct, emphatic contrast to the militaristic ethos of the new imperial order.

Within the context of its own times, the example of non-participation set in the Papal States stands as an emphatic counterpoint to Ugo Foscolo's belief that the only way to defeat the French was to work within their structures, and to learn from them. It would seem that Pius VII, and his many loyalists, would have agreed with Jacques Derrida that 'Operating necessarily from the inside... the enterprise of deconstruction falls prey to its own work.' That process would have to await the restoration, and the work of Consalvi after 1814. The example of the Papal States under Napoleonic occupation may be an exercise in the power of reaction, as depicted by the French and later historiography, but it is an equally stunning example of the power of reactionary ideology to thwart an imperial power, through non-violence. It reveals the power of a certain sort of ideology to bind and organise a polity not noted as disciplined or centralised, prior to – or following – imperial occupation.
The Last Stand of the Old Regime

The first Italian restorations, 1799–1809

The territorial and dynastic arrangements sanctioned at Lunéville in 1801 left north-western and central Italy with a more varied array of regimes than before the triennio. At one extreme, there was no appreciable period of restoration in Piedmont or the territories of the Cisalpine/Italian Republic; the Savoyard and Habsburg regencies installed by the Allied armies in the spring of 1799 were swept away soon after Marengo. These regions began their experience of direct rule by the Napoleonic regime at virtually the same time as France, although they felt it in very different ways. Elsewhere, the circumstances created by Lunéville were less clear. Liguria was, on the face of it, a restored sister republic and, as such, in the most difficult position, caught between the demands of the French occupation and its inherent unpopularity with the forces of counter-revolution. The duchies of Parma and Piacenza were left in a complete limbo, between the transfer of their duke to Florence in 1801 and proper annexation to France in 1805. A caretaker government under the Duchess, Maria-Amelia, and her chief minister, Franco Schizzati, was balanced by the presence of the French Commissioner-General, Moreau de St Méry. Ferdinand III’s restoration in Tuscany was, therefore, brief. The Habsburgs lost the archduchy to the Parmense, and later Spanish branches of the Bourbons, as the new Kingdom of Etruria; its ports and main cities were now heavily garrisoned by French troops. Pius VI was restored in Rome, in 1799, and succeeded by Pius VII, the following year. The rump of the Papal States, again stripped of the Legations and the Marches, remained under their old order until 1809.

The time between the fall of the first French conquest of Italy, the triennio of 1796–99, and the annexation of a particular region to France, after 1800, varied greatly, and the period of direct rule should not be too easily run together with the purely military occupations which preceded it. The consequences of the latter were more important than the former. Everywhere, save in Piedmont, the Italian Republic and, partially, in Liguria, it was a long
restoration, and a period too easily forgotten or dismissed. There is an inclination to emphasise two aspects of the lives of these regimes, at the expense of all else: their persecution of the patriots, unless curbed by the French, and the overbearing Napoleonic military occupation to which they were subjected. The reality is more complex, and more important for the experience of direct French rule that followed. French military occupation may have led to meddling by Salicetti and Clarke, to protect individuals, but it seldom meant interference in the internal affairs of these states. Occupation did not mean annexation. Stemming from this and, above all, from the ephemeral nature of the patriot regimes of the triennio, the organisation of Italy after Lunéville meant that the old order, in all its complexities and contradictions, was allowed to persist until the very hour of annexation to France. John Davis has wisely emphasised the deep roots of the economic and social crisis facing the Italian ancien régime at the close of the eighteenth century. The war and the French invasions compounded internal problems, particularly the financial collapse of virtually all the Italian states, and their incapacity to create new administrative structures to meet the challenges of war in the 1790s.¹

The restored regimes were, indeed, as weak as they had ever been, and just as ineffectual as the sister republics. Thus, nothing occurred in these circumstances to mitigate the shock of direct rule for either the imperial masters or their new administrés. This was certainly what the French felt. The most obvious manifestation of this was the re-emergence of counter-revolution, immediately after annexation. It meant more than the reignition of violent revolt, however. The world of the ancien régime had survived the trauma of war and revolution, ready to baffle and irritate the new regime, as much as to enrage and terrify. The structural realities of centre and periphery, highland and lowland, continued to dictate political and administrative norms, as well as the configurations of society and the economy. The durability, and impotence, of the old order is encapsulated by the hardy tenacity of the sbirri in almost all the Italian states. These ‘degenerated police forces’ of well-armed corps dispersed across the peripheries were nominally under official control, but were more widely regarded as little more than bandits in the pay of the state. However, the limited interests of the French occupying armies also meant that each of the old states went its separate way in these years, with crucial consequences for their fate under the French.

In Tuscany, General Clarke harassed first a restored Ferdinand III, and then the Parmense Bourbons, to protect the Tuscan patriots and the leading supporters of the reforms of Peter-Leopold. Liguria lived most closely, and confusedly, with Napoleonic France between 1800 and 1805. Well into the period between their return in 1800 and annexation, five years later, the French representative to the Republic was a man of pronounced Jacobin sympathies, Napoleon’s Corsican henchman, Christophe Salicetti, who
protected the patriots and continually harassed the more moderate elements in the regime. On the eve of annexation, he opposed even the drawing up of the lists of les plus marquants for the electoral colleges, which was by then standard practice in France itself:

[I]t is my opinion that absolutely no influence must be accorded to those in Liguria who have constantly shown themselves to be enemies of the French. They should be allowed the peaceful enjoyment of their property under the protection of the law; but to confer any confidence in them would be to enrage public opinion and will lead, sooner or later, to disastrous consequences.²

This created unease among the Genoese elites. On the one hand Salicetti’s protection of committed patriots, and the still unstable international climate, dissuaded most of the patriciate from taking public office; the great families had ‘hibernated’ during the triennio, and did not readily return to public life. Nevertheless, the patriot regime and the French knew they were to be reckoned with, and the experience of these years was a lesson in the continued potency of clientelismo, of the informal structures at the heart of the old order. The French, themselves, were careful not to alienate the old ruling class, cultivating those elements within it long disposed to reform before the triennio, particularly among the mercantile and financial sectors in Genoa. The breakdown of law and order on the periphery and the economic collapse of the war years ensured that these elements of the traditional elite did not turn overtly against the new Republic, even if their direct participation was ‘fair weather’, at best.³ New men emerged, mainly in Genoa, who were closely connected to the great families, but now they assumed more prominent positions in the municipal and departmental administrations, chief among them the Serra and Pareto families, who held onto these posts until 1814.⁴

The attitude of both the Ligurian government and the French was more uncompromising on the periphery, however. All the provincial provveditori were firm patriots, and their reports to the new French authorities after annexation display real contempt for the influence of the Church on the peasantry, mixed with fear and frustration at the continued influence of the nobility in the high valleys.⁵ To this end, the new Republic created a national police force on the French model, the gendarmeria, and dispersed it across the periphery, in anticipation of what would follow after annexation. It numbered only 54, was still doing service in the first months of direct rule, and won praise from the French prefect of the department of the Apennines, which embraced some of the most lawless parts of Liguria.⁶ Most units were later incorporated into the departmental reserve companies, and removed from regular policing duties,⁷ but this represented a major step towards French practices, in a crucial area of the state’s concerns in a disturbed
period. Hitherto, the policing of the Ligurian hinterland had been left to scattered, usually individual local constables, inappropriately called sbirri, and a more sizeable contingent of sbirri – mainly drawn from Corsica – sent out from Genoa under the command of magistrates.8

In contrast to this shadowing of French practices, the patriots at the helm of the new Republic tried to mobilise more traditional tools of social control from the Tridentine Church to guard against revolts on the periphery. As early as 1799, they planned a series of ‘national missions’ to the countryside, staffed by pro-patriot clergy, although this came to nothing because of the war.9 After 1800, the restored Republic allowed traditional missions to continue, thus furnishing the French with first-hand evidence of this aspect of ‘Baroque piety’ in action. The republican initiative had been an unmitigated disaster, however, the missions having become a vehicle for counter-revolutionary propaganda, and a lingering manifestation of the popular religiosity so detested by the provveditori.10 These two very different attempts to curb the threat of the periphery are emblematic of the two worlds between which the Ligurian Republic knew it was trapped. It was not lost on all sections of its ruling classes which method had proved most effective in quelling disorder, nor which had actually proved popular with the valligiani. Nor was weakness of the state confined to its traditional limits, in the valleys, or expressed in violent insurgency. Perazzo, the provveditore of the coastal district of Levanto, pointed to the disintegration of formal, external authority among its mercantile elite. These families had been allowed to become a law unto themselves, in the anarchy of the triennio; through inter-marriage and friendship, they controlled the hospital and the annona, and their debts and budgets. ‘There is no way to bring them to order,’ he concluded, ‘because they are bound together, to repulse and defend (their interests).’11 The dilemma for whoever assumed the mantle of the Republic of St George was all too clear.

The restoration of the Papacy to the rump of its territories in Umbria and Latium in 1799 was of a very different order, and of a much longer duration than elsewhere. By concentrating heavily on the persecution of the supporters of the short-lived Roman Republic, the real character of the papal regime under Pius VII is easily lost, as it was later to the French. The circumstances of the papal restoration led to a more direct and thorough continuity with the ancien régime than was the case in Liguria or Tuscany. Papal governments had developed a commitment to many aspects of administrative reform, since the mid-eighteenth century,12 a tradition less dented by the outbreak of the French Revolution or the traumas of the triennio than in Tuscany or the Kingdom of Naples. One of the first acts of Pius VII was to appoint Cardinal Consalvi, a prominent reformer, as his chief minister. Indeed, Pius and Consalvi actually built on some of the abortive reforms of the patriot Republic, especially to shape a more rational taxation structure; they conserved the new local territorial divisions of communes and cantons created under the
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Republic, a direct imitation of the French model. Equally, there was a conscious revival of the economic liberalism of Pius VI. In a series of edicts between 1801 and 1806, they abolished several guilds and trade corporations, on the explicit grounds that they were damaging the economy, most significantly the *annona e grazia*, which liberalised the grain trade. In 1800, many judicial privileges were curbed or even abolished, and limitations put on the competence of baronial and military tribunals.\(^{13}\)

All of this took place in a political culture utterly different from anything understood by the French, however. The details of Consalvi’s reforms, and their targets, may have been familiar enough, but the apex of the state was still the College of Cardinals. Even though attempts were made to reduce the role of the bishops in local administration, and to replace Apostolic delegates with lay congregations, the new rulers were most struck by simply how few laymen had actually been magistrates or administrators. Perhaps nowhere else in the future *départements réunis* was the concept of ‘civil society’ so little developed in the public sphere. Nevertheless, under the noses of a French military occupation, and side by side with its persecution of the patriots, the regime of Pius VII and Consalvi risked vocal opposition from its nobility, privileged corporations and even its own prelates, in a concerted drive to restore the shattered rump of its territories.

In common with every other restored regime in Italy, the Papacy had little tangible success in quelling disorder on the peripheries. Nevertheless, by virtue of the restoration itself, disorder had become less collective and political in character. Banditry and other forms of criminality thus returned to their pre-revolutionary parameters, but these were still unacceptably wide, and had long been regarded as such. The papal regime had never been able to control its periphery properly, and in the financially exhausted conditions of the restoration, it proved impossible to create effective policing or administrative structures. In the last years of the old order, Cardinal Busca had shown considerable interest in foreign policing models, and had sought to create an urban police for Rome on the lines of those he had seen in Paris and Brussels. However, the regime had no illusions that it had to begin with a reform of its own policing institutions, which were as much a source of disruption as brigandage. Thus the main thrust of Busca’s edicts of 1786 and 1793, renewed by Consalvi, had been to curtail the role of the *sbirri*, and shift many functions of policing to regular troops. They proved ineffective and, most importantly, did very little to improve public order, even in Rome itself.\(^{14}\)

There were many determined initiatives at the apex of the papal government in the years between the *triennio* and annexation, and at a time when reformers were increasingly excluded from the circles of power elsewhere, 1800 saw the emergence, in Consalvi, of one of the most determined and durable reformers of the new century. Yet, the other tradition of the papal *ancien régime* also persisted, in the failure of these initiatives to reverse economic and social stagnation. The traditional structures endured, to
confront the French in their entirety. Consalvi’s great reforming period would have to wait until the end of the Napoleonic Wars, but its first political signs appeared in the amnesty he issued to all patriots in 1801. This was balanced by an edict indemnifying those whose properties had been seized and sold as *beni nazionale* under the Republic, while also being wise enough to not to attempt their restoration. A judicious career had opened. Pius VII and Consalvi preferred to export their counter-revolutionary tendencies, and this they did, principally to neighbouring Tuscany.

The fate of Tuscany between 1799 and its annexation in 1808 is among the most intriguing of this period of political limbo. The initial restoration of Ferdinand III did nothing to quell the rampant civil disorder, nor to improve the economic hardships that drove it. However, the restoration at least transformed it into purely civil disorder. There were no popular risings calling for a return of either the French or the patriots, amidst the disturbed state of the central Apennines in these years, and this in the shadow of the French military occupation and the aggressively pro-patriot General Clarke as the French diplomatic representative in Florence. Tuscany provides another twist to the political configuration of these years, however. Its fate prior to annexation offers an intriguing example of counter-revolutionary ideology sustaining the popularity of a new, potentially artificial regime installed at the behest of a foreign overlord. Napoleon was quick to meddle in the high politics of Tuscany at Lunéville, but he did not get the results he sought, from either his puppets, or the Tuscans themselves. Ferdinand III, the Habsburg prince, was soon replaced in 1801 by his namesake from Parma, who promptly died, and was succeeded in turn by his epileptic son, Louis, the husband of the Spanish Bourbon princess, Maria-Luisa. The Grand Duchy was rebaptised the Kingdom of Etruria. It was neither the new Bourbon king nor Napoleon who proved the real force in the internal government of Tuscany, however, but Maria-Luisa, aided by Cesare Ventura, the former chief minister of Parma, and the papal nuncios sent by Consalvi, first De Gregorio and then, from 1802, Morozzo. However, the new regime also included a known liberal, Giulio Mozzi. They could lead only because they found indigenous support ready to hand.

If the counter-revolution elsewhere was sustained in part by old dynastic loyalties, as in Piedmont or the Papal States, or in Liguria by *clientelismo*, the popularity of the aggressive reaction begun by Maria-Luisa reveals the power of ideology. The new government had not only to steer away from the patriots and the supporters of the Leopoldine reforms, but also many reactionaries whose primary loyalty was to the House of Lorraine, rather than counter-revolutionary ideology. The short history of the Kingdom of Etruria is remarkable. The main thrust of Maria-Luisa’s policies was an attack on the Leopoldine reforms and their supporters, yet it was a highly selective attack, revealing a mixture of cynical realism and acute sensibility to her new subjects. The persecution of the patriots initiated by the Senate, in
1799–1800, was reined in, officially, although there is substantial evidence that it continued on the periphery relatively unchecked.\textsuperscript{17}

Likewise, the reversal of the Leopoldine religious reforms became a priority. The traditional Carnevale was revived, part not only of the clerical reaction, but of Maria-Luisa’s wider policy to promote public festivities in Florence. Both these aspects of Bourbon policy were a quick road to popular support, which won the regime a Pyrrhic victory in its death throes: as her days in Florence became numbered under the hail of Napoleon’s threats about her refusal to enforce the anti-British blockade, Maria-Luisa replied with overt expressions of public piety and festivities, all of which enjoyed great public participation, in stark contrast to the sullen reception French celebrations attracted after annexation. The ball given in March 1808, to mark annexation, ‘did not attract great numbers, although held on a magnificent scale’, according to Tassoni.\textsuperscript{18} The victories won by the papal nuncios in Church–state relations carried a deeper import, however. In the decree \textit{Il Motuproprio}, Habsburg regalism was abandoned, as much as Jansenist reformism: Rome could again decree on clerical and spiritual disputes; the regular orders in Tuscany were returned to the direct control of their generals, in Rome; Church properties were again declared inalienable; the bishops were reintegrated into the apparatus of police censorship. Clarke lambasted these measures, and with good reason. Nor did Napoleon recall him or try to curb the vehemence of his attacks on the government.\textsuperscript{19} It is too easy to interpret these measures purely as a reaction to the Leopoldine reforms, although they were certainly so intended in part. Their import was as much diplomatic as internal, in the circumstances of 1801. \textit{Il Motuproprio} was a direct affront to the Napoleonic Concordat of the same year; it stood, at once, as an assertion of Tuscan independence and a victory by proxy for Rome. The legacy for the French was to allow the two senior Tuscan bishops, Martini in Florence and Chigi-Zondadari in Siena, to replace several Leopoldine clerics and fill vacant sees with reactionary men of their own stamp, who would go on to dog the French, after annexation.

The restoration of the external expressions of popular piety and culture struck at the unacceptable face of the Leopoldine reforms, and also their softest target. More intriguing was the ability of Maria-Luisa and her government to leave in place those aspects of the Leopoldine reforms Tuscans had embraced. The persecution of the patriots was ferocious; 3000 families were afflicted by the Camera Nera set up by the Senate.\textsuperscript{20} However, this vengefulness was not allowed to infect the legal system as a whole, and many pro-Leopoldine magistrates, unfairly branded as \textit{giacobini} under the Camera Nera, quietly returned to office.\textsuperscript{21} Above all, the Leopoldine criminal legislation was not reversed for non-political cases, thus ensuring the severe Napoleonic criminal legislation a frosty reception from legists and people alike, in 1808. The introduction of the Special Military Commission to deal with the Aretino rebels in 1808 involved a significant number of public executions in
a country now unused to capital punishment; such a baptism unsettled many Tuscans wholly unconnected to the rising.  

The retention of the liberal criminal legislation of the Leopoldine period was coupled with the continuation of a policy of freedom of artistic and intellectual expression, religious matters apart. Tuscany remained a haven for Alfieri, left free to write there until his death in 1803, who expended his energies on attacking Napoleon, not his reactionary hosts. There is, perhaps, not as much irony as strikes the eye, that his ‘widowed’ mistress, Luisa Stolberg-Gerden, the Countess Albany, who had previously been a figurehead of the Aretino rebels, would go on to be venerated by the Florentine public, and a thorn in the side of the French.  

In her were joined the instinctive defence of that world Dumas described in the Three Musketeers as a world of less liberty, but more independence, that united Alfieri and the Aretini against the new order. Maria-Luisa obviously never saw in her the rival for Florentine affections that Elissa so feared. Maria-Luisa’s policies went beyond passive tolerance, to embrace active patronage of the arts, notwithstanding the straitened finances of her state. She revived the prestigious Accademia del Cimento, and recalled Felice Fontana, one of Peter-Leopold’s most prominent collaborators, as its head; it was dissolved under Napoleon. In its final year, 1807, the Etrurian regime created a liceo. Despite its many reactionary characteristics, ‘Etruria’ maintained a higher level of freedom for academic enquiry and artistic creativity than any other Italian state, and more than within Napoleonic France in the same years.

This tolerance was reflected in the practical sphere of high politics. In 1804, faced with a severe financial crisis, Mozzi recalled the leading Leopoldine minister, Vittorio Fossombroni, around whom a small committee, the Deputazione Cinquevira, was assembled. During its short life, the Deputazione made considerable progress in restoring government finances and rooting out the extensive corruption in public life found under Ferdinand. Maria-Luisa often resented its ‘traditional Tuscan parsimony’ over Court expenditure and the arts, but she actively supported Fossombroni against many entrenched interests. When they attacked the corruption of her chief adviser, Savatico, she exiled him, in the face of protests from her father in Madrid. When the Deputazione was dissolved, the underlying reason was not royal resentment at its interference in Court spending, but French pressure. During the war crisis of 1805, Talleyrand chose to interpret the presence of Leopoldine reformers in government as a revival of the pro-Habsburg party, rather than the restoration of the ideological cousins of the French Revolution. At the deeper level, Maria-Luisa allowed the economic liberalism of Peter-Leopold to continue to work its way into the life of the country. There was no attempt to restore properties confiscated from the Church or the Order of St Stephen, even if the process was emphatically halted, while the ruthless exploitation of privatised lands on the periphery continued apace, and private buyers extended their holdings still further. In the very heartland of
counter-revolution, the vicar of Arezzo reported in 1803 that the *coloni* of the Valdichiana and the Valdarno were falling ever deeper into poverty and debt. The ‘harder targets’ of counter-revolution were beyond the reach of the Bourbons.

This general tolerance of all moderate elements in the intelligentsia effectively allowed the structures and personnel of the Leopoldine period to survive in the administration, the magistracy and in the universities, alongside their more reactionary rivals. Only the Church underwent a deliberate, widespread purge. This continuity, under the aegis of an avowedly reactionary regime, may have helped to feed French delusions about the capacity of the Tuscans to integrate easily into imperial structures. There is a double irony in this. The reality of the depth of reaction was readily accepted on the periphery, after the Aretino revolts, but the work of Maria-Luisa in building a strong consensus from varied elements among the Tuscan elites was ignored and distorted in the most influential reports reaching Paris. In a lengthy report of August 1802, Tassoni portrayed a very narrow basis of support for the Bourbons, and stressed that all the ills of the country could be solved by a comprehensive restoration of the Leopoldine order. In fact, the truth was quite the reverse. Tuscany still faced daunting problems, but civil peace had been achieved by excluding the patriots, thereby separating them from more moderate reformers. Had it not been for French pressure in 1805, Leopoldine influences would have been much more formidable, for much longer. The genius of the Bourbon monarchy in Florence had been to achieve a delicate *ralliement* at the apex of the state, and even a degree of *amalgame* that would elude the French. Taken together, the increasing rehabilitation of some Leopoldine reformers in the higher echelons of government, the active promotion of intellectual life coupled with a revival of traditional popular culture, the thoroughgoing policy of reaction pursued within the Church and the utter inability of the centre to control the periphery, left intact a complex *ancien régime* to confront the French in 1808.

The course of events in Parma could not have been more different from those in Tuscany, but the result was the same. The duchies were subjected to more administrative confusion and diplomatic prevarication than any other part of the *départements réunis*. They were coveted by the Italian Republic, an interest which continued under Eugène. Lebrun, from Genoa, also insisted on a say in their administration, using the revolt as a pretext to renew such claims. Indeed, Lebrun attributed the revolt, essentially, to Moreau’s failure to establish proper administrative structures and he may not have been entirely wrong. Moreau de St Méry conducted little more than a holding operation on the periphery. This is less borne out by the self-serving attacks of Lebrun at the time, than the unfolding problems faced by his successors, after four years of occupation, before annexation. The French found an old order in the fullness of life, when they finally decided its fate in 1805. Whereas years of turbulent, fractured reforming initiatives had honed true
counter-revolution on the Tuscan periphery and among large sections of its elites at the centre, the explosion of revolt in the valleys of the Piacentino in the winter of 1805–6 came from a sudden, traumatic attempt to govern regions among the most independent and neglected in western Europe. Whereas Tuscany witnessed a concerted drive for enlightened reform in the late eighteenth century, Parma saw only a brief flirtation with it, during the short-lived ministry of Du Tillot in the early 1760s. The duchies had long reverted to perhaps the most emphatic example of ‘government at one remove’ in Italy. Nardon, the French official sent to act as Administrator-General after the revolt, and later the first prefect of the department of the Taro, was awestruck by this alien world:

The former administration of these states is utterly different from the French regime; there is no local administration in the countryside with recognised territorial boundaries, with their own property, or financial support from the state; nor are there any independent administrative bodies, comparable to the municipal corps of France or Piedmont.31

In their place, he found a countryside covered in independent hamlets, loosely administered from Parma by a central commission, the Congregazione dei Comuni, which had salaried local agents to gather the taxes from which their wages came. Thus, there was a mass of local officials with no real authority, or support from the centre. Nardon soon found that he would have to abolish hundreds of offices, but encumber the new French maires with unheard-of duties. Indeed, he soon had to all but admit that topography was against any, save a highly decentralised system. Only more adjoints, virtually free of their maires and based in the old hamlets, could assure tax collection and public order, and enforce conscription. He openly confessed that his organisation of the highland arrondissement of Borgo San Donnino was irregular, ‘but its circumstances are such that it is impossible to do otherwise’.32

The most effective arm of government policy during the 1790s, and the Duke’s chosen channel of influence, was the clerical mission.33 The French involved in the suppression of the revolt, and those who followed as permanent administrators, were at one in the belief that this was a region that simply did not know government of any effective kind. The new rulers thought the duchies were the worst example of the ungoverned periphery they had encountered in the départements réunis. The political centre had never attempted to exert absolutist authority, as in Piedmont, or enlightened reform, as in Tuscany; even the oblique bonds of clientelismo or patronage were slender, in contrast to Liguria and the Papal States. The Piacentino was, simply, in a ‘Rousseauesque’ state of nature which barely qualified as ‘government at one remove’. The net result was barbarism, which, in turn, bred crime. Moreau de St Méry may have done little to police the periphery,
but his extensive cultural and sociological studies of its people reveal deep contempt for their primitive society, and even their physical characteristics. Moreau saw the causes in the middle, rather than the long term, however. He could put a date on it: the fall of the reforming ministry of the French ‘import’, Du Tillot, and the era of Jesuitical clericalism it had ushered in: ‘A people led for thirty-five years by a prince given over so entirely to the most outlandish superstition, cannot have any real sense of itself, and I have lived with that lamentable experience!’

By 1808, Nardon had come to feel that the roots of the revolt lay in generations of virtual non-government; this unpoliced society was incapable of civilisation, and slipped directly into crime and violence:

[T]his country, without justice, without an administration, without policing, offered impunity to one and all; ordinary crimes multiplied endlessly. The morality and customs of the inhabitants still lead them into vile vendettas, [which are] the general reason for all [the other] offences. The young peasant of this region is brought up to carry a knife at every important moment in his life. This knife becomes a decoration, a sign of valour [and] from this custom, naturally, comes the use of this vicious weapon, and attacks at every gathering, at the slightest provocation, are the lamentable result; [they] were never pursued under the old government or, at least, they remained unpunished; no example [was set].

Nardon, perhaps, continued to underestimate his administrés in their capacity to develop an atomised political culture of their own, springing from an economy based on smuggling. Although lawless from the perspective of the formal state, it was not considered criminal by the communities of the periphery. However, the inveterate violence of highland society masked from the French any indigenous hierarchy or collective sense of identity.

Nardon was similarly shocked by the policing structures he found in the duchies, believing their incongruous mixture of overcentralisation and effective lack of any real control had allowed this society to ‘run wild’. ‘I would not think it useless for Your Excellence to assess the clear difference existing between the present [French] police system, and that practised in the time of the princes, Moreau de St. Méry and, finally, under General Junot’, he told Junot’s successor, Marshal Pérignon. Rural policing mirrored the system of local government. It was, in theory, entirely under the military commandant in Parma; his only force was the unpaid militia, composed of all able-bodied men, under local captains appointed from Parma. It did nothing it did not wish to do. Independent of the commandant were the sbirri, of whom there were actually a very great number in the duchies. A reserve company for the new department of Taro was organised among them, together with four others, to perform garrison duties in the major towns – Parma, Piacenza, Guastalla and Borgo San Donnino. There was also a company of ex-sbirri
guarding prisoners doing forced labour at the fortress of Salvo Maggiore.\(^39\) Thus, the *sbirri* were a far from small force or an ephemeral presence on the periphery during the *ancien régime*. They maintained their own spy network and could arrest whom they chose, without awaiting superior orders, but they, too, received no government pay or logistical support. To Nardon, the net result was brutality, corruption and chaos, and there was much in the patterns and levels of lawlessness to bear him out:

This is how the police worked, in ways that could only make it vicious, left as it was in the hands of a class of individuals who were badly paid, of poor character and poorly regarded; it could only lead to extensive corruption . . . The most serious crimes went unpunished.\(^40\)

Again, the portrait emerges of a periphery left to itself, a region where the interventions of the centre tended to make things worse, not better. The nature of the Parmense *ancien régime* was mutual estrangement between centre and periphery. In terms of engendering true counter-revolution, in conscious defence of the old political order, it was infertile ground. However, its traditional indifference to the politics of the centre would be galvanised, when its own independence, anarchic autonomy, and only integrated external institution, the Church, came under assault from the Napoleonic state. Beneath the surface of vendetta and lawlessness, lay an extreme variant of the atomised political culture of the Apennine spine, a world in which lawlessness as defined by the centre – smuggling and its attendant banditry, specifically – had evolved into the cornerstone of local politics.

The Piacentino had much in common with the Ligurian valleys, across the Apennine watershed, not least their shared commerce in smuggling, which linked the banditry endemic in both areas. There were subtle differences, however, which conditioned their political development and, most pertinently for the French, their respective responses in 1799. Whereas the Ligurian valleys were linked to the centre and its elites by *clientelismo*, the Piacentino was marked by their absence with the aristocracy of Parma and Piacenza. Unlike the Genoese patricians, the Scotti family, whose fiefs dominated the Val di Trebbia, did not exercise effective patronage or commercial involvement in its highland enclaves. The prosecutor of the criminal court of Piacenza claimed that, although the Marchese Scotti was not without influence in his fiefs, it was more over the clergy than the peasantry; he seemed afraid for his own properties during the revolt, and was in no way involved.\(^41\) The municipality of Piacenza, which included Scotti and other *signori* with fiefs in the Piacentino, sent a deputation to the rebels, in an attempt to end the revolt. The official military bulletin merely commented, ‘Although their efforts were not very successful, they merit no less praise for that.’\(^42\) This was in marked contrast to the ‘hidden patrician hand’ so often detected in Liguria. The cumulative picture was of a remarkably ungoverned
region, able to forge its own links with the centre through smuggling, but essentially untouched by outside mediation. Moreau, who preferred to blame the clergy for the revolt, also emphasised the prevalence of a highly atomised rebel leadership, based on the bandit-smuggling culture of the region, an insight that only underscored the incongruity of linking the clergy and the English to the rebellion:

It is personally known to me, that ‘church people’ incited [the rebels] to disobedience; and the enemies of the glory of France encouraged them in it. Among the rebels are the people of the valley of the Tolla, creatures whose only occupations are smuggling and violent crime, and who are, for these two reasons, well used to the dagger and the musket. They were joined by their neighbours and counterparts from across the Ligurian border. The main leaders are a sergeant in the local militia and an abbé, a fugitive from justice.43

If anyone had a good excuse to look for a British plot, it was Lebrun, who feared that a popular rising was stirring in Genoa when the garrison was subjected to repeated popular abuse. His fears, should a British squadron appear in harbour, could only have been heightened when his request for more troops was refused.44 Yet it was Moreau who dwelt on it.45 Even so, Moreau was largely right about the heartland of the revolt and its leaders. The attack on Bobbio was led by a mule driver and an innkeeper.46 In this sense, Lebrun’s assertion that slack administration was the root cause of the revolt is a valid half-truth, an opinion echoed by many other French officials. Nardon felt that the introduction of conscription, especially, had been too quick, and also not firmly enough enforced, ‘but all that is now over . . . and today, it is only a matter of well-directed policing and good organisation’.47 The prosecutor of the criminal court of Piacenza felt, on first hearing of the revolt, that, ‘These disorders are an attendant result of confusion and anarchy…. The authorities here are in such disarray, that people do not know who to turn to for justice.’ Yet, even as he told his superiors of the need for regular justice, he noted that whole communities would ‘rise against the Gendarmerie for the slightest cause; it is never supported by the local authorities; quite the reverse, they try to hamper its work’.48

Indeed, in the light of the intelligence his own prefect gave him on the eve of the insurrection, it should have been clear to Lebrun that the Piacentino would resist any attempt to rule it, whether by the old or the new regime. Taxes were taxes; government officials were government officials. French administrative structures could enforce taxation and conscription, but they could not alter the desire of the region to throw off outside interference. The Piacentino thrived on administrative anarchy; the conditions prevalent between 1801 and 1805 were ideal for the smuggling communities to rebuild
their economies after the ravages of the *triennio*. For its new masters, the real point of the rising in the Piacentino was the ability of this isolated, apparently leaderless, society to organise mass resistance at all, bereft as it was of close links to the elites of Parma and Piacenza. Virtually all the contemporary reports of the revolt place the numbers of insurgents in thousands.\(^49\) Many accounts of the fighting reveal the capacity of the rebels quickly to organise collective resistance and effective local leadership emerged immediately. Lacroix, the soldier at the forefront of the defence of Bardi, was emphatic about this:

> The cry of revolt spread from the valleys of the Tola and Nura, and the surrounding areas; the tocsin was sounded everywhere, and each peasant took up arms and answered it. Rampaging bands were soon organised and assembled at specified points; they fixed their camp at San Genesio, near Lugagnano: The alarm now became general.\(^50\)

A captain of light infantry paints a similar portrait of organised, determined resistance, when he hoped the rebels would surrender:

> They replied to me only with musket fire and ringing church bells. The commune of Mezzano, which had seemed ready to lay down its arms, was the first to sound of the bells. I went into it, to try to find someone to explain that I had peaceful intentions. However, the sound the bells increased, and the number of rebels swelled, so I thought it best for the safety of my men to open fire.\(^51\)

Among the rebel leaders captured in the following months was Giulliano Brandini, an innkeeper, ex-militia captain and commandant of the rebels’ headquarters at Lugagnano. He had sounded the tocsin to rally the first 400 men, just outside Borgo di Taro, and led the initial attacks; he and his secretary, Rivar, a local doctor, despatched letters to raise the surrounding hamlets.\(^52\) This organisational capacity probably made it easier to believe in British agents, and for the Bulletin of the Army of Italy to declare that those fighting on after the fall of Bardi were ‘true brigands, instruments of the foreigner’,\(^53\) thus mixing the two ubiquitous, antithetical metaphors of international conspiracy and common crime. The Police-Générale, in Paris, Rolland, in the nearest prefecture, and soldiers on the ground, like Delacroix, all insisted on the necessity of a guiding British intelligence behind the revolt. There had to be an English plot. Only one high-ranking official, the director of war administration, thought the threat of sedition exaggerated, because the masses could never hatch such a plot themselves, and the Genoese patricians were far too calculating to call in the British.\(^54\) However, even he missed the deeper truth, that they could hatch plots of their own, without
anyone’s help. A region infamous for its local feuds and personal vendettas had, as elsewhere in the Italian Apennines, shown an autochthonous capacity for collective action.

The report that came closest to recognising this was General Radet’s, who was sent to the duchies immediately after the revolt, to report to Eugène. It probably cut through the mists more than any other document to emerge as a result of the insurrection. Radet did not deviate from the others, in roundly condemning Moreau, or in pinpointing the timing of the rising on the conscription levy and confiscation of draft animals, but he drove home three points that others, more directly involved, either avoided or denied. Radet rubbished the whole notion of outside intervention of any kind:

I have been assured that the rebels were supported by the English, and paid in guineas; I have found no such proof. People have insinuated that a coalition of bandits and deserters took advantage of local discontent: all they found was one Russian, one Italian [i.e. a Lombard] and one Austrian among the rebels; it is demonstrable that the revolt was not the work of any external enemy.

Secondly, he makes no mention whatsoever of the clergy. Finally, he stressed that the montagnardi were well aware of the corruption surrounding Moreau’s rule in Parma, and that they saw the confiscation of their mules as not just a short-term war measure, but an attempt by the French to eradicate smuggling at its source. Perhaps Radet’s most subtle contribution to the quest for the origins of the revolt was that he put the nobles at the centre of the problem, but in a particular manner. He had found the noble families of Parma and, especially, Piacenza, badly disposed towards the French. Yet he did not attribute to them either a direct role, or even a deliberate policy of incitement in the background to the rising. Rather, ‘as landowners, these gentlemen have influence, and I am convinced they inculcated the locals with their own discontent’. The choice of words denotes a man who had a sense of how the periphery worked. The nobles had indirect influence, not power. Radet then pointed to something that showed a good grasp of the sinews of peasant revolt, and that was its potential, as well as its actual size. He believed that the estimates putting the numbers at around 17,000 were both very wide and very short of the mark: given the number of communities involved, Radet estimated the number who ‘turned out’ at around 60,000, but felt that only between 7000 and 8000 men had ever actually been able to unite and concert their actions for long. His report is singular in emphasising the magnitude of the revolt, and the self-generating capacity of the peasantry to rise. Yet even Radet utterly ignored what the rebels had actually said in their petitions. This wilful ignorance notwithstanding, the viceroy could scarcely complain that the raw power and independence of the periphery had not been set before him.
The Church was the only real link on which either the dukes or the French could rely in these valleys, less because it was a powerful force for social control, than simply through being the only permanent presence on the periphery, controlled from the centre. Lebrun was quick to praise the bishop of Piacenza, whose pastoral letter was probably the single most influential step taken to calm the area and prevent the spread of the revolt, and he also mobilised the missionary Lazzerite and Reformed Franciscan fathers. The bishop, Cerati, was hardly a supporter of the French reforms, but his fear of the moral degeneration of the periphery led him, like Turchi in Parma, to throw the Jesuits at the hinterland in the mid-1790s, but in the same spirit, he put his clergy to work in the interests of civil peace, in the wake of the 1806 revolt. The parish clergy rallied: ‘The priests of various parishes have concerted [their efforts] to disarm the misguided highlanders.’ Several priests were singled out for praise, and the overall judgement given to Paris was that ‘Generally, the attitude of the clergy is not at all bad.’

Lebrun specifically acknowledged the courage of the Archpriest of Bardi, who was much closer to the danger, and

used all his influence to prepare a return to order; he wrote to the clergy of the valley of the Tola...he asked them to persuade their people to stay calm; that the column crossing their valley was there to protect peaceable men, but would show no pity to those who resisted.

However, his entreaties had made no impact. Clergy were taken among the rebels – among them the parish priest of Mezzano, ‘who after having fired [on the French] took his gun and joined the rebels’ – and several were executed.

However, there is also too much evidence of clergy concerned only with maintaining order to compare this aspect of the Piacentino revolt with the other major centres of insurrection in the départements réunis. In the immediate aftermath, Radet named 25 – who came forward either bearing arms collected from their flocks, or offering to do so. Those working for peace in 1806 stood in a long tradition that sometimes survived under the French, and continued to serve them well. An agent of Moreau, in the summer of 1805, spoke of the personal mission against violence by Cassina, the parish priest of Pomaro who had once served in the papal household. He went out to the peasants in the fortnight before harvest, when they had most free time, preaching against vendetta to huge crowds:

Some fifty daggers and twenty rifles have been laid at the foot of his altars, along with many offerings of silver, gestures through which are symbolised the destruction of inveterate hatreds, passed down from father to son. Eight days ago, I was truly moved, on entering the parish church of Pomaro, at the sight of the daggers and pistols suspended from
the vault! Cassina had taken the wise precaution to hang them up there, in the manner of captured enemy flags, rather. This has been a real and precious victory, a tribute to the zeal of this septuagenarian pastor.62

However idealised and exaggerated, Cassina’s efforts to curb the culture of violence penetrated the periphery with more enthusiasm than anything the ducal regime attempted. It betokens a region neglected by its political centre, riven by atomised violence, yet susceptible to some outside influences. It took the French to snap these fragile strands, but the process only began after the revolt. They were not, by and large, immediately confronted by a politicised clergy.

The traditionally apolitical character of the region first emerged in its response to 1799, and was duly acknowledged by the French, even after the revolt of 1805–6. While ever on guard for signs of future insurrection, the minister of justice insisted as early as September 1806 that the area had been so ravaged by French and Allied troops alike, that crimes rooted in ‘1799’ might still be amnestied, after investigation. The local people had fought the French and even more the Russians, so brutal had been the conduct of both armies in the battle of the Trebbia in 1799.63 Notwithstanding their frequent rantings about British agents, this calmer assessment of recent history by Cambacérès is a tacit admission, and a reasonable indication to the historian, that the revolt of the Piacentino was not rooted in a tradition of counter-revolution, dating from 1799 or earlier. Prior to the revolt, Lebrun firmly believed that Moreau’s lack of attention to the organisation of the periphery was asking for trouble,64 a view that would become axiomatic for future French administrators in Italy, and he returned to it as soon as the dust had settled: ‘I undertook the organisation of things in Parma, and I believed it was important to gain a month on the advance of anarchy, by so doing.’65

However, this view did not prevail in the atmosphere of trauma immediately following the revolt. ‘An English plot’ had become a mantra, first chanted in the Vendée, perhaps the better to hide from themselves the hard reality that it was central authority, of any kind, that anti-revolution truly detested. The British were easier opponents than an alien political culture, unworthy even of the term, in their eyes. The Piacentino corresponded all too closely to this unspeakable truth, for, in reality, anti-revolution could be a more dread prospect for the new regime than the old enemy of counter-revolution. The latter belonged to an old order that would pass; the former spoke of the eternal struggle between centre and periphery. It was only with the arrival of Junot and Nardon that more anti-revolutionary sources of discontent were cited as the main causes of the rising. Junot confronted Napoleon directly, telling his old friend that the hasty introduction of conscription, coupled with the corruption of French officials, were at the heart of the rising, and that it should not be viewed as an attack on France itself. Napoleon told
him to burn six villages; he compromised on one, Mezzano-Scotto, where
the revolt originated.

The revolt began in the depth of the winter of 1805–6, and came as a bolt
from the blue. Although the reports from Rolland in late 1805 should have
served as a clear warning, the region had no discernible ‘pre-history’ of
politicised, collective disorder during the triennio. Moreau’s proclamation
of the new conscription levy is probably the clearest evidence for the confusion
for which Lebrun, Radet and others castigated him. It began by telling the
Parmigiani that Napoleon wanted this new force ‘to protect their country
and to keep the peace there’, but the rest of its detailed instructions correspond
to marching orders, and the formation of regular units. A deeper clue as to
why Moreau was so surprised is set out plainly in his cover note to Eugène.
He told the viceroy not only that all the militia captains ‘expressed the
ardent desire to comply’ and were ‘flattered by the confidence Napoleon
had shown in them’, but went on to depict the mountains as too weakly
armed to pose any threat, implicit in his remark that there were very few
rifles among the militiamen, and that they were mostly of small, and varying
calibres. This is surely a shockingly naive judgement, but it explains much.
Moreau mistook the ‘public face’ of the periphery for the reality, failing to
grasp that such weapons could be deadly, if in the right hands on the
right terrain. Perhaps it was all the more worrying, for being so unforeseen,
for if counter-revolution emerged in the Piacentino, it was a product of
Napoleonic rule.

There is no doubt that, just as in the Vendée in 1793, the sudden imposition
of conscription on the duchies by Eugène was the immediate spur to violent
resistance, although the rebels reviled many other aspects of the new order
they had rapidly come to detest. Among the demands set out in 1806 in the
petitions of the rebels of Val di Trebbia was that marriages take place ‘only
according to the rites of the Holy Church’. Indeed, they also demanded ‘the
re-establishment of the monks, and the full restitution of their properties’. This
seriously undermines the claims of Moreau de St Méry that the monks
were oppressive and unpopular landlords, based on information from Boccia,
an officer in the Duke’s sbirri. Paltrinieri, in his study of the revolt, astutely
pointed to French requisitioning of mules – so important to the haulage
trade in the region – as at least as significant as conscription, for the rebels.
Even earlier, however, there had been clear reports of deeper resentment
centred on taxation, well before the imposition of either conscription or the
Concordat, stemming not from the installation of the new order, but from
the enforcement of the rights of the old, by Lebrun. His career founded on
financial acumen, Lebrun exploited the administrative uncertainty in the
high valleys around Bardi – technically under Moreau, in Parma – to enforce
the collection of a series of ducal taxes worth 20,000 French francs, payable
for the last time until 1807. This came in addition to the new French taxes.
His stalking horse in this was Rossi, the ducal tax farmer, whose legal
The Napoleonic Empire in Italy, 1796–1814

rights Lebrun said he was there to uphold. Rolland, who was – illegally – administering Bardi, gave his superiors fair warning of the sources of discontent. On St Stephen’s Day 1805 he told Lebrun the tax levels for Bardi and Borgo di Taro had to be reduced, not increased, concluding:

I know the government can abolish all Rossi’s rights without difficulty; it is unjust that some of them, which are dubious, should be imposed for two years. It is not better to employ force, when justice will suffice. I must insist greatly on this point, because I foresee the interminable wrangles that will follow in this area if the sources of future problems are not eliminated.73

It was not legal action that was taken. Three days after Rolland’s letter, the revolt broke out in Bardi and Borgo Taro. The conclusion would seem to be that Lebrun’s greed, even if in the cause of public finances, overwhelmed his concern for the situation in the duchies, as expressed only a few weeks earlier to the minister of justice. The local administration of Borgo di Taro, when bereft of military support, simply fled over the border to Tuscany at the rebel approach.74 When they did find true collaboration on the periphery, the French were quick to single it out, and in so doing, also emphasised how dangerous this could be. Marghella, a local tax collector and colleague of the hated Rossi, was one of the very few local guides the French had during the revolt of the Piacentino and Lebrun, the French governor of Liguria, spoke of both his courage and isolation: ‘He was in the Apennines, together with his family. He went to Bardi with the Gendarmerie, without hesitation... He collected supplies and marched beside our brave troops. I would ask you to report this to His Majesty.’75 Marghella, as a collector of the hated gabella in a regional economy based on smuggling, was always an isolated, loathed figure – and he was also the loyallest of the loyal to the French on the periphery. His example is almost a paradigm of the dilemma the new regime faced in this geographical context, and in this region in particular. If the boundaries of the state were to advance in such conditions, it had to be through a coalition of outsiders and hated collaborators.

Although it lasted only a few weeks – most reports dating from 21 January confirm the major fighting as over76 – and was put down by relatively small forces hastily assembled from Gendarmerie units and reserve companies, the revolt shook the French to the core and had long-lasting ramifications both for the future governance of the new department of the Taro, carved from the duchies, and for the whole of the départements réunis. It came at a particularly sensitive time for the French, both in the context of their expansion in Italy and internationally, and was a cloud that passed across the sun of Austerlitz. As such, it seemed to touch a sensitive nerve in Napoleon.77 Predictably, rebel heads rolled, as the Special Military Commissions of Piacenza and Parma began their work, and a ruthless attitude pervaded the administration. Between 11 February and 1 May 1806, the Special Military
Commissions executed 21 of the 88 men accused of rebellion who appeared before them, and sent 19 more to the galleys. Rarely, in an administrative order where internal rivalry was ingrained, was the prosecutor of the criminal court of Piacenza happy to see the rebels tried by the dread Military Commissions, telling Lebrun:

I do not see how your ideas to work with moderation and gradualism can be done. . . . It seems that the only way to deal with those who persist [in their resistance], and are taken under arms, is to treat them as revolutionaries; and those who we manage to arrest should be dealt with by the Military Commissions, or even better by Special Courts, where there is no possibility of appeal. Finally, all those even suspected of having taken part in the revolt should be sent to the depot to go to the colonies, even including those who have simply been denounced for their bad conduct or turbulent characters.

This outburst is more shocking than the predictable severity of the military or the higher-level administrators whose careers were now at risk. It reveals the extent to which the trauma of the revolt drove a senior magistrate, normally by turns dismissive and suspicious of the Extraordinary Military Commissions, to cast aside legality. At local level, the sub-prefect of Borgo di Taro, who had fled the rebels, was sacked, and the conduct of many other local officials was intensely scrutinised. The purge went directly to the top. Moreau was ignominiously dismissed, and replaced by Marshal Junot, with his reputation for old style, Jacobin, ruthlessness. Nardon was an old school friend of Napoleon, who had previously held the prefecture of Angers, in the troubled west of France, and was now moved from the Ligurian department of Montenotte to form a counter-insurgency team with Junot. Nardon despised Moreau, but even he could not help remark that Moreau and his family ‘seem to me deeply affected by the blow dealt them’.

Before his dismissal, Moreau showed himself capable of great ruthlessness, if not of good judgement. Indeed, it has been rightly said that the true cruelty present in the repression of the revolt was his work, not that of Junot. In a last act of venom, Moreau unleashed the sbirri on the communities of the periphery. If the power and ruthlessness of the modern state were something which was still unknown to the montagnardi, the sbirri were all too familiar figures of hatred and fear. It was calculated cruelty. Moreau formed a colonne mobile from the sbirri under their ancien régime commander, Botti. Nardon, the former Terrorist, thought Botti a ‘violent man, even during the pacific reign of the last Duke’, and he held the conduct of Botti and his ex-sbirri in no small part responsible for prolonging the rebellion by their brutal behaviour. In a telling phrase for a former prefect of Angers, he told Paris that ‘this is how a peaceable area is brought to revolt – flooded with troops, its people threatened and frightened by a Botti who is sent into the valley of the Tidone, just as a Carrier was sent out to Nantes’.
Moreau, while meaning to sing Botti’s praises to his superiors, spilled out more of this past history than he meant when he told Eugène that the revolt had first broken out in Castel San Giovanni, where Botti – ‘the terror of the miscreants and the smugglers of this country’ – had his headquarters, and that the second outbreak came in Busseto, the base of the sbirri captain, Giacopelli. Despite his investment of confidence in the Parmense sbirri, Moreau rechristened them – ludicrously – a ‘grenadier company’. It was precisely the fear they inspired that led Junot to muster them into a reserve company, which was used as a ‘rapid deployment force’ to support the Gendarmerie brigades distributed about the countryside, and kept under tight French control. Nardon also used them to collect taxes. Marshal Pérignon continued to hold Botti in reserve, sending him and his ex-sbirri a year later on a battue générale of Val di Tidone, one of the major centres of the revolt, an action which ‘produced a marked impact on its people’. Clearly, when convulsed circumstances coincided with the presence of men like Junot in authority, the sbirri were still regarded as having their part to play. Many exposed French officials ‘on the ground’ were equally grateful to them. The police commissar of Piacenza, who had borne the brunt of the revolt, spoke thus of Botti and his works to Nardon:

As soon as Botti arrived, the enemies of the constituted authorities gathered together…and he went into the mountains, to end their military plot. There is great disappointment among these people, because they cannot ignite their imaginary revolution in our mountains.

The use of sbirri was not universally detested or rejected by the French, but its desirability corresponded clearly to a phase of pacification, and to the personal politics of particular French administrators. Junot, Botti and the sbirri were ‘all of a piece’. They belonged to the initial, essentially military period of pacification, and none of them was welcome once the crisis passed. Indeed, Nardon and those who had to follow in their wake often felt they had done more harm than good.

Such views never disabused the central government of its fear and suspicion of the region. Moreau was not alone in feeling Napoleon’s wrath. Even the loyal Lebrun came under fire, despite his energetic response to the crisis. Junot, a very close friend, was less harangued than ignored in his insistence on a softer line and more concentration on French failings. The revolt came at a crucial point in the process of French expansion in Italy. The jostling between the French, in Turin, and the Kingdom of Italy, for control of the duchies, itself attests to the safe springboard Napoleon had built – in very different ways – in these areas. However, the Piacentino was a stark reminder that it was a narrow base. At the very point the French proposed to enter not just the duchies, but Liguria and, indirectly, the Veneto and the Kingdom of Naples, this short-lived, seemingly obscure revolt was less
a reminder of 1799, than a chilling vision of the anti-revolution that the future would bring. The protestations of Junot, Lebrun and Nardon, that it stemmed from the introduction of basic French institutions, brutal policing and corrupt administration, appear as more worrying for Paris than the comparatively reassuring belief that the forces of counter-revolution were behind it. The French felt confident when they decided to annex the duchies, not just because of the stunning military victories of the Austerlitz campaign, but also the largely successful pacification and integration of Piedmont and the Italian Republic into the Napoleonic state system. This confidence reached its height just before the revolt, and is less reflected in high politics than in administrative detail. Since their annexation, in 1801–2, criminal justice in the Piedmontese departments had been dispensed through ‘Special Criminal Courts’, composed of three civilian and five military judges, the latter usually drawn from the Gendarmerie; there were no juries, the system also prevalent over much of western and southern France in these years. When Napoleon extended these practices to the new Ligurian departments, he made it clear to Bigot, his commissioner for judicial organisation there, that his reasons were pure administrative expediency.

In July 1805 he felt confident that this militarised form of criminal justice was reaching the end of its usefulness, even in Italy, and he wanted the duchies dealt with in the normal French manner, from the outset. The criminal courts to be created at Parma and Piacenza were to be composed exclusively of civilian judges; indeed, he decreed that particularly harsh sentences could be pronounced only if three-quarters of the judges agreed. Bigot concurred, hoping to see an end to the frequent clashes between civilian and military judges, and that this would soon be extended to Liguria. He told Paris in July 1805 that, ‘This system seems much better to me than the extraordinary organisation of five soldiers and three civil judges. A strong series of arguments would have to be put . . . not to adopt the same plan for the 28th Military Division (Liguria).’ The revolt swept such plans away, not only in the duchies, but in all those territories which thereafter became the départements réunis. After the revolt, even when the Special Military Commissions had finished their work, military judges were added to the five civilians on the new courts, and this was replicated in Tuscany and the Papal States. It is in such measures, more than Napoleon’s semi-racist outburst on receiving news of the rising, that the revolt’s profound impact on French Italy rests. The French believed their experiences in Piedmont and the interior of France indicated a corner turned; the revolt of the Piacentino disabused them of such notions. However, to grasp the nature of the new regime poised to swallow up the whole of Italy in 1805, that experience must be examined.
A French officer engaged in the suppression of the Piacentino revolt wrote to Lebrun early in 1806, with the understatement of a soldier, that the rebels had taken on ‘a government whose power they do not appreciate’. There are no truer words to describe what awaited all the peoples of the imperial departments. The power of the French state penetrated the mountain fastness of the Piacentino, where no civil power had ever really gone before, because none had been strong enough, and a new era was truly upon the peoples of Italy. Yet, the Napoleonic regime was still young when it acquired its first Italian provinces, directly in Piedmont, and at one hegemonic remove in the lands of the Cisalpine Republic. The years of relative peace, 1800–5, allowed Napoleon to forge a new, more powerful and more confident state. Its first Italian possessions shared in this process; those annexed after 1805 received its full force, now in mature, increasingly inflexible form.

The earliest components of the French empire in northern Italy acquired Napoleon and the formative reforms of the new Consular regime, at the same time as ‘old France’, if in very different ways. The mainland, non-transalpine possessions of the House of Savoy and the core territories of the Cisalpine Republic were definitively reoccupied after the second Italian campaign. The latter was transformed into the Italian Republic early in 1802, with the new French First Consul as its president, and the former Josephist reformer, Melzi d’Eril, as its effective leader; its institutions were swiftly – and somewhat brutally – brought into line with those of the parent regime, at the comices of Lyon, December 1801–January 1802. Nevertheless, most of the moderate reformers assembled at Lyon went on to hold important offices under successive Napoleonic regimes, thus indicating a different political path from that which emerged in the Piedmontese territories.
The first rulers of Napoleonic Italy: republican proconsuls, satraps and the juntas

The republican proconsuls: Jourdan in Piedmont, Lebrun in Liguria, Moreau de St Méry in Parma and Dauchy in Tuscany

The first executive administrators Napoleon installed in the départements réunis tended to be men with civilian backgrounds, often with revolutionary pasts. Jourdan was a general, the victor of Fleurus in 1794, but was probably better known as the Directorial politician who framed the definitive law of conscription, when he assumed his post in Turin in 1800. His later military career had been far from distinguished. A protégé of St Just, early in his career Jourdan had led a rearguard action against the coup of Brumaire, in the chambers. Lebrun’s career is well known, and his appointment to Genoa in 1805 was something of a parenthesis in a distinguished career at the apex of the imperial regime; in 1810, however, he was called from semi-retirement to fulfil a similar role in the newly annexed Dutch departments. Moreau de St Méry was a native of Martinique, and a prominent Feuillant during the Legislative Assembly, although an outspoken opponent of the abolition of slavery. He was exiled, 1793–98, for his moderate monarchist views, and assumed the direction of Parma in 1802, having been the French consul there since 1800. A leading intellectual in the regime, he was a notable pioneer of modern social anthropology, and devoted considerable time to sociological analyses of the Caribbean and the duchies. He was one of the few Napoleonic officials of his generation in Italy who was not a man of the Directory. Édouard Dauchy was a member of the 1789 National Assembly, and had survived most of the Revolution as a local administrator, emerging in national politics again only in 1795. Threatened in both royalist and neo-Jacobin purges of the Directory, he rallied quickly to Bonaparte. Whatever their differences, they were all men of the 1790s, set over areas previously riven by counter-revolution, and soon to be so again.

All of them turned instinctively to moderate patriot elements, and to the wider enlightened intelligentsia – and, in the case of Lebrun in Liguria – to the urban commercial classes. Jourdan rallied the moderate ‘survivors’ of 1799 around him in Turin. Moreau found less ready supporters, but revived the reforms of Du Tillot – particularly his anticlerical legislation – almost immediately. Jews were granted civil equality, the criminal courts and judicial torture were abolished and all trials made public, well before the Code Napoléon was actually completed in 1804. Although he kept the patriots at more of a distance than the others, Lebrun gained a good reputation among them for his stalwart defence of Liguria against the Piacentino revolt of 1806. Despite recalling many nobles and senators to office, ‘some of whom renowned for their anti-French attitudes’, the revolt concentrated not only his own mind, but those of many Ligurian patricians. Lebrun’s reputation for fairness rallied the ex-senator, Maghella, at the height of the revolt, ‘whose conduct
induced no little surprise in those who remembered his attitude at other, similar occasions’. His resolve also assured the patriots they could count on his protection, in the face of their worst nightmare. Dauchy arrived in Florence, largely on the recommendation of Degerando, in the hopes that a moderate, ex-republican official working together with the rest of the civilian junta would best effect the ralliement of the men of Peter-Leopold.

When and where there was hope that annexation would not entail another ‘Vendée’, Napoleon made recourse to moderate revolutionaries. Significantly, his initial choice for Piedmont, where he knew there would be trouble, was a republican soldier; in Rome, where Pius VII had prefixed his arrest and departure with a call to mass, passive resistance, Napoleon took no chances and sent in a trusted general, Miollis, as governor-general, alongside his prefects and a civilian junta, called the Consultà. Piedmont was first placed under the control of a Piedmontese patriot government – the Commissione di Governo – originally a five-man executive modelled on the Directory, but reduced to three, along Consular lines, by the spring of 1801. It was led by three unflinching republicans, known to patriot historiography as ‘the three Carlos’ – Botti, Bossi and Giulio – under the protection and general guidance of Napoleon’s commissaire général in Turin, the equally staunch republican, Jourdan. His role and relationship with the patriots were analogous to that of Salicetti in Liguria at the same time. Here, however, patriot rule was not judged a success. In March 1801, the Consulate ordered Jourdan to prepare the way for full annexation by the complete and rapid introduction of French laws and institutions. Six departments, later reduced to five, were created within the new 27th Military Division, which were formally annexed to France on 15 September 1802. Although ‘the three Carlos’ were retained by Jourdan in his new role as head of the General Administration of the 27th Military Division, they were soon swamped by the arrival of French commissioners with specific organisational tasks: Jourde, a prominent ex-parlementaire from the Auvergne, for the judiciary; Henniot for finances; General Wirion, for the Gendarmerie, who had already fulfilled the same role in the Vendée Militaire, the Belgian departments and the Rhineland; and the Bishop of Amiens, for the introduction of the Concordat.

Four cardinal points emerge from the initial French experience of annexation in Piedmont, each of which would have deep ramifications for their future imperial expansion in Italy: the first, and most easily forgotten, was that Piedmont and France acquired the Consulate together; the regime was equally new to both the ‘interior’ and the new imperial departments. Second, in sharp contrast to his conduct in the Cisalpine/Italian Republic, Napoleon swept away both the vestiges of the old Savoyard order and the incipient republic, brusquely and thoroughly; his policy here was not to allow any significant lapse to occur in the introduction of the new order. Third, the French charged with the task, whatever their own political backgrounds, developed a very quick distrust of the old elites, which were often
at odds with the avowed Consular policy of *ralliement*, while simultaneously acquiring a reliance on the patriots, coupled with a distinct distrust of their ability to cope with French norms or to act fairly when in power. Finally, and as a consequence of the newness of French rule, the swift nature of its introduction and, perhaps above all, because of their distrust of all sections of the native elites, the French commissioners sought to minimise the Italian presence in positions of authority, preferring to install Frenchmen to run the new departments, in so far as Paris allowed. The Parisian ministries would long try to regard the Piedmontese as somewhat special in Italy, as possessed of an absolutist heritage comparable to both their own past and to the ethos of the new Napoleonic regime; Piedmontese patriots, too, would come to be regarded as properly integrated into the new order, and capable of leading the way elsewhere. Frenchmen sent to create this ‘Piedmontese launching pad’, seldom, if ever, shared these views for long. The precedents set in the course of annexation were, indeed, fundamental for the future of French imperialism in Italy, but they were of an altogether different kind.

Even Jourdan, a ‘radicalising’ force, had had enough of the patriot culture of vendetta by annexation. He became increasingly hostile to the attempts by the patriot government to award indemnities to those who had ‘suffered for the homeland’ in 1799, first suspending debates in the Consultà, then suppressing the special tribunals set up by the Commissione di Governo to deal with them, and finally, in May 1801, handing over all such cases to the new French courts to settle as they pleased. The conduct of the patriots over this explosive issue led a convinced republican to dissolve the Piedmontese assembly without any prompting from Paris, and well before Bonaparte ordered it, although Jourdan’s growing aversion to patriot ‘talking shops’ was actually firmly in line with trends within France. As he pulled back from support for the Consultà, Lucien and Napoleon were substituting elected departmental councils with centrally appointed prefects; Piedmont held its first and last elections for justices of the peace in 1801, quickly coming under the new system of appointments by the Ministry of Justice at the same time as the rest of France.

The personnel of the new tribunals and prefectures was overwhelmingly patriot, however, and this proved to be Jourdan’s most lasting contribution in the Piedmontese departments, particularly in the patriot control of the lower tribunals and the police. It was characterised by the iron grip established over Alba and Bra, in the southern uplands, by the Negro family throughout the period, which began with their leading role in the defence of Alba against the peasantry, in 1800–1. This pattern was replicated in Parma, where Moreau turned to isolated men on the periphery, like the much lauded Maghella, the tax inspector who acted as a guide for the French at the height of the rebellion and who ‘was always in the advance guard, [and] shared all the dangers of the expedition’, Alpi, the mayor of Compiano, ‘who supplied wine and food, and put his whole fortune at the service of the
Commandant’, or the sub-prefect and mayor of the besieged town of Bobbio, both patriots during the *triennio*, who rallied their National Guardsmen and stood firm against the rebels. They are personified by Minghelli, the prosecutor of the civil tribunal of Fiorenzola, in the Piacentino, who continued to ‘hunt down’ mayors in his area who had been of dubious loyalty during the 1805–6 revolt. La Grave, his superior on the Cour d’Appel of Genoa, admitted his violent character, but traced the embattled career of this septuagenarian who had begun his career under Moreau:

His energetic actions and even more, his overt attachment to the French have made him many enemies…. There are still many men, in the annexed territories, who do not pardon their fellow citizens for loving the French and the present government, and so one is often at risk of being mistaken if, on finding that a public official who is a local man, is not liked, that he actually merited not being liked.

In Tuscany, Dauchy and Degerando sought out enlightened reformers, men of Peter-Leopold, like Giovanni Fabbroni, so confirming Tassoni’s belief that Tuscany had need of such men, to recover from the shock of the 1790s. On the troubled periphery, as in Piedmont and Parma, they turned to committed patriots, epitomised by Michele Re, chosen for the difficult post of Grossetto, and then for the truly dangerous sub-prefecture of Arezzo, after the 1808 revolt, and then for the newly created arrondissement of Modigliano in 1812. He had lost everything under the Austrian occupation, and was judged by Tassoni, the representative of the Kingdom of Italy, ‘a very good subject’. Their installation of patriots in the heart of the administration, and in positions of power on the periphery, was alternately cursed and blessed by their successors. The immediate brief of the military satraps and the civilian officials who followed them, was to protect men in exposed positions. However, the strong military presence they represented was also an admission that to rule through the patriots was fundamentally inadequate as a basis for the new regime. Almost in contradiction, the satraps were meant to build bridges to the traditional elites. When this policy collapsed, however, the bedrock of patriot collaboration remained, and came back into its own, in the last, fraught years of French rule. Dubois, in Florence, articulated it most clearly: ‘[The Jacobins] have burnt their boats for us; [the nobles] have kept theirs intact, to go over to whoever turns up with the intention of ruling them.’

The proconsuls and satraps, alike, failed conspicuously, if predictably, in their social relations with the traditional elites. Only Lebrun, a financier dealing with a commercial aristocracy, made a good social impression. Jourdan was notorious for shunning the Piedmontese aristocracy. Few, however, equalled Dauchy’s republican, secularised blunder in Florence, when he tried to hold an official ball during Carnevale, the traditional high
season for the Florentine nobility. In 1808, however, in protest at the introduction of the Concordat, the Florentine patricians decided not to hold their own festivities – ‘to demonstrate their apathy towards the new order of things’ – thus leaving Dauchy flat on his face. He compounded this, a week later, by dismissing without notice or pensions, all the lower ranks of Court servants. His republican colours emerge even more clearly, in something almost of an aside to Eugène, concerning the billeting of French troops in Tuscany:

The generals and officers will continue to be lodged by the civilian population, and will be supplied and fed by it, until further order in such a manner as to distribute the cost among the richest landowners, where they will be placed.

However, Moreau pursued a very different line towards the Parmense Court, and his propensity to accept the flattery of former lackeys was used against him in the aftermath of the 1806 revolt. Even one of his best friends, Étienne Méjean, secretary to Eugène, felt that although Moreau was ‘an enlightened man’, ‘I am still inclined to think that the exercise of power and his unfortunate propensity to vanity, have led him more than once to make irreparable mistakes.’ The somewhat apocryphal stories recounted to a French officer by some of the rebels themselves, also show the limits of Moreau’s accommodation to the dependency culture. Apparently, when a group of nuns, now reduced to begging for alms by the terms of the Concordat which had closed their convent, wrote to him asking for help, he was said to have replied ironically, ‘scrub floors and pray’. It rather fitted with the general judgement of Méjean on his friend, that he had ‘offended all enlightened men, and wounded all the others’.

Where the proconsuls failed most demonstrably, in the eyes of their superiors and their successors, was over policing institutions. Initially, at least, Jourdan too willingly sanctioned the patriot vendetta culture, through the creation of militias such as the Gendarmeria Piemontese and the infamous Cacciatori delle Alpi. Moreau gave in to patriot calls for vengeance too easily even for Junot, in his use of the *sbirri* after the Piacentino revolt. It was here, most clearly, that they failed to fulfil the first major political – as opposed to administrative – dictum of the Consular regime, the removal of party politics from the exercise of justice. They may have held back the tide of counter-revolution, but they often failed to in ways to ensure the rule of law, in the wake of repression.

The experience of absorbing Piedmont produced a pattern that was repeated throughout the *départements réunis*, as they, in turn, were annexed and governed. The appointments of Jourdan and, soon afterwards, of Moreau de St Méry, were the last manifestations of the Directorial policy, and, indeed, that of Lucien Bonaparte, who as minister of the interior after
Brumaire, also chose men of republican backgrounds as French prefects. They were not choices the regime remained happy with for long, however. Jourdan fell foul of Napoleon, principally for protecting patriots and failing to pacify Piedmont quickly enough. This reputation is somewhat unfair, for his attitude to the patriots was far from uncritical, just as his propensity to employ them in the police and the criminal courts was shared by the more conservative ex-parlementaire, Jourde. However, Napoleon made it plain to Lebrun that he had been entrusted with the annexation of Liguria exactly to avoid ‘the experience I had in Piedmont’, which had taught him to confer such tasks only on those he knew well. Nevertheless, the shock of the Piacentino revolt saw Lebrun recalled under a cloud, even if it was not as black as that enveloping Moreau. After Lebrun, Liguria passed under the direct control of Menou, in Turin; Moreau was replaced by two men very close to Napoleon, Junot, as governor, and Hugues Nardon, as administrative prefect. This betokened two things: it showed how pleased Paris obviously was with Menou’s work in Piedmont, between 1802 and 1805, and that the era of the early Consulate was over in Italy, just as in France.

Yet the poor collective record of Jourdan, Lebrun and Moreau notwithstanding, like men were present in future annexations. Salicetti was a case in point. The first to be sent into Liguria, prior to annexation in 1805, he protected the patriots, fulfilling a similar role in Rome in 1809 when Minister of Police for the Kingdom of Naples. His ideological preferences and policies had not altered; he confidently told Napoleon that there was nothing to fear from the Pope’s interdiction on serving the French. Salicetti felt sure that only a few fanatics would refuse office, and that, in any case, it would assure that important posts went to the most reliable people, true patriots. He was, of course, wrong. Dauchy’s appointment to Florence reflects the unique hopes the French had for Tuscany, more than an avowed embrace of the republican values he continued to hold; the Tuscans, as the perceived heirs of Peter-Leopold, were initially felt to merit civilian leadership by ‘men of 1789’. Dauchy knew where to look for them, and made immediate contact with masonic lodges all over Tuscany, particularly in Livorno. When they disappointed, Menou was quick to appear. Even Fauchet, whose political past was much closer to Dauchy than Menou, lamented only a year into direct rule:

The non-success [of Dauchy’s moderating policy] has emboldened resistance, which itself seems to me based on placid inertia, and consequently all the harder to defeat when constituted authority temporises and draws back at the first hurdle.

Nevertheless, the system of interim administration adopted in Tuscany and Rome did not exclude such men. The ‘junta system’ evolved for these annexations was a deliberate attempt to amalgamate intellectuals with
predominantly republican backgrounds, and military men of decidedly Napoleonic credentials. However, when crisis struck, in the shape of counter-revolutionary insurrection, and when public order became the chief priority of the regime, Napoleon turned to his satraps.

The rule of the satraps: Menou in Piedmont and Tuscany, Junot in Parma and Miollis in Rome

The coming of the satraps, Napoleon’s ‘men on horseback’, was a clear warning to Italians that the new state would make no compromise with resistance. When counter-revolution flared in the départements réunis, Napoleon’s reaction was to turn on – and out – his civilian proconsuls, even the well-trusted Lebrun, in favour of soldiers. Abdullah Menou was from a military family in the Nivernais, an early supporter of the Revolution, and on good terms with the Hébertistes, his ancient nobility notwithstanding; he helped storm the Tuileries on 10 August 1792. Menou first made his name fighting the Vendean rebels, and then as Napoleon’s governor-general of Cairo during the Egyptian campaign, where he converted to Islam on marrying the daughter of the owner of the Turkish baths. Few were better known and more loyal to Napoleon than Junot. Sextius Miollis was of the Provençal robe nobility, linked to the parlement of Aix. He had a reputation as a man of letters, but followed a military career. His liberal credentials dated to his service with Lafayette in America. He remained attached to Lafayette but managed to rise to the rank of general during the Terror, and as a deputy in 1802, he voted against the Consulate for life; while military governor of Mantua, in 1805, he replaced a statue of the Virgin with that of Virgil. Miollis was highly regarded by Eugène, and was entrusted with the potentially volatile occupation of Rome in 1808. They were all marked by anticlerical – if not quite anti-religious – pasts, and had made their names as ferocious opponents of counter-revolution. With the exception of Junot – a Burgundian bourgeois – Miollis and Menou were rare examples of true aristocratic families who were unswervingly loyal to the new regime. They were famous for their tempers, and their colourful private lives. In short, they were perfect for a certain phase of imperial expansion: that moment when the mutinous truth of the new administré is revealed in all its seeming savagery and guile.

Indeed, there is not always a clear divide between them and those proconsuls with republican pasts; Nardon moved on to Spain, where he was killed on service, and Dauchy moved directly from Tuscany to the Illyrian provinces, two of the most difficult postings in Napoleonic Europe.

Menou, Junot and, to a lesser extent, Miollis, emerge as anomalies in the Napoleonic system. Their handling of the traditional elites of the old centres sits somewhat incongruously with their role as ‘enforcers’ of imperial order. Their idiosyncratic approach to imperial integration marks them out as ‘pashas’, whose actions swerved ever further from the rigid, institutional norms of the imperial centre. They were allowed to attempt to cultivate the
traditional elites through blatant flattery and, when this tipped into a counter-productive vulgarity, with naked threats. However ill-conceived as a tool of ralliement, the injection of these colourful figures into the life of Napoleonic Italy was an attempt to arrest the process of alienation of the old elites that the regime also sought to reverse in France, where the Consulate felt it was still dealing with a royalist nobility that shared a common public culture with its republican adversaries. The working assumption of the Napoleonic architects of the policy of reconciliation was that royalist nobles fully understood the norms and ethos of the revolutionary state, and could integrate into its structures when they chose. There was an element of these assumptions present in French views of the Piedmontese and Tuscan elites, but in matters of public relations, they assumed crucial differences. The traditional rulers of Baroque Italy had to be won over by shows of munificence, which thinly veiled ruthless force. It was to prove a crude, indeed, a patronising set of assumptions, but it marked a concerted attempt at reconciliation.

The conduct of these Napoleonic soldiers is illustrative less of a successful policy than of their own perceptions of ancien régime political culture. In their hands, ralliement became an exercise in largesse, capable less of drawing the old elites into the imperial system than of perpetuating the dependency culture so derided by more conventional French administrators. The satraps displayed an instinctive penchant for, and grasp of, that most ancien régime of systems, clientelismo, but the arrival of a professional French bureaucracy in tandem with them, meant that it seldom stretched beyond the personnel of the former Courts. This is not to say they did not strive for an image of personal grandeur. For if Menou, Junot and Miollis had something basic in common – their military decisiveness apart – it was less their taste for a high life gilded by the Baroque splendour of the old order than a generous propensity to share it. Menou soon acquired a reputation for public extravagance in Turin, with one public festival lasting no less than three days and three nights. Bossi, the consul of the Italian Republic in Turin, described his munificence as ‘Asiatic, his liveries are covered in gold, and his many festivals, very grandiose’.31 When he left his Egyptian wife in Turin, to go to Florence in 1808, he took his ‘Asiatic’ habits with him, it seemed.

Menou’s occupation of the Pitti Palace, the traditional ducal residence, was very different from Dauchy’s stay. Whereas the republican proconsul used his residence as the occasion to brutally dispense with what he regarded as an ancien régime dependency culture, Menou immediately made himself, and his generosity, highly visible. He held a vast equestrian show for the crowds, and was quick to invite all the most prominent Florentine families to a series of official and private dinners.32 This stood in marked contrast to the sober secrecy that marked Dauchy’s style of government, which proved too austere, even for the Milanese patriot, Tassoni.33 Indeed, Dauchy refused to bankroll Menou’s policy of largesse, to the point of withholding funds for the celebration of St Napoleon’s Day, probably the most politically important
‘high day’ of the empire. Menou, true to his style, paid for it, himself, regardless.34 Junot seems to have ‘taken’ to the world of clientelismo all too readily, soon adapting to the life of a small Italian Court, and did as much as he could to revive it. He lavished gifts on the courtiers who fawned around him for favours, and held an extravagant series of banquets. Menou failed to transform such gestures into tools of ralliement; Junot was fêted by the municipalities of Parma and Piacenza, and was well received by the Scotti family, the foremost Piacentino aristocrats. Like Menou, he appropriated the ducal hunting grounds. Even Nardon understood Junot’s concern with the dependants of the ducal Court, and did not condemn him:

Misery abounds everywhere in Parma…every audience is an appeal to my heart, and a complete emptying of my purse; can mothers dying of hunger be turned away? Moreau gave generously, so did Junot, and it has all collapsed on top of me. These people are the poor pensioners of the Court…the whole population depends on it, directly or indirectly.35

Nardon implored Paris to help in receipt of civil pensions, in spite of his distaste for Junot’s penchant for aping the dukes.

In Menou’s case, at least, there was meant to be method in the madness. It was largely through his policy of amalgame, reaching beyond his more vulgar attempts at ralliement, that most of the great Florentine families re-entered public life, although this was not all it seemed. Roberto Capponi, the first major-domo to Ferdinand III, only accepted the post of mayor of Florence when Menou threatened him with Fenestrelles.36 As French rule took root, many within the old elite used the entrée Menou had offered to secure their positions further, to the dismay of the patriots and former supporters of Peter-Leopold. He deliberately cultivated leading families such as the Corsi, Corsini, Fabbroni and Fossumbronni, all of whom entered Napoleonic service reluctantly, if ultimately to their profit. His preference for the senior magistrates of the old order, especially, found popular favour,37 whatever consternation it provoked in the French jurists who later had to work with them. Politics aside, the personal conduct of the satraps ensured that amalgame would never stretch beyond the public sphere and, if that is defined in a social as well as political sense, often not even that far. Menou’s very public row with Reilly, the first prefect of Florence, over a box at the opera, appalled a nobility known for its public restraint.38 This paled into insignificance beside his very public affair with the celebrated Milanese ballerina, Gina Grassini. According to Tassoni – who was personally affronted by Menou soon after the latter’s arrival, it must be noted:

Grassini is involved in all his appointments, right from the morning, when she is in the cortege that accompanies [Menou] to the cathedral, where the curious gather to watch her descend her carriage and go
in, together with the members of the Cour d’Appel and the Criminal Court.\textsuperscript{39}

The last straw came for the Florentine elite when Menou made her the official hostess at a public dinner. Few attended, and most of them made a point of leaving before the meal began, to avoid being seen in her company.\textsuperscript{40} This conduct led Napoleon and Eugène to use Reille and Tassoni, respectively, as informants, and to Menou’s departure for the ‘new frontier’ of Venetia. Although Reille’s mission to Tuscany, ostensibly to organise its troops, is widely regarded as a ‘cover’ to spy on Menou, there is no trace of this in the official correspondence.\textsuperscript{41} Nevertheless, Eugène reported to Napoleon that Menou ‘...forgets his place a bit, neglects the business he doesn’t understand, lives openly with a dancer, and in all these ways, he compromises his dignity and by this kind of conduct, he undermines the consideration and respect necessary for an official of his rank’.\textsuperscript{42} Menou might have been modelling his behaviour on that of Junot in Parma. Junot quickly installed his mistress, Fosca Migliorucci – ‘La Foscarina’ – also a dancing girl, in the ducal palace. Like Menou, Junot showed a keen interest in Italian opera, and allowed La Foscarina to stage several contemporary favourites. He, himself, took tight control of the Easter festivities of 1806.\textsuperscript{43} At least Menou and Junot showed enough interest in Italian culture to enjoy the opera and went through the motions of attending Mass; in Junot’s case, it assured the French control over a potentially volatile moment. Soon after Junot’s departure, Nardon would seek to root out the opera, and to choke the life out of public expressions of worship. For all their ruthlessness and lack of decorum, the satraps were probably more open to the culture of their administrés than any French officials who preceded or followed them.

Where the proconsuls had largely failed to build social contacts, simply through their vestigial republicanism, the satraps achieved comparable levels of distaste by their vulgarity. By the time he occupied Rome in 1808, Napoleon had learned these lessons, as manifest in his choice of Miollis as the military governor of the two new departments of Rome and Trasimène. Miollis left his wife behind, and took a succession of Roman mistresses – in marked contrast to the disdain felt by the young, unmarried prefect Tournon, for the same women\textsuperscript{44} – but he did so, from among the nobility and the higher ranks of the bourgeoisie. His ‘principal girl’ was the wife of an influential Roman senator, Montanari, and in this, Miollis was himself integrated into Roman political practices.\textsuperscript{45} This certainly compromised his position by making him prey to the special pleading of the Roman elite, and there was at least something positive in the sexual choices of Menou and Junot, in that they remained free agents. Nevertheless, at the deeper level of integration, there is much truth in Louis Madelin’s comment that, ‘As a lover of women, of literary men and of priests, Miollis got on well with them all, in
a city where priests, literary men and women shared all the real influence, among them.\textsuperscript{46}

For all their attraction to the trappings of \textit{ancien régime} pomp, and their propensity to enjoy the very ‘emasculating’ decadence of the old centre they were despatched to uproot, the satraps never shed their republican verve when counter-revolution raised its head. Usurping the ducal pew in the cathedral of Parma, and heading the Easter procession to High Mass was one thing, but Junot could lash out at the clergy with real venom. In April 1806, he ordered the arrest of the Archpriest of Langhirano, simply for failing to attend the installation ceremony of the new mayor. Although quickly rescinded by Paris, the arrest was Junot’s way of showing the bishop of Parma ‘how important it is that the government is seen to be supported by religious influences, from the outset’.\textsuperscript{47} Menou wooed the Piedmontese military aristocracy and had little time for the republican prefect of Turin, Loysel, but he had no compunction about supporting a gendarmerie with very Jacobin credentials against local notables. Although Miollis managed to cultivate some of the Roman clergy, almost his first official act on entering the rump of the Papal States was to arrest a cleric for preaching against the French, as well as the parish priest, ‘to avoid a scandal’, that the new regime might be perceived as weak.\textsuperscript{48} He continued as he began, enforcing the terms of the Concordat with no discernible qualms, despite his continued social links to some of the more liberal clergy.\textsuperscript{49} In the great imperial scheme of things, their dalliances with noblewomen were as insignificant as those they had with showgirls. Indeed, in matters of the first rank – law and order, the imposition of conscription, the protection of public officials – there was no appreciable difference between the republicans Jourdan and Moreau, and the satraps Menou and Junot, except the heightened ruthlessness of the latter. Political background mattered more in Paris than ‘on the ground’, and this blurring of traditional, French lines – so often lost by Paris – was one of the most striking trends to emerge early in the process of integration. It was a powerful form of inter-French \textit{amalgame}, the realisation of a deeply Bonapartist dream, that the regime often failed to see.

The satraps came into their own in their iron resolve to reduce the peripheries of the former Italian states to the will of the new imperial centre. They brought the skills learned in the Vendée, in Egypt and in the Italian campaigns, to the hitherto ungoverned uplands of the Apennines, and made them tell. In so doing, they were at one with the ambitious and highly successful policy of internal pacification undertaken by the Consulate within France, in the first years of its rule. Even a noble with family links to the liberal opposition, Victor de Broglie remembered the first years of Napoleonic rule – the period of general peace between 1800 and 1805 – with pride: ‘These four years are, together with the ten years of the reign of Henri IV, the best, the noblest era of the history of France.’\textsuperscript{50} The simultaneous campaigns against banditry,
and concerted efforts to protect persons and property, regardless of past politics, won the Napoleonic regime an invaluable, if rather amorphous, blanket of support in provincial France.

The efforts of his Italian satraps were remarkably successful, too, and took place in much more difficult circumstances, for they represented not a reassertion of state power, but its very invention. They carried the tradition forged in the Vendée and the French Midi to the new Italian frontier, in their own flamboyant style. Menou might speak of wooing the Piedmontese nobility for whom he felt such empathy, but when the outbreak of war made him sense an upsurge of brigandage and conspiracy, he unceremoniously threw several of them into the prison of Fenestrelles, and proudly told Eugène, ‘Everyone trembles… public peace will not be troubled.’ When he asked for 100 extra gendarmes, at the outbreak of the War of the Third Coalition, he added, ‘I will hold the country down with an iron fist.’ Miollis saw the need for the *ralliement* of the Italian elites, but when the merchants of Livorno pleaded to be allowed to buy back British and other foreign merchandise worth over 1,200,000 francs seized on the arrival of the French, he replied, ‘My orders admit neither modification nor explanation’, even though Miollis himself told Eugène most of the goods had been imported legally. Miollis may have enjoyed the favours of Roman noblewomen, but in his very first days there, he did not flinch from arresting no less an aristocrat than the Principessa della Cattolica for helping in the campaign of passive resistance, sending her to refined imprisonment in the convent of Santa Caterina in Siena. Behind the wine, women, song and largesse, was a breed of very hard men indeed.

Under the proconsuls, the emphasis had been on supporting the patriots in a sea of counter-revolution, at the risk of pursuing a partisan policy of repression of the periphery. Menou’s arrival set a new pattern in Turin, which was repeated henceforth. The satraps marked the definitive break with the Directory. These soldiers were Napoleon’s men, and his alone; they had no political background beyond his and no political agenda other than that of the new regime, although this could easily be at odds with their own, very personal predilections. Yet their presence was also a conscious admission that the French needed an interim phase in the process of integration. This was less to soften the blow of change for their *administrés*, than to admit that the restoration of order and the imposition of conscription had to take precedence over the introduction of French administrative and legal norms. There was much to mark out their periods of rule as aberrational. Their very presence denoted the supremacy of ‘exceptional units’, mainly the military division, over that of the department: Menou even saw his competence extended from the 27th Military Division (the five Piedmontese departments) to embrace the new 28th Military Division (Liguria), where he effectively succeeded Lebrun in 1806. Parma’s special status as a troubled area after the Piacentino rising meant that it had a separate military governor, despite being in the 28th Military Division.
A similar pattern was followed in Tuscany and Rome. The satraps ruled from the old centres of the Italian states, the new prefects and gendarme commandants reporting, in the first instance, to them, as well as to Paris. They naturally assumed to themselves the political and geographic configuration of the old order. They were, then, the enforcers of holding operations, as well as the harbingers of the new order. Yet, under their auspices, the institutions of the new regime were protected by the wide umbrella of their policing powers, and allowed to develop in their own right. When their work of pacification was done, the old centres lost their last shards of political gravity, as the prefects assumed more direct control over the new territories, and as the Directors-General of Police and the higher courts assumed the security functions initially assigned to the satraps. The department emerged from their shadows as the main instrument of imperial government, as the ancien régime peripheries were brought to heel, even if the real strongholds of counter-revolution were never entirely secured.

As early as 1800, when set the task of reorganising the Gendarmerie throughout western France and the Belgian departments, Menou, Wirion and Radet evolved a strategy of pacification that aimed gradually to remove the main responsibility for policing from the army, passing it to the Gendarmerie, a step which marked the ‘normalisation’ of a given area. They saw quickly that gendarmes had the advantage over regular soldiers of coming to know the people and the terrain they patrolled, and that they provided the right balance between full-scale military occupation – which might be able to quell outright rebellion, but could do little in terms of ordinary policing – and the pre-revolutionary practice of leaving communities largely to police themselves. When Wirion and Radet expanded their work into the new Italian departments, under the auspices of Menou, Junot and Miollis, they were merely extending the general pattern Napoleon and Moncey, the inspector-general of the Imperial Gendarmerie, had successfully established in France, at the outset of the Consulate.54

Menou’s success, at least in Napoleon’s view, is confirmed by the fact that he was ‘redeployed’ to Tuscany in 1808, and again to the new Venetian territories in 1810, where he died. When the rump of the Papal States was seized, Miollis was despatched to Rome, to fulfil a similar role. Menou and Miollis were never given the free hand in Tuscany and Rome the former had enjoyed in his first years in Piedmont, or that Junot wielded in Parma; both were members of a mainly civilian junta. Nevertheless, their presence was always considered desirable in the convulsed circumstances following annexation. According to the ethos of the Napoleonic government, there was a time to ‘crack down’ and a time for regulated, bureaucratic rule. Napoleonic policy-makers prided themselves on knowing when to shift their ground, and saw that moment as a source of pride. In the Piedmontese departments, the order to end definitively the use of the Law of 10 Vendémiaire, Year IV, came in July 1807, shortly after the destruction of the last great bandits in the region. It was withdrawn in part because Napoleon felt its application...
had come to show, not the power of the police, but that it ‘accused the government of impotence in the repression of disorder’, as well as that it punished the innocent along with the guilty.\textsuperscript{55} It was another way of saying that Piedmont was now pacified, and could get back to normal. Two years later, the Piedmontese were also granted the right to introduce juries for criminal trials, a privilege they declined as being incompatible with their own legal traditions.\textsuperscript{56} Italians were not alone in their experience of the extraordinary institutions of Napoleonic rule, any more than in their eventual receipt of its fundamental administrative structures, such as the department, the prefect or the Gendarmerie. Thirty departments of ‘old France’, mainly in the Midi and the Vendée Militaire, were still without juries in 1811, their criminal justice administered by the same Special Criminal Courts as the Italian \textit{départements réunis}.\textsuperscript{57}

Menou was always a ferocious defender of the Gendarmerie against the complaints of the civilian administrators, and was known to despise even the Special Criminal Courts as too soft on bandits, preferring his own ad hoc ‘Extraordinary Military Tribunals’. He was the commandant of the 27th and 28th Military Divisions, which embraced north-western Italy until 1807, when he lost the argument over the use of the Law of 10 Vendémiaire, Year IV, and over prolonging the life of the Extraordinary Military Commissions. This did not spell the end of his career, however. Menou was less sacked, than transferred to Tuscany, and then to Venice, where his methods were still deemed appropriate. In a very real sense, Menou’s career path reflects the growth and character of the Napoleonic empire, and how its rulers wanted it to evolve. There was more than a little taste of the ‘wild west’ about the pacification of Napoleonic Europe; the ‘wild frontier’ kept shifting further away from the centre of the empire – or, at least, that was the hope – and so the men who ‘tamed’ that frontier became unwelcome, moving on to the ‘Indian country’ of the new departments and territories. Menou is, probably, the major example of such men. Significantly, as long as a major rebellion threatened in Tuscany – as it did until 1810 – Napoleon kept Menou at the helm. He was not alone. Menou’s ‘right-hand man’, Radet – entrusted by Napoleon with the reorganisation of the Gendarmerie in the French interior in 1800 – went south from Tuscany, to organise the Gendarmerie in the Papal States and the Kingdom of Naples, when Menou headed north to Venice. He had a reputation for tough, effective policing, but there was little love lost between Radet and civilian officials anxious to establish a more orderly, less aggressive form of imperial rule on ‘the new frontier’ of central Italy. He drew real invective from Antoine Roederer, the prefect of the Trasimeno:

Radet is a rotten braggart who will finish badly, likely as not. I don’t know how the Emperor doesn’t still know about him or, if he does know, why he doesn’t put him in his place. This man is dishonourable, real dirt, whatever his important position or his power.\textsuperscript{58}
This outburst came in the context of the prefect’s complaints about corruption in the local Gendarmerie that seemed to interest Radet not at all. ‘His place’ continued to be at the forefront of the battle against brigandage, leading mobiles columns all over southern Italy.59

There were such men at all levels of the imperial police; they were not all French, but the ‘wild west’ of the ever-expanding imperial frontier made room for those attracted to the power and danger offered by the process of pacification in its early stages. A Piedmontese, Vendero, followed in Menou’s footsteps. He had been a pro-French republican since the Revolution, and served in the infamous Piedmontese Gendarmeria – a vicious local militia which Wirion had quickly disbanded in 1801 – before becoming the police commissioner of the Piedmontese town of Asti in 1802,60 where he instigated a brutal but effective ‘reign of Terror’, which also had its spicier side. His superior said of him that, ‘...he abuses his official powers almost daily to give himself over to all sorts of excesses’, among which was running a known troublemaker out of town – but then taking up with his wife and issuing dire threats against the man; ‘His morals are so depraved that he has disrupted the lives of many honest families’, the usual police euphemism for chasing young women. Nevertheless, his superior in Turin admitted that ‘[he is] blessed with great courage and tremendous physical strength’.61 The prefect of Marengo spoke of his ‘intrepid’ courage and noted that, ‘He made arrests of several very important, very formidable bandits’, adding that, ‘I am persuaded that this is a man that the government can employ quite usefully.’62 His Director-General and his prefect wrote him honest, but glowing references for the post: ‘I attest to his past services and his bravery ... his courage and his intelligence and, above all, his severity. It was his unwise entanglements with women that led him into trouble... Vendero will be a good policeman... because he has spirit and courage’, according to his Director-General.63 His prefect charted his future with uncanny accuracy:

It would be better to get him out of an area where his habits now have appeared a little scandalous, and I think that employed in one of the southern cities of the newly conquered ex-Roman states... this man, who has been blessed by nature with a bodily strength and a rare firmness of arm could give great service to a government to which he has always been very loyal.64

It was probably no coincidence that Vendero’s rough-hewn reign of Terror in Asti was found out and dealt with only in 1808, when the region was pacified. In the same year that Menou moved on, so did Vendero. No one ever denied his misdeeds in Asti; he was simply transferred to Rome, where he became a police commissioner in the newly annexed city in 1810. His appointment was, itself, a sign that the French were determined to attack the urban ‘micro-criminality' that beset Rome throughout the eighteenth century, which successive papal governments had bemoaned for its disruption to the
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Lucrative tourist trade. Vendero incarnated one way, and one stage, in the process, of asserting the power and determination of the new imperial state to make its presence a reality in areas of Italian life beyond the reach of the ancien régime, a determination made all the more striking by its ability to reach down to the lowest levels of the police apparatus. Menou, Radet and Vendero were all of a type, and they followed the imperial frontier when the ‘imperial heartland’ became too tame, but there was never an opportunity for the Napoleonic regime to dispense with their services altogether.

A special type of criminal prosecutor emerged within the ranks of the French magistrates in the départements réunis, whose career path was predicated on first breaking resistance to imperial rule, and then the indulgent, arbitral habits of their Italian colleagues. Armand Binet and Gilbert Boucher were two young, thoroughly ‘Napoleonic’ prosecutors sent to the Italian departments, who acquired reputations as ‘troubleshooters’. They were always singled out for the most difficult areas, and deployed in the front line of counter-insurgency operations. They sprang from similar backgrounds, of the kind that made them models for the new generation of professional, loyal administrators Napoleon hoped would leave the Revolution behind. Binet always stressed that he had been brought up under the new regime, although he came from a well-established legal family who had served in the Parlement of Rennes for several generations. Boucher, too, came from a parlementaire family. His father had been a substitut to the prosecutor-general of the Parlement of Paris, and served in several of its bailliages; since the Revolution, he had been on the civil tribunal of his native Pontoise, and was one of the six cent plus imposés of the affluent department of Seine-et-Oise. Boucher père corresponded to the Napoleonic ideal still further, by being wealthy and willing enough to contribute to his son’s public career.

Both men reminded their superiors that they had given up lucrative private practices to serve in Italy. They attracted influential patrons; Boucher impressed first Moncey, the inspector-general of the Imperial Gendarmerie, whom he knew in Paris, and then Nardon, during his posting as a substitute prosecutor in the new criminal court of Parma, when he was only 26. Nardon admired ‘the firmness’ he had developed while briefly in Genoa, although his superior on the Cour d’Appel, La Grave, felt he was too inexperienced and immature for any promotion. Nardon’s view prevailed, but significantly, Boucher’s promotion came in the new criminal court of Florence, in the wake of the 1808 revolts. Here, his youthful energy won him unstinting praise. His superior told Paris that, in a court overwhelmed with work, he ‘was the equivalent of two [prosecutors]’. This won him the dubious prize of acting public prosecutor on the civil tribunal of Arezzo during the rising of 1808. He held the post for almost a year, and galvanised its expedition of criminal cases, in particular. Above all, Boucher was generally credited with rallying the 22 justices of the peace, during the revolt, and of ensuring that
they continued to liaise well with the civil tribunal, thereafter. 74 This early service, in one of the most dangerous postings in the empire, won him rare praise from Coffinhal, during his virtual inquisition into the quality of the magistrates of the new Roman departments two years later. 75 Binet was four years younger than Boucher, and was ‘parachuted’ into the other Tuscan centre of counter-revolution and banditry, Grossetto. He rushed all the way from Rennes to take up the post in 1808. 76

Although young and energetic, both felt the sapping effects of the Tuscan climate, but swore they wanted to continue serving in Italy, even if they sought changes of post after a year or so. 77 Here, their careers and characters diverged, however. Boucher went on to serve first on the Cour d’Appel and then the Cour Impériale of Rome; he became a component of the system at the old centre, and was considered worthy of his elevation by even the sternest critics. Coffinhal felt he deserved to become an auditeur of the Council of State. 78 Binet, however, revealed himself something of a bewigged Menou, in the wilds of Grossetto. In a report to Paris in 1811, Montiglio, the first president of the Cour d’Appel of Florence, singled out Binet as the only one of his prosecutors who had to be dismissed. His description of Binet’s conduct, admixed with very clear admiration for his professional qualities, make a classic portrait of the ‘imperial frontiersman’ in Napoleonic Europe:

How many times has he been warned? He is so discredited that, in the last few days, a tax official claims to have been attacked by him in the street, and so has the husband of the Guespanini woman. Although these allegations are certainly false…they are the direct consequences of his liaison with this woman, and of the rivalries he has provoked over her; the plaintiff has backed down, but taken as a whole, the conduct of Binet is such that he cannot stay in Tuscany. I say this with deep regret, because his youth, and his qualities can make him a very useful servant of His Majesty. 79

In the public sphere, Binet ‘lacked neither talent nor learning’ and was thoroughly honest, but he had become a virtual slave to a woman known almost as a prostitute, according to Montiglio. As with Menou and Vendero, the solution was not dismissal, but to send Binet to the newly acquired trouble spot of Todi. Todi brought the best out of Binet, even if its proximity to Grossetto allowed him to maintain his amorous links there. 80 There was nothing but praise for his work in destroying brigandage; his courage and energy were exceptional, and his superiors hoped it would put his ‘Tuscan past’ behind him. 81 When he fell foul of a local noble, it was for ‘the right reasons’, and he was supported by his superiors. 82 His ‘firmness’ caused a serious rift with his Italian colleagues, and it was thought best to move him again, to Velletri, another area marked by banditry and disorder. The
prosecutor of the Cour Impériale of Rome went so far as to say he was the only colleague in the Roman departments up to so hard a posting. His tough reputation would precede him and, ‘as a Frenchman, he will impose himself all the more’. It would also get him further away from Grossetto, and closer to the watchful eyes of the Cour Impériale of Rome.\textsuperscript{83} He was, avowedly, hard to replace in Todi.\textsuperscript{84}

In Velletri, however, both aspects of the old pattern resurfaced. Velletri was a huge arrondissement, and its civil tribunal riven with internal feuding that damaged its public image. Binet drove himself hard and, if he did not make the spectacular progress against brigandage he managed in Grossetto and Todi, it was readily acknowledged that the task was beyond anyone; as in Todi, his application and efficiency ensured the large backlog of criminal cases was significantly reduced. However, he became embroiled with the wife of his substitut, leading to his exclusion from the Cour Impériale, causing his mentor in Rome, Legonidec, to lament, ‘I regret that this young man, who has merit, in whom I take an interest, did not know how to detach himself from his presumed faults which excluded him from Tuscany, when he came to the Roman departments.’\textsuperscript{85} The careers of Boucher and Binet reveal the starkly contrasting paths that service in ‘the front line’ could produce. Boucher’s handling of Arezzo led on to a higher post in Rome; it kept him out on the frontier of the empire, but in a senior role. Binet, like Menou or Radet, remained a mobile ‘troubleshooter’, shifting from one convulsed area to another, as circumstances demanded, but with little hope of advancement. Binet remained in Velletri, to the bitter end, fighting bandits and his colleagues for, whatever his failings, he was indispensable as long as there was a ‘frontier’ to tame. As with Menou, at a higher level, it was his own appetites he could not master, rather than bandits. It came with the territory, as it were.

Thus, a policy of trying to rally and integrate the traditional elites of the centre sat beside the heavy-handed, aggressive assault on the counter-revolutionary strongholds of the periphery, and this marked the development of a new approach to imperial expansion in the world, post-Austerlitz and post-Piacentino. This policy was not as contradictory as it might first appear, and was probably the single most effective tool of \textit{ralliement} the imperial regime ever fashioned in Italy. Menou made overt efforts to depoliticise the process of restoring order, even if they were not often reflected in the composition of his police or courts, or in the prejudices of his ‘enforcers’. In Piedmont, Menou declared to the minister of justice that, ‘the judgements handed down by the Commission make much more of an impression on these thugs than those of the ordinary courts.’\textsuperscript{86} He would follow the same path in Florence, always emphasising to the Piedmontese and Tuscan propertied classes that ruthlessness was in the cause of the protection of persons and property, not a political tool, and that the power of the French state was there to stabilise society, not as an instrument of vendetta.
In Parma, Junot actually curbed the blind, vengeful aggression unleashed by Moreau. Menou, together with Wirion, successfully implanted a predominantly French Gendarmerie on Italian soil and saw – not mistakenly – that the Extraordinary Military Tribunals were impartial, if also ruthless. Their views sometimes received support from the Italians involved. In 1806, a former Piedmontese royal official, Maggiora, was denounced to the Military Commission of Alessandria, but was freed and exonerated. On his release he took the trouble to tell the minister of justice that, ‘The black infamy was completely exposed thanks to these upright magistrates’. Even in the highly charged atmosphere of the Piacentino, only a year after the revolt, the Extraordinary Military Commission of Parma dismissed a case against one Francesco Fiorentini, denounced by his mayor for ‘spreading alarmist ideas… and saying that the highlanders… would soon be in the area’. The military judges – the same men who had condemned so many rebels to death a year before – added that the accusation was ‘libellous’. It was left to a civilian, D'Auzers, the Director-General of Police in Turin, to defend the mayor, and get counter-charges dropped. Norvins, the Director-General of Police in Rome, embraced the creation of an Extraordinary Military Commission along the border between the Roman departments and the Kingdom of Naples in 1810, with rather more zeal than might be expected of a civilian official:

At a moment when rumours of insurrection are being spread about, this expedient seems to me very useful, all the more so for the swifter punishment it affords, than can be got from the ordinary courts…. An example of severity can only help to assure public order in these two departments.

Norvins later admitted that the rumours of the revolt were exaggerated, but his superiors held fast to the need to set terrible examples on the southern border. Ruthlessness would ‘arrest the growth of unconsidered ardour, which reacts without thinking’. In fact, the Commission acted with a mixture of swift, draconian retribution, and moderation. It quickly arrested 47 people accused of rebellion in the upland commune of Norcia, but of the 11 condemned to death, only 4 were actually in custody. The vast majority of those in custody were acquitted. Such behaviour amounted to a working compromise within the Commissions to fulfil their orders to deal out swift official vengeance, but never to base such severity on flimsy evidence – and flimsy evidence was, they knew all too well, what they usually received. Their scruples could go too far, however, most notably over the trial of the truly dangerous Narzole band in Piedmont in 1808. Although most of the band were sentenced to death, at least two of its leaders escaped the guillotine, and most of their accomplices were released, resulting in a public outcry that spelled the end of the Military Commissions in Piedmont.
The Military Commissions moved with the imperial frontier, where they were still needed. Like the satraps who favoured them, they belonged to the battle to tame the periphery; their appearance created particular fear in Tuscany, in the wake of the Arezzo revolt, where the Leopoldine reforms had abolished the death penalty, and mass arrests were unheard of. This was, indeed, part of their purpose, but the Commissions were far from terrorist in their actual workings, and in this respect, they were the precursors of a French preoccupation with fairness and impartiality, coupled with a continuing fear that an indigenous vendetta culture would infiltrate the justice system.

Many sectors of the local elites of the periphery gained greatly from the rule of the satraps, and did, indeed, rally to the regime, at least in their support for the restoration of order. Junot and Miollis, in Parma and the Papal States respectively, dealt definitively with the hitherto intractable problem of the sbirri, in a positive and highly responsible demonstration to their administrés, of the popular uses to which the power of the new state might be put. Junot followed the rapid installation of gendarmerie brigades throughout the whole of the territory of the duchies with a decree reorganising the sbirri, that removed them from isolated communities on the periphery, and concentrated them in the major towns, under the command of French officers. Miollis had an even more difficult task. The potential power of the sbirri is clearest from the fear and concern their continued existence inspired in the French. In 1811, the prefect of Rome, Tournon, recognised their capacity to create serious disorder in the countryside, stemming not just from the fact they had not been paid for some time, but also from ‘the vicious character of most of them’. He warned against disbanding them en masse, because they were still well armed and organised in their ‘families’; any attempt to confront them or forcibly dissolve them ‘at a stroke’ would only aggravate banditry in a region where it had already reached dangerous proportions. Tournon’s views expose starkly the paradox of the sbirri under the old order: they were a force with which to be reckoned, but they had done precious little to curb the rising tide of disorder on the Roman periphery. That this was not due principally to their own weakness was clear from the caution with which even so powerful an agent as the Napoleonic empire treated them. The French were not, as it emerged, as powerless against them as the states they succeeded, even if they trembled at the prospect of confrontation as much as their predecessors. Miollis stuck to his task. French policy in Rome, by 1810, was to neutralise and disband the sbirri.

The determination of the military governors to expand policing, and thus the presence of the state into the periphery, often for the first time, can be seen in almost every aspect of law and order. They vigorously applied French legislation protecting national and communal forests, like Junot’s decree in Parma, forbidding the uprooting of trees and the cutting of wood in forests.
Unlike previous rulers, he had in the gendarmerie a rural police force to enforce such laws. In the weeks before the outbreak of the revolt, the prosecutor of Parma’s criminal court had warned Paris that the proper installation of his own court, and of all the rest, was pressing, that crime was rising, and that communication had virtually broken down between the ducal magistrates on the periphery, and Parma. Not only were the old courts working too slowly, but ‘the judges in the localities even refuse to send in reports confirming various offences, which poses a great obstacle for the course of justice’. Moreau had, indeed, ‘given most energetic orders’ to end all this, but it took Junot to make it a reality, and get the new court system installed on the periphery. In the summer of 1809, Paris challenged the competence of the Roman Consultà over its organisation of the judiciary in the most emphatic manner possible, by sending out a commissioner, Coffinhal, from the Cour de Cassation, to investigate its appointments and change them where necessary. Miollis responded in terms that showed he had acted in order to avoid the mistakes made by Moreau in Parma. The situation required decisiveness and speed:

This organisation was made urgent not only by the bizarre and incoherent composition of the existing jurisdictions of Rome, by political circumstances…we had to act quickly and had to conciliate the numerous and powerful class of jurists. This class was the only thing capable of acting as a counter-weight [to the clergy] and also the only group whose ambition might be excited by the arrival of a new order of things.

Miollis linked the need for compromise with the old elites to the necessity of immediately overthrowing the old order in a typically Bonapartist fashion. If the old order was to be rallied and amalgamated, it was in the sole interest of enracinating the new. It was not really amalgame that mattered, but swift, decisive action to create a new order. In a crisis, few could match the dash and resourcefulness of the satraps. When the British threatened the Ligurian coast in 1805, Menou simply advised Eugène that, ‘you have to show only the heads of your flying columns along different points on the coast; that is how you make them think we have more troops than we really do’.

The clashes between the ‘men on horseback’ and the civilian administrators they were meant to nurture and protect went far beyond trivial rows over opera boxes. These animosities stemmed from several closely related sources, which did not reduce simply to clashes between overlapping military and civilian competency. Menou and Junot felt an automatic distrust for the men appointed by their predecessors. Menou favoured the Gendarmerie and the Extraordinary Military Tribunals, less because they were composed of soldiers like himself, than through a belief that the Piedmontese courts were full of patriots with partisan axes to grind; his suspicion of the men
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installed by Jourdan and Jourde in Piedmont was only intensified when Lebrun and Bigot-Préameneu staffed the courts of the new Ligurian departments with them. Neither Jourde nor Bigot could be described as republican in sympathy or background, but to the end Menou suspected their choices. The revolt of the Piacentino left Junot with no faith in Moreau’s work, but he also soon clashed with Nardon, although they shared a low opinion of Moreau. At such moments, Paris usually sensed it was time for the men on horseback to move on. In the cases of Tuscany and the Papal States, the two last regions to be annexed, however, the regime experimented with a compromise structure.

The Junta of Florence and the Consultà of Rome: an amalgame franco-française

The last areas of Italy annexed to the empire – Tuscany and the rump of the Papal States – received a form of interim administration that was a deliberate attempt to combine and amalgamate all the ideological currents within the French state. That of Florence was headed by Menou, but included Chaban, Dauchy and Degerando, as well as Radet on an informal basis. Its life was considerably shorter than that of the Roman Consultà, but their compositions were almost symmetrical: chaired by Miollis, the Consultà included the ex-Terrorist Janet, Degerando and the Piedmontese patriot jurist, Dal Pozzo. The young Piedmontese auditeur, future prime minister and mentor of Cavour, Cesare Balbo, was secretary to both bodies, and distinguished himself as the only person everyone consistently trusted and got on well with. These bodies were wracked by internal dissensions, many driven by ego as much as ideology, but their work was marked by speed and, all too often, errors of judgement born of haste and unsatisfactory compromises.

The Roman Consultà, particularly, attracted accusations of corruption which ranged from anonymous denunciations, such as that by a Roman ‘Jacobin’, who accused it of excluding ‘the friends of Salicetti’ from the new order, because of the intrigues of the Princess Chigi,105 to similar, if less emphatic accusations by Coffinhal, the special envoy of the minister of justice, who expressed concern that Dal Pozzo’s ‘personal friendships’ among the Roman nobility might unduly influence permanent appointments. 106 Much of his fire was more specific, however. Coffinhal felt it particularly irresponsible of the Consultà to allow outstanding criminal cases to be dealt with under papal legislation, something which suited the purposes of the Princess Sciarra, another close friend of Dal Pozzo, who was ‘at law’ against her relative, the Prince Coloma. Nor did it seem to know how French law dealt with the problem of denunciation, a fatal error in a vendetta culture, such as Rome’s. Dal Pozzo made appointments to the higher Roman courts of ‘men born in the Papal states, but their nomination has not lessened public opposition’. They were drawn from the most corrupt elements of the old order – the mangioni (gluttons) – who had dragged the papal government
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into disrepute. The judges of the civil tribunals, too, ‘are generally poorly educated and enjoy no public esteem’.107

Criticism of this kind continued throughout the French occupation. In 1812, the Police-Générale insisted that the seven native Romans serving as police commissioners in the city had to be transferred to other duties; all were appointees of the Consultà, and deemed unreliable.108 In 1811, the prosecutor of the Cour Impériale of Rome sent Paris a long report on the courts of his two departments, steeped in criticism of the work of the Consultà.109 In 1810, he noted that even Miollis wanted to dismiss Capalli, the president of the civil tribunal of Rieti, a patriot who had been twice involved in criminal proceedings and, in one instance, gaoloed. ‘It is true that was before the present government, but it still deprives a judge of all respect.’110 Even when the Consultà returned to its republican roots, its work did not escape the criticism of those who had to live with its appointees. It laboured against the widespread problems facing all central governments in pre-modern Europe, in a quest for suitable local officials, and was forced to rely on many local magistrates either left over from the old order, or patriots who returned to power. Regardless of ideology, later French magistrates felt they shared ‘an old habit of living off fees for services and from the profits that do not always derive from honest sources’. The prosecutor of the Cour Impériale had rooted out ‘only the very worst’ by 1811, and still wanted more changes.111 This was not rare, across the imperial departments, but there was still a feeling that the Consultà had compromised too readily, and too undiscerningly, with what it found. The Consultà also faced the unique hindrance of the successful campaign of passive resistance, and its failure at the higher levels of government must, in great part, be attributed to this. Caught between all this, and the need for haste perceived by Miollis and Dal Pozzo, the executors of the last French annexation in Italy were also the most harassed. Nevertheless, the displeasure of successive French administrators was real enough, whatever its causes. The Consultà manifestly failed to rally what was best, and even what was acceptable, to the new order. Their work did not reflect the indisputable ‘solid experience in their respective fields’ each of its members brought to Rome.

The ‘grand committees’ of Florence and Rome provided anything but an example of French unity in the face of the challenges of empire. In Florence, Menou, Dauchy and Fauchet could barely sit around the same table. All the members of the Roman Consultà often seemed able to agree on was defending themselves from the attacks of Coffinhal and his successors. Dal Pozzo was repeatedly accused of being the instrument of a ‘Piedmontese mafia’ in the realm of judicial appointments; Janet was decried for ideological rigidity in his preference for ex-republicans among the Romans; Miollis and Dal Pozzo were thought simply to do what attractive Roman women told them. Only Degerando, who took a very patronising view of his new administrés, escaped personal castigation.113 The many denunciations levelled against its
members reflected, rather than resolved, the divisions of the 1790s the regime was so intent on overriding.

**The prefects of the départements réunis**

The passing of the interim administrations was meant to mark the integration of the Italian departments into the French empire, and it was to be effected by a change of personnel, and of style. What did not change, for the most part, was their nationality. With the exception of a handful of Piedmontese, and a few truly exceptional cases at the very end of French rule, the overwhelming majority of the prefects of the départements réunis were drawn from the interior. The single most important, truly executive office in the structure of Napoleonic local government was seldom confided to Italians in the imperial departments, in direct contrast to the history of the office in the republic/kingdom of Italy, a fact of great importance for the future of French Italy.

Several distinct groupings appear within the ranks of the prefects that denote shifts and trends in policy. There was a group of relatively hardened republicans among them: Nardon – first in Montenotte, then in the Tar Fauchet in the Arno, and Loysel, in Turin. They were partnered by new men imbued with the ethos of the Conseil d’État, the University and the lycées, heralding a new imperialism, clear in its mores, more precise in its contempt for indigenous culture, but no less ruthless in its assertion of French rule. Nevertheless, within their ranks existed significant differences in background and politics. Roederer, in the Trasimeno, and Tournon, in Rome, were chosen to partner each other exactly because they represented this contrast that was to become amalgame. In 1809, Loysel was removed from Turin, to be replaced by Alexandre Lameth, an ex-noble, as part of a ‘very deliberate effort to recuperate a consensus among the milieus of the old nobility, which seemed integrated into the new imperial society, but were at heart nostalgic for the old order’. In 1806, a similar appointment was made in Genoa. Marie-Juste Antoine de la Rivoire de la Tourette was already in his fifties, and had already been prefect, first of the Tarn, and then of the Puy de Dôme; he was not just a noble, but one of Lucien Bonaparte’s first appointments to the new corps. The appointment of the Count de Chabrol-Volvic to succeed Nardon in the neighbouring department of Montenotte was not dissimilar. At 33, Chabrol-Volvic was of an old Auvergnat noble house, but an early Bonapartist, having served in Egypt, graduated at the head of the first cohort of students from the Polytechnique, and been one of the first sub-prefects, in 1801. The commitment of the regime to ralliement is clear in these appointments to the capitals of the old centres. Several Piedmontese served as prefects in the French interior, but only one was placed in another Italian department, Angelo Gandolfo, in Siena (Ombronne). Gandolfo had a good administrative career under the monarchy, and had held a chair in law at the University of Turin. He had been the first prefect of the Piedmontese
department of the Doire until he fell foul of the military in 1805.\textsuperscript{117} His record in Siena – from the point of view of the regime – was excellent; he kept his nerve bravely in 1808, in the face of a possible rising, and defended the exposed Jewish community with determination.\textsuperscript{118}

The peripheries, by contrast, were given to Jacobins of the old guard, epitomised by Nardon. Later, they were passed to younger \textit{auditeurs} with republican pasts, like Roederer and that other Alsatian Protestant, Rolland, who served first in Marengo – which contained the lair of the great bandit, Mayno – and then in the Apennines, which backed onto the Piacentino. Where there was trouble, republicans, young and old, held the reins. Fauchet remained in Florence, and his presence seemed initially at odds with the creation of Elisse’s Court, but his department also contained the dreaded Aretino. The policy of placing only the loyal over the most marked centres of revolt is clearest in the department of the Taro. When Nardon was forced to retire through poor health, he was replaced by Henri-Jean-Pierre Dupont-Delporte, then 26, the son of a fish merchant from Boulogne, who had known no other career than in imperial service. Made an \textit{auditeur} in 1806, his first post was as director of the Prussian salt mines, seized after the Jena campaign. He then served as prefect of the dangerous department of the Ariège, in the Pyrénées, close to the war in Spain and scene of a mass revolt in 1799. Clearly, there was a career path for Dupont-Delporte that entailed danger and also the passing of the baton from one diehard Bonapartist generation to another. It was the young \textit{auditeur}, not the old revolutionary Nardon, who persecuted the exiled Roman priests he was given to guard after 1810.\textsuperscript{119} Dupont-Delporte served in the 100 Days, and emerged from private life only after the 1830 Revolution to hold the prestigious prefecture of Seine-Inférieure, containing Paris. His elder son outdid the family’s Bonapartism, and was arrested for his part in republican student riots in 1831; the younger served Napoleon III as prefect.\textsuperscript{120}

The Dupont-Delportes may be an extreme example of ideological continuity in a family, but their case underlines the commitment to the regime felt by many entrusted with Italian prefectures. None personified this better than Hugues Nardon, Napoleon’s school friend, who began his career as a prefect in Loire Atlantique, in the forefront of the pacification of the Vendée, and then in the tough Ligurian posting of Montenotte, where Lebrun despaired of his hotheadedness, and lack of attention to detail, but lauded his zeal.\textsuperscript{121} When a serious illness ended his posting to Parma, he recuperated briefly in Geneva, and moved on to serve in Spain, where he was killed on duty, in 1812.\textsuperscript{122} Chabrol-Volvic proved himself a stern gaoler to Pius VII in Savona, and was rewarded in 1813 with the prefecture of Seine-Inférieure, from which he departed into private life, never to return, in 1815. Even Gandolfo paid dearly; excluded from public life by the restored Savoyards, he was finally ennobled, aged 88, by the liberal regime of Carlo Alberto in 1833.\textsuperscript{123} There were others, such as Tournon, in Rome, or
Benoit Capelle and the Count Michel Goyon – successively prefects of the Méditerranée – who went on to serve the Bourbons and set the past behind them. However, their collective conduct during the first empire in Italy was of steady loyalty to the regime, and a shared determination to root out its enemies. The general tone of Tournon’s memoirs, written to clear himself under the Restoration, often stand in contrast to his official correspondence at the time. Indeed, even the edited collection of his private letters, made by a descendant in holy orders, cannot disguise his commitment to the regime while in Rome.

Imperial rule in Italy would turn on an unconscious, independent, but decidedly uniform outlook among the prefects, whatever their backgrounds, that was marked by a growing contempt for their administrés of all ranks and classes. However, in the short term, on their arrival, the new prefects defined themselves first against the satraps. What the satraps – and, in the case of Moreau, even some proconsuls – failed to set, in the eyes of the younger, more institutionalised bureaucrats who served alongside them, was a rigorous example to their administrés, of what it now meant to be a servant of the French state; this was as true in the context of the juntas of Florence and Rome as in that of their personal rule in Turin or Parma. The arrival of the new men brought perceptible change. Their style of government was meant to be different from that of the satraps, and in many ways, it was.

Nevertheless, as the precision wheels of the imperial administration began to replace the less predictable lurchings of Napoleon’s pashas, some of their attitudes were relearned by the next generation. Few men could have been more different from Menou or Junot than Antoine Roederer. Indeed, his appointment in Umbria was intended to mark a new phase in the process of imperial integration. However, it was not long into his tenure that Roederer remarked of the Umbrian elites, ‘We find ourselves in a country where the upper class is very clever. They take the slightest hint.’ His personal dislike of Radet, the last direct heir of the satraps, did not prevent his acquisition of their collective attitude to their administrés. Nor, as the failure of integration gave way to outright attempts at forcible assimilation, did such personal feelings long preclude a return to some of their methods, the chief difference being that men such as Roederer had no compunction about applying to the former ruling elites the ruthlessness usually reserved by the ‘men on horseback’ for the periphery. It ran deeper than this, too, especially when the attitudes of the ‘new men’ diverged from those of the satraps, rather than reflected them. They drew on the hard experience of their predecessors in the public sphere, but they passed much harsher judgements in those areas where public administration and cultural prejudices intersect. These examples represent the reactions of men at the end of the process, however. A new form of French unity was emerging within the administration of the Italian departments, based on the overwhelmingly
negative experience of ruling Italians. It turned not just on defining the indigenous *administrés* and ‘the Other’, but equally, on a conscious definition of themselves as an ‘Other’, among the Italians. They had acquired these attitudes, and drawn together within a laager of their own making, through their belief – individual and collective – that the process of integration had failed among their Italian colleagues, as well as among their *administrés*. That course must now be charted.
Part II

The Phantom of Integration: *Ralliement* and *Amalgame* in the Imperial Departments of Italy

Nathan Wachtel succinctly, but with acute sensibility, discerned two different aspects to the process of acculturation in the context of extra-European colonialism. The first, which forms the subject to this section, he calls *integration*, in the process of which ‘foreign elements are incorporated into the indigenous system, and they are absorbed into its own structures and categories; and even if they provoke changes in the whole of that society, this reorganisation takes its own form from within native values and models’. Its essence is spontaneous and unforced; it stands at the opposite end of the spectrum from *assimilation*.¹ This was what the French ideally hoped for in Italy, and it was what many patriots had tried to convince them of. The events of the *triennio* blunted such hopes to the point that it would be erroneous to apply Wachtel’s category in its pristine sense. Nonetheless, the essence of these hopes – if now couched in less optimistic terms than before 1796 – survived into the Napoleonic occupation, in the form of the twin pillars of the regime’s domestic political policy: *ralliement* and *amalgame*. *Ralliement*, with its emphasis on spontaneous, but reactive support for the Napoleonic regime, might approximate to *integration* as defined by Wachtel in certain significant respects. *Ralliement* implied a wide-ranging societal acceptance and approval of Napoleonic values and institutions; it approximates to *integration* as long as the assumption held for the French and the Italians, that the needs and problems facing the *départements réunis* were similar enough to those of France for Italians to be willing and able to absorb French laws, institutions and mores without prompting or coercion. This was the aspiration of the new regime, and there were times and places when it matched Italian hopes as well, however fragile the relationship between occupier and occupied. Perhaps more than Wachtel’s original theory allows, in Napoleonic Italy the state had an active role, as the architect of a manner of governing that would foster this coming together. Nowhere is the theory better explained than in a letter from the ministry of Police-Générale to Dubois, the Director-General of Police, in Florence:
The incorrigible partisans of the old order and those of the republic must occupy you equally, and you will have to be able to separate the ones from the others. Administrators must, at all times, pay the greatest attention as to how they treat individuals from these different parties; they must never accord them unlimited trust; they must never set them against each other in ways that could unsettle public opinion, or revive old hatreds. They must, on the contrary, make them set about forgetting the times of trouble and disorder; they must render them the strictest and most impartial justice.²

Circumstances, often of an apolitical kind, would make this easier said than done, but the French tempered hope with caution from the outset. In the wake of ralliement would come a natural reordering of social values and structures. Amalgame, on the other hand, represents the politics of fusion, of consciously bringing together old adversaries within imperial institutions. For Bluche, 'The policy of fusion was not only an idea. It was an essential condition for the consolidation of the regime.'³ He was right, and once leavened with the concept of acculturation, it becomes clear that, should something so essential fail or falter, the consequence for the subject society would be assimilation. Initially, for many Italians at least, ralliement and amalgame appeared as reasonable and realisable enough to merit an approximation to integration. Ralliement offered them the power and protection of the new state, to resolve deeply rooted conflicts to their own ends and satisfaction. Amalgame offered them new, potentially rewarding careers. However, whereas the French saw ralliement as the first step in the process of acculturation, and amalgame as requiring something of an apprenticeship, many Italians turned to the former in an attempt to integrate the sinews of the French state into their own culture. Wachtel’s broad categories offer an incisive construct within which to interpret the contemporary policies of ralliement and amalgame, all the more so because it helps recast them in their historical essence, that of gross misunderstandings that led to estrangement.
The hopes for placing French rule on firm foundations began with the most basic responsibilities the modern state has assigned to itself: the protection of persons and property. In the context of the conditions prevalent the length and breadth of the départements réunis, this meant, in part, the new masters cleaning up the mess they had created during the triennio; in even greater part, it meant confronting and solving the growing problems of social control inherited from the old order. This was something the French state was particularly well equipped to do, in the light of its own experiences.

There is a growing body of scholarship on disorder and its relationship to revolution and counter-revolution in France under the Directory and the early Consulate, which reveals not just a similarity of experience, but a genuine chronological continuity between the pacification of the western departments and the Midi, and all the départements réunis, Italian, Belgian and Rhenish. In Italy, the first, fundamental step to a new era in policing and social control was taken simply by the establishment of Napoleonic hegemony over the entire peninsula. This began with the annexation of Liguria to the empire in 1805 and was immediately followed by concerted ‘cross-border’ operations against Mayno, which soon led to his demise; when the last annexation of the rump of the Papal States effectively took place in 1808, Miollis quickly set up a military commission in Umbria to stamp out banditry along the former Tuscan–Papal border, and liaised with Murat’s government in Naples to begin synchronised assaults on the brigands along the southern border. These were no empty measures, even if they were not as effective or enduring as the campaigns of internal pacification further north. Taken together, this entirely new approach to rural policing represents a very tangible example of the process of wearing down and assimilating the peripheries of the pre-imperial states; it is a clear historical example of the theory outlined by Wachtel.

The capacity of the Napoleonic regime to establish a semblance of order on the Italian peripheries remains all the more remarkable because, through the imposition of conscription, it introduced a cardinal source of disruption
entirely its own. Its most important consequence in the *départements réunis* was that it brought the full force of the Napoleonic state into the communities of the periphery; conscription was a vital element in the forcible assimilation of the Italian masses. However, the universal fear and desperation it engendered heightened the lawlessness of the periphery, specifically in that brigandage expanded to include hordes of deserters and *réfractaires*. That is, the immediate consequence of annexation was usually to rekindle the anarchy of the *triennio*. If this resembled more the phenomenon of anti-revolution than that of true counter-revolution, it was usually too fine a nuance for contemporaries to care about. Simultaneously, the French dispensed with the help of the Church, by far the most effective arm of social control available to the *ancien régime*. The abolition of the missions and the regular orders who carried them out, deprived them of valuable sources of empirical information about the communities of the periphery, as well as the less tangible moral and cultural influence wielded by the Tridentine Church in areas where the formal institutions of the state were ephemeral. To a considerable extent, the French could counterbalance these self-induced sources of instability with the support that better law enforcement could muster among Italian elites traumatised by the anarchy that preceded French rule. However, there is evidence that there were longer-standing precedents at the apex of the *ancien régime*, that actively desired an avenue of escape from the political culture of arbitration and government at one remove. Put another way, there had long been signs that this political culture, however sophisticated and well suited to Italian realities, was not a political ideal for the ruling elites. Much is made, rightly, of Tuscan traditions of arbitral jurisprudence, and of Peter-Leopold’s constitutionalism, not only at the national level, but in the localities.6

This stands in contrast to the ruthlessness the Tuscan reformers applied to those communitarian institutions at the centre which were within their grasp. Both the Florentine guilds, and the lay confraternities, were suppressed in the 1770s and 1780s.7 Tight control over society, the periphery included, had always been the avowed ethos of Savoyard absolutism, and has all too readily been accepted as the reality. However flawed in practice, there was a traditional desire for strong government among the Piedmontese elites, and it was reinvigorated by enlightened currents, during the last crisis of the old order.8 Ironically, Carlo Denina’s vitriolic critique of the Savoyard monarchy in its last phase, *Dell’impiego delle persone* – which won him only censure and exile – demanded stronger government. Pius VI showed a consistent interest in policing, and carried out considerable administrative reforms in the city of Rome, principally aimed at bringing the *sbirri* under military supervision, if to little practical effect. There had been projects to model the policing of Rome on that of Paris, a clear indication of official preferences, if also an emphatic example of official impotence.9 Only the Republic of St George in Genoa, and the dukes of Parma and Piacenza, stood
apart from this real, if usually thwarted, desire for a more permanent, less transient degree of control within their borders.

The *sbirro*: collaborator and catalyst for change

The talisman of Italian hopes for a more ordered society under the French was the *sbirro*. There were two different perspectives on this ‘hate figure’ of the old order, and both played well into French hands in the quest for a rapid *ralliement* of the propertied classes. The very existence of the ‘families’ of *sbirri*, scattered across the peripheries of the former states of the *départements réunis*, reveals a different, rather contradictory picture of the old order from that summoned up in the concept of ‘government at one remove’, and of the *togato* as mediator. Rather, the *sbirri* emerge as a failed attempt to create proto-Gendarmeries, and so incarnate a thwarted will common to all the states of the new *départements réunis*, save those of House of Savoy, to control their peripheries directly, and in force. The formidable numbers and strength of the *famiglie di sbirri*, at the moment of annexation, show clearly that what the centres of the old order lacked was the financial and political means to control what they had created, but the concept of a powerful rural police force, covering the entire national territory, was not an alien one. In the more immediate context of the unstable Italian present, the coming of the Gendarmerie offered both the elites at the centre, and many terrorised local communities, the first chance in their history to curb the tyranny of the *sbirri*, and the prospect of being rid of it for good. Radet remarked to Eugène on the fine line between the *sbirro* and the gendarme, the difference being that the latter were under proper discipline, and so centrally controlled. Therefore, the Gendarmerie in the Kingdom of Italy had to be modelled directly on that of France, ‘otherwise, what would the corps be? Would it lose its moral standing and its moral force, and so would it then become little different from the *sbirri*?’

Radet, so often criticised for his heavy-handedness, knew some fine lines when he saw them. It is a tribute to the Napoleonic state that, in this respect at least, that fine line was not crossed. It was, truly, a *société policiée*, in a way its Italian domains were not, yet probably in no other aspect of their rule in the *départements réunis* did the French have such a clear opportunity to play the Paladin.

However, this was usually complicated by the marked penchant of the *sbirri* to rally to the new regime. Even in the Papal States, where the campaign of passive resistance turned on a general refusal to serve the French, the *sbirri* often proved readier to become the strong arm of local government, usually as *gardes champêtres*, than the local notables who were their nominal superiors. The sources for the period of the changeover from *ancien régime* to Napoleonic rule reveal the considerable numbers of *sbirri* spread over the territories of the new imperial departments. In the face of the virtual collapse of the organs of the state throughout Italy during the *triennio*, the survival of
the sbirri in such force is remarkable. They emerged from the revolutionary trauma still numerous, militarily effective and, by their own standards, organised. Their survival points directly to the paradox at the heart of the Italian ancien régime, of ‘strength through weakness’: the very independence of the sbirri from conventional central control, their general lack of reliance on the state for pay, arms and – perhaps above all – orders, made the collapse of the centre irrelevant to them. Whereas in 1813–14 the Gendarmerie obeyed orders from Paris and withdrew from the départements réunis, the sbirri simply carried on. The weakness of the ancien régime states precluded their disbandment – they were too strong for their own governments, even without conventional logistical support.

The French were wary of them, and cautious in the extreme over the process of disbandment. Their numbers alone were daunting. In the core of the Papal States, even after the dismissal and deportation of a considerable number of sbirri born outside, there were still 230 organised in their ‘families’, spread over the provinces, 90 more in the city of Rome, 80 who had taken over the duties of the Guardia Finanziaria. An unknown number had become gardes champêtres or huissiers des tribunaux, soon after annexation; these posts were in the gift of local authorities, and it was often feared they had been made under pressure from the sbirri themselves, or as ill-concealed bribes by terrified communities.11 The sbirri were remarkably numerous in the duchies of Parma, Piacenza and Guastalla, in 1806: a reserve company for the new department of Taro was organised, together with four others, to perform garrison duties in the major towns – Parma, Piacenza, Guastalla and Borgo San Donnino.12 There was also a company of ex-sbirri guarding prisoners doing forced labour at the fortress of Salvo Maggiore.13 These figures show the sbirri were far from a small force or an ephemeral presence on the periphery during the ancien régime. There was no lack of rural policing before the arrival of the Gendarmerie; rather, there was an absence of central control over it. Miollis had little time for the ‘weak ways’ of the papal regime, nor was he averse to fighting bandits or anyone else who stood in his master’s path, but he reacted to the Roman sbirri with a dread more akin to the timidity of the old order, than the ruthlessness of the new:

The men who compose the sbirri, as described by public opinion, is a subject of fear and discontent. To dismiss them would open the last floodgates we possess against disorder, and it would probably only augment the fomenters of that disorder.14

The best Miollis could do was to dismiss as many officers as he could, and put them under French regulations. Tournon feared almost as much as he loathed the sbirri, but like Miollis before him, was forced to confide to a personal friend that ‘those brigands who have fallen into the hands of the government while armed, have not been killed by the Gendarmerie; those
we have been able to arrest have been taken by former sbirri, who can share their way of thinking'. Both men were quickly infected with a very atavistic fear of this corps, which denotes anything but its ineffectiveness.

The potential power of the sbirri is clearest from the fear and concern their continued existence inspired in the French. In 1811 Tournon had no doubts about their capacity to create serious disorder in the countryside, and warned against disbanding them en masse, because any attempt to confront or forcibly dissolve them ‘at a stroke’ would only aggravate banditry in a region where it had already reached dangerous proportions. Tournon’s views expose starkly the paradox of the sbirri under the old order: they were a force to be reckoned with, but they had done precious little to curb the rising tide of disorder on the Roman periphery. That this was not due principally to their own weakness was clear from the caution with which even so powerful an agent as the Napoleonic empire treated them. The French were not, as it emerged, as powerless against them as the states they succeeded, and Tournon disapproved of the concessions already made to them by the exposed local authorities:

These people should only be given jobs as police agents or gardes champêtres with the greatest caution. Such posts are only too prone to give vent to the vicious inclinations of the sbirri, and several of those appointed as gardes champêtres have already come to the attention of the police, and their arrests have been necessary.

His policy was to neutralise and disband the sbirri. However, this had not always been the case.

Prior to the Piacentino revolt, Moreau formed a colonne mobile from the sbirri under their ancien régime commander, proving not only their enduring ruthlessness towards the communities they garrisoned, but their willingness to serve their new masters in the old way. Nardon, who had to live with the consequences of Moreau’s opportunism, held the conduct of Botti and his ex-sbirri in no small part responsible for provoking the rebellion by their brutal policing. It was precisely the fear they inspired in local communities that led Junot to use them as a ‘rapid deployment force’ to support the Gendarmerie brigades distributed about the countryside. He ensured they were kept in check by French officers, and were seldom deployed independently. They were also used to collect taxes by the new French civil authorities. Junot continued to employ Botti, sending him and his ex-sbirri on battue générale of Val di Tidone, one of the major centres of the revolt, a year later. When convulsed circumstances coincided with the presence in authority of men like Junot, the sbirri were still regarded as having their part to play. However, the voluntary use of sbirri corresponded clearly to a phase of pacification, and to the personal politics of particular French administrators. Junot, Botti and the sbirri were ‘all of a piece’. They belonged
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to the initial, essentially military period of pacification, and none was welcome once the crisis was past. When Ernesto Spampani, the ex-ssbirro captain of Pistoia, asked to join the French police, the French Director-General of Police in Florence spoke of ‘his turbulence, his love of exaggeration and denunciation’. However, although he recommended he be removed from Tuscany – ‘where he has grudges to settle’ – there was no doubt that he could be useful in the new, unruly Roman departments just over the border.22

Nor were those opposed to the employment of the ssbirri – or the deployment of their policing methods – easily able to rid themselves of them. In Rome, Tournon’s disdain could not prevent their continued use in the lower rungs of rural policing, nor as prison guards in the larger towns and cities. They also continued, as in the Piacentino, as active auxiliaries to the new Gendarmerie in the most disturbed parts of the two Roman departments. In the spring of 1811, the ssbirri made up an important part of the colonnes mobiles unleashed by the French against the bandits around Velletri, operations Tournon described as ‘extremely dangerous’.23 They were deployed again, a few months later, in the same way, on the Neapolitan border around Frossinone, probably the most bandit-ridden, counter-revolutionary part of the Roman departments.24 They were useful, but Tournon knew that failure to pay them ‘…could finish by turning them into an even more dangerous form of brigand, all the more so because they know their areas perfectly, as well as the workings of the police, which continues to employ them against still other brigands’.25 The ssbirri were, indeed, an organised police corps, efficient and powerful. They knew their localities; they were capable of engaging the bandits; they were still possessed of enough force to offer resistance to either the bandits or the French. Thus, the real problem for central authority was over discipline and control, not of establishing a police presence in the countryside.

The apolitical behaviour of the ssbirri is striking throughout the départements réunis. The French never detected any trace of loyalty in their ranks to the dukes of Parma or Tuscany, nor to Pius VII, always attributing their unreliability to a mixture of financial desperation and ‘bad character’. The only notable exception to this came in the Papal States, where several ssbirri officers in Umbria were arrested by Miollis, for acting as couriers for the Pope’s orders, assuring their circulation around the provincial governors in the first months of the occupation.26 Most served the French willingly enough, however, if seldom in the manner preferred by the new regime. In Parma and Piacenza, the ssbirri – and, most certainly their chief, Botti – showed themselves actively pro-French, and proved among Junot’s most enthusiastic ‘enforcers’ in the often brutal repression that followed the revolt of 1805–6. Moreau and Junot shared a high opinion of Botti, the latter entrusting him and several ‘families’ of ssbirri with an enquiry into the sources of banditry in the Piacentino.27 In the Papal States and the duchies, what emerges is
a numerous, well-armed and tightly knit, if hardly ‘disciplined’, *ancien régime* corporation, long as ‘out of hand’ as lay confraternities were from clerical control. This pattern was not universal: in Liguria, the *sbirri* were not gathered together in ‘families’ outside Genoa, but scattered about the periphery as individual ‘constables’. The pattern in Tuscany was closer to that of Parma and the Papal States, but the presence of a national civilian police network, the Buon Governo, provided a perpetual challenge to the *sbirri*. Although possessed of no armed force, the Buon Governo supplied a steady, detailed flow of information to the centre, with levels of professionalism seldom achieved elsewhere in *ancien régime* Italy. It is very revealing of the attitudes of professional Tuscan bureaucrats to the *sbirri* that, on the eve of annexation in 1807, they were the chief conduit of the petitions of numerous local communities, asking for their replacement by French detachments. The Buon Governo was also very influential in the rapid ‘recall’ of the *sbirri* and their transfer into French military units bound for active service, ensuring the exile, en masse, of the Tuscan *sbirri*.

If there was a unifying thread in the relationship of the *sbirri* to the rest of the *ancien régime*, it was the loathing in which they were held by both the communities in which they lived and by the professional bureaucrats of the former Italian states. It was a rare source of mutual interest between centre and periphery, and one to which the French were able to appeal as a foundation for *ralliement*. The Gendarmerie fulfilled the role originally envisaged for the *sbirri*, but it was subjected to strict military discipline, drawn from the ranks of the *sous-officiers* of the Grande Armée, housed in barracks – at least for the most part – and supported from central public funds. Indeed, the whole ethos of the new corps was to keep it apart from the communities it served, and independent of them, financially, logistically and socially.

In practice, and given the historical precedent set by the *sbirri* of what could happen to small units of armed men on the Italian periphery, it is a tribute to the discipline instilled under the Grande Armée, and to the tight system of central control exercised by the Napoleonic state, that the six-man brigades quartered across the *départements réunis* did not go down the same road. All too often they went unpaid; barracks were come by only gradually in many areas, while their roles in the process of conscription and the enforcement of the terms of the Concordat made them as unpopular as their predecessors, if for very different reasons. Indeed, the most striking logistical difference between the *sbirri* and the gendarme was that the former were often better armed and equipped than the latter. They were free, at least, to pillage local resources unhindered. The conduct of individual gendarmes was often questioned, but in direct contrast to the world of the *sbirri*, gendarmes who displayed *sbirri*-like behaviour were dealt with accordingly. If the new corps won few friends among the communities it was meant to serve, and even if its members found themselves as ‘ghettoised’ as their predecessors, it did not slip the lead of a very different ‘centre’ under the new regime.
Under Napoleonic rule, ultimately, the centre achieved a tighter grip over the periphery than had ever been known, but it did so because it was able to control its local agents, not because it was the first regime to implant and disseminate a powerful, permanent armed corps on the periphery, and still less because the new corps won ‘hearts and minds’ where its predecessor had failed to do so. Ironically, the real exception to this is Piedmont, given its status as the most absolutist and ‘professionalised’ of the Italian states. Devoid of sbirri, and with no real police presence in the countryside, the arrival of the Gendarmerie on its periphery represented a true volte-face in its rural history. Elsewhere, the novelty of the new regime lay not in the existence of the corps itself, but in its ability to solve the hitherto perennial problem of central control. Perhaps the true nature of the relationship between the sbirri and the French is encapsulated by the fate of a Roman sbirro, Costantini. He had no qualms about serving the new order, and took a leading role in the arrest of Pius VII, and Radet’s ‘assault on the Vatican’ on the night of 6 July 1809. Radet confided a great deal of responsibility to him that night, but Miollis used him as a convenient scapegoat, and in a cynical attempt to placate outraged Roman opinion, had him shot for pilfering the Papal apartments, five days later.30

**Ralliement through policing: practical integration and future borrowings**

Any consensus for ralliement based on law and order stopped where the strongholds of counter-revolution merged with local economies rooted in smuggling, or in the very different species of banditry centred on service to the feudal baronage. Ralliement of this kind had a discernible geographic space. In the Roman arrondissements of Viterbo and Frossinone, ‘in the communes where the brigands are landowners, and where the tax collectors dare not try to raise revenue’, ralliement constructed on the restoration of order had no hope of success, leading Norvins to conclude, by 1812, that only brute force would work.31 Earlier, it had been no different in the southern uplands of Piedmont or the Ligurian valleys. Where a traditional economy or social structure favoured such activities, ralliement reached its geographic limits. This makes the French achievement in southern Piedmont all the more remarkable. Here, sheer persistence and the forceful policing of the old frontier made possible by the annexation of both Piedmont and Liguria, changed the behaviour of the Narzole band from a major catalyst in the local economy to a kidnapping network and a direct threat to local landowners, which, in turn, won the regime local support for its eventual extirpation.32 The French were deeply aware of the significance of this success. It greatly influenced their perception of themselves, and their role in establishing law and order, in the rest of the imperial departments. In the
The diminuation of the number of thieves and the repression of brigandage are the things it is imperative to tackle effectively. We were able to destroy the dreadful brigandage in the Piedmontese and Ligurian mountains, as well as in the Alpine valleys through perseverance and indefatigable energy.33

He compared this to earlier successes in the Vendean departments. The French saw their reputation now preceded them. When Tournon was informed that the peasants of Poli, near Tivoli, had turned on a famous local bandit, he interpreted it in this context, for ‘what emerges as most gratifying, is that the country people themselves carried out these arrests’.34 Narzole was never far from the eye of the official mind.

It was not the official mind that truly mattered in the quest for ralliement, however, and the restoration of order spoke louder for the new regime than its jaded, pessimistic discourse. Where the French continued to win their real spurs, and to impress the propertied classes of the periphery, was in their pursuit of less politicised criminals and their capacity to protect property. Around – and, physically, below – the roccaforti of mountain smugglers and ungoverned valley communities, now hardened into bastions of counter-revolution, lay the plains and urban centres whose people had regarded them as threats, since the late Middle Ages.35 The French did not always grasp this potential, their most notable failure being the city – as distinctly opposed to the province – of Arezzo. That is, they failed to see that, in 1799 and earlier, Arezzo had, in fact, been the first victim of the Viva Maria, and became its hub only after a forced occupation. Instead, they turned their wrath on the town in 1799, and again in 1808, thus consummating their own delusions.

However, elsewhere the new order was able to profit from both the anarchy engendered by the collapse of the old and, on occasion, the often vicious repression the ancien régime unleashed on the provinces in its death throes. The unfolding of events in the Piedmontese provinces, between 1797 and circa 1802, provided the first Italian testing ground for both sets of circumstances. The year 1797 had seen a wave of peasant revolts, in both the Alpine and Apennine valleys, as well as subsistence riots in many provincial centres. In the face of an atavistic enemy, the provincial towns showed a remarkable ability to regulate their own conflicts, and then to unite, literally within their own walls, in the face of onslaughts from their hinterlands. In several cases, however, the royal government in Turin chose not to dwell on this sense of unity, or on the desire for civil order it embodied, but on the initial disturbances. The result was brutal, often blind repression. In the short term, this was soon overshadowed by the horrors of war and the
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rapaciousness of the Army of Italy: in 1799, these same towns opened their doors to a new, more counter-revolutionary wave of mountain rebellion.

Yet, in the years immediately after the reoccupation of Piedmont in 1800, older patterns began to reassert themselves, particularly the willingness of the provincial centres to work with the French, to repel the continuing disorder rooted in the higher valleys. The atavistic fear of the mountain by the plain, of the periphery by the urban centre – however small and localised – was discernible amidst the anti-French, anti-Jacobin fury of *il novantanove*, even if it was not always apparent. It was, however, among the most engrained of all forms of conflict and insecurity in early modern Italy. During subsistence crises, town dwellers of all classes in the lowlands and the great urban centres sought to shut their gates against violent, famished intrusions from the periphery. Now, they wanted the French to take the fight to the periphery, through the Gendarmerie. The traditional alliance between the Ligurian *valligiani* and Genoa, or the new-found coalition of Ruffo’s Santa Fede and the Neapolitan *lazzaroni*, was, without question, a terrifying and defining lesson for the future rulers of Napoleonic Italy, which they were never complacent enough to forget.

Nevertheless, beside this was the example of Piedmontese towns like Saluzzo, Fossano or Racconigi, the terror first sown in Siena by the arrival of the Aretini, or even the hesitancy of Florence to admit the ‘army’ of Arezzo as its liberator, in 1799. The way in which Bobbio stood firm against the rebels of the Piacentino in 1806, and the willingness of the clergy and nobles of Piacenza to try to mediate with the rebels, were all signs of deeper currents of fear, loathing and submissiveness to any power capable of preserving order at work, than those fuelling ideological confrontation. Many were thrown away by the French: the Church, a powerful source of order, was rapidly alienated by the introduction of the Concordat, and large sections of the Italian nobility were soon estranged for a multiplicity of motives. Above all, the antithetical nature of Italian traditions of arbitration, official or otherwise, and the ethos of the new regime, made collaboration very difficult.

In their place, however, the French could bring the Gendarmerie, swifter and more decisive criminal justice, an effective system of quasi-legal police surveillance – the *mesure administrative*, or *Haute Police* – and a now engrained professional determination to repeat previous successes in the Italian departments. The edifice Howard Brown terms ‘the security state’ won the new rulers a great deal of admiration and support, particularly when local national guardsmen came forward, consistently, and not just in times of crisis, to support the gendarmes’ patrols against routine, if serious, crime. In southern Piedmont, especially in those areas on the edge of the major bastions of prolonged banditry and engrained, anti-French resistance, this proved the case. The national guards of Bra, Cuneo and other towns supported the Gendarmerie with great consistency throughout the last six years of
French rule. Cuneo’s national guard helped the Gendarmerie patrol *fêtes de campagne*. In the first week of September 1813, 100 national guards had patrolled Cuneo’s rural outskirts, rounding up beggars, deserters and other *mauvais sujets*, while from January, 21 national guards did 24-hour patrols on the edge of the town. In April 1812, Bra’s national guard was also doing day and night patrols following a series of thefts from country houses outside the town. The desire to preserve law and order was not confined to full-time police officials or to one particular period in the history of French rule in these parts of Piedmont, where lesser and middling landowners had long lived in the shadow of mountain disorder.

From the outset of effective French rule in 1808, the Tuscan authorities welcomed the power of the Gendarmerie. But this had less to do with the legacy of Leopoldine enlightened absolutism than French ability to enforce the will of the centre on the periphery. Not only did the president of the ducal Buon Governo continue to work with the junta and Radet, but many *vicarcii*, provincial officials who combined policing and judicial powers, beseeched the new government for brigades, essentially to support the work already being done by local militias. The concern of the *vicarcii* only reflected that of many local communities. Reille had been quick to respond to petitions by quartering pickets of French troops across the periphery, late in 1807; when they were withdrawn, in June, both the Buon Governo and the new prefects reported great concern from the mayors, that Gendarmerie brigades be sent to replace them, quickly. Reille was impressed by the manner in which many Tuscan communities had sprung to their own defence in the troubled years before annexation, especially the urban volunteer militias ‘composed of bourgeois who get no pay at all, and who police their towns when called upon’. At a fundamental level, the character of such corps signals a genuine identity of interest between this sector of their Tuscan *administrés* and the French, but their highly localised *ancien régime* structures were unacceptable to Reille. He was sufficiently impressed by their members to wish to retain them, but reorganised into a light infantry regiment for service over a wider area. He deeply admired the companies of professional coastguards who manned the *presidi* of Gigillio, Grossetto, Campiglia and Pietra Santa, and the network of lookout towers connecting them, the length of the Tuscan Riviera, supported by another company mounted on local ponies which moved between the posts. Reille firmly believed they were irreplaceable:

> They are drawn from local men, who are used to the very special climate of the Maremma, with which they alone can cope. They are recruited exclusively for service in these companies, and as it would be impossible to replace them, I propose to leave them as they are, while bringing them as closely into line as possible with our companies of coastguards.
Only local men, organised to suit themselves, could cope with such difficult conditions. His flexibility was rare among the new rulers, but his views did not prevail: the Tuscan coastguards were disbanded and replaced by regular troops. Such inflexibility in the particular was emblematic of a more serious rigidity at fundamental levels. As John Davis has incisively observed of Napoleonic Italy, a top-down perspective on modernisation does not always work; those outside the state could ‘take the notion of the rule of law to heart in ways that exposed the autocratic realities of the new bureaucracies constructed on the ashes of the ancien régime monarchies’. In this case, the French trampled on the last green shoots of Italian civic republicanism, the acceptable face of campanilismo, as it were.

This intransigence presaged a refusal to engage even with those aspects of ancien régime social control that might have bolstered French rule. However, sheer power, organisational ability and military resources also allowed the French, effectively, to ignore large sections of the Italian elites, whose traditional status as sources of arbitration between the state and the communities of the periphery was now redundant. This was why, essentially, they were able to rule the départements réunis more effectively than any previous regime with virtually a ‘skeleton crew’ composed of bureaucrats and gendarmes imported from ‘the interior’, without either the support of the Church or the upper echelons of the lay elites. Even in one of the most bandit-ridden parts of Umbria, the prefect, Roederer, openly trembled at the prospect, raised by Miollis, of using civic guards, drawn from the local landowners, to do regular patrols independently of the Gendarmerie. It was a return to the anarchy of the pre-annexation period: ‘General Miollis is unaware of – or has forgotten – that this unit committed dreadful excesses’, and he persuaded Paris to concentrate arms in his hands, for distribution at his discretion. During the convulsed circumstances of 1813, it was not thought wise to arm even ‘the better off property owners’.

Roederer’s revulsion at the prospect of even propertied, ‘respectable’ Italians policing themselves, as opposed to national guardsmen assisting a predominantly French Gendarmerie, is very revealing. The concept of the state as a buffer to protect citizens from each other became axiomatic to the French in Italy. The almost complete entrustment of policing to the French betokened not just a lingering worry that the political factions of the triennio were still at odds with each other, although such bitterness did, indeed, endure. Rather, the French came to believe that Italian society was too unaccustomed to their standards of public responsibility, too lacking in civisme, to police itself. There were many implications in such an attitude towards their administrés, but its major result was to turn Italians into spectators, rather than active participants, in what they, as well as the French, saw as a vital aspect of the new regime. They saw the law enforced by Gendarmerie brigades composed, in two-thirds, of Frenchmen, with the remainder made up by Piedmontese and the occasional Ligurian. All senior
officers, like all three Directors-General of Police, were French, and most of the prosecutors of the higher courts were predominantly so, with a few Piedmontese.

Italians might admire the apparatus of the Napoleonic security state, and be quick to imitate – or agitate for the imitation – of its institutions and procedures, in the decades after 1814, but they played no part in its operations. The Carabinieri Reale, in the lands of the House of Savoy, and the papal Gendarmeria set up by Consalvi soon after the restoration, represent two emphatic examples of what Axtell has termed ‘borrowings’. In this case, Italians revived the Napoleonic regime, after 1814, but they did not draw on an experience of direct participation. Davis has argued that, under the French, ‘the law itself was adopted as an instrument of change that sought to impose values and precepts that often ran counter to established law, custom and practice’. This is incontrovertibly so, but the instrument was not wielded or fashioned by Italians, even the wealthiest and – formerly – most influential. This was because what the French saw as central to Italian life, was less the shattering of community, than its eternal absence. The very spontaneity of collaboration in restoring order could arouse deep suspicions in the ranks of the imperial bureaucracy, that only vendetta and selfish interest lay behind it. Napoleon’s men often emerge as unstructured Gramscians.

In the context of colonial North America, Axtell also remarked of the concept of ‘borrowings’, that ‘Adaptation is less often a sign of capitulation than of capitalisation’, and that the acceptance of a different material culture need not denote the rejection of identity. This was just what the French feared, and what later Italian liberals and revolutionaries felt had happened. Massimo D’Azeglio, the second constitutional prime minister of both Piedmont and the newly united Italy, described the creation of the Savoyard Carabinieri as tantamount to placing ‘the sword of Achilles in the hands of Thersiles’. That was politics, as it were. However, a deeper, more pervasive force has been detected in the readiness of the propertied classes of the periphery to embrace the security state. Their increasing reliance on the Gendarmerie, in particular, denotes a willingness to abandon the political culture of arbitration, and of government at one remove, at least in this crucial respect. Perhaps it reveals the endurance of the vision of tight control that saw the creation of the sbirri, now at last seen to be feasible under a stronger state. If the French saw in this a desire to prosecute political vendettas and ‘play the tyrant’, in the manner of a politically immature, decadent elite culture, others have seen in it the culmination of class conflict and deep-seated insecurity rooted in the crisis of the Italian ancien régime in the late eighteenth century. Propertied Italians, terrified by the collapse of order, the threat to property posed by popular counter-revolution and the longer-term rise in criminality, embraced the security state.

In so doing, it has been argued, the French pandered to the most divisive currents in Italian society. There is no doubt that demographic pressures,
and the resultant struggles over common lands in particular, often shattered the complex bonds among the social strata of the periphery. Tuscany, above all, offers strong evidence of this, yet even here, the impetus for policing directed at the protection of property could run far down the social scale. The issue was greatly confused for the peasantry everywhere, by the threat of conscription which, itself, should often be interpreted in the context of a threat to property, particularly in areas of *mezzadria*, where it could disrupt the rural economy. Many of the great Tuscan landowners initially supported conscription as a form of social control; Count Torregiani sent 74 of his tenants to the army during French rule – although the French complained they were always ‘the worst sort’ – but by 1813 even he complained that the war was draining his manpower, and that he had to virtually abandon several of his farms.\(^5\)

When divorced from conscription, however, the service provided by the Gendarmerie often emerges less as the instrument of class, than of peripheral communities as a whole. The repression of disorder was certainly in the interests of large landowners beset by restless tenants, particularly when their relationship was aggressively allodial, as in Tuscany, where great landowners, like Torregiani, implored such measures to lessen the threat they perceived from their *mezzadri*, whose hostility dated from Leopoldine reforms.\(^5\) However, the usefulness of the new security state was not confined to them.

The real triumph came when the new policing powers the French had to offer were seized upon in the heart of the periphery, in those areas immediately adjacent to, but seldom part of, the bastions of resistance in 1799. Their determination to act firmly in such circumstances to protect local notables is made strikingly clear by events in the commune of La Rochetta Tanaro, in the Langhe, in 1812. On 29 April, an attempt was made on the life of one Damiano, a local landowner and municipal councillor,\(^5\) the following month, three other municipal councillors, their secretary and Damiano lost a total of 800 vines due to deliberate vandalism.\(^5\) D’Auzers’ response was quick and emphatic: a brigade of gendarmes was assembled and sent to La Rochetta to protect the notables;\(^6\) when the harassment persisted, 16 more gendarmes were despatched. D’Auzers declared, ‘The seriousness of such a crime must necessitate rigorous and energetic action against the perpetrators.’\(^6\) A *battue générale* ensued and 14 *mauvais sujets*, designated as such by the municipal councillors, were arrested. One of them was found guilty of harassing the notables and was sentenced to five years in gaol,\(^6\) while six others got shorter sentences after spending eight months in gaol prior to conviction.\(^5\) This operation bears an outward resemblance to Menou’s favoured tactics – the use of the law of 10 Vendémiaire, Year IV – but the resemblance is a deceptive one. The occupation of La Rochetta Tanaro was carried out at the expense of the government, not of the commune,\(^6\) and its purpose was to protect property, not to penalise the commune.
The notables were left in no doubt about the government’s determination to defend them.

Further south, the need was even greater. An almost casual aside from the secretary-general of Rome’s police spoke volumes of what the new regime could find on the periphery. In Sonnino, a mountain commune near Velletri, a powerful baronial family, the Colonnas, owned a building called, simply, the Tower, which housed the gaol and local court, and was ‘where most of the townspeople took refuge whenever the area was full of bands of assassins’. Ironically, the problem came to light as a result of another aspect of the impact of *ralliement*, when the Colonnas, entering into the spirit of the abolition of feudalism brought by the Code, sold the Tower to a local entrepreneur, who demolished it, leaving Sonnino undefended.65 Seen from Paris, the modern, Napoleonic state had entered a world that was still in the Dark Ages. Here, too, are delineated the lines of support the French might find within the ranks of the propertied classes.

The new regime was, in a rural context, truly ‘bourgeois’, in that its natural constituency was found among those property owners who were most exposed to disorder and crime, but who lacked the individual wealth or influence to protect themselves; this could stretch well into the middle ranks of the peasantry, if not too compromised by opposition to conscription. Unlike these provincial notables, the true baronage could retire behind its own private armies. This was the condition of the Colonna and other great Roman families, who – like the barons of the Kingdom of Naples – were as inclined to foster banditry as to evade it. However, the imperial fiefs of the Piedmontese and Ligurian Apennines also saw families like the Barolos – strongly suspected of complicity with the Narzole band – retreat behind their own local influence and private field guards, even after the abolition of the last vestiges of seigneurialism.66 In the same area, around Alba, as late as 1814, the ex-counts Guarrene, Lion di Souza and Giaccoza all retained private guards.67 Men commanding such force were not as directly dependent for protection on the French, or on the local authorities; therefore, they were able to hold themselves aloof from fears for the safety of persons and property. The great families simply did not need this aspect of the modern state, and were still avoiding it until the end, even in that part of Italy longest under French rule.

It was not so among the middle ranks of the landowners resident on the periphery, however, and they had had a long apprenticeship in the anxieties of disorder, dating back at least as far as the *triennio*. This experience, common the length and breadth of the Apennine spine by the second French invasion of 1800, had shown them that neither collective local resources, nor the political culture of government at one remove, were sufficient against the rising tide of anarchy. Not long after the annexation of Liguria, the small hill commune of Apparizione, east of Genoa, petitioned the prefect to use the Gendarmerie to protect its common lands from the
encroachments of other villages, an example of traditional, collective sources of local authority asking new forces to solve old problems.\textsuperscript{68}

The Ligurian valleys, the Piacentino, and the ex-imperial fiefs of the Langhe, together with Tolfa and much of the Aretino, are notable by their absence in such stories. Nevertheless, this aspect of the new regime had won support, if hardly popularity, and so penetrated the periphery to a remarkable degree. There were very few requests by mayors or local communities for Gendarmerie brigades to be withdrawn, although they complained often, and forcibly, about the conduct of individual gendarmes. There was no love lost between the Gendarmerie and the communities it policed; violent men policed an equally violent society. At Villanova, in the Piedmontese department of the Po, a clash between gendarmes and local people, including the mayor, whose daughter was allegedly raped by members of the brigade, escalated into something close to a vendetta. The initial confrontation was followed by a gendarme raid on Villanova, a descent into \textit{sbirri}-like behaviour. Even so violent and bitter an incident as this did not blind the local notables to the value of the Gendarmerie. Following an investigation, Paris offered to move the brigade to placate the populace,\textsuperscript{69} but the local authorities had formulated their own compromise. ‘The mayor and people of Villanova ask nothing else, save the removal of the gendarmes they have accused.’\textsuperscript{70} Paris quickly complied.\textsuperscript{71} This is, perhaps, the most emphatic example of how important the Gendarmerie’s presence had become to Piedmontese notables.

The real test came in the death throes of imperial rule in Italy. In southern Piedmont, there was no support for anti-French revolts along the lines of 1799.\textsuperscript{72} Even in the Aretino, the unsettled conditions of 1814 actually saw many isolated communities rally around the Gendarmerie. Although several mayors in the valleys implored reimbursement for the heavy costs of the brigades sent to protect them, they stressed the need to maintain the Gendarmerie, and the cooperation they were getting from their own national guardsmen. The mayor of Terranova reported how ‘Several of the wealthiest landowners of the commune have advanced money to maintain the said corps’, while his colleague in Montevarchi – a target of the 1799 rebels – lamented that he had no brigade, and demanded one from the prefect, ‘in so much as it is essential both for public security, and in the interests of the government’. The Commandant of the Arno complained that mayors did not want to pay for the upkeep of extra, auxiliary brigades, while demanding their presence in the same breath. When the French, desperately overstretched, began to withdraw brigades from the periphery, to concentrate on the protection of the main roads, the sub-prefect of Pistoia reported a flood of complaints from mayors, demanding their re-establishment ‘according to the old system’.\textsuperscript{73} The pattern set by the petitions of 1808, when many Tuscan communities had begged first for French troops to protect them from deserters and \textit{sbirri}, and then for proper Gendarmerie brigades when they were withdrawn, had endured.
**Haute Police and the search for order: the periphery and the new regime**

Italians may have been passive recipients of the security state, but when Napoleonic policing entered the realms of denunciation and passed from the new, unfamiliar context of the Code into those of semi-legality, they found themselves on ground more congenial – and familiar – to them than to their new masters. In the official denunciation and the extra-legal procedures of the *Haute Police*, the French had given them an arena for which the political culture of government at one remove, on the one hand, and of the Inquisition, on the other, had long prepared them.

Alongside the Gendarmerie were the administrative, civilian police, represented at the centre by the Directors-General of Police, in Turin, Florence and Rome, and in the localities by their commissioners. Commanded by Fouché and Savary, they were a more sinister force than the gendarmes, and their agents were usually known patriots. Nevertheless, working with the prefects and the public prosecutors, usually to circumvent the strictures of the Code, they had their part to play in the defence of persons and property, and so in the cause of *ralliement*. Indeed, their frequent recourse to the extra-legal *mesure administrative*, or *mesure d’Haute Police*, in dealing with inveterate criminals in isolated communities, actually corresponded more easily with the practices of the old order than the altogether new presence of the Gendarmerie on the periphery. It appealed to older traditions of denunciation, which often disconcerted the French, but as the targets of the *mesure administrative* shifted from political subversives to local bullies, habitual petty criminals or unruly tenants, it became a policing tool remarkably suited to the needs of wealthy landowners and peasant communities alike. After official denunciation to a public prosecutor, it allowed secret information to be gathered on those accused of a variety of offences, and for their detention, arrest and even exile, should normal court proceedings collapse in the face of good evidence.

In Napoleonic hands, the normal outcome of investigations under *Haute Police* usually amounted to little more than police surveillance, but this was more often through French circumspection than local compassion for those involved. War and the vast extent of the empire made more effective the ancien régime tradition of exiling the accused from the locality. Whereas the best the Archduchy of Tuscany could offer were the insalubrious wastes of the Maremma, and the Piedmontese, Sardinia, the circumstances of Napoleonic Europe allowed local *bêtes noires* to be conscripted and sent to Spain or, later, Russia. Denunciations soon flooded in to the new rulers, a sign of *ralliement* of the most fundamental kind. Communities feared the Gendarmerie as an arm of conscription, and they feared conscription because of its seemingly arbitrary application and numerical impact on their workforces. However, the denunciation and removal of an individual, or small group, were quite different.
The process began in the Piedmontese departments, while still being refined and developed in France itself. By the next wave of imperial expansion in 1805, it had evolved into its permanent form. The first years of French rule in Piedmont saw the use of sweeping measures such as the general deportation of those convicted of rebellion, authorised by Jourdan in 1802, together with its antidote, the general amnesty of 1799. It also saw the arrest of numerous men in rural areas, generally accused of seditious speech – probably because the amnesty made it impossible for any of their actions to be brought to law. Later, the French abandoned this general approach in favour of the examination of individual cases; these investigations embraced men previously arrested, in addition to current cases before the Director-General in Turin. In 1805, while Menou was still head of the General Administration and the security forces, he gave D'Auzers responsibility for *Haute Police*, and it is from this time that detailed investigations of individual cases begin. In the convulsed conditions of rural Piedmont, a *mesure administrative* could bring relative calm to communes where trouble had been endemic long before the Revolution. In October 1810, Fava, a *laboureur* from La Morra, was arrested by a *colonne mobile*, accused of killing the *adjoint* in 1806. The *juge de paix* could not convict, but recommended he be held under *Haute Police*. D'Auzers complied, sending Fava to a colonial battalion, and added that were he allowed to return, Fava would ‘wreak vengeance’ on the mayor for denouncing him. Moreover, this was not his first offence; he had deserted from a royal regiment in 1792, after killing his sergeant, and had terrorised his neighbours after his return to La Morra. He was also suspected of rural thefts. Faissola, from the Langhese commune of Verduno, had a similar record, and met an identical fate in 1811. He was acquitted by Stura’s criminal court of a series of violent assaults on the mayor in 1806 through lack of proof and, therefore, the mayor would only arrest him when assured it would be done by *Haute Police*. D’Auzers said his violent conduct had even extended to his own father and uncles, and so ordered him to a colonial battalion.

In his classic account of the Napoleonic era, Georges Lefebvre declared: ‘In Napoleon’s eyes, detention under the *mesure administrative* was not just there to stifle opposition; it was also supposed to punish common offences...if judicial proof was insufficient.’ This was, without doubt, music to the ears of many exposed communities and local officials throughout the peripheries of the Apennine spine. *Haute Police* came to the rescue of the mayor and a number of families in the Tuscan village of Lamporechio in 1810, when the government detained Paolo Masi, and then sent him to the army. Masi had been a local criminal during the ancien régime, and had first been sent into the Tuscan army, from which he deserted and returned to terrorise his neighbours. When judicial proceedings collapsed, this community feared the worst, but after enquiries, the prefect was able to hold him in gaol, before he was sent to the army. In Greve, in Tuscany, *Haute Police*
was used to end the reign of terror imposed by a delinquent family of several generations, after repeated petitions by local people. The Formiglie family was reported to the prefect in Florence as ‘in general, of bad repute’:

The boys only rarely sleep in the parental home. Armed with rifles, they rove about the countryside... They are regarded as the authors, or the accomplices, of many crimes committed in the area. These suspicions are based on the fact that they have no savings, no regular work, and that they have no desire to work.80

Private suits had always collapsed, but the French authorities eventually decided to conscript the boys; they were successfully arrested and sent to a labour battalion on Elba. Their father, who had a long criminal record, was too old at 55, for deportation, but was placed under permanent surveillance, reporting daily to the mayor and the Gendarmerie.81 A series of arrests near Piacenza also aimed at breaking a cycle of family crime. Following a series of local petitions, the prefect arrested and conscripted a local thief and highwayman, Barilla, gaolled several times under the dukes, but always released. He went to a labour battalion to separate him from his sons – ‘who are starting to follow in their father’s footsteps’ – as much as anything else.82 The French saw this kind of thing as simply correcting the lax approach of the old order, and communities often initiated this sea change. Gianmaria Gianetti was 51 and a successful, wealthy farmer in the Ligurian mountain commune of Caprigliola, but remained a threat to his neighbours – ‘capable of anything’, ‘a man who knows how to create fear’ – according to their petition. D’Auzers put him under permanent police surveillance in 1810, and attributed his persistent violence simply to the propensity of the weak justice of the old order to let him get away with it. He concluded as much from the ‘case history’ of Gianetti, supplied by his commune, and verified by the prefect. His crimes, which included wounding with a firearm, armed robbery and persistent attacks on a neighbouring family, stretched back into the 1780s, and were all committed under the old order. He benefited from amnesties on several occasions. Gianetti had actually collaborated with the French, and ‘had often proved useful to the Gendarmerie in its work’, but D’Auzers still felt he had to be made an example of:

For there is no doubt that he has for too long escaped the just punishment he merits, either by the tacit complicity of the Ligurian courts which effectively gave him impunity from the law, or through his various connections with the Ligurian and Tuscan governments.83

The supposedly absolutist domains of the House of Savoy did not escape his censure, either. In 1811, Giradenga, a carpenter of Valloria, was denounced for persistent violent conduct by the mayor and a local petition; he had
been involved in a great deal of violence during the triennio. D’Auzers doubted none of this, and further investigations revealed a feud between Giradenga’s father and the Bruno family going back to at least 1781, when the elder Giradenga had killed a Bruno. In 1791, he had killed another Bruno and his son had fired on them during the ‘anarchy’ of 1799. None of these charges had ever been dealt with under the monarchy, and d’Auzers felt it was time the state intervened:

[T]hey have managed to evade just punishment for all these offences, sometimes by turning over other criminals and so benefitting from the immunity accorded by Piedmontese law in such cases, sometimes by coming under amnesties accorded by the King.

The elder Giradenga was put under surveillance, but not exiled or arrested because of his age, while his son was sent to a colonial battalion. D’Auzers pointed out the contrast with the policy of the ancien régime; instead of surrendering to local bullies – or even relying on them – the French made a determined effort to eliminate at least the most blatant rural thugs. D’Auzers not only sought an accurate picture of local affairs, but he also acted on this information. Even a supposedly absolutist state left a mess for the French to clean up. His colleague in Florence felt no different, the obvious polarity in the characters of the ancien régime states of the Savoyards, the Habsburg-Lorraines and the Republic of St George notwithstanding:

The successive changes of government in Tuscany, the weakness of the previous legislation and the apathy of the courts has greatly increased rural crime in the Grand Duchy: thefts of livestock, agricultural tools and of crops. The inveterate authors of these offences are almost always known in their communes, but the problems of bringing together proofs and witnesses, means that most of them have long enjoyed impunity... I am convinced of the usefulness of the mesure d’administration, if applied with justice and discretion.

In these cases, and countless others, local communities had turned to the new state to redress exactly that mess. There were other, subtler but even crueler bullies at work on the Apennine periphery, many of them among the notabilii, and the new regime was not afraid to take them on through Haute Police, its commitment to ralliement notwithstanding. In 1811 Norvins, in Rome, was convinced by reports from his commissioner in Todi that the mayor and several other propertied people were in league with a cartel of grain merchants to supply the town at a gross profit during a period of shortage. One of their number was ‘an old usurer who made his fortune in a scandalous manner... and his character, his connections and his financial resources make him appear
a very dangerous man’. Norvins felt that a court case would collapse, but that given the politically volatile climate in the area, kept at fever pitch by the hatred of conscription and ‘the ever growing fanaticism of the priests . . . it would be dangerous not to set right so serious a wrong’. Paris agreed, ordering the worst offender to be held in gaol in Rome, under Haute Police, and when released, to be kept under police surveillance. There were times when the French police showed themselves willing, as well as capable, of intervening unprompted on the side of a very traditional populism. In such instances, the police were seen to serve the people.

Three things astonish about the impact of Haute Police on the communities of the periphery: the ubiquity of its use up and down the Apennine spine, the rapidity with which Italians were prepared to address denunciations to an alien regime, and the fact that many of them actually came from close to ‘the heart of darkness’. Bettole, near Sinalunga, had been a centre of the 1799 revolt, and was hardly unaware of the change of regime in Florence. As early as March 1808, its parish priest and ‘principal residents’ petitioned the Buon Governo – and through it, the French – to exile 14 local people for petty crime and, above all, threatening behaviour. The next month, the priest of Pieve San Stefano went so far as to denounce the vicario of Poppio to the new authorities, accusing him, among other things, of protecting former Aretini rebels. In this context, it is less the motives or even the outcome of the denunciations that attracts attention, but their very existence. There were elements among the lesser propertied classes of the periphery ready to turn to the new order for help and support in local quarrels. The same pattern struck the French in the Papal States, where Norvins remarked that, ‘In these parts, the denunciations are prompt [to arrive], and the proofs are just as slow.’ Clearly, the campaign of passive resistance was not strong enough to resist this kind of temptation; it was too well engrained by the methods of the Tridentine Church. Put another way, the French were not everywhere and invariably confronted with local communities who naturally preferred to eschew outside interference, and regulate their own affairs.

In a report to Napoleon in 1811, the Ministry of Justice responded to the need to justify and rationalise the acquisition of the empire, a need common to all aggressive, expansionist states. Predictably, perhaps, the report indicated two imperatives underpinning any and almost all imperial orders. The first was the unique ability of empires to weld former warring peoples together, at the communal, as well as the national level:

If men had continued to live in isolated pockets, they would never have emerged from barbarism: They would have remained in degradation and anarchy, busying themselves with the self destruction of eternal petty wars. From time immemorial, this has been the fate of peoples who have not been contained by a superior force. . . . By means of conquest, divisions between peoples cease; hatreds and animosities are calmed.
The second rationale took this a logical step further: the right of conquest is conferred by the ability of empires to keep order, and thereby to deliver people from the anarchy and brutishness engendered by weak government:

It is force, or more correctly, the power to protect, that confers the right to govern. Even those who prefer to distinguish between the sovereign by right, and the de facto sovereign, are constrained to admit that the law must be obeyed, if order and peace are to be maintained. . . . Society is not governed by abstractions.95

There is much in the support the French won from the communities of the Italian periphery to justify these assertions, in exactly the way the Ministry of Justice preferred and predicted. On one level, this reveals a strong identity of interest between rulers and ruled, but there were important qualifications which, taken together, would turn this source of ralliement into a quagmire for the French. Denunciations might appear as a sign that the periphery at last wished to be led from its ‘brutish degradation’, that it would give the Gendarmerie a more lasting welcome than it had the Tridentine missions. It actually proved quite the reverse, however, for an atavistic nerve had been unwittingly touched by the new regime. It was the last nerve it wanted unearthed, and brought Italian mores into conflict with the ethos of the regime. Most things are relative in multinational empires, especially in their early phases, when several ancien régimes collide. The provincial intendants of the French Bourbons – and their subjects – had the maréchaussée to call upon on the periphery; the rulers and ruled of the future départements réunis had only the sbirri, circumstances in which even the anonymous poison pen letter might be more reliable than the forces of public order. In the longue durée, this shaped two very contrasting mentalités, and the denunciation was the point of contact where they clashed under Napoleonic rule.
The Code permitted the practice of denunciation, but its framers presumed they had sufficiently circumscribed the procedures to tame the excesses it had reached during the 1790s in France. In 1810, Coffinhal, the member of the Cour de Cassation sent to investigate the judicial work of the Roman Consultà, was not impressed by the cavalier way Dal Pozzo handled denunciations. He felt Dal Pozzo simply did not know the requirements of the Code and spelt out the correct procedure: both official and private denunciations had to be dealt with by the public prosecutors. It was an affair only for the courts.¹ There are three revealing aspects to the censorious tone of Coffinhal's report. By implication – and on other occasions, more explicitly – Coffinhal felt that even the supposedly ‘acculturated’ Piedmontese magistrates had not really grasped this aspect of French legal procedure, but were still trapped in a very different world, where the weak governments of the old order had to seek information in any way, and from any source, that came to hand. Second, it was soon clear to the French in Rome, as it had been to their predecessors in all the départements réunis, that Coffinhal had pinpointed a widespread problem. A year later, the French prosecutor of the Cour d’Appel of Rome said this culture, and the ‘unofficial’ way it was expressed, was rampant not only in society at large, but also within the ranks of the administration:

The [local] police and the civil administrators keep a watch on the justices of the peace, and on the whole judicial branch of government; in general, the mayors and the police commissioners...do not get along with the justices of the peace, and denounce them; everything was arbitrary under the former government. Neither one lot, nor the other, can be persuaded to work within the system, or their own competencies, or together.²

If this climate prevailed within the administration, it was but a reflection of a much wider phenomenon in Italian political culture. This is Coffinhal's
third point. Denunciation pervaded the imperial departments, a manifestation of a shared, if unacknowledged, political culture across this region of small, weak states, and rugged, loosely governed peripheries. It embraced Dal Pozzo, just as much as the Romans. Dal Pozzo was believed, at least by the minister of justice in Paris, to be so integrated into French norms as to be capable of organising the Papal States, yet he shared the same flaw with Roman officials, men widely acknowledged as very poor quality administrators, that of a failure to see the need to regulate denunciation.

The French had much to worry them when they actually confronted the culture of denunciation at close quarters, and in detail. It could bring them precious information, just as it had earlier regimes. Perhaps more poignantly, it was the clearest possible sign that many communities, especially on the periphery, were prepared to collaborate with their new rulers in this not insignificant aspect of public life. However, the experience of the imperial officials sent to Italy, from beginning to end, and from Aosta to the borders of the Abruzzi, was that this support usually came at too heavy a price. The procedural problems which first struck Coffinhal were indications of something far more serious and deep rooted, and he knew it. There was one point, however, that need not have troubled him, or any of his colleagues. Italians soon learned how to play by the letter, if almost never to the spirit, of the rules of denunciation laid down by their new masters. There were two aspects of the mesure administrative that inadvertently conformed to the ancien régime norms most detested by the French, and so opened the way to the resuscitation of a collective mentalité they wanted to destroy. Despite the wide diversity of legal codes and public legislation among the Italian states in the eighteenth century, most of the judicial orders of those later subsumed into the départements réunis shared two common characteristics that predisposed them to rely heavily on denunciation. With the exception of the Republic of St George, which had no professional magistracy as such, the Italian states drew a clear line between their senior magistrates, in the higher courts at the centre, and local judges; the latter accepted verbal denunciations as evidence, as a matter of course. The common legal culture in the higher courts operated not through public trials, but by methods of investigation and interrogation modelled on the Inquisition. Senior magistrates worked in camera, in a system specifically designed to facilitate denunciation. These two hallmarks of the administration of justice were anathema to the Code, as Coffinhal made clear. However, they readily found a new home in the workings of Haute Police. When the French realised this, they proceeded with due caution.

The ‘imperial’ nature of Napoleonic rule gives indigenous denunciations their real significance. The newness and ‘otherness’ of imperial rule ensured that, whatever the French actually made of the cases, they provided basic information and acute – if often warped – insights into the ways of the ruled that might otherwise have been closed to them. Interpreted in the general
climate of hostility to them, the denunciation emerges as a vital, if jaundiced, ray of light for the French. It was, perhaps, as close as they got to integrating those traditional networks of information and communication the British proved so capable of using in nineteenth-century India. Potential comparisons aside, the imperial nature of Napoleonic rule raises the denunciation and official responses to it, above parochial, or even contemporary political concerns. Empires are abnormal political entities, at least in their early stages, and the Napoleonic empire never really progressed beyond this, even in France. Abnormal regimes – of whatever kind – often lack established channels of communication, and thus the denunciation offers them a rare glimpse of the public and the private mind.3

Denunciation was a double-edged sword for the French, at best. On one level, the very fact that a petitioner turns to the state reveals a certain level of acceptance of that state’s authority. The denunciation implies the right of the state to intervene in local, even private affairs: it is just as important to denounce – to engage in the act itself – as it is to denounce someone for something. At first glance, denunciation forges a bond between the imperialist intruder and the occupied ‘other’. This represents the edge of the fault lines between ruler and ruled, where two worlds can either intersect or collide. In the act of denunciation, the originator – as with any form of petition – consciously turns to, and acknowledges, authority. There is a chance for interaction, for reciprocity. However, because denunciation reflected Italian mores, rather than simply concrete Italian needs for French intervention, its potential for ralliement broke down. It did so for several reasons, at different corresponding structural levels of the process of acculturation: at that of practical, contemporary politics, some denunciations were welcomed and others spurned, according to whether they corresponded to the regime’s avowed aim to depoliticise public life; only the most overt political opponents of French rule were ‘dealt with’, if denounced. The second factor was whether the demands of the denunciation offended the social and cultural sensibilities of the French magistracy and police. This is something quite different from political considerations, for these cases were not really concerned with confronting a real and present danger to the state, nor sifting truth from fabrication. Rather, they forced the French to assess whether what was asked was acceptable in cultural terms, and they might often couch their reactions to denunciations in precisely these terms. Most such cases corresponded to requests from families, or communities, that unruly sons be subjected to a mesure administrative, applied in the nature of the lettre de cachet. Such requests were a very direct test of degrees of cultural similitude between the French and their administrés.

The French regarded denunciations as something akin to sociological evidence, as windows on the mind – collective, more than individual – of their new charges. The wider conclusions the French drew about the society portrayed in the denunciations by Italians shaped the ways in which they
ruled the départements réunis. Thus, denunciations must be analysed beyond their role as a stimulus to police intervention, or even for what they told the French about the workings of the old order. Their impact was at once more subjective and more profound. The denunciations must first be approached from the perspective of their originators, from whose indigenous traditions they sprang, and then weighed against the French response. Most denunciations stemmed from the small towns and borghi of the periphery, a product of the political culture of the old order in the Apennine spine, even though they could also appear as desperate pleas to escape from it. Conversely, demands that the mesure administrative become a prolongation of the tradition of the lettre de cachet, were largely – if not entirely – the preserve of the urban elites.

The Italians: the denunciations and their authors: mentalité, the longue durée and the new regime

Interwoven with the plethora of local vendettas, and even beneath the revolutionary politics of the triennio, lay the deeper heritage of an Italian political culture profoundly influenced by two forces: the weak secular state and the Roman Inquisition, whose jurisdiction coincided, in the main, with the states of the départements réunis and the original core of the Kingdom of Italy. The state, constrained by geography and endemic penury, was usually unable to gather information through its own agents, and still less enforce its will consistently. The Inquisition had also proved unable to enforce censorship effectively; in the course of the seventeenth century, it had been increasingly forced to devolve control to the bishops. It was exactly this structural weakness which led Church and state alike to place such a high premium on denunciation, and for the former, virtually to enshrine it as an obligation on the faithful, however much circumspection it showed in dealing with the results. This is not to say the coercive powers of the Church were negligible. The police of the bishops of Grossetto was virtually the only regular force at work on the wild periphery of the Tuscan Maremma, in the eighteenth century, and the Inquisition of Parma ran a more effective check on comings and goings in the city than its ducal counterparts. Most strikingly, through the pan-Italian system of the biglietti – literally, ‘confessional tickets’ – the episcopate kept a closer check on the whereabouts of the entire population of the peninsula during Holy Week, than even the French ever managed to do.

The Church as a whole remained distinctly more effective and powerful than most lay governments in the realm of social control. Here, the French did not feel they were confronting weakness. They saw, quite clearly, that the Church had filled at least part of the power vacuum endemic to the political culture of government at one remove. However, by definition, the concerns of the Church led it to foster the private denunciation of one individual by
another, thus sustaining, if hardly creating single-handedly, a tradition of 
information gathering the French had come to loathe. The recent experience 
of the Terror, 1792–94, and of their own ancien régime police, combined to 
dispose them against this, to say nothing of their anticlericalism. The French 
were not strangers to the world of the police informant, nor to the presence 
of a powerful Inquisition in their midst, but both had operated within the 
context of a relatively strong state, from a very early point in time. From the 
High Middle Ages, the Inquisitions sent to crush the heretics of the Midi 
were an important arm of the expanding kingdom, as well as of religious 
orthodoxy. The police of the Chatêlet were notorious, but they operated 
within the context of Bourbon absolutism. They were not the only source of 
order, and they were a police force, however nefarious. This was very different 
from the context of Italian denunciation. In France, the authorities sought 
out what they wanted to know through their own organs; in Italy, even the 
Church had to wait for information to come to it from the public.

Although the work of the Inquisition had begun to decline once confided 
with the impossible task of the Clementine Index in 1596, its methods of 
enquiry permeated the work of the Tridentine episcopate in the course of 
the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. If the need to root out heresy 
passed quickly from the priorities of the Church, the civilising mission to 
the communities of the periphery continued unabated. In all its aspects, 
through the missions, the confessional in Holy Week and the inquisitional 
tribunals in the dioceses which supervised censorship, the tradition of 
denunciation was kept very much alive, even as the Inquisition itself faded 
from Italian life.

The arrival of a state with an unprecedented, proven capacity for inter-
vention on the periphery, sparked waves of traditional denunciations to the 
new imperial authorities. Their structures provide a valuable insight into the 
terms in which individuals, communities and groups within the narrow world 
of peripheral society sought to achieve collaboration. Whether signed or 
amonymous, individual or collective, most denunciations were utterly blatant 
in their layout. There is the part which is meant to excite the interest of 
authorities – usually touching on political subversion or public corruption – 
and that which really interests the authors, usually concerned with threats 
to personal safety or rivalries of a public or private, personal or material 
nature. Denunciations try to integrate and relate these two often incongruous, 
occasionally fabricated components. They are attempts to mesh together 
the public and private spheres and, logically, the interests of ruler and ruled. 
For the state, to choose to intervene is either to cross a line into a private 
sphere it preferred to avoid, or to attempt to weld its interest and those of 
the authors together. For the authors, the denunciations are clear invitations 
to the state to join their world – at least up to a point – and not without con-
ditions. The imperial context makes them a potent, fraught and intriguing 
point of contact. There is risk on both sides – and not merely the obvious
ones of revenge or danger – should it all ‘go public’ and backfire on
denoncer and inquisitor alike. Rather, for the ruled, there is the risk that,
once invited in, authority may not go away again very easily when it is not
wanted. The ruler risks compromising public authority in local or personal
quarrels, of becoming the prisoner of barely understood local interests. How-
ever, patterns of behaviour soon emerged on both sides that transcended
the myriad local animosities and political rivalries behind the petitions.

In 1811 a priest in Umbria, Sebastiano Moscatelli, was denounced by
several parishioners of his two parishes, Rancolungo and Santa Maria del
Cantone. The former came to light in January, the latter in the spring, and
are almost identical in structure, as well as in content, both signed by the
16 leading heads of household in the parish. Both petitions comprised two
paragraphs. In the second paragraph, they described Moscatelli as, in the
words of that of Santa Maria:

...a wicked and confrontational person... all his parishioners have felt
the damage he does, and his likes and dislikes. He has always sown
discord among honest families. He has offended people who have no
connection with him; he threatens not just with hurtful words, but with
fisticuffs, blows from his baton etc.

However, the petition began:

Moscatelli still nurtures feelings that are utterly against the invincible
French nation. He distinguished himself in 1799, as a brigand chief. . . .
Nowadays, Moscatelli spreads strange rumours, and he often boasts that
the present government will not last long.10

That of Rancolungo spoke of his ‘oppression of the parish’ and of the ‘spiritual
and temporal damage he has done to so many families’, and then went
on to tell how he had ‘led the hordes which assailed Città di Castello in
’98 and ‘99’.11

The model used by the parish of Santa Maria against Moscatelli was the
preferred strategy of many communities, when dealing with the new state.
They reasoned that the authorities would launch a secret investigation,
which they did, but Moscatelli was not arrested immediately, nor as a result
of this. The French showed no real interest in his political past, rather they
were concerned, initially, by his conduct as a priest,12 and this was how he
first chose to defend himself.13 The notables of the parishes did not see that
the goal of Napoleonic policy was that the memory of ‘1799’ should not be
revived, save in the presence of a real and present danger. The priest’s lawyer
gives us an insight into how some members of the local elite had grasped
what drove their new masters, rejoining that the real reason for local animosity
was not ‘1799’, but the priest’s adherence to the ‘civilising mission’:
‘...because of his zeal, pledged both in private and at the altar, to restrain his parishioners in good moral conduct, and to commit them to obedience and submission to the government and the laws’.14

Later, however, Moscatelli was found to be involved in local banditry, something not as incompatible with his status as a priest who had taken the oath of loyalty as it might first appear, as Santa Maria had been a fief of the bastard line of the French Bourbons, the Borboni di Sorbolo, and the whole community had been involved in brigandage, because of the immunity the fief provided.15 None of this was mentioned in the original denunciations, causing the sub-prefect to remark dryly, that had it been – and had Moscatelli not disappeared into the hills – he would have been arrested immediately.16 Moscatelli’s lawyer grasped perfectly the Napoleonic determination to drive the politics of the 1790s out of public life. The original denunciations, on the other hand, displayed an acute understanding of the politics of ralliement, and of the paranoia the French harboured about 1799. However, they ultimately failed to calculate the local knowledge the regime had built up, and also, perhaps more excusably, that although the French would always prick up their ears at the word Novantanove, the real preoccupation with it was shifting from their minds to those of their administrés. Only a gross attempt to disguise local history could reconcile the interests of the leading notables of these parishes with those of the state. They tried, for all their history was a nest of crime.

The example of Moscatelli and his enemies in Umbria is emblematic of several salient traits of Italian denunciation and French responses, on which the relationship between ruler and ruled could turn. Italians persisted in dredging up ‘1799’ the length and breadth of the départements réunis, despite the fact that the French, if hardly uninterested, were not sanguine about resuscitating political animosities in Italy, any more than within France itself. The petitioners seldom portray themselves, or their communities, as the victims of politically driven atrocities. According to the authors, it is in the official interest to deal with plots against the state: the unhinging of local administration, the revival of the unrest of 1799; the organised recalcitrance of anti-revolution, such as the disruption of the workings of conscription. The authors portray themselves as doing the state a major service, tipping it off, at some risk to themselves. They do not automatically assume a direct identity of interest between their own needs and those of the state in the political aspect of the denunciation, nor do they usually revert to anything as crude as asking direct favours in return. They want the denounced ‘out of the way’, for different reasons than they assume the state will care about, per se, but they use anti-state activities to reinforce the case they hope will interest the authorities. In the main, the petitioners of the periphery were not naive, even if they judged the French wrongly; they always stress the risks to all concerned if their mutual enemies are not dealt with. It could begin as soon as the French annexed a region definitively, and it could be
The Napoleonic Empire in Italy, 1796–1814

blatant. In July 1808 an anonymous denunciation reached the offices of the Buon Governo in Florence, almost at the moment it was due to hand over to the French police. It denounced the vicario, the sbirri captain (the Bargello), the mayor of Borgo San Lorenzo and several leading landowners for complicity in brigandage and corruption. The petitioner stressed the need for a strong police presence in the area, adding for good measure:

We still have monuments in the piazza to the last, infamous revolution [the Aretino rising of 1799], with their inscriptions for all to see. They should be torn down, as they are a visible reminder to the people of their own triumph. No further disorder could take place in this area, if they were demolished.

While they remained, however, the government would never seem secure, but it was too dangerous for the local authorities to touch these sacred images of the cross and the Madonna. How the French felt about ‘1799’ – and about the way Italians manipulated it in future – was made clear by Degerando as early as 1802, in his report on Tuscany after the Aretino revolt: whereas in 1799 the French had aided and abetted the Tuscan patriots in the pursuit of their ‘private vengeance’ and favoured their assaults on the ex-rebels, they behaved with ‘heroic moderation’ on their return in 1800. This attitude endured throughout the occupation, at least among the higher ranks of the administration. In 1811, a denunciation of a priest in the volatile Apennine valleys of eastern Liguria made great play of his current political opinions and conduct during the Austrian invasion in 1799. The sub-prefect of Sarzana said it was all true, but that the motivation was simply that his local rivals wanted rid of him. D’Auzers, in Turin, agreed with this, once satisfied he had got to the bottom of it:

Those who witnessed this denunciation are the owners of the communal olive presses, where all the locals bring their olives… the priest, Tancredi, tried to get his olives pressed elsewhere last year, by means of a false transaction, and was brought to law by the self same signatories of the denunciation.

D’Auzers admitted that this was, in itself, a wrongful act, but a matter for the courts. The real concern was Tancredi’s opposition to the Concordat. Things that did not factor in the initial denunciation drove the resultant investigation. When threatened with arrest on these grounds, the local authorities actually rallied around Tancredi, calling the original denunciation as falsehood. The result was a triumph for confusion. Paris authorised only a stiff reprimand, and admitted it was unable to get at the real truth. In the course of it all, however, the state and its subjects had set out their respective priorities, and neither truly got their way. Their different priorities were clear,
as was the suspicion the French had of every scrap of local paper they received. The only winner was the accused, his proven political past notwithstanding.

The charges of sowing unrest of a societal kind were regarded as more significant for the stability of their rule, than any lingering embers of counter-revolution. The French were more than ready to intervene in apolitical matters like cases of persistent local thugs and thieves. Denunciation was not their preferred entrée, but they did not automatically discard what it told them. Social unrest linked to criminality or otherwise, was the surest way to attract a hearing. A vicious murder came to light in the commune of Canalupo, in the valleys above Genoa in 1810, through an anonymous denunciation, in which the victim, a peasant called Ferrarato, was hacked to death by one Dova, who owed him money. It transpired that even Ferrarato’s own brothers and wife were complicit in the killing; indeed, he had been left to die covered in stab wounds and lay exposed for several hours. So appalled were the French by this, and other similar crimes in the area, that the law of 10 Vendémiaire, Year IV, was applied, and the commune put under military occupation, although there had been no political motivation for any of it.22

The use of this law had by now become rare in Piedmont and Liguria, and its deployment in a purely criminal, apolitical context is indicative of the circumstances in which the French would intervene forcefully, for a more forceful method would be hard to imagine. It did not always involve resistance to conscription – the usual grounds for the use of the law of 10 Vendémiaire, Year IV – and still less, the evocation of 1799. The apparent barbarism of the periphery was perceived as equally, if not more, serious. A local clique in Fontanigorda, in Liguria, showed a clever grasp of what really worried the French in 1809, just before the arrest of the Pope, the seizure of Rome and Napoleon’s marriage to Marie-Louise. Their leader, Giuseppe Biggio, ‘seized the moment, when the priest preached a sermon on marriage to portray him as an enemy of the government, preaching maxims opposed to the Code’. He bullied four ‘ignorant and weak’ peasants into signing a denunciation that D’Auzers rapidly saw through.23

At times, however, petitioners ‘caught out’ the regime, in the contradictions it could fall into when trying to accommodate entrenched local elites. There were those with a real grasp of what the Napoleonic state was ‘about’, and why it could fail; this is where the denunciation became a cunning ploy – to act as a prick to the official conscience. Few parts of the empire found French rule as alien as the Papal States, but when a local lawyer denounced the personnel of the tribunal of Viterbo to the Minister of Justice, his choice of words was a very clever exercise in throwing official discourse back in the official face:

Well aware . . . that in organising the new courts, you had the good of the Nation most in mind, by removing all the abuses which existed under
the previous government, and removing among other abuses, that of Despotism, [which] renders the result of a case dependent on the caprice of an individual. . . . Our Sovereign must not remain deluded that in the circuit of Viterbo, the vastness of his domains and the distance of this place [from the centre], have led to the appointment of two subjects of dishonest character . . . .24

He went on to describe how they still used the inquisitorial system of examining cases in camera, as opposed to open court: ‘In civil cases, they work against the law, as most of them are no longer debated in public, but in private, at the house of the procurator.’ For good measure, he dragged in 1799 – but the real thrust of this denunciation is how it played first, on the ‘wise-but-remote-ruler’ syndrome, revealing a quick adaptation to recently changed circumstances, but above all by pandering to the loudly orchestrated desire by the French to be seen as the bringers of modern, rational, enlightened justice, and as liberators from the petty tyrants supposedly fostered by the lax, corrupt government of the popes. In fact, it almost worked. The procurator of the Cour Impériale in Rome agreed that those involved ought to go – ‘these two public officials have every fault’ – but the evidence against them was not solid, and it was very difficult to remove men of such standing.25 This points to a wider problem when it came to denunciations of well-entrenched local notables: the French were caught between the need to work through them – where they could persuade them to serve – and effective enforcement of the ethos and norms of the Napoleonic state.26 Where they attempted both at once, they failed and admitted as much, falling back on interventionism.

The hard truth is, the French could not trust their lowliest local officials, maires and juges de paix, to remain outside the ‘culture of denunciation’. A French magistrate in the relatively assimilated Piedmontese departments spoke of ‘. . . the numerous abuses occasioned by the extensive powers invested in some mayors, who bring trouble and desolation into many families by fighting private vendettas through vague denunciations’. The public prosecutor of the criminal court of Florence did not mince his words in 1813:

I admit, quite frankly, that when I see a mayor, a justice of the peace and a parish priest in full agreement in their opinion of someone in their commune, I have trouble believing that they are motivated by anything other than their personal emotions.27

The best way to prove this is probably to cite the exception to the rule that saw floods of private denunciations. After the 1806 revolt in the Piacentino not one denunciation originated from a private individual, just as not one civil lawsuit was ever appealed to the Cour d’Appel in Genoa. The new state
was utterly rejected. Yet even here, although everyone ‘outside the system’ refused to use the state even for their own ends, there are a few cases of *maires* being tempted to do so – and being found out. Two substantial landowners, the Cavanna brothers of the Colla hills near Piacenza – who had well-documented anti-French pasts – were reported by a mayor as plotting a revolt in 1813. At such a dangerous time and place, Paris ordered their arrest – but even in these circumstances, they were sent home, when it emerged that the *maire* and his police *commissaire* had their own, very private agendas; the *maire* wanted to build a private road across Cavanna land, while the police *commissaire* wanted to marry his daughter to the son of the *maire*, when she in fact preferred one of the Cavannas.

The end result was typical of French caution and general disgust, but in the indigenous context of the culture of denunciation, it says rather more. In a twisted way, this is a tribute to the attractions of the new order. All things being relative, there were Italians who were prepared to assimilate certain aspects of the Napoleonic state, even if in ways repugnant to the French, but it was not the ‘window’ the French wanted, and Italians could not really see that. The desire – and expectation – to deploy the state for private or factional ends was rooted in the political culture of the weak, ephemeral *ancien régime* states where, if the hinterland was policed at all, it was done either by supporting one local faction against another, or by acting as an arbiter between them. A blatant lesson in how the urban elite worked, and what it hoped for of the French, was brought home to Coffinhal during his mission from the rarefied atmosphere of the Cour de Cassation to that of the Roman aristocracy: he was shocked to learn that a Roman judge on the Cour d’Appel had accepted a dinner invitation from the Duke of Bonnelli, the evening before he sat on a trial concerning Bonnelli and proceeded to find in his favour. However, when Coffinhal himself received a signed denunciation of his colleague and the Duke, from the third party, the reality of denunciation culture was brought home to him, for there was general perplexity when he refused to accept it in evidence.

The authors – whether rich and powerful or marginalised and desperate, in the centre and periphery alike – had learnt the power of the Napoleonic state, but they had not grasped that strong, ‘enlightened’ states strive for objectivity, not allies. When they eventually did, it was clear the new order was of no real use to them. It was only when Napoleonic policing slipped back into *ancien régime* habits – when it was prepared to break down the walls it erected between the public and private spheres – that real identities of interest could be forged. Nevertheless, at least some Italians – and these denunciations are the work of the propertied and literate – wanted a strong state to abet, if not to govern, them. Later experience would teach them that only a large strong state capable of maintaining a decent police force could deliver this.
The French response: the discovery of imperial Italy

The French had served a hard apprenticeship in the politics of denunciation under the Terror, and it proved formative for the Napoleonic regime, although not in ways as straightforward as its general image as a police state might suggest. The revolutionary regimes – not just the Committee of Public Safety, but the early idealists of the Constituent Assembly – were new, embattled, strangers, imperialists even, in their own land, and encouraged denunciation as an act of civic virtue. However, they were very clear in their hopes – if not their actions – that political denunciations made to the new, pure revolutionary regime were very different in inspiration and intent from the ‘dirty tricks’ of the secret informants of the police of the ancien régime. The Revolutionary Tribunal had nothing to do with the Chatêlet, in their eyes. Nevertheless, they were well aware of the dangers involved, and always openly acknowledged that denunciation was, potentially, ‘the back door to tyranny’. On the other hand, it was hard for the state to resist amassing the wealth of information it provided.

The Napoleonic state inherited all this baggage, and sought to reform and contain it in accordance with the hope that it could discard what was worst about the Revolution, and refine what was best: strong rational government, grounded in a spirit of civisme, a professional – generally accountable – administration of justice, a secular state with a clear division between the public and private spheres, all regulated by codified law. The essence of the Napoleonic state was to create and sustain the enlightened ideal of a society both polie and polie. Thus, denunciation was a stop-gap, a nasty end to a very desirable means. The regime was also just as embattled as its predecessors, surrounded by counter-revolution from within and massive European war without. The imperial context it found itself confronted by in Italy, as a new, alien regime set over a recalcitrant periphery, only intensified the need for raw information, whatever its source, and the sheer ability to garner information meant even dubious methods could not be abandoned. In human terms, Napoleon could never abandon Fouché, although he often wished he could. To a degree that is not often appreciated, many officials within the Napoleonic regime disliked relying on police spies, or responding to anonymous denunciations. In Piedmont – the first part of Italy they annexed – Wirion and Menou expressed repugnance for such methods, but they soon found – initially in their campaigns against well-entrenched bandit-smugglers – that covert policing and reliance on spies were too valuable to be discarded. Thus, ‘the great dream’ soon died, and the regime provided the essential administrative structures to facilitate, even encourage, denunciation. The pattern had now been established for the future.

The Code recognised the existence of the denunciation, and created a mechanism for dealing with it. In an Italian context, at least, the use of Haute Police was an important exception to the general rule upheld by
Coffinhal. It was in no way a deliberate concession, as the whole system of the *mesure administrative* was a well-established fixture of the Napoleonic state. Nevertheless, it allowed the authors of denunciations to write to local police commissioners, sub-prefects or prefects, with a realistic hope of getting their attention; they did not have to try to convince the predominantly French public prosecutors in the first instance, and they could – as in the past – bombard just as many agents of central authority as there might be. This was possible because the Napoleonic state contained competing strands of competence: two police forces under the Ministers of War and Police-Générale, respectively; the civil administration, under Interior; the courts, under Justice. However, petitioners could aspire to greater things than under the old order, because all these strands came together in the Council of State, and if a denunciation was taken seriously enough, it finished its journey here. It was less in breach of Coffinhal’s procedures that the French bent their own rules, than in their clear preference for collective, communal denunciations, instead of those emanating from individuals. Demands from groups of local notables, or whole villages, usually got a warm welcome, and often a vigorous response, an official attitude that stands somewhat at odds with the general hostility of all the revolutionary regimes, those post-Brumaire included, to collective petitions of any kind. In the context of the peripheries of the Apennine spine, effectively it represents a tacit recognition of a well-established communal solidarity. Acknowledgement of their legitimacy entailed an official admission of the important role of consensus in the local affairs of the periphery, however antithetical to the fundamental ethos of the new regime.31 It was the reverse side of the coin of the law of 10 Vendémiaire, Year IV, of which the satraps were especially fond, with its recourse to the concept of collective communal guilt for violent offences committed by individuals. In these two measures, the one sympathetic, the other draconian in the pristine sense of the term, lay the unspoken, if far from tacit, recognition that there was more to the new regime than the state and the citizen, as formulated in 1789.

Nevertheless, although the French valued petitions, and used them for their own ends, this entailed neither approval nor a ready acceptance of their veracity. The collective petition was, barely, their acceptable face. They loathed denunciation of one individual by another, particularly if made anonymously; all denunciations, whatever their provenance, were regarded with deep suspicion. The denunciations that flooded in confronted the French with the worst aspects of the lives of their *administrés*, and created a powerful vision of a nightmare world, and the degree to which it coloured their view of Italians, and of their own imperial mission to them, was perhaps the most important, far-reaching aspect of the denunciation. It was also the worst miscalculation made by the denouncers, for their lurid tales turned the new regime not just against certain groups or individuals, but against a whole society.
Significantly, the violent, unruly world they portrayed was largely the preserve of the propertied classes, or, at least, their middle ranks. The authors were, by definition, of the local elite, but so, almost universally, were the protagonists of the violence and sexual promiscuity they depicted. The bulk of the disorder they recounted with such relish did not originate among the lower classes, nor amidst the old elites of the centre. This was the world of the substantial peasant proprietor and the bourgeoisie of the countryside and small towns. The French had continually to weigh this fact against the stacks of venom-coated paper on their desks, in finding a far from stable, to say nothing of a stabilising, force in the wider framework of the society of the Italian periphery. People of some standing in their communities, at least in the relative terms of the Apennine spine, emerge as clearly at variance with the ethos of the Napoleonic state, even as they called for its intervention. Indeed, the details of the denunciations were interpreted by their recipients as the signs of a society actively at odds with the laws of the regime. Even those who professed affinity to the new order, at a cost to themselves, could inadvertently confirm French prejudices. The view of the French in Rome that sexual corruption was at the heart of local political life, could but be reinforced by the depraved portrait painted by an anonymous denunciation sent to the minister of justice. The author’s clear purpose was to lament and explain why he and his fellow patriots – ‘the friends of Salicetti’ – had been excluded from posts under the Consultà. Along the way, however, he exposed not only the corruption of Dal Pozzo, but of his own society:

Those who have recently been appointed to posts would turn out the same if they had been baptised in a stagnant pool, or even mud, as in baptismal water. . . . The only men to get posts were those supported by the Princess Chigi, or by some other beautiful woman; in a manner of speaking, it is the women who hand out posts in Rome, not the Consultà.32

This tirade carries weight on several levels. A patriot, possibly a veteran of ‘1799’, showed his inability to grasp two important things: that his words fed French views not just about a political clique around the Chigis, but about a whole society and culture. The French would not take this in the isolation of political, or even ideological, rivalry. They had a holistic view of this society, already in the process of hardening into prejudice, and such denunciations fed it. The second point is the very anonymity of the denunciation. These were not the methods of civisme; even a friend of Salicetti was incapable of transparency or moderation. Nothing was better calculated to remind the French they were in a different world than the assertion made in another anonymous Roman denunciation to the minister of justice: ‘Very often, anonymous letters open eyes, and signed letters close them: in the former, there is the naked truth; in the latter, there is only adulation and the
fear of making enemies. However true this may have been in the context of Roman public life, it was anathema to the ethos of the new regime.

More pressingly, the denunciation exposes elites at odds within their own ranks, devoid of any cohesion, whether induced by the defence of property or anything else. The violence and atomised animosities depicted in the information generated by Italians were continually weighed in the official mind, against the emphatic requests for better law and order that often formed part of the same petition. In the context of the grand imperial design of a society resting on the bedrock of stable, landed notables, the French in Italy soon felt they had nothing on which to place this template. The chances of building the new order on Apennine masses de granit appeared highly improbable. The denunciations exposed centuries of misgovernment. The French public prosecutor of Genoa’s Cour Impériale, in 1813, after over eight years of imperial rule, asserted exactly this. After the investigation of a murder committed in broad daylight, in 1802, he concluded that those charged, the two Guani brothers of Torriglia, were probably guilty, but the town was so riven by factionalism, no firm evidence would ever emerge. Moreover, one brother, Luigi, was a notary, and men with his skills were in too short supply to be gaoled. Above all, the Guani were patriots. It was a regrettable fact that they were needed for this reason, too:

My own view is that he [Luigi Guani] has the failing, all too common in men in his circumstances, to desire power in his commune, and exercise his own influence over its people, but this fault is less dangerous in him than in many others, because his political opinions are more supportive of the government than those antagonising him.

These comments are of more significance than just indicating the general shortage of politically reliable or literate men, something just as true in many parts of the interior. Rather, it underlines the persistent feeling that the Napoleonic vision of a polity resting on the sobering influence of local notables was simply impossible in the Italian departments. Seen another way, his resignation to working with and through such subordinates reveals the resilience of deep-rooted ancien régime mores; it is an admission that cultural mentalité was stronger than any avowed political allegiance, even for those who actually felt they sided with the cause of change, and consequentially exposed themselves to the vendetta culture.

The French could not conceive that their Italian ‘sources’ had any notion of revolutionary civisme. The whole process convinced them that they were dealing with a degenerate society. When the French revolutionaries were agonising over the dangers inherent in encouraging civic denunciation, and also at pains to distinguish it from the corrupt practices of the ancien régime, they drew positive examples from their vision of Republican Rome, whereas they defined as its antithesis the bigoted secrecy of the Venetian
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Inquisition. This was a very powerful ‘indicator’ for the French, in that only the remote Italian past could be trusted; there was everything to guard against in the Italian present. They perceived a society largely unchanged since the Middle Ages, pricked only in a few urban centres like Siena by the Renaissance and the Counter-Reformation, beyond which lay an inferno. The prefect of Ombronne, the department virtually synonymous with the old state of Siena, did not place the blame for the general dépravation actuelle des moeurs on the clergy of either the city or the countryside, nor did he believe that they were worse now than in the past. Thanks, at least in part, to the influence of the post-Tridentine clergy, ‘The city of Siena is probably where less crimes are committed than anywhere else.’ It was different in the countryside, on the periphery, even among the elites. In 1810, two years after annexation the same prefect of Siena told Paris of ‘…the “little wars”, the hatreds and discords that reign in these small towns’, and attributed the denunciation on his desk to this cultural climate. His colleague in Florence commented that ‘the country is…full of hate – passionately’, and described the classic Tuscan landscape as harbouring ‘…places where the inhabitants have shown themselves to be of a blood-thirsty and turbulent character, and to be brigands’, in the course of dealing with the denunciation of a supposed political conspiracy. Such attitudes were hardly unique to the French in Tuscany. In analysing the geography of vendetta, and the denunciations it generated, these observations help to trace the growing realisation among the French that centre and periphery harboured very different cultures, and that species of denunciation belonged, primarily, to the latter.

The Revolution taught the French the elusive nature of objective truth. Thus, the real value of the denunciation was the knowledge it provided of the political geography of local hatreds. The other lesson of the past was that it was seldom wise to act on such information, either because it would entail the public sphere invading the private or simply because it would stir up more trouble than it was worth. Norvins, in Rome, commented in the course of a routine investigation, ‘Countless denunciations assail the higher authorities, and when you try to verify them, the result is either acquiring a knowledge of facts that are difficult to prove, or proof of longstanding mysteries, or of crimes it is impossible to prevent.’ This bland statement is, in fact, the distilled wisdom of the Revolutionary decade and by the time they got to Italy, the French had absorbed it, whatever other lessons they may have failed to learn. Lagarde, the French Director-General of Police in Florence, told Paris clearly, that

I have little liking for lightly taken measures and information coming from one sole source, for this channel is usually wrong, especially in Italy, which is a country of timorous, but also hateful, passions. I never take severe measures without making enquiries on several different sides
and...I regard the municipal authorities as essentially partial, especially in the smaller places.40

The Police-Générale made clear to the prefect of Ombronne ‘...the importance of establishing a sort of control over the reports that will reach you from different sides about those against whom you might take police measures’, especially in a newly annexed, faction-riven country,41 who in turn lamented the costs of the vendetta culture in time and money, while also attesting to how essential careful investigation was. In the light of these trends, the comment of Rolland, the Alsatian-born prefect of the Apennines, when faced with a verbal denunciation of a man from a small commune who had openly reviled Napoleon after Sunday Mass, he felt he could proceed because ‘the denouncer is a peasant who seems to have no connection to the accused’.42 Denunciation could have its uses, but it succeeded best when it arose in the context of spontaneous simplicity so prized by the early revolutionaries.

This measured, impartial approach to ‘secret policing’ stands out as one of the most admirable – and little appreciated – aspects of the Napoleonic state, and contrasts with much of its behaviour in other spheres: ruthless enforcement of conscription, economic imperialism beyond the borders of 1798, intransigence over the Concordat, cultural chauvinism. However, such moderate objectivity was not really what many of its subjects wanted, and the French knew it better than they did. This is clear by what is generally absent in the process of French decision-making. Ruthless repression, arrest and imprisonment were used only sparingly; police surveillance was the usual termination of most cases. Yet cheek by jowl with this tolerant approach, the authorities almost never contemplated a negotiated reconciliation between the parties as a possible resolution to local disputes. This was not just an institutional break with ancien régime traditions of judicial arbitration, for arbitration had formed part of the ideal of the revolutionary judicial reforms of the early 1790s.43 The comments of almost all French officials, in every branch and at every level of the administration all over Italy, reveal a general feeling that this was a society that could not be trusted to live at peace with itself. Forgiveness was regarded as alien to its nature.

What had changed since the 1790s within French political culture, and in its attitude to the denunciation, in particular, was not easy for the public to see. The opportunity for denunciation was put in place by the new order, but the spirit in which it was received and evaluated had changed immensely, partly because the Napoleonic regime saw it as a necessary but disagreeable method of governing, partly because – like the revolutionaries – they had a real horror of slipping back into the perceived corruption of the ancien régime police. In an Italian context, it is the latter, rather than the former, which really counts. The closer the French got to Italian society, the less they liked it, and the more convinced of their own prejudices.
they became as a result. Familiarity – at least of this sort – definitely bred contempt.

The authors of denunciations were not wrong to assume the French thought themselves in ‘Indian country’, surrounded by savages. Where they miscalculated, was to assume they would readily discriminate among these savages – that they would succumb to what they were told. The French despised the barbarity of the Italian ‘other’, but they did not regard him as a fool, and they prided themselves on knowing as much. In the words of the prefect of the Apennines: ‘We have to deal with the kind of men who are used to calculating the danger as much as the reward, and who act only in proportion to the interest or the risk that must be run.’ Yet, they dwelt on three themes, especially: violence, sex and the relationship of the former to the latter. This was how reading and investigating denunciations conditioned the French. Although there was little new to them in the details, from their experience of Revolutionary France, Italy, itself, was new to them, and this is what they were told about it, first hand.

The authors seldom helped their own cause in the lurid descriptions of their enemies’ behaviour. In the course of ‘unveiling’ an anti-government plot in a Tuscan hill town, one informant dwelt on the bloodthirsty nature of a personal, apolitical ‘romp’ by the Gallozzi brothers he was out to ‘shop’. They were drinking with a friend in his wine cellar when a row broke out, and the Gallozzis hacked their host to death, mortally wounding his mother when she tried to intervene. When the deed was done, one brother concluded the proceedings thus: ‘...he pronounced these words over the corpse: “I will carry you to the tomb myself.” ...This individual – consumed with rage – had touched the blood which had spilt on the ground and drank it in his fury.’

The terse report of the captain of the Gendarmerie in Orvieto, in the ex-Papal States, fed this image, if in less grisly terms. At midnight on 9 March 1811, the town’s apothecary killed a notary at his own door on the main square. They had been friends, but the pharmacist had become jealous of a supposed relationship between his wife and his friend. Even without denunciation, the French could make up their own minds, but the facts gathered by such means helped to create an unsettling composite picture of an unhinged society. Just as the notables of Supino, in the Papal States, dared to ‘cross the line’ and deploy collective revolt for their own ends, so a surgeon and his farm manager were ready to incite atavistic popular tumult in Berdinetto, in the Ligurian Apennines. When Giuseppe Gozo and Ursula Ghisolfo attempted to marry there, thus spoiling the plans of the surgeon, Ghiglino, to wed the bride to his farm manager, he struck back thus: ‘About seven in the evening, a crowd of men, women and children formed at the door of the parish church to catch and strip naked the newly married couple, who had just taken their vows.’ Later, a local man out walking, was hit by a stone, obviously meant for them. Worse was to come, however,
for that night an arson attack destroyed four houses, including Gozo’s, and all his animals and furniture were lost. Local denunciations attributed everything to Ghiglino. In the southern Tuscan town of Sinalunga, a lawyer, Cuccioli, and his wife were hacked to death in their beds; although it was carried out by two ex-sbirri – now in the police – a professional rival was suspected. Whether true or not, such reports did not provide a collective portrait of provincial professionals calculated to inspire French confidence in the solidity of Italian granite.

The immediate point is not the supposed barbarity of Italian highland society, but that in describing it as such, the Italians themselves fuelled French prejudices. In short, denunciations of this kind backfired well and truly. The closer they got to Italian goings-on, the more the French behaved like the Inquisition, although this was lost on them. Rather, they drew on the discourse – and prejudices – of the anthropologues of the New World produced by the Enlightenment – Voltaire, De Pauw and above all Buffon – and pronounced the Italian highlands a society neither policiée nor polie. On one hand, denunciation culture turned them into almost voyeuristic ethnographers – more interested in the behavioural patterns of what they saw as a primitive society – but on the other, it augmented distrust and disgust, while also engendering caution.

Lurid portraits of violence and exaggerated passions were not confined to the periphery, or the lower reaches of notability. Nor did the French always have to rely on denunciation to find them. In 1810, an autopsy concluded that a minor Genoese noble, Luigi Cevasco, had battered his son to death. Ralliement notwithstanding, Paris insisted so abhorrent a case had to go to trial. When the criminal court acquitted Cevasco, the French Police Commissioner in Genoa felt compelled to condemn the entire Genoese: ‘The minor nobles tried everything to save this man. They set about it with an extraordinary energy and commitment.’ First, a fellow noble tried and failed to intimidate the magistrat de sûreté, himself a noble, ‘and had the impudence to remind him that it was a question of saving the honour of the corps; that no noble had ever been convicted of an offence carrying a serious condemnation’. When this sort of pressure failed, they changed tactics, and so influenced the witnesses that none would say Cevasco was guilty. The court had no choice save acquittal, but the police commissioner felt sure that ‘most of the witnesses had been bribed or won over, that a lot of money had been spent over this one’.

The true significance of this case is less the perverted act itself, nor even the esprit du corps of the lesser nobility, but the mark it left on their imperial masters. The magistrat de sûreté was praised by his French superiors, and emerged from the affair as a ‘good’ – indeed, acculturated – Genoese in their eyes, but they were most struck by his isolation and embattled position, his alienation from his peers. It was also a lesson that even prejudiced, unreliable denunciations were better than no flow of information at all. At the
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deeper, more structural level of the collective mentalité, this case also reveals the alien, potentially intimidating nature of the public trial; testifying in open court proved a much more difficult exercise for the Ligurians than their natural penchant for private denunciation, handled in camera. The French interpreted the persistence of this legal culture in a very moralistic manner. That witnesses could be intimidated and bribed by their betters indicated that Liguria was comparable to the most disturbed, unregenerated parts of France still, themselves, without juries and under the militarised Special Criminal Courts. However, in French eyes, there was a crucial difference about Italy, well illustrated by this local cause célèbre. The intimidation was carried out by the elite of the centre, by the urban nobility, a caste driven by a perverted sense of honour, which had rendered it thoroughly immoral.

It did not always take such shocking or violent cases to convince the French that they were dealing with local elites incapable of acculturating to their mores. Even when policiés, they emerge from the police files as so impolis as to be unworthy of even minor office. The mayor of the Piedmontese town of Bobbio and his tax collector developed such a dislike of each other that it boiled over into ‘grimacing and gross, indecent and injurious mutual insults’ at the Christmas midnight Mass, in front of most of the town. The prefect felt it could not be kept out of court.50 Sex and violence – lasciviously portrayed by a wave of private denunciations – seemed to engulf the life of the criminal court of Siena, in late 1810. Pini, a judge, was accused of adultery with the wife of a prominent Senese, Guarnini, who at one point actually attacked her with a club in the main square, in broad daylight. She was so seriously wounded that the archbishop agreed to apply the traditional Tridentine substitute for divorce, the séparation du corps, which constrained Guarnini to stay away from her. She abused it, by moving in with Pini. What worried the French most, it seems, was that Pini’s standing in public opinion was not undermined, while other members of the court remained persistent targets of accusations of corruption and political disloyalty. The prefect, for his part, drew the lesson that divisions within the court were readily exploited by the Senesi, ‘And one can readily imagine how easy it was for the public, and above all, for those who had been involved in lawsuits, to malign the tribunal.’ His impressions ranged beyond this, however, into a general condemnation of the society from which the whole affair had arisen:

I must add that the people of Siena is passionate, impetuous and vindictive; throughout its history, there have always been secret factionalism, coteries, malicious manoeuvrings. The habitual recourse to anonymous denunciations is more deeply rooted here than elsewhere, and as well as that small number which might be true, there are a great number which are nothing more than the product of personal animosity.51
The French prosecutor felt the culture of denunciation not only surrounded him, but was bent on his destruction:

I will be driven to defend myself and justify my conduct against the slanderous denunciations set in motion against me...by jealous, mendacious men who draw up these nebulous denunciations....Fire smoulders under the ashes, and I am walking on the edge of a volcano of defamation.52

His colleagues elsewhere in imperial Italy would have disputed only his conviction that Siena was especially prone to these things.

Their loathing of denunciation notwithstanding, the French were still more frustrated when local solidarity precluded the information it alone could yield, especially in the face of elites whose behaviour appeared utterly at variance with the role and image of the Napoleonic notable. This might stem from solidarity within the ranks of the elite, as in Genoa, or from the influence wielded by wealthy local notables across all classes in their areas. In 1811, Piazza, a landowner of Modigliano in Tuscany, was accused by the authorities of killing two tax officials in broad daylight, and then of masterminding a veritable guerrilla war against the authorities, running contraband under their noses. The Military Court in Florence raged that:

The extent of his properties and the power he wields give him great weight in both the town and the surrounding countryside, and an influence that allows him to escape the control of the authorities, and makes him virtually immune from the law.53

This is a striking reminder that the French could not live without denunciation, whatever their sensibilities about what it told them, or even its very existence.

The French were often reminded of more than they wished by Italian denunciations. They were hardly strangers to local hatreds, violence or the existence of an unruly, unreconstructed rural bourgeoisie. The seemingly endemic violence of their own Midi, and of Provence especially, had already nurtured almost an axiomatic faith in the relationship of the intemperate meridional climate to sexual passion, violence and the unsavoury duplicity that transposed both onto the paper of denunciation. Few doubted the reality of the brutal, irrational world portrayed in the denunciations, however much they suspected the veracity of their specific contents.

Although the French might see their Italian departments as extensions of the Midi, culturally as well as physically,54 the fact that the evidence before them came not from France, but from Italy, lent it a different connotation. They were already formulating a national vision that suppressed the realities of ‘southern violence’ in favour of an idealised France of the Enlightenment,
which became their counterpoint to the Italy of the police files. Hope *au delà des Alpes* was less assured than even in the darkest reaches of the Midi, because it lacked the deep-rooted, if fragile, traditions of Bourbon – and thus, secular – absolutism. Despite the obvious familiarity of their contents, the French interpreted the denunciations as unique to the *départements réunis*, so turning themselves into ‘the other’. Their ubiquitous contempt for the apparent judicial weakness of the Italian old order thus translated itself into more than disdain, and into a feeling of alienation. There were still other ways the Italian elites could surprise and disgust their new imperial masters, however. Their deepest convictions of their own ‘otherness’ were confirmed not on the wild periphery, but in the old centres.

**Lettres de cachet**

The elites of the *départements réunis*, from Piedmont to Latinium, showed a marked penchant for the *lettre de cachet*, a device for imprisoning individuals by sovereign fiat common to the French and Italian *ancien régimes*, and regarded as singularly emblematic of their arbitrary character. A common trait among notable families, from urban patricians to the rural bourgeoisie, was pleading with the secular power to exile or imprison their unruly, disobedient sons, and they readily sought French help to the same end. In the context of *ralliement*, and as part of an analysis of the potential for the integration of the Italian elites into the French empire, these petitions emerge as yet another window of opportunity for the new rulers, another instance where the indigenous elites actively – persistently – sought the intervention of the new state in their own affairs. Yet, for the French, these demands were, essentially, part of the pervasive practice of mutual, private denunciation, yet another strand in a widely shared, if degenerate, culture.

What sets requests of this kind apart, was their capacity – once acted upon – to draw the new regime into the dark heart of the private sphere, into the inner life of the family. In common with the wider category of interpersonal or collective denunciation, the very existence of such desires appalled the French, for in them the regime found, at the very core of the notable Italian family, what it loathed most in its own *ancien régime* past. The new order was met, instantaneously on arrival, with a cardinal element of that which it had determined to reject. Few things crystallised the tensions between liberty and state power more than the real, if complex, resemblance between the Bourbon *lettre de cachet* and the Napoleonic *mesure administrative*, if applied to family circumstances. The *lettre de cachet* had been an integral part of the ethos of justice under the French monarchy, not just a means of control. The magistracy had even used it against its own unruly sons with considerable frequency. This ethos changed under the Revolution, when the debate about repressive legislation became inextricably linked to that of the right of the state to intervene in private matters and, above all, about
the place of the police in a more accountable political order. Although the Napoleonic codes, especially that of 1810, became more repressive in character, they approached offenders as individuals, in a spirit of legality based on the libertarian principles of 1791. The use of *Haute Police* was not born of the defence of either caste or family honour, but of the hard experience of the 1790s, which seemed to reveal the limits of the idealistic approach of the early revolutionaries to criminal legislation. This was at variance with the traditions still alive among the Italian elites.

Interestingly, their reactions to calls for the *lettre de cachet* were one of the very few things that could actually divide the French in Italy. Their capacity to share the same opinions about Italian piety, the decadence of the nobilities of the old centre and so many other things that might separate them at home, melted away in the context of the *lettre de cachet*. To a new generation of administrators, whatever their backgrounds, these petitions were a powerful temptation to rally the elite; to men with clear memories of the *ancien régime*, it conjured up a spirit of moderation usually absent in other aspects of policing. Few Frenchmen were more ill disposed to their *administrés* than Casanova, the police commissioner of Genoa. Yet even he was moved by the petition of a Genoese merchant, who wanted his son, Carlo-Giuseppe Odero, put away in a state prison: ‘He is given to gambling, women and pleasure, all of which distracts him from having a serious profession. He lives on my property, in defiance of me, and runs up debts on my accounts that I am ill able to afford.’

The Police-Générale, significantly, refused to accede to demands it regarded as excessive. Roederer, the prefect of Trasimeno, and scion of a prominent republican family, found the temptation of helping a merchant family of Perugia, his *chef-lieu*, too much to resist. In 1811, the boy’s parents sought his arrest under *Haute Police* and his incorporation into an army unit in Spain, then the only war-torn part of the empire. Roederer concurred, citing the son’s incorrigible behaviour, debts and unwillingness to get a proper job. Norvins, the Director-General of Police in Rome, stood firm against Roederer, feeling that a reprimand and a high number for the 1813 call-up would suffice. Camille de Tournon was appointed prefect of Rome in hope that his family’s royalist, Catholic past and his noble status might rally the Roman aristocracy. By and large this proved a disappointment, at least as much through Tournon’s disdain for them as through Roman dislike of the new order. However, Tournon could show a rare willingness – an atavistic solidarity, perhaps – to side with his Roman counterparts over the use of *lettres de cachet*. Most successful petitions sought to spare a family physical violence from a delinquent son, or to avoid him incurring ruinous debts.

However, in 1812, Tournon championed a very different request from a mother who dreaded her son’s wish to marry a girl ‘devoid of all means’. Even at the opening of the Russian campaign, she – and Tournon – were
prepared to see him forcibly enlisted. His equally noble colleague, Norvins, told Paris drily that the whole thing had been exaggerated, that the boy was not at all dangerous, and that the whole affair was none of the prefect’s business. The mother had been the mistress of the chargé d’affaires of the Neapolitan Bourbons, prior to 1805, and the relationship – and her own main source of support – had ended when he fled to Palermo with the Court.\textsuperscript{62} Clearly, this was not the kind of collaboration the French wanted. Tournon and Norvins, although bothnobles, were of different generations, and whereas Tournon may have seen himself upholding the honour of a family of comparable status, Norvins remembered all too well the less auspicious elements of the old order. It was not only the delinquency of Italian youth that came to the attention of the French, but the cynical cruelty of some well-heeled parents, as well. Conversely, the counter-revolutionary connections of the mother, the estranged wife of Count Benito Braccucci, did not prevent her turning to the new regime to further her private interests in a quite ruthless fashion given the military climate. She was not alone. Delinquency cut across region and class, in similar fashion to Baroque religion.

French militarism found its most ready collaboration among Italian parents in the opportunities it afforded for curbing delinquency. Youthful trouble-makers of all classes found their tormentors happy to borrow just enough French ideology to see them off to the depots. Such requests reached the French from every corner of Italy: in 1813, at the height of the war, Lorenzo Carbone of Novi, in Liguria – ‘a man of some means and standing’ – sought the arrest his son, Luca, ‘a young man more free spirited than depraved’ in the opinion of the sub-prefect\textsuperscript{63} – and to conscript him: ‘a son whose propensity for the vices of gambling and drink have scandalised even his brothers; considering that he may well lead his younger brother astray, please send him to the service of the imperial armies, in the hope it may do him some good’.\textsuperscript{64} Florence spawned similar petitions from distraught parents, among them Giovanni Grassellini, who pleaded with the French, ‘…exposing the irregular and libertine conduct of his son Paolo…that he be subjected to military discipline’, this in December 1807, before Tuscany was even officially annexed to the Empire.\textsuperscript{65} A flood of similar requests reached the new authorities at this precise moment – December 1807 – on the very eve of annexation, exposing a clear and early indication of a real, if delicate, common ground between rulers and ruled.

This common ground could be narrow, indeed. The Pontenani, an aristocratic family of Arezzo, sought the conscription of a son as a means of dissolving his marriage to a girl ‘of low extraction’, and were rebuffed,\textsuperscript{66} a serious stand taken on principle, when the geographical source of this request is remembered. Signs of collaboration were rare enough in Arezzo, a bastion of counter-revolution. A direct plea from one of its leading families was truly a gift horse, but it was resolutely looked in the mouth. The French had their own idea of what constituted a case for forcible conscription; it
could include many forms of delinquency, from gambling to physical abuse of parents, but it did not embrace many standard expectations of the local elites, for such requests seem to have been granted almost routinely, before French rule. The new regime did not seek collaboration at any price; ralliement was not the equivalent of accommodation. The lesson for Italian notables, and even for some of the French, was that the new order demanded integration on its own terms, however tempting the prizes of cooperation.

This is not to say the authorities refused categorically to respond to such pleas, only that they acted according to their own convictions, rather than in any spirit of compromise with indigenous mores. When the president of Parma’s commercial tribunal pleaded for Haute Police to be used against his son, Ferdinando Ghidini, he received support from Nardon, the ex-Terrorist prefect. Ferdinando was not a mere youth, and had been exiled under the ducal government for organising prostitution. The Police-Générale concurred, but not to the severe degree demanded by Nardon or the father. Instead of exile or the Spanish front, Paris agreed only to hold Ferdinando in gaol, in nearby Piacenza, for one year. An example of Haute Police at its most humane came in a brutal case of persistent rape and sexual harassment of a young widow by her uncle, a secularised friar, in Montefiascone, in the ex-Papal States. She had been raped by her uncle before her marriage, a fact he actually boasted about, and again after she returned home on the death of her husband. When her father snapped and accused his brother of making her pregnant, he was assaulted, an offence the courts could punish with only a fine. However, this alerted the public prosecutor to the serious background, reinforced by la voix publique, which attested that the father and his daughter were honest people of some property, and that the uncle had been sent into the Church to get him out of the way. Working closely together, the prosecutor, prefect and administrative police were able to detain him under Haute Police for a limited time, and then under local surveillance, until Paris decided to send him to a labour battalion in Corsica. This was how Haute Police was meant to work – through the cooperation of all branches of the administration, the magistracy included, and these were the circumstances for which it was intended.

The application of Haute Police was not entirely a cynical exercise for conscripting the elite; the new regime had principles. Paris, and men of the ancien régime like Norvins, were alert to the ruthless streak in many Italian parents, and correspondingly circumspect in their responses to their petitions. The eagerness of many prefects, especially younger men, to avail the regime of this form of ralliement, indicates how popular the lettre de cachet was among the local elites. Their willingness to accommodate, in these instances, also reveals that Italians expected the new regime to continue in the manner of the old, in matters crucial to their private interests. The French did, and did not, respond to these fundamental expectations. When they chose to do so, it was on their own terms, and in the light of the increasingly negative
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collective opinion of the Italian elites they were framing, not from any desire to adapt to indigenous mores. Even carefully chosen prefects could be held at bay, when *ralliement* threatened to usurp pride of place to the civilising mission. Nowhere is this clearer than over the threatened revival of the *lettre de cachet*.

**The limits of *ralliement***

The French reaction to the culture of denunciation and vendetta in Italy is encapsulated by their sheer terror at the prospect of introducing juries into the *départements réunis*. Carelli, the Savoyard prosecutor of the Cour d’Appel of Florence, was almost beside himself over this issue in 1810. His thoughts merit quotation at length, not just for their virulent repugnance for Tuscan mores, but because, in his anxiety, Carelli actually comes close to grasping the logic of the inquisitorial system of justice that normally so frustrated him. He felt that having to hold forth in front of a jury would prove beyond Tuscan magistrates, who had enough trouble as it was in open court; he was also very candid about the ‘repugnance’ most potential Tuscan jurors – the propertied classes – felt for the severity of the French criminal code. However, there was a deeper reason still to keep juries well away from Tuscany:

> Judges are protected by the dignity with which they are always endowed, to brave the fear of personal vendetta against them, and so can apply the penalties they hand down, as required by law. But this is not so for a juror who, having given his verdict on the accused, finds himself lost in the crowd, and often face to face with the relatives and friends, even with the unknown accomplices, of the man his verdict has sent to the scaffold or the galleys. Here, where personal enmities are only too common, what really matters is that fear of vendetta has the deciding influence on everything, and if that influence is extended to the work of the juries, crime would usually go unpunished, and even the wisest laws would be without influence or force. These observations are not drawn from some simple theory based on assumptions about people’s characters; they are born of experience. [In open court] when you preside over the discussions of a criminal case, you can see for yourself, the fearful circumspection of the witnesses when they relate the facts as they are questioned.71

The French would not adapt their system to incorporate local custom or practice, but the policy that denied juries to many parts of the interior could, at least, be extended to Italy. This was another instance of the French concept of the *départements réunis* as an extension of their own Midi, but it was never quite so simple. There was a longer, very different institutional history to confront in Italy.
Denunciation and the Limits of Ralliement

Ralliement demanded a certain passivity of the new rulers. They had to await Italian responses to their initiatives and, more frequently, to see how their new administrés might approach them, with a view to integrating their own interests with those of the regime. In the context of a recent past of mass counter-revolution and a current climate of persistent, violent, collective resistance to conscription, or of more passive resistance to their religious policies, the degree of Italian willingness to turn to the French, in a variety of contexts, is actually quite impressive. Equally striking is the knowledge even remote, peripheral communities and individuals could show of the preoccupations of their new masters. However, it was the French reaction to appeals for intervention that truly mattered in an imperial relationship of unequal partners, and that reaction was constrained by the rigid template the regime fashioned for itself. It was not helped by the growing realisation that the collective mentalités of their administrés did not move swiftly.

More worryingly, the French did not see the same process at work in themselves. Adapting their precepts to local traditions, to say nothing of local conditions, seldom occurred to them. Yet, the cumulative impact of the information volunteered by Italians, and the very manner in which it arrived, confirmed the French in the belief that compromise was unthinkable. It all pointed to the certainty that Italians had to be regenerated. The new Criminal Code of 1810 spoke of a division at the heart of French society. It distinguished candidly between ‘the true people, as opposed to this unnatural population which has emerged beside it, and which follows only its own base instincts: sloth, debauchery, greed. It is the irreconcilable enemy of wisdom, thrift, hard work and property.’ It was outspoken in the assumption that ‘a debased race’ existed in society, that it was at the origin of all crime, ‘and whose regeneration remains difficult to achieve’.

As they created their own image of the départements réunis, the French seemed increasingly unsure where in the social scale – or on the geographic divide between centre and periphery – to draw that axiomatic line. Italians condemned themselves by their own words, their denunciations, as well as by what they reported. Indeed, little of this really involved the lower classes; a significant amount concerned the urban elites, as well as those of the periphery. Who were les classes dangereuses in Napoleonic Italy? The condemnation of society could embrace whole regions. In a direct reaction to the pile of unsolicited denunciations on his desk, the prefect in Siena expressed emphatically his belief that, whatever their specific political content, the venom-soaked pieces of paper pouring in to him denoted a social phenomenon with far deeper roots than the revolutionary upheavals of the 1790s: ‘To find the cause of the moral depravity of the Tuscans, you have to go back to the distant past, to Boccaccio in his tales and the historians who have written after him, who have given us images that are, assuredly, unflattering.’

The Tuscans were the Italians in whom the French put most faith, given their experience of enlightened reform under Peter-Leopold; the
prefect of Siena was a Piedmontese, Gandolfo, hence his familiarity with Renaissance letters, neither of which boded well for Italy, be it in the contemporary context of Napoleonic rule, or for its future after Unification.

The problem became even more muddled, but also more urgent, as the French found it ever more difficult to work with those Italians who rallied to them, and then had to be ‘amalgamated’ – further integrated – into the cadres of the new state itself.
At the pinnacle of the old order, the propensity to rally varied greatly, from state to state, in keeping with their very different traditions. The French had entertained high hopes of the Piedmontese, assuming their militaristic, absolutist traditions would readily dispose them to the Napoleonic order, an assumption based partly on a false vision of the Savoyard past, as emerged when the French had to work with those Piedmontese who did rally. However, dynastic loyalty proved a very powerful check on ralliement in Piedmont, from beginning to end. The loyalty of the elites and masses of the core of the Papal States, outside the Legations and Marches, proved equally tenacious. This was not universally the case, however. Under the early rule of the satraps, particularly, the great families of Florence and Parma proved willing to work with their new masters, just as they had accepted previous changes of dynasty. Initially, the Genoese patricians were more reticent. During annexation, however, more came forward than not, at least once the more moderate Lebrun replaced the former Jacobin, Salicetti. In his first days in Tuscany, Reille, who was virtually the acting French proconsul for a few weeks, found exactly the same. Although most of the ministers he inherited from the Spanish Bourbons appeared ‘old, very slow and barely competent’, he still had ‘a machine set up that I will try to run as well as possible, until further orders’. Beyond the ranks of the administration, he noted:

The people of Florence – and of the capital, alone – are irked at the prospect of becoming a mere province. They console themselves in the hope that Her Highness [Élisse Bonaparte, the new Grand Duchess] will come to their city every year for a while, and they would be pleased to see her do so, soon.¹

In the case of Tuscany, the new Grand Duchess and the Florentines would soon fall out, and she spent most of her time in Lucca. In the first instance, the elites of the old centres, however discomfited by their absorption into
an imperial mass, initially swallowed hard, drew on centuries of experience in such shifts of ruler, and prepared to collaborate. With his patriot loyalties and Jacobin past, Tassoni put it another way to his superiors in Milan:

Those in the anti-French party have a particular desire to conserve their jobs. Thus, they are plotting ways to impose themselves on the new order, and reassert the most severe despotism ever known in Tuscany, of which they were the leaders. At the head of this faction were Frullani, Giunti, Corsini . . . who want to take back the reins of government. They will not succeed, because Dauchy will be too much ahead of them for their intriguing ambitions to catch him off guard.2

Tassoni was right, but for the wrong reasons. The French sought out such men, especially under Menou, who quickly called the great families to see him.3 Their collaboration was seldom easy for the French to accept, however, for this was a very different kind of conquest from any Italy had seen before.

The Piedmontese4

The French sought out the collaboration of the Piedmontese elites quite aggressively, when they first annexed the region, and continued to do so, throughout the 14 years of their rule. Indeed, the only significant instance of the French borrowing from Italian elite culture was the adoption of the Savoyard system of the university, as the central, controlling agent of all national education. The French université erected by Napoleon early in the Consulate, was modelled directly, deliberately and almost entirely on the University of Turin, and he implored the Piedmontese statesman, Prospero Balbo, to become its director. Balbo never accepted, preferring to remain rector of the University of Turin, in order to temporise and blunt that very French influence intent on integrating him.5 The French fared little better with the great Piedmontese families, particularly those they admired most, the oldest families, with strong military traditions. In reality, the French sent to organise and run the new departments were generally unhappy with those Piedmontese who entered the administration. There were important exceptions, especially among the higher magistracy. Botton di Castellamonte went on to a very distinguished career on the Cour de Cassation, and several administrators served competently in departments of the ‘interior’. Indeed, there were towering examples of integration, none more pronounced than Montiglio, who moved from an intermediate post on the royal Senate of Turin, to that of public prosecutor on the French civil tribunal at Vercelli in eastern Piedmont, and then spent six years on the Cour d’Appel of Paris. His letter of application for a senior post on the new Cour d’Appel of Florence, written directly to Napoleon, is instructive of his own perceptions of what true integration, complete amalgamation, actually entailed:
I have applied myself enthusiastically to learning the language and laws of France, and I have noted that soon my colleagues no longer noticed the presence of an ultramontane among them in our discussions. Since [coming to Paris] I have forgotten about pecuniary motives; my old habits and my early loyalties have given way to new feelings. In the six years I have spent in Paris...senior posts have come up in Turin and Genoa; I have not applied for them. I have only applied for a post in Florence through the particular circumstances surrounding the organisation of the judicial order in Tuscany, having learned that Your Majesty wants people who have an equal knowledge of French laws and the Italian language.6

Montiglio not only belonged to the new order, he understood what membership meant and what the process involved. He was more candid, possibly, than he had intended; to join the French was to leave the past and his own culture behind. In the case of the Piedmontese, the French had not thought this necessary; Montigilo knew better, and neither he nor his new masters were disappointed by the results.

However, this was not generally so. The French despaired of the Piedmontese ‘at home’, but their persistent complaints made no impact on the central ministries. Successive ministers of justice continued to see the Piedmontese as fully integrated and acculturated in the ways of the Codes, to the point that they felt secure in sending them to dominate the senior courts of the Ligurian departments in 1805, and serve in the Tuscan and Roman departments after 1808. The strength of Parisian faith in the Piedmontese was manifested most clearly by their presence on the Tuscan Giunta and the Roman Consultà. The Piedmontese who served on both these bodies were Cesare Balbo, the son of Prospero, and Ferdinando Dal Pozzo; the former was an auditeur of the Council of State, the latter had been the senior public prosecutor of the Cour d’Appel of Genoa since 1805. In the years after 1814, both men became beacons of liberal reform in Piedmont. Dal Pozzo emerged as a sage of Napoleonic jurisprudence. His legal meditations, much sought after in elite, reforming circles, were published in ill-concealed anonymity.7 Balbo’s career was more illustrious. Despite the hatred he later displayed for French imperialism in the ‘History of Italy’ and his memoirs, especially his distaste at his role in the annexations of Tuscany and Rome, Balbo never hid his admiration for the Napoleonic system of administration. He became the last unconstitutional prime minister of the Savoyard state, acting as ‘midwife’ to the Cavourian constitution. Their French colleagues felt rather differently. Dal Pozzo’s work in the creation of the tribunals in the Roman departments was attacked bitterly by Coffinhal, in his inspection reports of 1810, and continued to be ridiculed by French magistrates who inherited his work. The appointment of so many Piedmontese alienated the Romans, causing even the French procurator of the Cour d’Appel of Rome to advise Paris that, however able the Piedmontese might be, enough was enough.8
A more general, apparently blander remark on Dal Pozzo’s work was all the more damning. On the eve of the creation of the new Cour Impériale, the procurator said simply that, ‘in the new structures, it will be very important to have capable men as public prosecutors, because honesty, of itself, is not enough’. Tournon was less damning, but had little faith in Dal Pozzo. In his unpublished memoirs, Tournon judged Dal Pozzo ‘polished and full of good intentions… but naturally timid, with little confidence in his own abilities’. This did not prevent Dal Pozzo using his position to create something akin to a Piedmontese ‘mafia’ in the new Roman courts, but it gives a different view from that of the morning star of modern legal reform he acquired after 1814 and, indeed, from his reputation with Paris. Tournon’s view of Balbo is even more crushing, with benefit of hindsight, summing him up as an ‘amiable young man, but without any grasp of administration’. The immediate concern is not to assess the fairness or accuracy of the opinions of Coffinhal or Tournon, but to register them. Contempt and condescension towards the Piedmontese permeated the administration. Roederer rejoiced at the departure of his Piedmontese secretary, whose French was incomprehensible, and the arrival of Dubois, from the department of the Orne, ‘a man shaped by experience’. This was the true face of the policy of amalgamation, the exact measure of integration.

The Piedmontese are a striking example of an imperial centre at odds with its own officials ‘on the ground’. The views of Tournon and the French magistrates in Rome reveal the emptiness of the imperial project of amalgamation, in the eyes of those closest to its practical workings. No one doubted the political loyalty of their Piedmontese colleagues, nor their commitment to furthering the imperial presence in Italy. Indeed, French complaints about Dal Pozzo’s ‘empire-building’ among his compatriots, and his alleged cronyism denote almost too enthusiastic a devotion to the pursuit of imperial expansion. Nepotism did not automatically spell incompetence. A close relative of Dal Pozzo, Pinelli, became the prosecutor of Rome’s criminal court; he was thought ‘honest and above reproach’ by Coffinhal, and did the job as well as any Frenchman. Nor did Dal Pozzo and those whose careers he promoted share the delicate reservations about Napoleon’s destruction of the old Italian order, expressed so poignantly by Cesare Balbo in his memoirs.

French contempt for their most loyal, and longest-standing, Italian collaborators was not about political reliability. Worryingly, it went far deeper. Their preoccupation was increasingly with the inability of the Piedmontese to grasp the spirit, as opposed to the workings, of the French state. Much criticism of the Piedmontese public prosecutors in the Tuscan and Roman departments was of their clannishness, and their severe – if competent – application of French penal legislation, rather than a poor grasp of the Civil Code. According to their immediate superior, Legonidec, the French prosecutor of the Cour d’Appel of Rome, in 1810: ‘I believe these gentlemen to be honest, and well versed in criminal law, but they have little experience
in civil matters; they have no presence in court, and no real personal bearing, which is so useful for making an impression." Legonidec recounted the particular virtues the Piedmontese could bring to Napoleonic service, but also the liabilities they had in common with all other Italian magistrates who were thrust suddenly from the inquisitorial to the post-revolutionary legal culture of the public trial. The French were generally correct in supposing the severity of the royal Costituzioni disposed the Piedmontese to the Code, and they certainly adapted better than Tuscans habituated to the Leopoldine reforms.

The products of the Tuscan enlightenment had still not moved beyond a system of trials held in camera, and often lacked the skills of public debate, like Mareti-Salugia, one of Dal Pozzo’s appointments, the prosecutor of the volatile Umbrian town of Folgino:

He is very weak in civil matters, and cannot address the court without getting into arguments; he is very honest and ethical, which together with his careful attention to detail are all good attributes, but when the next reorganisation comes, it will be essential to have men capable of being the public prosecutor, of leading the prosecution, even though honesty, of itself, ought to be qualification enough.16

Herein lay the common fault with all Italian magistrates. Yet there was another, perhaps unforeseen, consequence of introducing Italians, and especially Romans, to the world of open court. According to the French, the new system played to their sense of theatre, and actually exaggerated the need for the well-honed oratorical skills their own system precluded. Legonidec paid a truly great backhanded compliment to Piacenza, the Piedmontese prosecutor of Viterbo, when, doubting Dal Pozzo’s wisdom in appointing him, he said, ‘he is physically deformed, and in ill health, in a country where a good reputation built on ability only leads to ridicule if it belongs to someone of unfortunate appearance’.17

The provenance of most of Dal Pozzo’s appointments guaranteed their political loyalty. Almost all came from the tightly knit patriot circles of the eastern provinces of Piedmont: Vercelli, Alessandria and Casale, areas marked by a preponderance of bourgeois elements loyal to the new order, and had been brought together first on the civil tribunal of Alessandria, and then promoted by Dal Pozzo to the new Ligurian courts after 1805. They tended to occupy the lower and middle ranks of the hierarchy, while the jurists of the royal Senate first appointed by Jourde to the Cour d’Appel of Turin tended to dominate the new senior courts of Genoa, Florence and Rome. However, among the lower ranks, some of the ‘worst’ habits of the old order were reproduced on new terrain. Pinelli, a product of the lower provincial courts, was clearly at odds with the ethos of French criminal justice, when he suggested that the seemingly uncatchable bandits along the Neapolitan
border be granted safe conducts and the promise of immunity by the Consultà, if they would disperse and turn over their accomplices. This slip serves as reminder of the other factor common to all the legal systems of the Italian old order, the vast gulf between the central and peripheral magistracies. Pinelli revealed his origins to be emphatically in the latter, where the ferocious royal codes actually meant very little in the world of ‘government at one remove’. Paris stamped on his suggestion: immunity would be granted only to brigands who gave themselves up freely, and made a direct contribution to the capture of the rest of their bands. Traditional reflexes were also apparent in civil matters. Dal Pozzo showed his own roots in the lower magistracy, in his willingness to perpetuate the jurisdiction of the justices of the peace of the city of Rome, over the marshlands of the Agro Romano. This allowed them to continue according to the papal legislation of 1790 as the final source of appeal for civil cases of a value of less than 50 scudi. Coffinhal sympathised to the degree that it corresponded to the dictates of local geography, but it was utterly contrary to the basic French principles governing territorial organisation.

In the new departments, the Piedmontese simply kept local men out of jobs. By 1811, Legonidec concluded that he preferred Frenchmen with good Italian in these posts, as they seemed to arouse less resentment among the Roman legal classes than the Piedmontese; he really wanted Romans serving their own region, but ‘I would probably have a great deal of trouble in training and supervising them.’ Legonidec confirmed Coffinhal’s initial judgement that ‘these appointments have irritated the locals, who have little respect for the Piedmontese…. They would even prefer Frenchmen.’ The success of ralliement and then amalgame, in one region, appeared to thwart it in another. Ultimately, the French thought the advantages of using the Piedmontese outweighed the problems. Under Napoleonic rule, a clear pattern eventually emerged, in which all the most senior judgements of the Cours d’Appel of Turin, Genoa, Florence and Rome fell to Piedmontese magistrates with backgrounds in the royal Senate or senior French courts, while all the prosecutors were French. This was an emphatic signal of the confidence the French had in a particular institution of the old order, the Senate of Turin, but it was an ill-judged affront to the togati of their other possessions, in a culture where the magistrate was held in particular esteem. The French monopoly of the post of prosecutor in the senior courts, and their shared tenure of it in the lower ones with the Piedmontese, was a powerful reminder that true integration, based on the spontaneous adoption of the ethos of the new order by its imperial subjects, was a very long way off.

An internal report in the Ministry of Justice, probably drawn up in 1811, felt that all the Piedmontese prosecutors had played a crucial role in establishing the administration of justice in the volatile Roman departments. It also had full confidence in the senior magistrates in the new Cours d’Appel, a
judgement more predictable in the light of their backgrounds in the royal Senate of Turin. Nevertheless, the report did not ignore the deeper implications for the foundering of integration in the Roman departments, and further emphasised the singular place the French accorded the Piedmontese in the imperial judicial order:

The mutual loathing of the Romans for the Piedmontese cannot be denied, but they do not like the Genoese any better, and the Tuscans – to whom they are more amenable – are not yet well enough versed [in French law] to entrust any of them with a senior post.23

The observation cannot be avoided that, however fraught with problems for the French, in a part of the empire where refusal to serve the new regime had been elevated into a form of resistance, such attitudes boded still worse for the post-1860 unitary state.

The Tuscans

The Piedmontese were almost alone among Italians in being thought so integrated as to be ‘exportable’. Only a handful of Romans, Tuscans, Ligurians or Parmensi were ever employed outside their own areas. Indeed, in the cases of all but the Tuscans, precious few were ever employed above local level at all. Nevertheless, Tuscany had a unique place in French affections, at least initially, as the cradle of enlightened reform. However, when the French encountered the realities of Tuscan public life, a serious gap in perception and confidence in the depth of the Leopoldine heritage soon emerged, in contrast to Parisian aspirations. General Reille, the first French official on the scene, in the period just either side of annexation, displayed no sense of recent history. His verdict corresponded to Nardon’s accounts of Parma, earlier, or Tournon’s of Rome, later, in the process of expansion, and were probably all the more shocking and disappointing for that. In December, 1807, he reported from Florence:

There is a countless number of civil servants, in every department, and whatever the new order of government that might be established here, it will have to get rid of most of them…. The ex-Queen was too good to them, and all her decisions had the mark of weakness.24

Perhaps the one ray of hope in this verdict was that the rot was of recent origin, the result of the transient rule of the Spanish Bourbons. The Tuscan ‘placemen’ soon met their fate. Within weeks, French administrators were being poured into Tuscany, with sweeping job losses and no adequate pension provisions, a state of affairs that worried even Tassoni.25 Reille’s condemnation did not pertain to the savage, priest-ridden peasantry of the
The Napoleonic Empire in Italy, 1796–1814

Aretino; it had nothing to do with the horrors of 1799, but was pointed at the very heart of the Leopoldine state.

The Piedmontese legist, Montiglio, effectively assumed the organisation of the judiciary and made most of the appointments. As a Piedmontese, he quickly grasped the traditional gap between the senior magistrates in the major centres of Siena and Pisa, as well as Florence, and the judges of the periphery; it was a trait common to Piedmont as well. His time in Florence proved how integrated Montiglio had become, for although he drew upon his Italian knowledge to discriminate between the magistrates of centre and periphery, in a way few Frenchmen would automatically have done, he used this insight to seek out those Tuscans best suited to the new order. He stood by his initial faith in the *togati* of the centre, when the merits of all his appointments were tested by the creation of the new Cour Impériale in 1810, which consolidated senior magistrates into one court, based in Florence.26

Tuscany is rich in good magistrates in the senior ranks and...a Cour Impériale of forty members, all with distinguished credentials and deserving, would be easy to create in Florence.... Among these magistrates, I know of neither personal circumstances, nor of powerful patrons which can sometimes override the merit of some candidates, nor of the empty parading of devotion to the government, when it is not accompanied by probity, ability and a commitment to the duties of serving our state.27

Montiglio knew exactly what the regime sought of those it ‘amalgamated’. There was a need for more than political loyalty; a deeper, more practical commitment to working by French rules, and to French ends, was the real test. Rightly or wrongly, this was how Montiglio defended ‘his men’ to Paris. There were times when it was not clear, however, which French maxims counted for most. The case of Frullani, a judge on the criminal court of Florence, reveals the complicated relationship between the French and Tuscan variants of enlightened absolutism, as well as how Montiglio judged the relative merits of a magistrate under official scrutiny. Montiglio answered accusations that Frullani was anti-French, first by pointing to his record as an aggressive defender of regalism against Church claims under the old order, and then by the good advice he gave to fellow magistrates about the divorce laws comprised in the Code: ‘He concluded openly, and continues to conclude, in favour of the view that makes a distinction between the civil law and what governs the conscience of the individual.’ His fault, according to Montiglio, was that common to Tuscan judges: ‘he sins by upholding maxims that are too soft and too philanthropic...in criminal matters’.28 There were times when similarities were more important than differences between the Tuscan and French exponents of enlightenment, although the differences were always clear enough, particularly in the sphere of criminal justice. Frullani had his merits.
Yet Montiglio was also sharp to weed out or block the promotion of those he felt were not of this ilk, and he found most of them – in true Piedmontese fashion – in the lower courts. Montiglio simply assumed the working realities of the gulf between centre and periphery; as a Piedmontese, he was quicker to see it and act accordingly, than his French colleagues. It was an Italian prejudice, employed for French ends. In 1811, Montiglio used the reorganisation engendered by the new Cour Impériale to remove those provincial magistrates ‘overpromoted’ by the Giunta:

Fortunately, there is not a magistrate in the Grand Duchy whose honesty is in question, but many of them...are not experienced enough in the system, and others who serve as presidents or prosecutors would be better placed...as ordinary judges, and many of those now in the senior tribunals are only fit to serve at the lower levels of the hierarchy.29

He spoke of his ‘just severity’, hoping the magistrates he had discarded would find employment elsewhere. It was a ‘just severity’ arrived at by very Italian criteria, nonetheless.

Montiglio’s enduring faith in his Tuscan colleagues was not shared by his public prosecutor, the Savoyard, Carelli, formerly of the Cour d’Appel of Lyon. Carelli had a very pragmatic view of the Leopoldine inheritance, and found huge lacunae in it. Essentially, the distinction between the legal cultures of the periphery and the centre remained untouched. He blamed the huge backlog of cases not on the abrupt transition from one legal system to another, but on the ‘slowness of the old methods of procedure’. In sum, the Leopoldine reforms had only been skin deep: ‘[P]revious Tuscan legislation was founded on a jumble of statutes and local usages, and on the individual edicts of various Grand Dukes.’30 The first public prosecutor of the criminal court of Siena, Chery, complained that his colleagues had no grip on French procedures, that reaching a decision could take them a week or even a month, when in France it could be done in a few hours, if not immediately. Proper debate in open court was beyond them, each judge summing up, in turn, and the president having no control. The inquisitorial system died hard, and basic rules were continually broken, as the president took case briefs directly from the secretaries, and dealt with them himself at home, without reference to the prosecutor. In such instances, cases simply collapsed. The Tuscans took their holidays when they pleased, not in the formal vacations, and never informed Chery of their absences. At root: ‘The tribunal wants to carry on in the old way, because its members believe in the old system, because the judges are less discomfited this way and are little learned in the law, and above all, because they want the old government back.’31

Chery’s tirade is all the more significant because he was not of a revolutionary, republican background, but a true representative of the sort of amalgame of the old regime in the new, so prized by Napoleon. He was the
scion of an old *parlementaire* family; one of his uncles had been on the Royal Council under Louis XVI, another ended his career as the doyen of the *avocats* of the Parlement of Aix-en-Provence. Testimony from men of this stamp reveal not only the gulf between the new French regime and the Italian status quo, but still more, the profound differences between the *ancien régimes* of France and even the most enlightened polity of eighteenth-century Italy. The scathing assessment of the Tuscans ‘in action’ over criminal proceedings, delivered by Fruncepau, a French judge on the Cour d’Appel of Florence, however, reveals that French dissatisfaction was not confined to the prosecutors. It is all the more striking, as it is directed not against the provincial magistrates, but the members of the criminal court of Florence. The French had to monopolise the most senior posts, ‘... given that many Tuscans employed vacillate and are lacking in firmness in the exercise of their duties, because they are afraid of displeasing their fellow citizens’. Embedded in this outburst is the perceived incompatibility of the traditional role of the *togato* as both arbitrator, and mediator of public opinion, with that of the professional French magistrate, working to interpret the Codes in the interests of the state. The reorganisation of the Cour Impériale saw such protests prevail. Montiglio used this opportunity to concentrate all criminal cases in Florence, replacing the criminal courts of Siena and Pisa with periodic assizes. His disclaimer that this compromise would ‘avoid too great a shock for the reciprocal interests of these *chefs-lieux*’ showed the Italian prejudices driving his actions, responses ingrained with the accepted disdain of the legal culture of the centre for that of the periphery. This matched the exasperation of Carelli and his subordinates, however.

Initially, and only briefly, the staunchest defender of the policy of *amalgame* in the Tuscan magistracy was the Grand Duchess, an intervention all the more poignant and disinterested in the light of her general unpopularity in Florence. By 1810, however, even Élisse Bonaparte had to accept the dismissal of many Tuscans from the criminal courts, while still imploping Paris to employ them in non-criminal posts at the expense of the French and Piedmontese. Among those ‘outsiders’ she wished to remove to the interior was the Piedmontese prosecutor of the criminal court of Florence, Buoncompagni, which was supported by a Police-Générale report describing Buoncompagni as ‘generally detested’, ‘reputedly cruel and a bigot’. Montiglio and Carelli stood by Buoncompagni, however, and he stayed. This was a small victory for the ‘hard line’ in judicial policy, and betokened a wider trend in the process of integration. By the decree of 15 January 1809, Élisse accorded the Tuscan legal classes a unique privilege: those magistrates in post could only be replaced by other Tuscans, a measure in keeping with Murat’s legislation in Naples, although most key senior posts remained in French or Piedmontese hands. These lingering hopes in the Leopoldine reforms soon evaporated.
French decisiveness in criminal matters was not entirely unwelcome in Tuscany, at least initially. Soci, the *magistrat de sûreté* of the civil tribunal of Siena, praised them for rejecting the Tuscan tradition of granting a mass criminal amnesty at a time of dynastic change, something all ‘the worst elements’ had been playing on. He was pleased that, instead, the gaols were full.\(^{36}\) It was what to do with convicted criminals that drove a wedge between the French and the Tuscans, especially the Senesi. Élisse complained of their continuing ‘weakness and indulgence, the result of necessity under the old order’. Hopefully, a better knowledge of the Code and the influence of the Piedmontese public prosecutors would change their approach.\(^{37}\) For their part, the Tuscan legists mourned the ‘subtlety’ of their own penal code.\(^{38}\) They acted on this conviction, as well as just bemoaning the new regime. Chevannes, who succeeded Chery, shared his predecessor’s view of the Senese approach to French criminal law. He noted carefully the peer pressure at work within the court, in the judgements rendered by two new arrivals on its bench, Rai and Rossi, who were firm enough when they first came, ‘but today, they seem to have lost all energy; and in the important cases put before them in the last few months, they have voted as a man with those who regard severity as a crime in itself’.\(^{39}\) The French could act on it too; Rossi was demoted to the civil tribunal the following year.\(^{40}\) The irreconcilable nature of Tuscan and French criminal legislation was now recognised by all, and an important channel of *amalgame* closed.

French dissatisfaction with the Tuscans was not confined to criminal justice. By 1810, even the minister of justice, so long the champion of amalgamation against the wishes of those ‘on the ground’, declared the slow workings of the civil tribunal of Pisa to be ‘of a state that cannot be tolerated much longer’, attributing this to ‘the marked estrangement of most of the members of the court, in adapting themselves to the forms demanded by French legislation’. As a result, the bulk of its work was falling on its two French members.\(^{41}\) The implication of wilful sloth was implicit, if not clearly stated.

The Florentine elite had served several masters since the *triennio*, and its most illustrious families were considerably older than the Lorenese dynasty that had ruled them for almost a century before the French invasions. Their initial reaction to the removal of the Spanish Bourbons, on annexation to France in 1808, was not one of overt hostility. Indeed, Tassoni greatly feared not only their seeming readiness to serve the French, but their capacity to ingratiate themselves with their new masters at the expense of the patriots. As early as January 1808 – even before official annexation – he grumbled over the growing influence of the Corsini family on Reille;\(^{42}\) in June, he complained that two of the most prominent reactionary nobles, Frullani and Giunti, were actively infiltrating the new administration.\(^{43}\) One of their early victories was the appointment of their protégé, the former superintendent of the royal household, Count Baldelli, to the superintendency of all the former royal domains. Baldelli had resigned from the French army at the revolution,
raised a rebel force for the Archduke in 1799, and then emigrated to Vienna. However, Tassoni’s greatest fear of their seemingly boundless power came when they challenged the position of a very different personal example of *amalgame*, Piamonti, the president of the Buon Governo, the close Tuscan equivalent of the Napoleonic Ministry of Police-Générale. Piamonti served the French well in 1808, making the administration of policing – if hardly its actual enforcement – one of the most seamless transitions in the history of the period, especially his important role in quelling the post-annexation revolts. As early as February, Tassoni reported attempts to blacken his name by the ever-‘networking’ Florentine nobility, and to oust him in favour of their own replacement; they were still trying, in June, when Menou arrived in Florence. Although technically removed by 1809, Piamonti continued to advise the new regime.

Notwithstanding Tassoni’s partisan concerns, the portrait still emerges of an elite prepared to serve new masters. The Florentine patricians mobilised their traditional skills of entryism to win over the French the moment their diplomatic fate was sealed, and all prospect of independence vanished. Although they obviously hoped to soften the blow of Napoleonic imperialism by joining its higher ranks and influencing first Dauchy and then Menou, their initial reaction was not a replication of the disdainful, splendid isolation adopted by many great Piedmontese families, and still less that of the passive resistance of Rome. Set in this context, the clash between Piamonti and the Florentine nobility exposes the perils of *amalgame*, in that too wide an adherence to the French could simply import old rivalries into the new order. It was a short-lived dilemma, however, for although the adherence of the Leopoldine bureaucrat, Piamonti, proved enduring, that of the aristocracy was soon shocked into passive resistance by the very essence of the new regime.

Tuscan enlightened absolutism did, indeed, provide the French with genuine support and extremely useful collaborators, epitomised by Piamonti, but it was a narrow base. Even as the aristocrats courted Dauchy, his abolition of the Regio Dirrito and the Tribunale di Grazia worried them, as did the abrupt and integral introduction of the Code, thus entailing the suppression of the few remaining feudal rights and jurisdictions Peter-Leopold had left them. These tremors notwithstanding, Tassoni duly recorded the continuing noble presence at French official banquets and balls, throughout the spring and summer of 1808, even when the provincial revolts were at their height. Menou’s behaviour eroded this, but the real break came with the passing of the Giunta and institution of the full French administrative order. As the judicial order slipped from their grasp, and the full force of the Concordat reached Tuscany, a policy of collective withdrawal emerged. As soon as the definitive abolition of feudal privilege was decreed, a group of Florentine nobles, the Società, closed their private gaming club, the Casino, ‘perhaps to avoid being constrained to admit people of undistinguished birth’, Tassoni ventured. When Élisse tried to
rekindle their early enthusiasm for sociability, she met with little success. Her more discreet tactic of inviting small groups to intimate dinners, and rotating the families involved, did not correspond to local custom. Most nobles tried to avoid her invitations, and when they did attend, met her with studied coldness.\textsuperscript{50} Worse affronts awaited the French when they tried to draw young Tuscan patricians into the \textit{gardes d'honneur} and to Paris, as \textit{auditeurs}. However, the deeper significance of the evaporation of \textit{amalgame} through \textit{sociabilité} was the despair of Florentines at the rigidity of the new regime, through its impermeability to entryism over any issue of real importance. Equally, their belief that such tactics might thwart the introduction of something as fundamental to the empire as the Code, betrays a certain innocence about the nature of the new beast set above them among even such worldly ranks. The Florentines were not alone.

**The Ligurians and the Parmensi**

Lebrun proved very effective in the \textit{ralliement} of many sectors of the Ligurian elite. His moderation reassured the commercial classes and, to a lesser degree, the patricians, while his firm response to the revolt of the Piacentino ensured that patriot loyalty was also maintained, despite the return to public life of many of their political rivals. When Lebrun departed early in 1806, the task of integration and amalgamation fell to the French and Piedmontese administrators, policemen and magistrates left behind. Their task proved far from easy, and the results generally displeased them; over time, many of Lebrun’s successors openly bemoaned the disastrous consequences of the initial successes of \textit{ralliement}. In 1808, the ill-named French police commissioner of the city, Jolyclerc, lamented that the municipality had not been purged of its aristocratic elements under Lebrun, thus allowing a ‘party’ to entrench itself with a plan ‘aimed at turning Genoa against all new ideas . . . and showing the nobles that they . . . could re-establish aristocratic rule, and seize power again’.\textsuperscript{51}

The French in Genoa became notorious for their dislike of the locals, and for keeping to themselves,\textsuperscript{52} an attitude that may have led them to misinterpret the motives and nature of Genoese collaboration, or at least of some its most prominent \textit{ralliés}. Jolyclerc was referring specifically to the clique centred around the mayor, Agostino Pareto, and Girolamo Serra, men Lebrun had carefully cultivated and brought into the imperial fold. When Jolyclerc’s outburst is juxtaposed with Lebrun’s recommendations of January 1806, the disintegration of the policy of \textit{amalgame} – the failure of integration, in French eyes – becomes all too evident. Lebrun called Pareto ‘a unique man, [blessed with] talent, learning, ability and an indefatigable capacity for hard work’, with a brother also possessed of considerable administrative ability. As for Serra, who, with his brothers, came to dominate the municipal council, ‘he is a man that His Majesty must include in the government;
he has reconciled several factions, he is capable of bringing in all of them’.53 Jolyclerc, however, regarded them simply as two ex-minor nobles determined to control the city in their own interests, contrary to the French project of reform:

Their party appeared at the beginning of the Genoese revolution, and has reinvented itself constantly, in every phase of that revolution, and always with the same aim: to amass power to itself. One can but suppose its two leaders took this as their aim, from the outset, and they have followed this plan in unswerving fashion, ever since. To calm the masses when roused and attach them to themselves, but at the same time, to . . . turn them against the new ideas and, on the other hand, to show the great nobles that they can never re-establish aristocratic rule.54

According to Jolyclerc, the Pareto–Serra faction had been remarkably successful in infiltrating their clients, friends and relatives into the lower ranks of the city administration, thus confirming the success of entryism and the durability of traditional networks during French rule. The new institutions had, indeed, become the preserve of a faction. Jolyclerc went on to cite the specific policies they thwarted with impunity. They had stalled the creation of a lycée – ‘They do not want any kind of education here, and above all, not French education’ – and showed a strong determination to prevent the enforcement of French laws banning burials in the town’s churches and oratories, instead creating a cemetery outside. The latter innovation threatened to upset the careful hierarchies of Genoa’s lay confraternities, which, themselves, were now supposed to be illegal. They were also doing their best to neglect the État Civil; Jolyclerc noted that only one-quarter of new births were registered in 1806, rising to one-third by 1808, in an obvious affront to the future needs of conscription. They worked with Cardinal Spina to perpetuate the religious holidays banned by the Concordat, and – three years after annexation – the anonna was still functioning, acting not only as a platform of popular support for Serra and Pareto, but as a lucrative source of revenue for the municipality. The French interpreted all this as obvious signs of counter-revolutionary intent, seeing the Pareto–Serra axis as anything but a source of collaboration.

This antagonistic outlook discounted significant aspects of their collaboration. Pareto, as mayor, ‘borrowed’ gladly from the French in many matters of local administration that he believed beneficial, the numbering of all houses and the erection of street signs, among them, thus ensuring a more reliable postal service. Likewise, he established all-night police services, to the approval of his subordinates.55 Jolyclerc failed to recognise the importance of such ‘borrowings’ for the solidity of French rule, nor could he grasp that the Pareto faction was fundamentally loyal. Serra had been among the first to turn directly to Napoleon for help, in 1797, mainly to curb the ferocity of
popular counter-revolution. His memoirs portray him as a patriot, if socially conservative, and were written under the emphatically reactionary Savoyard restoration. In them, Serra quite openly declared that his true hope had always been to retain Ligurian independence, and that the best period in Liguria in his lifetime was the provisional government, 1800–2. That regime combined modern economic reforms, such as free trade, with judicial reforms ‘adapted to national customs’, and a political system with the kind of balance of power that ‘best reflected the Constitution of 1576, that inaugurated a great era’. Serra was no ally of Salicetti or the extreme patriots, but he shared their fear that the patricians did not have the national interest at heart, for they had long stood in the path of practical reform. However, he equated none of this with abandoning his clientele in favour of the wholly public, official sphere demanded by the new order, and this was what created conflict with the French. Men like Serra trod a fine line between trying to preserve those aspects of the old order on which they themselves depended for power and influence, and serving the French.

At a more structural level, the persistence of a méntalité still rooted in clientelismo and a cultural allegiance to a resurgent popular piety at odds with the Concordat, estranged them from the French, but this was aggravated as much by the inability of the new regime to compromise and adapt to local conditions, as by their own predilections. Pareto and his officials most certainly ignored the terms of the Concordat. In May 1809 the prefect felt obliged to ‘inform’ Pareto that ‘under the pretext of ceremonies or religious processions, unauthorised, illegal assemblies are taking place’ and that ‘considering that these gatherings cause unrest, they will not be tolerated henceforth’. Pareto fought for the nuns of the last four tolerated convents in Genoa to keep their chapels, which the law decreed to be private, and so subject to closure. Yet Pareto can also be seen struggling to reconcile local practices to the exigencies of the new regime, attempting – unsuccessfully – to effect integration in reverse, as it were. As Lent approached in 1813, he suggested the local custom of houses being blessed by the clergy ‘could provide the most exact data for the census, if the priests were supplied with registers, which they could then turn over to the police’. While sharing – at least officially – French views on the need for burials to take place in the new cemeteries outside the city, Pareto attempted to explain the Genoese mores on the transportation of corpses through the town:

It is indecent, indeed, revolting, to see human corpses covered only by a wretched shroud, being carried to the cemeteries in the arms of one pall-bearer, as if it was about getting rid of an unpleasant weight, or an object of public shame. This affront is only too often the case, for the poor.

It fell on deaf ears. Amalgame could not work under French administrators who rejected the moderation on which their original policies had been
The Napoleonic Empire in Italy, 1796–1814

predicated, and who themselves slipped back – or even acquired anew – a nostalgia for doctrinaire republicanism.

The Ligurian magistracy – or the lack of one – posed technical problems from the outset, which produced an immediate ‘colonisation’ of the new tribunals by the coalition of French and Piedmontese that would later reproduce itself in Tuscany and Rome. Whereas the French found the peculiarities of most of the Italian magistracies to lie in the gulf between the centre and periphery, the problem with Liguria was, simply, the complete lack of a professional judiciary, its highest courts being manned by a rota of senators, some – but far from all – with formal legal training. Even in the Papal States, the absence of senior magistrates arose not from the lack of a trained hierarchy as such, but from the monopoly of such posts by the higher clergy. The French then had to seek prospective native magistrates among the leading lawyers of Genoa. Lebrun noted that many were reluctant to accept, simply because they could not afford to leave private practice, added to ‘a convinced repugnance for [French] criminal law’. Such refusals are interesting, because those involved were generally the choices of Salicetti, as well as Lebrun; the most prominent – Molini and Molfino – were patriots.

Aversion to the harshness of French criminal legislation was not the preserve of counter-revolutionaries or anyone else attached to the old order, just as the poor pay deterred even avowed patriots. Although Molini and Molfino eventually accepted presidencies on the Cour d’Appel, the most senior court in Liguria was always led by a Piedmontese: Brayda was brought from Turin in 1805, and Dal Pozzo assumed the first presidency of the Cour Impériale, on his return from Rome in 1811. The prosecutors were always French. The maxim laid down by Lebrun’s adviser on judicial organisation, Bigot, in 1805, and adhered to in all the later annexations, was that French prosecutors were irreplaceable on the senior courts, as transmitters of a correct knowledge of the Code to the Italian legal classes. This marked the lack of integration of Liguria into the French legal order, and guided appointments there to the end of the empire. In 1811, when asked to supply Paris with the details of magistrates who might be the equivalent of French parlementaires, with a view to appointing them to the new Cours Impériales, the prefect could but reply that Genoa had never had a professional magistracy or anything like a French parlement. The only way to meet such a request was to look among the great nobles who had served on the rota.

Few Ligurians emerged to serve in the departments annexed later, and there were, relatively, very few in the upper echelons of their own courts during 11 years of imperial rule.

Parma proved a different problem. Indeed, the contrast with Liguria, annexed at the same time, could not have been greater. Although the smallest of the ancien régime polities to become part of the départements réunis, Parma possessed one of the largest, most distinguished law faculties in Italy. Thus, in one sense, the degree of acceptance the French accorded the togati of the
duchies was at least as much a reflection of their own willingness, or not, to compromise with the old order, and initiate a reciprocal policy of integration. Unlike Liguria or the Papal States, where senior magistrates simply did not exist, or Tuscany and Piedmont, where their education might not always live up to expectations, the law faculty of Parma was, historically, a centre of excellence. It was a resource the French spurned, for they closed it in 1805, and here, perhaps more than anywhere else, they revealed the holistic nature of their imperial enterprise in Italy. The impact of the Piacentino revolt of 1806 was singularly powerful. Initially in Parma, the French hoped to break the model of Special Criminal Courts, with their mixture of civilian and military judges, in favour of a purely civilian tribunal, where Parmensi were numerous; in fact, the revolt ensured this policy was almost stillborn. As with so much else in the course of annexing the duchies, the most heated battles were initially fought between various branches of the French administration, in the confused atmosphere of the departures of Moreau and then Junot, and the trenchant approach typical of Nardon. Moreau quickly appointed Piedmontese as prosecutors of the criminal courts of Parma and Piacenza, who soon brought auxiliary officials and clerks with them; most were from the tribunals of Alessandria, and so represent an early advance for protégés of Dal Pozzo. However, Parma remained a poignant repository of a rejected ex-elite of jurisconsultes. Antonio Lama had been a very high-ranking magistrate under the dukes, but could not even hold down a post as a juge on the civil tribunal, after annexation. The Piedmontese prosecutor of the Cour d’Appel in Genoa reassured Paris:

There is nothing humiliating about M. Lama’s misfortune; he was too imbued with the erroneous doctrines of ultramontane criminal jurisconsultes, to be a good judge; but his technical opinions and his scruples do not detract from his probity, in the slightest.

This was not the view in Parma, however. Lama desperately wanted to serve, fought hard for reinstatement, and had many prominent local supporters. Even Nardon, normally no friend of the Parmense elite, sought a way to reintegrate Lama, so strong was his support locally, but he never regained a judicial post under the French. His replacement was a Frenchman, Jean-Baptiste Busson, a protégé of Moreau, who won a reputation for toughness during the repression of the slave revolt on Saint Domingue, where he had lost his property and investments. The change of personnel was certainly influenced by the revolt, but it is also symptomatic of a wider feeling in the départements réunis that public prosecutors had to act as official informers and bullying teachers to even the most highly reputed Italian magistrates. The presence of Mastelloni, the criminal prosecutor in Parma, by 1806, is, like that of Montiglio in Florence, a reminder that effective integration did, in fact, occur. Mastelloni was an exiled Neapolitan patriot, but he also emerged
from an *ancien régime* tradition of aggressive reform directed against an unruly periphery, dominated by a feudal nobility. He saw Lama not as an *ingénue*, but as the ringleader less of political counter-revolution than of a genre of elite anti-revolution, bent on thwarting the introduction of French practices in the new courts, which was the true source of his popularity:

Since the new tribunals came into operation, I have noted how all the judges cling to the old methods, and that they much regret the change in the judicial order, to the extent that I have had to exercise great firmness in recalling them to their duty.72

At first, Mastelloni thought their reluctance stemmed simply from ‘a long-standing habit of working in one system’, but practical experience taught him otherwise. Their opposition was based, he believed, on a deliberate attempt to curb what they perceived as the harshness of the French penal codes, and their weapon – wielded with skill especially by Lama – was to insist on the *ancien régime* practice of a majority of three-quarters of the judges, when handing down a punitive sentence. The resulting acquittal of many serious offenders was a plot to ‘please public opinion’.73 Borri, the Piedmontese prosecutor of the civil tribunal of Piacenza, felt the same thing was afoot lower down the judicial hierarchy. He warned Paris that Salati, sacked by the French from a post on the tribunal, but still influential, was trying to get his job back. He had to be stopped not only because he was intent on thwarting the new penal legislation, but also was inextricably part of an *ancien régime* milieu that made little distinction between the public and private spheres:

He habitually used to hold his assizes in the houses of many of the nobles of the city, with whom he has very close links, and with whom he dines almost every day. . . . You know well the risk all this poses to criminal proceedings. He always reveals secrets and confidential matters to these lords and ladies. It is among them that deals are made to favour miscreants, and to leave the way open to granting immunities, without it ever coming into the open.74

Salati received backing from Count Maggi, the Taro’s deputy in the Corps Légitatif, but Paris obviously heeded Borri, and he did not return.75

Borri’s portrait of Salati’s world was indicative of the gulf between the old and new orders, in how business was conducted. Whereas even the fount of Italian jurisprudence was riddled with an informality bordering on the corrupt, the new order demanded an alien formality and professionalism. Familiarity bred contempt on both sides of the imperial equation. In the duchies, just as in Tuscany and Liguria, there was a feeling among the *togati* within the French system that behind its professionalism lurked a severity
in criminal matters that was anything but enlightened or progressive, and which, on close acquaintance, revolted their neo-Baconian humanism. Mastelloni and Borri may have been correct in their belief that, once inside, the Parmensi would attempt to pervert – or, at least, to adapt – its workings to local mores. In this spirit, many of the most prominent magistrates of this traditional centre of legal excellence sought to infiltrate the ranks of the new regime.

However, their applications just as often exposed ignorance of the imperial order as a willingness to serve or subvert new masters. The petition of Giuseppe Godi, a senior magistrate, former professor of law, and a member of a distinguished Parmense legal family, reveals the complete incomprehension of even those closest to the centre of the ancien régime, about what imperial rule really meant: ‘This applicant has the honour of informing you, that following an intensive education, the [former] government named him to the chair of criminal law [at Parma], where he taught its principles.’ Godi had no notion that his expertise was utterly useless to a regime intent on abolishing all indigenous statutes, replacing them solely with its own Code. The fate of the Parmensi magistrates appears all the more interesting, when set beside that of their colleagues in neighbouring Modena where, however ineffectual in practice, anti-seigneurial legal reform had been consistent, if gradualist, in the eighteenth century, whereas Parma thoroughly rejected reform after the fall of Du Tillot in 1771. Godi and Lama fell by the wayside, while many Modenese magistrates rose in the service of the Kingdom of Italy. This tradition of sustained anti-seigneurialism ended with the introduction of the French Code, and it was the centralising, statist outlook it engendered among the Modenese togati, particularly over the administration of the periphery, as much as their respective diplomatic status, that determined their fates under Napoleon.

The new department of the Taro was put under the higher jurisdiction of the Cour d’Appel of Genoa, because of its relatively small population. Yet, despite the proud legal traditions, there were no Parmensi magistrates on the Cour d’Appel of Genoa until spring 1807, two years after annexation. Until then, no appeals were made to the court from Parma or Piacenza. The appointment of the first Parmense magistrate came as a direct result of this spontaneous boycott, that united centre and periphery, but the new judge was selected for his loyalty to the French, rather than any distinguished academic record under the Duke. Parma had been a fount of legal wisdom in Italy, so experience counted for nothing.

**The Romans**

The French faced more acute recruitment problems in the Roman departments than anywhere else in Italy. The widespread boycott of collaboration greatly narrowed an already small potential pool of capable magistrates through the
domination of most senior posts by clerics under the papal government. This was compounded by the generally poor quality of those educated laymen prepared to collaborate, and resentment of the extensive use of Piedmontese in so many key judicial posts. Yet, there were further problems ahead, for often even those who rallied found it difficult to adapt to new, very alien norms imposed with marked haste.

Dal Pozzo, predictably, defended his handiwork to Paris, noting the high calibre of the Cour d’Appel and the criminal courts, but adding that the civil tribunals had also proved themselves. However, even he had to admit that there was a very thin base of talent to draw upon among the lower tribunals and for the justices of the peace, especially on the periphery; the new prosecutors had had to purge the original justices of the peace chosen by the Consultà, to set things on a proper basis. Dal Pozzo’s handiwork also included the establishment of the Court of Appeal, and the criminal courts, but adding that the civil tribunals had also proved themselves. However, even he had to admit that there was a very thin base of talent to draw upon among the lower tribunals and for the justices of the peace, especially on the periphery; the new prosecutors had had to purge the original justices of the peace chosen by the Consultà, to set things on a proper basis. This was, of itself, quite a confession of initial failure, but it is dwarfed by the continuous flood of complaints about the Roman magistrates in the years that followed.

In 1813, Legonidec, the prosecutor of the Cour Impériale, gave a depressing catalogue of the failure of amalgame after four years of imperial rule. The Roman presidents clashed with him almost daily over civil, as well as criminal, suits, causing frequent adjournments and a growing backlog of cases. They were not latent counter-revolutionaries trying to subvert the course of justice, but men out of their depth, and often of lax morality. Massidi was simply incompetent: ‘His incapacity is not compensated for by an absolute loyalty to the regime’, he was simply unable to follow proceedings. More typical of ‘the Italian problem’, was Paradisi who, although honest and of a good provincial family, ‘is irresolute and timid in criminal matters’. Mangiatordi was a law professor, and could not adapt to the bench, being too dogmatic and discursive, and only fit to judge civil cases. The other two presidents, Cavi and Ruffini, were quite able, but were involved with married women, whom they flaunted in public and both were deeply in debt. Cavi also showed an ancien régime reluctance to interrogate the accused and witnesses in open court, although he was very aggressive to his colleagues. His résumé of the provincial tribunals was worse still. That of Velletri was simply condemned as having lost public confidence, held together only by Binet, its French prosecutor. Rivoli was composed of honest, but ponderous magistrates, too lenient in criminal cases. Perugia was riven by internal feuding, despite the genuine ability of its members. In 1812, Legonidec had criticised the policy of his first president, the Piedmontese Cavalli, of keeping Romans out: ‘I only stand by my own [candidates for posts] for the good of the service: All other things being equal in public competition, I prefer people from the region.’ A year later, when faced with the results of his own detailed enquiries, he had to change his mind.

There were important exceptions to the general condemnation of the Romans, although they tended to reflect the gulf between centre and periphery. In the midst of a damning report on his colleagues, Legonidec
praised the smooth functioning of the city’s civil tribunal. There were clear
signs not only of *ralliement*, but also of *amalgame*, among the younger
members of the lay elite of the capital, according to the usually critical
Legonidec. Among the junior staff of the Cour Impériale were Pieromaldi,
33, a former *curiale*, and Cicognani, 24, from a propertied family who had
served in the sub-prefecture. They both had French doctorates in law, and were
doing well in the *parquet* of the Cour.82 It was not always the young who
won the respect of the French. Castrucci, one of the few native prosecutors,
was 80 in 1812, and had served the French well in Spoleto, where he would
be hard to replace. His superior felt, nonetheless, that he was owed a transfer
to Tivoli, his home town, ‘where he enjoys a high reputation and would be
of independent means, a quality desirable in a public official’.83 In 1811,
Camerchioli, over 50, was the only reliable judge on the civil tribunal of
Frossinone. Significantly, his two colleagues on the bench were Tesoli, 36,
loyal to a fault, but ‘he is known as a hothead, and was in trouble under the
ancien régime’, and Gorirossi, who had a Jacobin past, had followed the
French into exile in 1799, and was ‘something of an extremist’.84 This com-
bination might serve as a microcosm of local justice under the French. The
deeper impression that emerges of French rule in the Roman departments,
even in the context of praise, is of administration dependent on outsiders,
political outcasts, the old men, and the boys.

‘Getting in’: *demandes places*

The petitions for posts from Italian magistrates to the minister of justice
provide a remarkable insight into the pitfalls and subtleties of the search for
spontaneous integration into the French administration. These *demandes
places* unravel two important aspects of the process of integration within the
Italian elites under the French occupation. The first is, simply, the willingness
of so many men of the *ancien régime* to serve, with the important exceptions
of Liguria and the Roman departments. In Liguria, the lack of any court
structures comparable to those of the new regime meant the administration
of justice was an interaction between unprofessional senior magistrates and
lawyers; the latter did not come into consideration, and the former were
often loath to abandon their lucrative practices, and so lose clients who
were just as often their patrons.85 By and large, this opened the way for the
Piedmontese to dominate the Ligurian courts after 1805. The problem
exposed by the Piedmontese president of Novi’s civil tribunal in 1812 was
fairly typical. When seeking to fill a vacant judgeship with a local man,
he had only two candidates; while both were loyal to the regime and well
educated, neither had any formal legal training, and the normal shortlist,
he noted, was three.86 In the Roman departments, lawyers were reluctant
to apply for similar reasons, but this was often part of a well-coordinated
campaign of passive resistance. As the realities of the Code dawned on the
Italian legal classes, everywhere repugnance of the Concordat and in particular the penal codes, spawned a similar reticence. The lawyers of Liguria and the Papal States, however, are somewhat unique in their immediate refusal to seek service in the new order.

Elsewhere, however, the sheer volume of petitions, and the persistence of many of the applicants, reveal that a sizeable proportion of togati in every region were eager to work with the new regime. Initially – and this is the crucial point – the reaction of many leading magistrates to the arrival of the French was to serve them. When the Italian togati quite naturally stressed their distinguished ancien régime careers, as they always did, they did not for a moment assume that their experience would be almost irrelevant under the Code. Collaboration came quite naturally to them; what is absent is any great sense of dynastic or political fealty to their own old political order. Few in Parma were closer to the Duke’s household than Vicenzo Lusardi, the mayor (podestà) of Colorne, the seat of the Duke’s private residence, a post which also carried responsibility for the collection of revenues in the whole private ducal domain. He continued under Moreau, who charged him with tax collection over a large area that was engulfed in the 1806 revolt, when by all accounts he stood firm against the rebels. After annexation he fared less well, stranded in a minor judicial post in the backwater of Borgotaro. He hid none of this in his petition for a higher post back in Parma. Lusardi was proud that he had served a succession of masters well, and saw no reason to hide the fact, implicit in his curriculum vitae, that regime change meant nothing to him. The Tuscan justice of the peace, Galquano Bartoli, took a similar line when asking for promotion, but in contrast to the former intimate of the ducal Court of Parma, this relatively obscure fonctionnaire on the periphery read his new masters aright. Bartoli stressed his experience as a vicario under the old order, a post combining judicial and policing functions responsible to the Buon Governo, one of the few Tuscan institutions the French respected. Playing on the perceived ‘softness’ of Tuscan magistrates, he got his wish. Thus, there were appeals that worked, and Italians who knew what the French wanted to hear, but they were seldom found at the centres of ancien régime authority.

Bartoli was far from unique in his willingness to serve a succession of new masters, but he was rare in his ability to discern the crucial changes in political culture made by the French, a skill perhaps more readily found among the police than the togati. The most cultivated elements of the legal profession did not readily equate collaboration with integration. This was the second element of the demandes places crucial for the process of integration, their naivety. The petition of Godi is a striking example showing how many of the most eminent togati did not suspect the massive changes that awaited the administration of justice, under the French. Like the denunciations that flooded in for quite different reasons, demandes places often told the French more than the applicants wanted them to know or, indeed, than they actually
knew about themselves. Godi revealed his ignorance of the changes in store for Parma, more than his professional abilities, epitomising the togato who understood collaboration and regime change, but not the magnitude of integration demanded. This was a conquest like no other.

When this became obvious, the frank confessions of ignorance from those within the system could be striking. Gherardo Gheardini, a judge on the civil tribunal of Montepulciano, in Tuscany, went so far as to say, when demanding a promotion, that under the ancien régime his position was approximate to that of a judge on a senior court, and that he accepted his current post under the misapprehension that ‘the standing of judge was equivalent to that of the president of the court: I was mistaken from the outset. I have come to see that it means nothing.’ This was a common phenomenon, exposing just how little even senior Italian magistrates knew about the character of the French hierarchy, to say nothing of the workings of the new legislation. Gheardini’s petition, like Godi’s, exemplifies the tendency of leading Italian magistrates to emphasise their ancien régime careers without really discerning what would impress or repel the French.

On the one hand, Gheardini stressed that his degree was from Pisa, one of the leading law faculties in Italy, and the fount of enlightened jurisprudence. However, he put equal weight on his time in the Roman Curia, where for ten years, he ‘perfected’ his studies on the Roll of Advocates.90 Nothing could have been calculated to impress the French less, and he never rose above the civil tribunals. Indeed, some senior French magistrates in Italy suspected even Pisan degrees. Legonidec, the procurator of the Cour d’Appel of Rome, did not regard them as being awarded by proper examination, and set little store by those in his own circuit who boasted of them.91 Gheardini’s lateral move from Montepulciano to Siena, his home, was governed less by his superiors’ faith in his abilities, than that he had contracted a marriage that ‘diminished the consideration which ought to surround a magistrate’.92

Piero Fainardi, the only Parmense magistrate to serve on a senior court under the French, seemed to have no idea either how to approach his new masters, or even when they were trying by their own lights to benefit his region, as well as his career. Fainardi was placed on the Cour d’Appel of Genoa specifically to ensure that the former duchies had a voice, and gained his elevation largely because of his patriot politics. He did not enjoy the move, however, particularly as he was placed in a section of the Cour that entailed periods in the relatively remote town of Chiavari. As early as August 1806 he asked to go home for family reasons, and did so again, in 1808.93 On each occasion, he pleaded with Paris because of his six children and aged aunt. A return to Parma would, certainly in the short term, have left his beloved region again unrepresented on the senior regional court. The tone of his letters is replete with the discourse of the world of patron and client, and Baroque charity as applied to clientelismo. ‘The well being of this
little world [his family] could not be in better hands than yours, my lord. That is what consoles me, and what means I need not wear myself out with long prayers’, he told the minister of justice. This shows at best a remarkable lack of appreciation of Napoleonic public discourse. The only other explanation for such behaviour would justify the many assertions made by the French that egoism, private interests and a campanilismo bordering on maladie du pays, governed even the most educated and able members of the traditional elites.

It is hardly surprising that Fainardi’s cultural and professional outlook was echoed by more junior magistrates, and it is tempting to agree, at least in part, with the French perception of a very deep-rooted ‘dependency culture’ among the Parmense elite, nurtured by the ducal Court and the powerful patronage of the Church, which shaped their expectations and the discourse in which they were couched. Most resembled those of the fallen courtier, Giuseppe-Antonio Vignoli, chief secretary to the Ducal Supreme Council of Justice, and unemployed since annexation. His demande place made no specific mention of his professional training or skills, but spoke wholly of his penury, ending with a plea ‘…that you might wish to accord me your protection, once you have come to know how my misfortune has touched all the feelings of those who know me’. Perhaps more predictable, but showing an equal ignorance of the new political culture, was the reference of the bishop of Agnani for Giuseppe Lugaresi, for a justiceship of the peace. The bishop was among the few prelates loyal to the French in the Roman departments, but this did not imbue him with a grasp of the imperatives of the new state:

He is now bereft of the support of his father, whose death deprived him of the small pension granted to him for forty years of loyal service, because the pension was hereditary [and so abolished by the French]. The integrity, not to say the loyalty of his father’s service have led him to beg Your Excellence to better his circumstances, all the more so because he carries the burden of an aged mother and two young sisters on his shoulders, all of whom have no source of support other than him.

Rome was, indeed, the fount of Baroque piety, but it is still striking that so senior a collaborationist prelate should have displayed so little grasp of the ways of the new regime. Parallel to these anachronistic appeals to a variant of Baroque charity based on clientelismo, was a strain of ‘patriot-pleading’ that bore the marks of a shared culture, the wellspring of which was to plead misfortune in the hopes of finding protection. It could come out of the other end of the political kaleidoscope, but in the context of the French ‘job market’ it read with remarkable similarity. In 1808, Francesco Garibaldi, justice of the peace of Borgo San Donnino, in the Piacentino, asked for promotion to the civil
tribunal of Parma. His application spoke at length and with passion of his loyalty to the French in 1799, and of the crucial role he played in defending the fort at Bardi from the rebels in 1806. By contrast, it hardly mentioned his actual career or qualifications.97 He stayed put, as even so raw a memory was not the way to influence so professional a system. Few patriots were more deeply imbued with the Baroque tradition of supplication than the Romans. Giulio Impaccianti, who boasted of his closeness to Salicetti, saying he ‘took the goal of his noble ideas with him, when he left Rome’, virtually accused Dal Pozzo of disloyalty, his demande place dwelt on figura, a very ancien régime concept utterly alien to post-revolutionary politics. Instead of the presidency of Rome’s criminal court, Dal Pozzo offered him only a judgeship in Perugia, with a much lower salary, provoking him to say, ‘I well understood that this nomination amounted to nothing more than a humiliation, and I refused.’98 It may not have been a coincidence that he never held a post under the French, despite the chronic problems of staffing all their Roman tribunals.99 Giuseppe Liverziani, a judge of the civil tribunal of Perugia, also expressed his feelings at being omitted from the new Cour Impériale of Rome in terms of dishonour and effrontery, coupled with his domestic needs:

I am a Roman, forty years old, married with three children. My former post [under the old order] was equivalent to that of many of those selected for the Cour Impériale, although the posts I have held since have been of a much lower standing, especially as the father of a family.100

When the Piedmontese, Cavalli, moved to his new post as first president of the Cour d’Appel of Rome, he left his family in Turin to arrive as quickly as possible. All he asked of the government was to accord him leave when spring came, to bring them to Rome.101

The French complained long and loudly of their postings too, but they did so in the context of faithful service rendered to the empire, and usually in the course of seeking promotion. Family issues were often of equal importance, but they were expressed in very different terms from those of the Italians. Carelli asked to go home, to Lyon – not his native Savoy – feeling his job was done, and that at 50, he needed to be closer to his family and properties, but he declared he had been delighted to have the opportunity to do the initial ‘spade work’ in Florence, and did not regret it.102 Neither did he openly complain when this was refused. No contrast to the petitions of Fainardi or Lusardi could be greater than those of Crivelli-Flaivé, a young avoué in Avignon, who declared himself more than ready to serve in any of the pays conquis, because he wanted promotion to procurator:

I have a very large clientele here; but I will not equivocate over leaving my home to go to whatever post His Majesty may assign me. May I allow
myself to say that I will leave a secure job from loyalty to the government, for a salary that will not of itself recompense my sacrifice.\textsuperscript{103}

Jacques-François Dufresneau, an advocate of the Cour de Cassation, and native of Dijon, thought he had lost out in the competition for a post in one of the new Cours d’Appel in Italy in 1805 because of his poor Italian; by 1808, he felt he had remedied that, and applied again.\textsuperscript{104} Such young Frenchmen obviously came from another world, and spoke in a different, indeed alien, discourse, from the \textit{togati} with whom they had applied to work. Whatever their real motives, they used a consciously different approach more at one with the regime, than many very senior \textit{togati}. The French emerge, from their petitions, in the image discerned by David Bell in the late \textit{ancien régime}, as a magisterial caste imbued with – and loyal to – the concept of the modern, professional state.\textsuperscript{105} When their respective \textit{demandes places} are juxtaposed, the cultural gap between the French and Italian legal classes emerges in stark terms. Discourse is, indeed, hard evidence of real divisions.

There were Italians who at least tried to learn. Francesco Scaravigo-Formica, a former judicial official in Piacenza under the dukes, unsuccessfully petitioned for a post three times, changing his tone slightly on each occasion, and his petitions might serve as a weathervane of the gradual penetration of the ways of the occupiers into the minds of prospective collaborators. In 1806 he said merely, ‘I only know how to beg Your Excellence to wish to protect me, in my awful circumstances, by making them known to His Majesty [Napoleon], at a time when there are not a few honourable posts a judge can fill.’ In 1811 he still began with the hope that the minister of justice’s ‘kind and magnanimous heart might take an interest in my misfortunes’, but at least then outlined his past career and accomplishments. By 1813, he made no mention of his ‘plight’, only his abilities.\textsuperscript{106} Others learnt faster. When Gian-Domenico Rossi, a justice of the peace near Parma, was inexplicably dismissed, he did not revert to Baroque histrionics. He felt assured that he had not been the victim of a conspiracy – the government was too wise for that – and stressed both his long career as a local judge under the old order, and his service with the French in 1799, adding that the vast size of the department necessitated more judges, not less.\textsuperscript{107} Rossi got a post in 1807,\textsuperscript{108} a case of having not just something to sell, but knowing how to sell it. As with Bartoli in Tuscany, it is, perhaps, illuminating that so many of the most astute \textit{demandes places} came not from the elites of the centre, but from the periphery, and they emerged, ‘properly formulated’, as it were, very soon after annexation.

The need to impress in the quest for employment probably exaggerated many cultural traditions, leading applicants to express themselves in ways that made them appear, for better or for worse, as caricatures. Such letters should not be assumed to reveal the whole, or even the real nature of their
authors. The pressure that generated them, however, led many applicants to retreat instinctively into their cultural shells, and employ stereotypical language towards authority. The *demandes places* may not tell the truth about individuals, but they expose cultural fault lines between the French and Italians in ways few other sources can. In this sense, they are to *amalgame* what denunciations represent for *ralliement*. However, while the denunciations painted a universal and uniform picture of the *départements réunis*, the *demandes places* reinforced their regional stereotypes of the Italian elites: craven Parmensi, sunk in the Courtly and clerical dependency culture; Tuscans who overestimated their own enlightenment and education; Romans who lurched only from pathetic begging to ridiculous *amour propre*; Ligurians who were simply not of the modern world; the almost acculturated Piedmontese.

To this was added the universal figure of the lazy, semi-educated young noble, who even cropped up in allodial, supposedly enlightened Tuscany, where he was least expected.

The French should have added themselves to this list, although it is hardly surprising they did not. The carefully crafted image of the young imperial professional jumps from the *demandes places*. Petitions, particularly from Italians already inside the system, reflect a mixture of ‘old’ and ‘new’, and probably represent the normal hopes and worries of professional men, as well as a believable degree of integration, within believable limits. Giuseppe Bruschi, a Piedmontese, was Binet’s substitute procurator in the dangerous Roman arrondissement of Todi, and applied for Binet’s job when he moved up to Rome in 1812. He said all the right things, stressing his own training – six years in the highly respected faculty of Turin – and that he had ‘held the fort’ when Binet had to tour the periphery. He made the point that he came from a legal family, something by which the regime set increasing store in the late empire, the true mark of the astute ‘insider’. For all this, Bruschi let slip just a trace of *ancien régime* corporatist attitudes, by concluding that he had a claim on the post because substitutes held a certain right to replace their procurators.\textsuperscript{109} Such attitudes, revealing rational minds in transition from one order to another, probably represent the human reality best, but they are not the norms in which most applicants expressed themselves. In the case of the individual, the stereotype was not likely to be the whole truth, but in terms of the collective culture, neither were these pictures entirely false. There was a vast gulf between the French and even the most willing Italian collaborators.

Nevertheless, the very existence of a mass of *demandes places* is testimony that, however counter-productive their applications, many Italians who should have known better still applied. For whatever reason, and it was usually penury, the French could seldom claim they lacked men willing to serve among the *togati* and the courtiers of the old order. Tassoni, in Florence, may have been right in thinking that the real goal of some was to subvert the new regime, yet this was not universally so. The tone of so many *demandes*
places and the reactions of so many magistrates to the nature of service, also show an unsuspected gap between collaboration and true integration. The togati were not alone.

The sub-prefects: the emphatic abandonment of amalgame

The sub-prefects were the true ‘cyphers’ and mechanical fonctionnaires of the imperial administrative order, and meant to be natives of the arrondissements they administered. However, they were also the local ‘face’ of government; they were intended to provide the prefects with local knowledge and instil their administrés with confidence. The French followed their own rule only in Piedmont; only here, local men, usually with patriot backgrounds, held these posts. When so rigid and standardised a regime departs from its own template to this extent, the estrangement between its Italian administrés and the new imperial order comes into sharp focus. As the French advanced south, they felt a perceptible diminishing of confidence in the local elites, to the extent that even this most mechanical of posts could seldom be left to natives, for it was exactly the need for familiarity with the administration that saw so many ‘outsiders’ deployed at this most local of levels. The absence of the newly ruled from the sub-prefecture denotes, perhaps more poignantly than any other case, how little direct schooling in the ways of the modern state the propertied classes of the départements réunis actually got under Napoleon.

The policy of amalgame usually ended in local men being pushed aside as the French bent over backwards to employ and accommodate those few Italian notables willing to serve at this level. Basilico Potenziani was one of the few sons of wealthy Roman families to become an auditeur, and his first posting to a sub-prefecture was Chiavari, in Liguria. A similar case was that of Carlo Publicola De Santa Croce, also of a notable Roman family. A Knight of Malta, De Santa Croce had served in the Hamburg Regiment, and then braved public opprobrium by becoming both a member of Rome’s Electoral College and the captain of its garde d’honneur. For this, he was rewarded with the prestigious sub-prefecture of Siena, the second city of Tuscany, thus affronting a Tuscan elite that already felt itself pushed out of the best administrative and judicial posts. In both these cases, the desire for amalgame, indeed for ralliement, drove the French to break their own rules in areas where there was no pressing need to do so. The use of outsiders, whatever their provenance, denatured the office of sub-prefect, and closed the most obvious opportunity to ‘school’ the Italian masses de granit in the new ways. The confusion in French priorities, which turned at times on issues of security – as in Novi, Arezzo, and the whole region touched by the 1806 Piacentino revolt – and at times on the obsession with rallying the higher nobility, excluded exactly those elements of the Italian propertied classes they most needed to train.
The decision in 1809 to create sub-prefects in departmental *chef-lieux* should have opened the way to deeper collaboration, but these new posts were simultaneously declared the preserve of the *auditeurs* which effectively meant a new influx of young Frenchmen. That of Spoleto, the *chef-lieu* of Trasimeno (Umbria), went to Louis Zoë Ducros, from a wealthy Breton family, of the first generation educated in the imperial *lycées*. When he was transferred elsewhere, the prefect, Roederer, spoke up for one of his council-lors, a local notable, Bernardino Montari, whom Roederer – often no great friend of the local notables – felt was well suited to the post. He was reminded curtly by Paris that only *auditeurs* were eligible. The sub-prefecture of Rome, where the regime desperately needed friends, went to Claude de Fréminville de la Poix, a war veteran, noble and member of the Electoral College of Lyon, who had served in the administration of Paris, becoming an *auditeur* in 1810. Fréminville was later redeployed to the periphery, as sub-prefect of Foligno, to spearhead one of the last anti-brigand offensives of the empire; rare among *auditeurs*, he protested, even demanding the Legion of Honour as compensation. The sub-prefecture of Genoa, where the local patriot clans clamoured for office, went to Jules Alexandre Croze, from Brioude in the Auvergne, a law graduate from the Imperial University. In all of these cases, obviously, the prefects were also French, and the administration of the great Italian cities, as well as their immediate hinterlands, fell wholly into French hands. The sole Italian *auditeur* was just as much an outsider in his post. Nicola Giovanni Tomasio Littardi was a Ligurian, from Port-Maurice on the border with Nice, a perfect example of true *amalgame*. Made an *auditeur* in 1809, he was soon sent on a special mission to Vienna after the Wagram campaign, and then served in the new Illyrian provinces, modern Croatia. In 1810, he became sub-prefect of Parma, an appointment possibly made with an eye to the past history of the Piacentino revolt, and his experience of a troubled region.

Wherever a serious security problem existed, the French assigned sub-prefectures accordingly. These appointments, which almost always infringed administrative norms, and invariably strayed from the spirit guiding the nature of the office, are perhaps among the clearest evidence that the French doubted the applicability of *amalgame* to large tracts of the *départements réunis*. Where they perceived endemic recalcitrance, the French almost automatically lost hope in the capacity of Italians to integrate sufficiently to cope, even when their political loyalty was above reproach. Few Ligurian *provveditori* had served the patriot republic or the French better than Isengard, in Novi, and his report to the Ministry of the Interior at the moment of annexation in 1805 revealed the genuine extent of his loyalty, as did his willingness to risk his neck in the battle against the formidable Giuseppe Mayno, whose bandits held sway around Novi. Nevertheless, Lebrun did not feel he had the administrative capacity or intellectual discipline necessary for a sub-prefect. He was transferred to tax collection, where his zeal was judged
appropriate, and where Lebrun thought, ‘he will be able to hide his disorgan-
ization, and his reckless conduct’. 119 The French prefect of Genoa sought a
local man to replace him. First, Datili, the only son of one of the city’s richest
families or, alternatively, Podestà, the ex-proveditori of Genoa, who ‘combines
a deep knowledge of the area with real administrative talent, [and] is among
those Ligurians who have served the French with the greatest zeal and sincerit’y’. More to the point, he was without a post in 1806, and his appoint-
ment would do much to placate the patriots, who had seen many lucrative
key posts go either to outsiders, or those of doubtful political loyalty.120

Instead, Paris swept aside the diplomacy of elite ralliement, as symbolised by
Datili, loyalty to the cause, as represented by Isengard, and local knowledge
and political reliability, in the person of Podestà. Until 1814, Novi was
under Charles-Alexis Reboul-Berville, a gentilhomme from the Vivarais, and
protégé of Menou. Novi remained a French outpost, even against the wishes
of Lebrun and a French prefect.121

The arrondissements of the Piacentino were dealt with similarly. The
exceptions were the two Piedmontese sub-prefects of Bobbio and Voghera,
who were universally praised for their spirited resistance to the rebels; one,
Giuseppe Montiglio – a former officer in the Savoyard army – won the
Legion of Honour.122 However, their colleagues in Liguria and the soon to be
created department of the Taro – the former duchies of Parma and Piacenza –
were regarded very differently. The alleged cowardice of Antonio Bricoli, sub-
prefect of Bardi – the heartland of the revolt – had permanent consequences
for the region. Bricoli’s dismissal provoked an outburst from Lebrun that
was transformed into an axiom for future appointments in the area: ‘an
auditeur is required for Borgo Taro [the new seat for the arrondissement],
where he can serve his administrative apprenticeship’.123 So it proved. One of
the shortlisted candidates was Reboul-Berville, but the post went to a Parisian,
François Heim, then in his forties, a former member of the Parlement of Paris,
and a close friend of the Prince Borghese.124 Piacenza went to a Niçois, Frédéric
Caravel, whose family was deeply committed to the regime;125 Borgo San
Donnino was held by another Parisian, François Locard, who was sent there
directly from the Ministry of the Interior in 1806, and remained to the
end.126 With the presence of Littardi in Parma, the entire department of the
Taro was wholly in French hands, throughout its existence. There was never a
real attempt at amalgamation with the local elite after the 1806 revolt.

It was the same in the arrondissement of Arezzo, the heartland of Tuscan
counter-revolution, where Désiré Vulpillat, an ex-officer from the Jura, was
sub-prefect from the time of the Giunta in 1808, until 1814.127 Needless to say,
he was not loved, and in 1809 Paris tentatively proposed his replacement by
a local man, Nonni, because, went the reasoning, ‘this area needs to be guided
by an administrator who knows it well, who is known to it, a local notable
who can prevent the further alienation of these people, who can lead them
with a mixture of firmness and confidence’.128 In short, Paris proposed a
return to normalcy. A storm erupted, led significantly, by Élisse, herself so recently a champion of the Tuscans’ right to administer themselves. She demanded that Nonni’s candidacy be dropped because ‘Arezzo is the least loyal part of Tuscany’. She got her way. Even as it tried to employ Tuscans in its desire to rally them and govern the region according to the French template, the Ministry of the Interior had to confess that Nicontri, the local landowner first appointed sub-prefect of Arezzo immediately after the 1808 revolt, was afraid to take up his post, and had not technically even accepted or resigned it, as he simply did not answer his post. Vulpillat was still there in 1813, and drew this assessment from the prefect in Florence: ‘…he is not generally liked in his arrondissement, but he is zealous and active’. It was a common refrain. Ducros, sent to shore up the regime on the convulsed border between the Roman departments and Naples in 1813, was described by his prefect as ‘sharp, frank and firm, [although] he seems unreflective, and to be distracted at times’. What was unacceptable in the Ligurian patriot, Isengard, did not prevent the French auditeur, Ducros, from assuming in 1806 an analogous role in an arrondissement with comparable problems to those of Novi.

In keeping with the rosy image painted for him by Degerando and others, Napoleon’s initial faith in the capacity of the Tuscan elites to integrate was reflected in his initial policy of reserving sub-prefectures to them, just as he wished to do for judicial posts. Dauchy sought to ensure this, but the 1808 revolts thwarted its full implementation. Tassoni mocked many of the first appointments: Nenci in Pistoia and Minutelli in Montepulciano lacked talent and experience, although were above political or moral reproach. A year later Paris was forced to agree, adding that experience had proved that too many of the initial appointments had been made without a real knowledge of both the people and the country. However, the analysis of the Interior, set beside the judgements of Tassoni, reveal a deeper gulf between French and Tuscans than politics. Setting aside the exceptional case of Nicontri in Arezzo, all were agreed that there was no lack of desire to work within the regime – to amalgamate – not just offer support. The problem was now perceived as the incapacity of the Tuscan masses de granit to cope with the demands of the new regime, and some of the most damning judgements were reserved for young men in relatively tranquil arrondissements. Of Nenci, in Pistoia, Paris said:

\[\ldots\text{very young, a rich landowner, but uneducated, unused to regular work, unable to adjust to government business, having no knowledge of our laws, although full of goodwill and very loyal, but knows he would be better in a lower post.}\]

Mastiani, in Pisa, was also loyal to the French, and one of the richest landowners in Tuscany, ‘but utterly incapable of dispensing justice; he cannot
adapt to a working routine, nor to living at his post’. In the end, he resigned of his own accord. Guidi never left Florence to take up his post in Volterra, and opted to serve as an *adjoint* to the mayor instead. Yet, until Élisse intervened, Paris persisted in a policy of only appointing outsiders when a Tuscan had refused. Nonetheless, the problem was increasingly perceived in almost cultural terms. The immediate temptation is to equate the situation in Tuscany directly with the ultimately impossible attempt by the Venetian aristocracy to integrate itself into the prefectoral corps, after the annexation of the Republic of St Mark to the Kingdom of Italy. To French eyes, however, the two cases were not essentially comparable. In Venetia, they knew they were dealing with the ruling elite of one of the most unreconstructed ancien régime polities, whereas Tuscany was, reputedly, in the vanguard of enlightened reform until relatively recently. Venice had been predictable, whereas Tuscany was truly the graveyard of *amalgame*, the point, both geographical and political, where the French at every level of government began definitively to despair that propertied Italians previously exposed to enlightened government could integrate into the new order, less because they were opposed to it, than because integration was beyond their comprehension and, quite probably in French eyes, beyond their ability.

In those cases where local men did serve successfully as sub-prefects, they were seldom what the French had in mind, and they often said as much. Michele De Ré is a classic case in point. Tassoni thought well of him – ‘an able man who lost a great deal for the cause in 1799’ – and felt that his appointment to the dangerous arrondissement of Grosseto – the Maremma swamplands – was perhaps the only good choice Dauchy had made in 1808. Paris took a different view, and recommended he be asked to resign:

> Not only without wealth, but not up to the job. Sadly, he is too implicated as a man of faction. He is neither respected, nor trusted by the public; he is odious to the big landowners. Nevertheless, he cannot actually be accused of any grave errors while in the job, and it is not easy to find a well-qualified sub-prefect for such an area.

Many great landowners in the Maremma were implicated in the 1808 rising and suspected of continued links with the British. These circumstances turned De Ré’s failings into positive virtues for the Giunta and its French successors in Tuscany, if not for Paris. The desire for normalcy by the imperial centre was quashed by the French on the ground. The French authorities in Florence obviously had the former doctor and committed patriot noted as a man for difficult postings.

A rather different, but equally inappropriate appointment according to the norms, was that of Pier-Paolo Cassani in the upland arrondissement of Foligno, in Umbria. He was a local man, an innkeeper – hardly a notable, and uneducated. His prefect, Roederer, remarked that ‘He senses his own
inability, and has long wished to be moved to a lower level of administration.’ Of his administrative methods, Roederer said simply, ‘He has none; he is only a postman for the prefecture; he doesn’t understand a single law, and has no view on anything.’ Nevertheless, he successfully executed conscription in 1811 ‘in part because his character and his manner inspire confidence in the country people’.140 This was hardly the image of stewardship by entrenched landed elites envisaged by the system, and even this case of unconventional success proved fragile and illusory, for although Cassani could cope, particularly with conscription, in the relatively quiet years of 1810–11, when the situation worsened in 1812 he was swiftly replaced by the ruthless French auditeur, Croze. There were, of course, exceptions to the rule or, more correctly, exceptions that corresponded to the official rule. Giulio Torre was the sub-prefect of Sarazana, in Liguria, throughout the French period; with a good private fortune, and as a former member of the Senate of the old Republic, he largely met the French model for the post.141 Another was Bernardino Montani, sub-prefect of Perugia, in Umbria, an ex-noble, and a landowner with a moderate fortune.142 For the most part, however, the sub-prefectures, like so many other posts, were in the hands of a mixture of patriots and outsiders. Official policy after 1809 ensured that the new sub-prefects of the departmental chefs-lieux – and thus, the traditional centres – were reserved for auditeurs, who were never local men, while the more dangerous parts of the periphery remained in, or were soon passed to, French hands.

The impact of the centre

Napoleon intended Paris to be the centre of the new imperial universe. He told Las Cases on St Helena:

It came into my perpetual dreams, to make of Paris the veritable capital of Europe: In time, I wanted it to become (a city) of two, three, even four million inhabitants…in a word, something fabulous, colossal, something unknown before our own times.143

He was neither lying nor exaggerating his original thoughts, and there is a wealth of material evidence to bear witness to these particular ‘words from the Rock’. More to the point, he gave Paris the coveted privilege of very low conscription quotas, and was capable of resorting to tactics worthy of both the Parlement of Paris and the Commune in times of subsistence crisis, notably just before the onset of the Russian campaign in 1812, when he used nothing less than the Imperial Guard to forage ruthlessly in the Norman departments for provisions for the city, in the manner of the Armée Révolutionnaire.144 In short, he became the city’s protector, in the manner of both the Parlement and Hébert. However, Paris was meant to protect him, in return. It was to be both a magnet for those who rallied and
wished to amalgamate or, failing that, a cage for those who refused to integrate, and had to be forcibly assimilated. Napoleon sought to draw to Paris the very best minds and talents of the lands under his sway; Goethe and Canova were the most prominent of those he courted. It was here that auditeurs really began their careers in the Council of State; it was to Paris that driven, ambitious young professionals on the peripheries – Boucher, Binet and thousands of others – sweated and petitioned to return when their spurs were won. No one embodied the spirit of the young imperial professional more than Antoine Roederer in his determination to make the regime’s writ run in Umbria and, perhaps, even more in these words written to his father, late in 1811: ‘Today, I have been two years and four days in Spoleto. It seems more like a month. In six months, I hope to come to see you… for I desire nothing more than to go to Paris, to see Paris.’

When his counterpart in Rome, Camille de Tournon, returned on leave, he was suitably impressed by the new splendour of the imperial capital, noting in his memoirs, ‘A Frenchman abroad, like the Roman of an earlier time, bowed his head before the sum civis romanum.’ Thus, the centre kept its emotional hold on its loyal servants, in the furthest-flung corners of the periphery. It was Napoleon’s hope, and the regime’s determined policy, that others from all over Europe, would feel the same. The prospects for advancement were here, more than anywhere else, and the routes were informal as well as institutional, even in so professionalised a state. The Duchesse de Chastenay remarked of the salon of Champagny, a holder of a succession powerful ministries throughout the period, that he ‘received, generally, the hopefuls, the auditeurs, the prospective protégés, in truth, and those who had more ephemeral relations with him, who rather passed through’. Even the young Comte de Montesquiou, from a background ill-disposed to the new order, still believed his father did him a favour by introducing him to the salon of the Duchesse de Luynes, for ‘it was generally regarded as a most honourable recommendation’. The old order carried on in this ambience, and the new evolved its own variants on the great tradition.

Such were the routes open to newcomers, and if they regarded Paris more as a cage than a city of golden threaded networks, it was certainly as well gilded a cage as Napoleon’s means could fashion. Of the charms of the salon, Montesquiou could recall ‘the grace, elegance and glowing youth’ brought to his milieu préféré by Mlle de Narbonne, while the German composer Reichardt spoke of Juliette Récamier in almost ravening terms. The urban ambience surrounding these private spaces was intended to seduce and impress simultaneously. The Napoleonic period saw more than the well-known grandiose public building projects, as attention was turned to the parks and gardens of the city for the first time since the 1780s. They, coupled to its salon society, set an agreeable stage for the processes of acculturation and professional advancement, in stark, deliberate contrast to the horrors of
the battlefields on the imperial frontier, or the rudeness and perceived backwardness of its peripheries.

Very few Italians actually came to Paris under the empire, whether voluntarily, by coercion, or through some combination of the two. Whatever influence the imperial centre exercised fell on the elites. Those Italians who were drawn to the centre – to Paris – came away with a strong sense of the power and potential of the new regime, whatever their feelings for or against it. Its power as a magnet, as the centre of power, was unavoidable. The Piedmontese *togati* obviously were seduced, as planned. Peyretti di Condove and Botton never returned home. That so many others did not come away entirely despondent and broken through sustained contact with it, is a tribute to the resilience of their faith in their own cultural roots, for the aim of imperial policy was no less than this: to inspire, where possible, to overawe where this failed. Napoleon’s strategy was no different, in essence, from that employed by the American government, when it took the captured Sioux leader Red Cloud on a tour of the great eastern cities in the 1870s, an experience that shattered his renowned determination to resist their expansion.150

The reactions of the Florentine aristocrat, Tommaso Corsini, corresponded to this defeatism. Initially reticent about taking office, he not only went to Paris as a senator, but accepted the futile task of trying to persuade Roman nobles to serve on the Cour Impériale, even enduring the public humiliation of presiding over its farcical installation.151 There were those who did not stand aside, despite their intrinsic antipathy, however, and Corsini undertook something in Rome he did not attempt in his native Tuscany. Indeed, the French in Florence did not regard the Corsini as of the true elite. They were of less standing than the other great families, despite their wealth, connections and even their venerable lineage, because they were a papal, rather than a patrician family.152 In one of his last dispatches before leaving Florence, Tassoni described Tommaso Corsini as ‘one of those sorts…who have always formed the faction that, in whatever circumstances might prevail, and under every regime, have sought to dominate this country’. Of Corsini’s ally, Leonardo Frullani, he added, ‘he has received more honours from the French than from the previous dynasty’.153 Corsini’s entry in the *Italian National Dictionary of Biography* turns Tassoni’s republican logic around, portraying him as a man who served his country, Tuscany, unswervingly, during a dark period.154 It was quite probably in a mixture of both these spirits, that he accepted his post as senator.

In Frullani’s case, the French truly ignored and insulted a man who should have been their ideal cultural mediator, and their fault came from the bad advice of other Italians. Tassoni saw in him only a ‘climber’, and Montiglio passed him over for the new Cour d’Appel in 1808, making him a mere judge on the criminal court of Florence. Although Montiglio found him useful, and defended him from other critics, Carelli, his procurator,
believed Frullani lazy, and essentially disloyal.\textsuperscript{155} It took his former colleague, Giunti, to tell them that ‘he is in the wilderness, in humiliation, in a country where he has been the head of the civil service, and one of the leading ministers under its respective sovereigns’.\textsuperscript{156} That Frullani became a councillor of state as a result of this intervention may verify Tassoni’s fears on the one hand, but they point to the failure of the regime to appreciate a man who had risen from a very humble peasant background, through the Leopoldine schools, to graduate from Pisa in 1772, and reach the apex of public service.\textsuperscript{157} It is, perhaps, in cases like Frullani’s, more than in those of true patricians, that the obtuseness of the French, and integrated Italians, emerges. They saw a reactionary in Frullani’s willingness to serve the Spanish Bourbons, rather than someone trying to salvage reform from the wreck; they saw only his attachment to the Florentine grandees, not his very modest background.

The French idealised the Leopoldine regime, but failed to recognise its most distinguished example of a true career open to talent. Frullani and even the Corsini, when set beside the true ‘republican families’ of Florence, were outsiders under the old order, something that made their ralliement to the new regime both less valuable and more genuine, than the French were often prepared to allow.

Tommaso Corsini was a near perfect exemplar of Wachtel’s definition of integration, however imperfect a representative of sincere political amalgame to Tassoni. The police in Florence saw in him so effective ‘an intriguer’ in Paris, and so powerful a patron, that he undermined Élisse’s Court; the Tuscan elite soon perceived where real influence with the centre was to be found.\textsuperscript{158} These men used the Napoleonic Senate to lobby for their own former national interests with the central government, just as Canova used his standing with Napoleon to try to protect the cultural life of Tuscany and Rome.\textsuperscript{159} Prospero Balbo pursued the same policy as rector of the University of Turin, but chose, for exactly the same reasons, not to be drawn to the centre, when offered the rectorship of the entire Imperial University. As Dorinda Outram has observed, the desire to control the educational system and preserve its ancien régime ethos were ‘the real reasons for the eagerness of sections of the Piedmontese nobility to accept employment under the French’.\textsuperscript{160} Frullani used his post on the criminal court of Florence to try to point the regime towards the promotion of the former vicarii; most were only justices of the peace, but they had exercised criminal and political, as well as civil, justice under the old order.\textsuperscript{161} He would do so again, as a councillor of state.\textsuperscript{162} Yet this remained almost the only purpose of many Italians in Paris as well as at home; they had amalgamated, using the imperial institutions for their own ends, and to protect what they could of the old order, but they had not rallied. They used the imperial system, but never desired its wider vision. In this sense, the assessment of the French in Tuscany was probably correct, as far as it went, in that Corsini and Frullani were not truly at one with the ethos of the regime; their amalgamation did not run
very deep. However, immediately after annexation at least, Paris – unlike the French ‘on the ground’ – was ready to overlook this, and the result was a tentative, fragile integration on Wachtel’s model. That Paris was more tolerant of tepid ideological loyalty than those with an immediate knowledge of the Tuscans, speaks volumes for both the potency of the memory of the 1799 and 1808 revolts among the French in the region, and the bitterness of direct relations between the rulers and ruled.

Many patriots used their connections to the imperial centre no differently from patricians. The Leopoldine reformer and patriot, Giovanni Fabbroni, actively sought election to the Corps Législatif, to escape stultifying campanilismo and find a bigger stage for his abilities and ambitions, spending most of 1809–14 in Paris. However, instinctively, he used his position to promote and extend his clientage networks in Tuscany. He admitted he had no real influence over wider affairs, and the real usefulness of his Parisian links emerged only when he was able to return to Florence for an extended period in 1812, where he became a powerful patron. His hopes of ‘Florentinising public life’ in Paris proved a chimera, and the authoritarian nature of the Napoleonic system worked against itself in this regard, for there was little a deputy could do within the system, other than lobby for his own area, so powerless were the parliamentary bodies. Fabbroni’s real leverage came from his position as head of the Ponts et Chaussées for the Italian departments, and from his presidency of the Mint in Florence. Even so, men like Corsi never showed any of Fabbroni’s intentions of serving interests other than those of the polities of the old order. In one notable case, indicative of the thin layer of Roman collaboration, the French actually used Paris as a safe haven of sorts for one of their most prominent supporters in the city. Bartolucci, the original first president of the Cour d’Appel, was generally esteemed by even his French colleagues, and regarded as irreplaceable despite his faults. Even normally severe French critics such as Legonidec, the procurator of the Cour Impériale, were prepared to tolerate his ‘inclination to accept recommendations’ because he was a good influence – and honest – in important cases, and ‘to remove him would cause too big a stir in Italy’. When the new, more powerful Cour Impériale was created, however, it was thought best to remove him to Paris as a councillor of state, despite his own desire to remain. He was often forced into acts of corruption to protect his feckless family, not unlike the head of state to whom he was so loyal, which made him enemies and lowered him in the eyes of public opinion. One of his denouncers said of him, ‘he has two sides to his character – the wolf and the mackerel’ and accused him of ‘selling’ his daughter to Miollis. Paris was the best place for him.

Most of those who came to Paris came to a cage, however. Many Italian auditeurs were little more than civilian conscripts, and Napoleon’s infamous ‘Golden Levy’ among the great Roman families literally snatched youths and children from the hearts of their families. This is where, in human
terms, integration tips over into forcible assimilation. It is the reality behind these ethnographic definitions. Indeed, the most famous – and the most obstinate – Italian of them all so treated, Pius VII, never actually made it to Paris. Napoleon thought it wiser to keep him in Fontainebleau, which probably made him the most dangerous Italian then alive. Even Paris was not ready for the beacon of passive resistance.
Wachtel defines assimilation as the forcing of a colonial people into the ways of the European intruder, ‘alongside the elimination of indigenous traditions, by submitting it to the models and values of the dominant society’.¹ Something approximate to this began to happen in the imperial départements réunis when ralliement proved tenuous, and amalgame unworkable. Something equivalent to it was, more often than not, wished for by many of the most powerful and influential French officials on the ground and, at times, in Paris as well. The regime’s leading intellectual, and a proto-ethnographer, Degerando, put it clearly when assessing the Romans: ‘This people must be enlightened, we must find the surest way to efface their own national customs, and to unite the Romans entirely to the French.’² Assimilation is a process, and a set of attitudes, that originates among the rulers, and is arrived upon the ruled.

What these concepts meant in hard, contemporary realities, and how the French marked the shift from integration to assimilation, is brought home by the images of two dinners, held by two very different Frenchmen who, when they eventually met, loathed each other cordially. In the immediate aftermath of the Piacentino revolt of 1806, Radet, the ‘imperial trouble-shooter’ and organiser of new gendarmeries throughout the empire, gathered together several of the officers who had put down the revolt, and those parish clergy from the area who were willing to accept his invitation, ‘in order to encourage a relaxed, lengthy exchange of views’ on what had gone wrong.³ The other was held in considerably more style by Antoine Roederer, the prefect of Umbria. In 1811, the regime demanded ‘the Golden Levy’ of the great Roman families, a measure meant to bring their sons into imperial service, which was not well received. The 12 greatest Umbrian families were each expected to provide two sons for the French military academies. Roederer was very frank with his father about how he overcame their resistance, and openly proud of his method. A ‘very polite’ letter was sent to each of their fathers, inviting them, together with their sons, to a dinner to discuss the matter. However, the letters were delivered by the Gendarmerie.
In only the most thinly disguised manner, Roederer subjected the leading families of his department to the same treatment meted out to any peasant family whose son turned *réfractaire*: a visit from the feared military police, and an escort to the depot, even if in this case it was a handsome villa outside Spoleto. Roederer did nothing by chance:

My invitation cards were understood perfectly; no one missed the dinner; I scarcely alluded to the departures, and only by way of conversation did I ask which day they were going, and if it was to be the same date as I’d promised the government. . . . It only costs you a dinner.4

The first dinner was an invitation to *ralliement*, and a tentative step towards *amalgame*; its hope was to open the way to integration. The second was as emphatic an exercise in assimilation as can be imagined. That the gentler, more open-minded approach was that of a gendarme with so tough a reputation as to be entrusted with the arrest of the Pope, and the velvet-draped brutality was the ploy of a civilian prefect, and the son of one of the most prominent intellectuals of the period, denotes, among much else, that the French – above all, the most cultivated and ‘enlightened’ among them – had in no uncertain terms turned their faces from integration, and set them towards assimilation.

Therefore, it is with the French that the analysis of the final stage of Napoleonic imperialism in Italy must begin. When and where such policies and opinions emerged, they represented the cumulative process of the endurance of counter-revolution – both violent and passive – of anti-revolution and, perhaps most of all, the experience of inadequate collaboration. French attitudes towards their Italian charges and colleagues were, almost universally, the story of the ingraining of prejudice and the self-justification of a sense of superiority. They may have originated in the face of peasant revolt, but they were hardened, cast in stone, by the reams of denunciations, and even in the piles of *demandes places*, that came to them unsolicited. The guiding principle, confirmed by experience, was that to alter their own institutions and practices was to court disaster; it would be to surrender to the madness the occupiers perceived around them. To do otherwise would not only be to lose Italy, but to lose themselves. That, at least, was the French perspective.

Conversely, there is no zeal like that of the convert, and there is no more zealous exemplar of acculturation – of spontaneous integration – than Carlo Denina, Napoleon’s librarian until his death in 1811 and, quite probably, the would-be *éminence grise* of cultural mediation in the corridors of power. Although Denina was a renowned intellectual and critic before 1800, Napoleon’s regime seems to be what he had been waiting for all his life. At no point does he seek to steer the course of cultural mediation more overtly than in his *Essai sur les traces anciennes du caractère des Italies modernes*, written as a supplement and commentary on his official *Tableau historique,*
The Essai was dedicated to Eugène, and its avowed aim was to give him a better idea of his new subjects but, despite sporadic efforts to correct its general bias, it did not offer a flattering view of Denina’s fellow Italians. Three things are immediately striking about this avowedly ‘informative’ text. First, Denina sees great continuity within the diverse regions of Italy, as emphatically opposed to any notion of a collective national character. Second, he locates the roots of contemporary Italy not in the Roman period, but in the centuries prior to Roman hegemony, in the era of the unfettered campanilismo of the tribal republics. Finally, Denina applies to his analysis of Italian history, a geographic and climactic determinism that far exceeds that of Montesquieu, whose work generally stood as the benchmark for the eighteenth-century progenitors of the social sciences. These later became the key themes of Denina’s Le rivoluzioni d’Italia, written soon afterwards.6

Taken together, Denina’s examination of Italian history polarises the early Italians into the ferox – the early Romans, Ligurians, Umbrians, Aretini and Pisans – and the Tuscans, especially, who submitted easily to all conquerors from the Gauls onwards, devoid of all martial spirit and, though highly cultivated, also spiritual to the point of superstition and ‘ingenious and skilled in those arts which lend themselves to luxury and ease’. 7 Indeed, volume one of Le rivoluzioni actually begins with a castigation of Etruscan decadence.8 Denina searched for the juste milieu of the polie et policée that he, like the French, believed the hallmark of a great and civilised people; he claimed to find it here and there, but almost as the product of a microclimate, such as the small Tuscan town of Borgo San Sepolcro, the cradle of many soldiers, scholars and artists, blessed with fertile soil and good air, but also subject to earthquakes, which ‘doubtless has had an influence on the character of its people’.9 The real sting of the Essai is in its endnotes. The Italians’ path is mapped out with some cruelty; as they changed, they degenerated from the ferox to societies described in terms that Said has termed ‘trivialised’, becoming as the Tuscans had always been. Although the Romans – originally nothing more than a collection of bandits – ‘policed themselves only slowly’10 – they metamorphosed into the timid Senate that crumbled before the legions, an example of how ‘the proudest and most ferocious of men can become but vile courtiers’, and this is what they remained.11 There was no real tradition of a ‘middle way’, that blended polie et policée; according to this reading, barbarism and degeneracy had survived the millennia in Italy.

Denina was preaching to the converted. Whether the Essai struck a chord with Eugène is hard to say, but the mass of correspondence, public and private, generated by the French in Italy reflects the attitudes of the Essai. Denina said the Ligurians were, and remained, ‘merchants and pirates, by turn, still the men Dante dubbed as diversi d’ogni costume, outside all norms’,12 and concluding of the Florentine Renaissance that, in that warlike age, the city produced no warriors – ‘proof that its people are devoid of ferocity’13 – he
was but echoing the feelings of those to whom he had acculturated. Denina is the mirror of the collective French mind in Napoleonic Italy, not its mediator. That the French reached such views spontaneously, indicates a powerful will to forcibly assimilate the peoples of Italy. If Denina mapped the road of assimilation, he did so after the French had already set off in that direction. He warned the French not to hope for much; they already thought they knew as much as expressed emphatically by Norvins, in Rome. By 1813, after four years of occupation and state-building, he simply felt there was nothing there to work with:

Rome has never acted as a sovereign state in its dealings with Europe. Its government was neither commercial nor warlike in character. It depended on the credulity of Catholics, on the spiritual influence of the great Saint, and so it could not make common cause with other governments, who all had age-old interests based on family ties, fleets, armies, and on tangible territorial power. . . . Thus there was no reason to have a series of political interests in common with France; there was nothing this singular people could have accepted or understood of such common interests, for it does not possess the most basic makings of a nation; it is under the yoke of its priests and its lawyers, who have replaced the victors of the Capitol as its rulers.14

After their experience of enlightened reform under Peter-Leopold, the Tuscan elites did not even have this excuse, but their chief policeman, Dubois, was more damning of them than Norvins of the Romans: ‘They are too blind, too ignorant, to appreciate the immense resources that a genius such as the emperor – who is resolved to crush the enemies of civilization – can create and nurture.’15 The path to assimilation was open with such words, and the French were quick to explain the failure of integration in ways more critical of their administrés than of themselves. They did so in a manner that often foreshadowed a later era of imperialism.
The Myth of the Lazy Native

The most significant nuance between Denina and the French was that, whereas Denina saw Italian societies as essentially immutable, if given to periods of dynamism, the French saw them as merely stagnant through a mixture of climate and geography, on the one hand, and governance – interpreted in its widest sense – on the other. Their contempt for the regimes they usurped is already abundantly clear, from both their words and deeds. The French brought with them the enlightenment ‘baggage’ of climactic and geographical determinism, but they applied it with a particular verve to the societies they encountered, and used both pillars of societal analysis to explain to themselves the failure of integration, and then to construct a view of their Italian administrés which bore many of the hallmarks of later, truly colonial occupations16 and, finally, to justify and give shape to a policy of assimilation.

The French took two things about Italy as axiomatic. The first was its diversity; the second was the presence in each region of an urbanised, relatively civilised centre, alongside an essentially barbarous highland periphery. Frenchmen usually came to know Italy region by region, as they moved about, and some of them never served outside a single area. Prima facie, this should have produced a very fragmented view of Italy; it should make it unfeasible and dishonest to speak of a ‘French view’ of Italians, but this was not what the experience of occupation engendered. A startlingly uniform view emerges from the writings and actions of the French, despite not only the regional disparities they themselves acknowledged, but – perhaps even more surprisingly – in spite of the fact that men of often very different backgrounds acquired their opinions independently of each other, in very different locations. This is partly explicable by how a shared French culture influenced their reactions to ‘the other’, partly by the supposed need to abandon integration and resort to forcible assimilation. They drew on their own myths of self-image, and set about creating new ones about their Italian administrés. The image of France they carried with them was very particular. It was the France of the salon, of that north-eastern, secular, urban France that a century later would be distinguished from the south
and west by the Maggiolo Line. Indeed, their France was Paris, proof of the emotional and cultural power the centre possessed over its elites, even on the furthest frontiers of a large empire, thus setting the Napoleonic capital firmly in that form of urbanism associated with early modern, absolutist states, where cities are shaped by and for political, rather than economic ends, and associated more with the politics of empire than of class.\textsuperscript{17} Their sense of Frenchness could be moulded in very tangible ways. Although their education had made the French elites of all political hues familiar with Italian landscapes dominated by classical ruins, they often found strangeness and distaste in their contemporary surroundings. The French naturalist, Le Montlausier, told Roederer that Rome ‘was nothing but a hole’.\textsuperscript{18} Tournon was quick to express his clear contempt for modern Roman gardens. He told his father:

\begin{quote}
The gardens of Rome have an odd character; firstly, by the luxurious decorations of their architecture; then by the nature of the way things are planted…There are massive Cypress trees, poplars and conifers all trimmed to big points. These gloomy pyramids and vast parasols form a sharp contrast and give these gardens an appearance at once sombre and original. They know nothing of our trees with tapered, falling leaves, nor of our pretty waterfalls. The return of Spring makes no impact on this vegetation.\textsuperscript{19}
\end{quote}

The example is not trivial;\textsuperscript{20} the garden was regarded as a powerful exemplar of \textit{la société polie et policiée} in French culture, particularly in the Napoleonic period, when great efforts were being made to restore the revolutionary damage to Parisian public spaces. Under Napoleon, the public parks came to symbolise ‘the points of departure, the pivots and talons’ linking the symbolic spaces of the city. Perhaps more potently for those of its citizens ‘on the edge of empire’, a new generation firmly re-established the classical, formal French garden of the \textit{grand siècle}, now mixed with precise borrowings from the English style – \textit{la mode nouvelle} – which was regarded as the civilised norm.\textsuperscript{21} Accordingly, Tournon had a ready comparison with what he found in Rome, and he chose to do so in quasi-nationalist terms. He told his mother, ‘No nation could care less about the charms of the countryside than the Romans. There are not three gardens in the heart of Rome, and those in its environs are more magnificent than agreeable.’\textsuperscript{22} Tournon’s lack of empathy with his surroundings spread beyond the urban, to the whole landscape around him: ‘This landscape has nothing to do with ours. Indian fig trees and aloes cover the craggy hillsides, and from their summits, you can see the immense, marshy plains, the sea… and the crests of the Apennines, covered in snow.’\textsuperscript{23}

This was manifestly more than homesickness for the Rhône. It was a profound sense of ‘otherness’. Indeed, Tournon seems a man afloat in a very
alien physical world. Although at ease with classical ruins – ‘The ancient is always more attractive than the modern’ – his education had not prepared him for the physical dislocation he felt in central Italy; he tried to come to terms with it by painting, and his landscapes convey his sense of strange-ness. This was not the ‘Africa’ of the periphery decried by Norvins, but the heart and environs of the second city of the empire which so disturbed their own prefect. Lattimore’s insight that ‘the maximum difference is to be sought near the center of gravity of each country and not at the frontier where they meet’ assumes a powerful import, when Tournon’s feelings are invoked, all the more so because he was at the helm of a place he found so genuinely disconcerting.

The French were drawn home – and together – by the very representation of physical space they found around them, at the heart of high Italian culture. Their fundamental visual reaction to the Italian centre was not just alienation, but also a quick recognition of their own identity, and in this way, they not only defined the Italian elites who shaped these cityscapes as ‘the other’, they could simultaneously define themselves as a collective ‘other’. Roederer, in Umbria, expressed this sense of alienation by taking a similar visual reference as his touchstone, in a private letter to his father:

My whole ambition turns on getting a prefecture in the Interior, where I can put down roots. I feel like a traveller in an inn, here, because I can never bring myself to construct anything permanent at so great a distance [from home], and this privation makes me inexpressibly unhappy. If, on the contrary, I was in the Interior, I could buy a little property near the chef lieu, where I could create a proper garden.

A sense of ‘otherness’ that reached beyond the purely functional emerges in their attitudes to language. There is something deeper than exasperation with practical linguistic problems in Roederer’s remark about an Italian colleague to his father, ‘He speaks French like an Italian, that is, in a way incomprehensible in both France and Italy.’ This surpasses pure contempt, although this is certainly present, to reveal a clear sense of what French should sound like, everywhere and in all circumstances. The audible, like the visual, was an expression of a holistic homeland. These indicators are important for the automatic way in which the French react to very basic differences with the Italians. Through their uniform reactions to the seen and heard, the French display their adherence to the ‘imagined community’ of a particular vision of France, ‘the Interior’ in their contemporary discourse. This powerful sense of cultural homogeneity within their own ranks manifested itself in almost every facet of contact between the French and the Italian urban elites. The strength and coherence of this imagined community allowed relationships to emerge predicated on ‘cultural imperialism’ in a much more
compressed period of time than in circumstances such as British India, where these concepts were originally applied.

Equally, the French had to hand a ready set of stereotypes to define Italians. Their contempt for what they perceived as the urban dependency culture centred on ecclesiastical and courtly charity, and the need to sweep it away by the wholesale introduction of the French state edifice. The French envisaged the next stage of their occupation in terms remarkably similar to those of Alatas in his study of colonial stereotyping in South-East Asia, ‘The image of the indolent, dull, backward and treacherous native has changed into that of a dependent native requiring assistance to climb the ladder of progress.’\textsuperscript{29} The analogy with later, extra-European colonialisms can be very precise. The anthropologist Geoffrey Gorer remarked of the influence of Islam on the Javanese that ‘Poverty, especially uncomplaining and involuntary poverty, is numbing and repulsive anywhere; and Mohammedanism is the most deadening of all creeds.’\textsuperscript{30} Many of the contemptuous remarks made by the French about Italian Catholicism bear close comparison to Gorer’s vindication of a later imperialism. Tournon contrasted the robust, imperial past of his \textit{chef-lieu} with the servility of what he found:

\begin{quote}
The temple of Jupiter that once dominated the eternal city is a far cry from the humble cells of the Passionists! The [Roman] triumphs brought exotic spoils of conquest to this place; the mendicant friars bring to it only the alms given them by wretches poorer than themselves!\textsuperscript{31}
\end{quote}

As the scion of a royalist family, who had fled the Jacobin sack of Lyon as a child in 1794, Tournon’s contempt for Baroque charity is all the more striking. His conventionally religious background make many of his disparaging remarks about Roman piety all the more revealing. Nor was his contempt for the Romans confined to religion. Tournon remarked to the director of conscription in Rome that, ‘The kind of men found in this department is much smaller than elsewhere in the empire, especially in Rome’, adding that height regulations for the army needed to be dropped all the more, to do such weak people some good.\textsuperscript{32} Such remarks do not quite match the blatant racist contempt of Gorer on the Javanese – ‘I do not like being among people who appear smaller and weaker than I am . . . I dislike the company of those I feel to be my inferiors’\textsuperscript{33} – but it is not entirely foreign to the sentiments of later, extra-European imperialism. Tournon did not display racism, it is true, but he was still prepared to think – and write officially thus – about other Europeans.

Tournon arrived in Rome determined to change not just the system of administration, but the slovenly habits he perceived:

\begin{quote}
A government based on precision and action is called for, utterly contrary to their customs, for until now, they have known an administration that
\end{quote}
works on only approximations. We do not take offence at working quickly. . . . The single report will give you an idea of the amount of work needed to get these wheels – so numerous and, up to now, so badly coor-
dinated – moving again.34

There is a striking similarity here to the vision of the oriental among west-
erners as construed by Said, just as the French vision of themselves
 corresponds to that, in Said’s formulation, adopted by western imperialists.
Working methods were not only different in terms of pace, but also in the
relative value each culture placed on precision – that is, on truth itself.35 As
Tournon bluntly told his mother, when explaining how he had organised
his household, as well as his offices, ‘It is absolutely essential to establish
a system here that is utterly at odds with their customs, since [ours] is founded
on energy and precision.’36 These remarks establish both a European version
of the myth of the lazy native, and its corollary, that of the precise, energetic
Frenchman. Integration was thus out of the question; once the dependency
culture had been removed, the dependency mentality had to be uprooted.
Legonidec, the prosecutor of the Cour Impériale, echoed these sentiments
when he said that the lazy working habits of the Rota, the senior papal crim-
inal court, led Roman magistrates into slothful habits; they were indifferent
to the fact that long adjournments created dangerous backlogs of important
cases.37 Above all, the French had a vision and a plan for how to impose it;
weak government had been behind everything, and strong government could
cure it. In this, the French were the precursors not only of later colonial atti-
tudes but, even more precisely, of some of their critics. In 1890 the Spanish
commentator, Jose Rizal, blamed Filipino indolence on Spanish rule, as the
Spaniards themselves, the products of a warm climate and centuries of
corrupt government, were no example to them.38 Thus, the stereotype of
the lazy meridional European so evident in the context of Napoleonic Italy
tipped over into critiques of a later colonialism, along with the myth of the
lazy native, as applied to Italian and Filipino, alike. The application of such
stereotypes by the French is striking, when compared with the contexts in
which Alatas and Said have analysed the myth of the lazy native. Alatas,
in particular, assigns it an explicitly functional role in the justification of
colonial capitalism, which does not really apply in Napoleonic Italy. The
absence of economic exploitation on the scale of colonial Indonesia or Malaya
would seem to heighten the levels of alienation felt by the French towards
Italians of all classes.

The French developed an informal lexicon of stereotypes across the diverse
space that constituted early nineteenth-century Italy. They were shaped,
first, around geography, by centre and periphery. The highland periphery
was composed of a barbarous peasantry, often energetic and enterprising,
but lawless, superstitious and ignorant. What good characteristics they
possessed were the gifts of a robust climate and their lack of proximity to
the corrupting forces of the plains. Their elites were unruly, ill-disciplined socially and morally, as well as corrupt, within their narrow political horizons. The flood of denunciations on their desks served as a constant reminder of the viability of the latter stereotype. Where the French broke, unconsciously but instinctively, with the official policy of rallying and amalgamating the elites of the old centres, was in their propensity to apply stereotypes to them. Italian urban patricians were lazy and soft; even those of goodwill had no idea about the discipline of work, leaving home, or military valour. Their lackeys – clergy, courtiers, principal civil servants – were cunning, two-faced and utterly corrupt. The popular classes of the lowlands and cities that comprised the centre were also lazy, but downtrodden, almost sheep-like, and with no will of their own. Although they made exceptions for those they knew, these were the categories through which they judged Italians. As they were perceived to be too strong for the workings of integration to overcome, these stereotypes became the criteria for how the rulers dealt with the ruled.

From this array of stereotypes, their own experience of governing the Italian departments and the realities of topography, the French discerned two quite distinct civilising missions, although the final product of Italian regeneration was to be cultural uniformity. These two branches of the ‘French project’ – which correspond directly to the formulations of Wolfgang M. Schröder39 – are easily submerged in their drive to impose standard institutions on the _départements réunis_, but they are of cardinal importance. On the periphery, the French saw themselves engaged in _civilisation-building_, the process of bringing civilised mores and civilising institutions to societies where they had hitherto been absent or their influence only weakly felt. By contrast, in the old centres, where they perceived a degenerate civilisation rather than a tabula rasa, they pursued _civilisation-changing_, a ‘corrective project’, aimed at elevating a fallen culture to the new, higher standards set by the invading ‘other’, if necessary at the cost of the destruction of cultural diversity.

**The jagged edges: Nuestras Indias in the age of Enlightenment**

The popular masses of the peripheries were the only Italians the French automatically, axiomatically, assumed they would have to assimilate. Everything they knew about their own periphery, from the Vendée onwards, and their memories of 1799, ensured that they had no illusions. Norvins felt he knew something about ‘barbarism’ on the periphery, having served in Saint Domingue, during the great slave revolts, and his words on the youth of the Umbrian and Roman Apennines, in 1812, carry a particular resonance: ‘The absence of almost all civilization…indicates the savage morality of this country… I know of no country as truly barbarous as this, where its youth become brigands whereas in France, for ages, it has turned to soldiering.’40
The potential was there, but it was mired in a society that Norvins, who had faced the wrath of Toussaint l’Ouverture, found appalling in its primitive cruelty. Only Moreau, in his dealings with militia captains of the Piacentino in late 1805, was stupid enough to see the periphery as anything but a menace.

Nevertheless, that same menace betokened human potential, for the wild periphery contained what later nineteenth-century Europeans termed ‘virility’. The French did not perceive a paradox in this, but a glimmer of hope. The warlike energy of the *montagnardi*, once policed and disciplined, could be harnessed in more than the immediate cause of filling the ranks of the Grande Armée; it had a moral purpose. Nowhere was the army meant to be *l’école de la nation* more than on the Italian periphery. Eugène’s proclamation to the people of the former papal Marches, incorporated into the Kingdom of Italy in 1808, brusquely quashed any hopes they may have entertained that conscription would not be extended to the region because it did not accord with local tradition:

To those who tell you that you need not obey the laws on conscription; How? As if this law was not the only means offered you to become a nation again, to make the power of Italy respected both now and in the future; to conserve the institutions that your Sovereign has given you! How? It is as if the law of conscription had been made for you alone; as if it was not, today, the fundamental law of every country of Europe; as if, finally, at the moment when it has been enforced in every nation, north and south, that three Italian departments could, without danger to themselves, try to exempt themselves from it!

Conscription was the panacea for the degeneracy of the Italian centre and the savagery of its periphery; it was the means to regeneration, to the creation of the new man. It was a very ruthless form of assimilation.

There was much in common between the French and the evangelising initiatives of the Catholic Reformation, in their mutual desire to assert social, as well as political control over the Apennines. However, the French valued martial virtues, and sought to channel them into the public sphere where they existed – as in the highlands – or to instil them, where they were lacking, as in the rest of Italian society, a militarism alien to Trent. The veteran was a crucial figure in the Napoleonic scheme of society, its counterpart to the friar. Veterans – indeed, the cream of the veterans – were needed to staff the Gendarmerie, a symbol of the *société polie et policée*. They were meant to return to isolated communities with a wider, truly imperial vision of the world; they were to be the cultural mediators who broke down the walls of parochialism and *campanilismo*, to open new horizons for those left behind. These aspects of conscription heightened in importance in the context of the Italian departments because conscription, and the matrix of values it
was intended to instil in society, were alien. It seemed to the French that the peripheries might yield the best and fastest results, exactly because conscription was harder to enforce there. Their best hope was in *Hesperia feroce.*

To harness that hope, however, the periphery had first, almost literally, to be corralled, and kept in one place long enough to be assimilated, and this went far beyond the hunting down of deserters and refractory conscripts, although it most certainly involved that. To assimilate the periphery, to say nothing of integrating it, the French first had to tackle the land itself. There were two sides to this coin: first, the highlands had to be isolated from any outside influences save those permitted by the French; the second involved turning back one of the oldest tides common to all the regions of Italy – transhumance – to prevent the unchecked flow of the periphery to the centre. In both cases, the French determined to break very old moulds indeed. This was the regime at its most determined and powerful, and its policy of assimilation at its most challenging. Isolating the periphery from the influences of the old centre seemed relatively easy, so tenuous had its formal grip been.

However, the period of the French occupation shows, on close inspection, how durable were the informal or, rather, non-institutional bonds of *clientelismo* and reciprocity that linked, as quite distinct from bound, the rural hinterland to the elites of the centres. Nevertheless, there were some bonds the French could and did snap. It is in this context that the Napoleonic concept of the department as a self-contained, almost holistic administrative unit was intended to serve the particular end of containing the periphery. It was meant to be synonymous with the diocese in the French system, and although this was almost never achieved in the Italian departments, the terms of the Concordat that gave bishops sole control of all aspects of religious life in their jurisdictions – and simultaneously put them under the surveillance of the prefects – was strenuously attempted. It achieved a certain negative success, checking the flow of influential outsiders into the periphery. The banning of the missions, tighter controls on who was allowed to preach – the Concordat stipulated that it should normally be the parish curé alone – and the suppression of the mendicant preaching orders who did both these tasks, were meant to isolate the periphery from this almost unique regular contact with traditional sources of social control. Instead, these communities were to receive regular visits from the Gendarmerie and the prefect, as he did his triannual tour of his department, to enforce conscription.

However, there was also a need to prevent the mountain from moving, for this is what mountains did in the Mediterranean, from time immemorial, and with them came popular disorder, together with unlettered heresy under the old order, transformed into violent counter-revolution under the new. The French found in Italy three fundamental types of transhumance: that of people in search of seasonal work, what Olwen Hufton calls ‘the economy of make-shifts’; flocks and herds, driven to and from mountain pastures;
and peasant revolt, driven by economic and political forces, producing assaults on the towns and the lowlands, by the periphery. The new regime made unprecedented progress in putting an end to the last of these forms of migration. The great rebellions of the Piedmontese valleys, 1799–1802, were the last of their kind, and the diffuse, if huge revolts of 1809 in the central Apennines, which targeted Bologna and the Romagna, were also quelled; the Aretini did not rise again en masse, and neither did the Ligurians. The French did not end the deeper causes of such risings – the very existence of the 1809 disturbances proves that their rule exacerbated popular unrest – but in so far as transhumance dared to enter politics, however obliquely, it was successfully beaten down.

The essence of the French project required stifling the other two forms of transhumance, however. Their determination to delve this deep into the life of the periphery indicates the magnitude of the challenge they posed to the old order, as well as the point where their quest for social control slipped beyond the possible. Temporary migrations were a cardinal element in the economic life of the Apennine and Alpine valleys for millennia before the Napoleonic conquest, and remained so for decades afterwards. Their place in Italian life need not be laboured, but Denina drew a lively – and surprisingly sympathetic – portrait of it in the *Essai*. He began with Suetonius, remarking that, although the destination had shifted over centuries, the pattern remained. For the Piedmontese and Milanese from the Alpine valleys, the destination was no longer the Romagna or Latium, but the rich fields of the Po valley. His vignettes depicted a living tradition: most of the gardeners of Rome came from the same, small area around the Piedmontese hill town of Biella, while another canton in the same province sent carpenters out all over Italy; the villages around lakes Como and Lugano had the same tradition among stonemasons; the great families of Rome drew their domestic servants from a few valleys in the Abruzzi hills.

The French viewed traditional transhumance more like the Tridentine Church than their loyal informant, however. Whether as herdsmen or labourers, the arrival of the periphery in the centre had always meant disruption, cultural as well as purely criminal. ‘The mountains, rumbling with heresy and revolt under the traditional banners of economic and political insubordination, as a permanent source of unrest’, remained to vex the French, even if the definition of heresy had now changed. The Piedmontese town of Bra, on the route of both migrant labourers heading from the Apennines to the Po valley, and of herdsmen driving cattle from the region over the mountains to market in Genoa, always braced itself for two annual invasions at least. The Tuscan Maremma was another zone of intense seasonal transhumance within the imperial departments, that worried generations of local authorities, lay and secular, and continued to concern the French. Smuggling was inimical to the haulage trade of the valleys of eastern Liguria and the Piacentino, but where the French differed from
previous regimes was not in their disapproval of transhumance and its con-
sequences – their desire to control such movements was very much akin to
that of the Tridentine Church, whose monitoring of Easter communion
attendance was far more successful than anything the French achieved – but
in their quest to institutionalise control of transhumance. Obviously they
failed utterly, but their policy denotes the utter incompatibility to the very
lifeblood of highland Italian society of their systems of internal passports
and constant local checks on the movements of men eligible for conscription.
At this most fundamental level, an irreconcilable conflict emerges between
the Napoleonic state, resting on a settled ‘mass of granite’, and the economy
of the Italian masses. A brief note between the ministers of the interior and
foreign affairs of the Kingdom of Italy, concerning a plea from a mayor on
the Tuscan–Italian border, is indicative of this:

The many shepherds of this commune are being reduced to desperation
by the heavy duties being levied on them by the French customs' men
when they are bringing their animals back from the Tuscan Maremma
where the pasture is always greener. This kind of regulation will result in
the instant and total ruin of these mountain communities; its main
sustenance comes from pasturage.48

In the same region, the authorities tried, usually in vain, to enforce the carrying
of passports on working men who crossed from the valleys above Bologna to
work in the Maremma and around Volterra; the erection of an international
border between the empire and the kingdom in 1808 meant as little as those
of the old order to them.49

The disruption caused by these movements was cultural, as well as admin-
istrative or criminal. For the Tridentine Church, the seasonal influx of
montagnardi into the acculturated lowlands and towns meant the arrival of
that unconscious, untutored heresy. For the French, it spelled the diffusion
of highland archaism, which was just as unwelcome as violent revolt. This is
epitomised by their encounters with the batti birbi in a handful of very poor
mountain communes in Liguria. Groups of men went out, annually, from
Boronasia, Mezzanego and Sopra la Croce, as far afield as France, Spain and
Portugal – there were even consular reports of them in America – as nothing
short of ‘con artists’, to beg for money under a traditional false pretext, that
their relatives had been captured by the Barbary pirates, and were being
held hostage. They played on an old Christian duty to help ransom such
captives, and were known locally as the batti birbi. What most intrigued
the French, however, was that this practice was not the preserve of the very
poor. The authorities believed that all the wealthiest landowners had been
batti in their youth, the mayor included, and that it was something akin to a
rite of passage.50 ‘Even the richest landowners… and people who outwardly
seem honest think nothing of putting on simple garb to go off as a birba, in
the inverted morality of this place’, the prefect told Paris.51 Two batti, arrested by the Swiss authorities, were supposed to have confessed to a secret ‘batti factory’ turning out false passports.52 The French believed the old Republic had actually protected and encouraged them, as a source of income for these very poor communes, and when the two batti captured in Switzerland were acquitted by the civil tribunal in Sarazana, the prefect exploded ‘...these people are not as we thought, down-trodden innocents’, and demanded tough measures against them. Nothing intimidated them, however; they saw themselves as victims of illegal persecution, and could fight the regime on its own ground. He recommended banning the issue of all passports in these communes, notwithstanding the economic hardship it would cause.53 Even Savary, the ruthless minister of police, balked at this, although he admitted defeat to the chief of the Gendarmerie over his attempts to control their movements.54 However, Rolland, the prefect who claimed he took the brunt of their wrath, demanded the deportation of the leading batti:

The government does not want to use deportation...except in very urgent cases, but this is the only way to destroy this sort of fraud, and I know of no more urgent case than leaving them in full liberty, and I have said before, that it would be enough to deport and enlist several of the leading batti birbi to coerce the others through fear, and they will fall into line.55

Rolland had come a long way from his view of the batti as ‘down-trodden innocents’. Their bold, entrepreneurial spirit was lost on him. All that was left, after the failure to reform and control them, was that other form of movement, conscription. To Rolland, these clever, defiant peasants on the margins of the world, posed as great a danger to society as the rising tide of banditry and revolt in the last months of the occupation.

Two senior French officials in Italy have some claim to stand as links between Napoleonic, intra-European imperialism, and the later, extra-colonialism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: Moreau de St Méry, the ill-fated administrator-general of Parma and Piacenza brought down by the Piacentino revolt, and Norvins de Monbrettone, the Director-General of Police in Rome. Both served in the French West Indies, where they had dealt with African slave populations; Moreau was raised in Martinique. However, their judgements on Italians were among the most damning to emerge from the occupation.

Moreau de St Méry was generally reviled among his colleagues in the wake of the Piacentino revolt. Perhaps his failings really stemmed from his enthusiasm for ethnography, which produced his unpublished ‘Description topographique et statisique des états de Parme, Plaisance et Guastalle’, which runs to over 1000 pages. He also compiled a two-volume history of the
duchies. Moreau’s loathing of the Parmigiani leaps from the pages, and is all the more striking given his deep knowledge of the Caribbean. He regarded the dance as vital to ethnographic understanding, a good indication of a people’s level of civilisation, and his remarks on those of the duchies, when set beside his study of the Afro-Caribbean dances, make for startling reading in the context of cultural imperialism and its parameters. Peasant dances were complex, but too much so for most people to get right, and the results were always shambolic. Even among the upper classes, ‘the private dance is not an agreeable sight in this country’. The only dances that approximated to aestheticism were those of the Court, thanks to the French influence of that ‘little Versailles’. The awkwardness of Italians stood in utter contrast to the elegance and grace of the Creoles, whether in town or country: ‘The Creoles, languorous, for whom indolence seems to be the preferred style, take on a new existence at a dance. There is a naïve, touching grace in all their movements, their expressions are alive…a European would find it hard to follow their light, short steps.’ In the same passage, Moreau describes ‘the charm born of decency’ of young Creole women at dances, in marked contrast to the ‘bad taste’ of the Parmense women of all classes, especially those ‘who applaud the drunken antics of these dancers who are rightly called “grotesques”, whose antics keep non-Italian spectators in a state of depressingly anxiety’. Moreau dealt in gross stereotypes, for all his ethnographic knowledge, whether in Martinique or Parma, but the nature of his stereotypes is shocking, as is his propensity to turn a languid eye on white Europeans with even more venom, and less affection, than on the Creoles. He did more than import prejudices from the New World to the Old, he set much of what he found in his Italian corner of the Old World well below parts of the New. There was no fellow-feeling between Moreau and the people of the duchies.

In the autumn of 1812, Norvins set out from Rome on his faithful Camargue pony to tour the peripheries of his two departments. It took him three months, and the opinions he recorded along the way leave posterity in no doubt of his disdain for all he found. There was, quite apart from the banditry he vowed to combat with all his strength, a moral depravity here that seems genuinely to have shocked Norvins, a man of the old order, who had served on St Domingue during the worst of the slave revolts:

The corruption of morals is the same in all the country towns of Italy [bourgs], and especially in the former Roman states. Society there is in a state of perpetual scandal, for which the only remedy is time. It is easy to gauge one aspect of its excesses from the numbers of babies abandoned at the hospitals, or left with peasants.

When he reached the hill town of Frossinone, he seemed to have found – after many travels – his own vision of hell:
The inhabitants of the towns and the countryside resemble savages. . . . There is not a trace of civilization in any of the little towns perched on the escarpments of the Apennines. The popes were right to call this district their Tartary . . . and the barbarity of the inhabitants is the result of the feudalism exercised by a powerful family. . . . This savage spirit prevails even among the richest landowners.62

Norvins’ immediate predecessor, Raffin, called Frossinone ‘the popes’ Tartary’, adding a comment that shows the mixture of disgust and patronising admiration many of the French felt for the highlanders: ‘These people, of a fierce nature, behave like Africans. . . . They are clever in the practical things, and at agriculture, and they have preserved classical morals among themselves.’63

The experience of the Roman Apennines drove Norvins, a man whose mother was an intimate of the Marquise de Montullé and close to the royal family, to lash out at noble privilege, as well as peasant degeneracy, a caste of mind common among ex-French nobles sent to the Italian departments. This outburst acquires the power to unsettle when set beside his reminiscences of the Caribbean, giving a particular force to his continued use of the word ‘savagery’ to describe the populations of the Roman periphery. He felt something close to a physical revulsion at the sight of the population of St Domingue, but his terms foreshadow his reaction to the Apennines:

[There was] a crowd of children of both sexes and I don’t know how many colours . . . their nostrils were monstrous, their knees deformed . . . their arms curved in such a way as to make us take them for something between a man and a monkey. . . . It was vision that had something of hell about it.64

Predictably, Norvins spoke often of ‘savagery’ in his tales of the revolt – ‘savage instincts’ were what lay behind the rebel’s guerrilla tactics65 – and his distaste for the mixed races of the colony is not unusual. However, his vision of hell obviously was not confined to the extra-European world. A man who had experienced the horrors – and even more, the strangeness – of bloody chaos and war in the tropics, was still capable of expressing similar feelings of revulsion about ‘fellow Europeans’.

There was only one thing worse than the propensity of the peripheral elites to turn against – or simply away – from the French, and that was their seemingly bottomless hatred of each other. The elites were not drawn into a volatile, lascivious popular culture, they were its ‘trend setters’. In the Ligurian mountain communes of Vezzano and Arcola, the local notables appointed as tax collectors by the French proved not only corrupt – some people were made to pay their taxes several times over in 1809 – but were driven by lust and sexual jealousy to the public violence that first brought...
them to the notice of the police. Gian-Battista Bertaldi, the chief tax collector, attacked his brother-in-law’s domestic servant with a sword in the main square and threatened to kill her because he had had an affair with her, and believed she was now having one with his brother-in-law. ‘Such jealousies seem to have been the motive that determined this act’, noted D’Auzers, in Turin. Bertaldi was from so wealthy a family that he was actually able to refund the money he had stolen from the public funds.66 The French could, then, expect little better from the wealthiest than the poorest members of peripheral communities. Literacy and responsibility only opened further, more complex crimes for them to solve, as well as violence. However, the personal immorality of the provincial elites seemed to disgust them.

It could move from the personal and particular, to the collective and public, with little sense of shame and none of restraint. The wealthiest landowners of the convulsed commune of Supino, in the ex-Papal States, had planned a night attack in the spring of 1811, ostensibly on the Gendarmerie, giving rise to accusations of a counter-revolutionary plot. What was really uncovered, however, was an opportunistic raid on the gendarmes, to create a diversion to settle personal scores between rival families. This was a case of collective revolt, nonetheless, and the dreaded law of 10 Vendémiaire, Year IV was applied to Supino. The violent, ‘populist’ behaviour of the local notables was what shocked the French – and their propensity to mobilise their own workers for acts of brigandage – rather than the causes.

This kind of behaviour exposed deeper problems than explicitly political opposition. It betokened, above all, a pervasive sense of irresponsibility among all classes of the periphery, quite distinct from the meditated malice of the denunciation. Sexual promiscuity, whether it produced violent vendettas or towns full of illegitimate children, was, in French eyes, part of the same culture that spawned the localised civil wars of Supino. Even when reviling popular culture and disorder, the French found it hard to avoid including the provincial elites in their ethnographic castigations. Norvins pointed continually to the role of the feudal nobles in corrupting the Roman periphery; Rolland saw the batti as transcending class, and eventually sought to vent official wrath on its relatively prominent leaders, not its rank and file. French thinking turned on the belief that the periphery shared a common culture, across class lines, and that it was a violent, sordid and narrow world at that.

The French remained convinced that highland vendetta culture was rooted in weak government, but closer acquaintance led some astute observers to see it as fostered by the narrowness of their public worlds, more than by the weakness of the centre. Norvins felt this about the internal vendettas of the Roman periphery, and he saw the arrival of empire as the best cure:

In Rome, there is nothing to fear in these animosities, but in the small mountain towns, which are not held in check by the authorities, and
where old prejudices have not been enlightened by regular contact with the center of the empire, hatreds fester in the heart, opinions in the soul, and external events which imperceptibly destroy any hope of returning to the lost, mourned ways of the past, only increase the sharp edges of these passions, instead of killing them. They plunge men into a sort of political despair that it would be useful for us to exploit for the government.\textsuperscript{67}

Norvins thought in terms of \textit{ralliement}, not of assimilation, but experience proved that although law and order when applied to banditry or the protection of property might lead very far down the path of spontaneous integration, government interference in the vendettas of the local elites was welcome only if it took the form of partisan intervention, a road the French would not go down. Norvins condemned the Roman baronage, notably the Colonnas, for failing to give the right sort of leadership to the people of the periphery, and for instilling lawlessness in them. His contempt becomes all the more emphatic in the light of his Caribbean experience. Norvins decried the callousness of Toussaint and his rival, Rigaud, but he praised their qualities of leadership in uniting blacks and mulattoes in a common struggle. Norvins regarded Toussaint, in particular, as a good administrator and organiser, even postulating that Napoleon made a crucial error in trying to defeat them; Toussaint should have been co-opted as his proconsul in St Domingue.\textsuperscript{68} Neither Norvins nor his colleagues in the judicial arm wanted to accord a native Roman as much as the post as procurator on a local court, or even a sub-prefecture, if they could help it. The solution for Italy was the concept of empire itself, for the cause of its ills was the irresponsible political culture born of \textit{campanilismo}. Norvins had, by hard experience, come to agree with Denina’s vision of the immortal nature of \textit{campanilismo}, born in the pre-Roman past, and also with his sense of its dark roots:

\textit{Before us are those ferocious traditions, the brazen and low bravura, that drives each of the peoples of Italy to want to surpass, or at least not to believe that its neighbours can surpass it, something aggravated by a general equality, that is, demonstrably, still a part of us.}\textsuperscript{69}

Denina turned himself into a dogged and learned apologist for empire, to tear up these roots, whereas Norvins and his colleagues slipped into the politics of despair.

The immediate remedy for the wildness of the propertied classes of the highlands was the same as that imposed on the masses, conscription. In extreme individual cases this was applauded by local elites, but for essentially different reasons from the French. Francesco Assereto was the son of a notary and municipal secretary of Uscio, in the Ligurian Apennines. Like his father, Francesco was generally judged a violent character by the local authorities.
According to a confidential police report, drawn from both local and official sources:

He picks quarrels, he disturbs the peace of families by bringing dishonour and shame among them, by ruining young, inexperienced girls. This young man, devoid of morality, takes pleasure in insulting the mayor, the priest and the Gendarmerie, who all want him exiled. His father is incapable of teaching him honest ways, as he is a bad character himself.70

Two salient points about the Asseretos, father and son, drove the French recourse to elite conscription, that most desperate form of assimilation. The first is the kind of family this seemingly perpetual scandal involved. Notaries were very powerful people in provincial Italy, virtually irreplaceable in the communities of the periphery because of their high levels of literacy, and so dominating the influential post of municipal secretary, often holding several at once. Even the relatively powerful Savoyard monarchy found it impossible to prevent such plurality, and the nepotistic power networks it produced, despite a flood of legislation.71 The Genoese Republic had far less chance of exerting control at this level. Thus, the generational debauchery of the Asseretos was not a phenomenon of the classes dangereuses but, rather, a nest of depravity for the intelligentsia of the rural bourgeoisie. Such cases confirmed French prejudices that more than formal education was needed to regenerate even the cleverest Italians. It betokened a shared, debauched, culture between the propertied classes of the periphery and the masses. The piles of abandoned illegitimate babies Norvins noted as he passed through the borghi of the Roman and Umbrian Apennines were of bourgeois, not just rude peasant, provenance. Norvins did not think to attribute the plethora of enfants trouvés to the economic plight of rural Italy in 1812; too many reports about the likes of Francesco Assereto and his father – the Karamazovs of the eastern Riviera – had conditioned him and his colleagues elsewhere in the Italian departments to see such things in moral terms.

There is another French response to such cases, showing why, as well as when, their view of the world parted company from those among the rural elites who looked to them for protection from the unruly in their midst. An earlier exploration of denunciation concentrated on French scepticism about the precise veracity of accusations and their feelings of revulsion about a political culture that stooped to it. The example of Assereto, and a host of others like it, clarifies a different strand in their thought about the elites of the periphery. While the local authorities – his peers – demanded Assereto’s incorporation into a penal battalion in Corsica or even Guyana, the higher echelons of the administration, from the prefect upwards to the Police-Générale, decided instead to send him to a line regiment as a second lieutenant – he was literate – in the hopes that it would ‘channel his spirit’
to the good of society. They adopted a similar attitude to Luigi Torti, the profligate son of a landowner near Tortona, in Piedmont. Whereas his family and the local authorities sought his arrest and imprisonment, D’Auzers preferred to conscript him, because ‘by this means, he can still become a good citizen’. Whereas their peers thought in terms of punishment and the ancien régime practice of exile – rooted in an essentially pessimistic view of human nature – the French saw conscription as a moral education; martial values were so intrinsically wholesome as to be agents for moral reform. Men could be reformed, and should not languish in exile, but would one day return home as cultural mediators, as true hommes régénérés, and exemplars of courage and civisme. In the midst of their quasi-racist outbursts, and their despair at the emasculating Italian climate, the cases of Assereto and Torti serve as important reminders that even the most disparaging French imperialists were not the racist, positivist monsters of a later era. French officials felt no need to hide or temper their belief that the meridional climate enflamed the grosser passions, or blunted the finer sensibilities, a preconception that provided the Tuscan Director-General of Police with his rationale for conscription, deployed as a collective application of Haute Police for ‘heat stroked’ Italian males:

Enrolment is, of all policing measures, the one that must be applied in Tuscany, because I regard it as the only way to rid the Grand Duchy of a host of individuals who...wishing to idle themselves away, because of the allure of laziness common to hot countries, turn naturally to crime to make a living.

Those French administrators most sensitive to enlightened discourse struggled with the twin poles of environment and nurture in their efforts to regenerate Italians, but those most persistently and intensely exposed to meridional violence seldom took the time to dissemble the different strands within it. They believed, against all their own jaundiced empirical evidence, that the Italians could be ‘regenerated’, even if it took generations, and they never lost their sense of duty to effect this. Their hand was increasingly heavy, invariably arrogant and even cruel, but it was not intentionally malicious. Even the most cynical and ruthless among them were still, certainly by their own lights and arguably those of historical hindsight as well, the men of the Enlightenment they always claimed to be. They represented one strand of that complex phenomenon, and perhaps one which had been perverted by la force des choses in the course of the revolutionary decade, but they did not regard even their administrés as intrinsically inferior, to be oppressed without justification or cause.

Nevertheless, events are lived and endured in their own times, and measured by what had gone before. On these terms, the actions of the French could only be perceived as monstrous by those they touched. The new regime
brought not just suffering, but novel forms of suffering, and a set of moral values as incomprehensible to elites imbued with the pacific values of the Catholic Reformation, as to relatively ungoverned peripheral communities.

When Roederer tried to create local *gardes d'honneur* – essentially elitist, ceremonial units, ostensibly to act as public escorts for the Emperor, but also as a ploy gently to put the sons of the local notables on a war footing – he lost the collective support for conscription that might be found in individual cases like those of Assereto or Torti. Instead, in no small irony, he stirred those combative qualities Norvins, his colleague in Rome, felt were lodged deep in the psyche of rural Umbria. Roederer forced Paris to agree to admit men of lower social standing to the *gardes* and he had high hopes of this: ‘My aim was to attach the greatest number of families as possible to the present government, without, however, admitting young men to the *garde* who did not have any of the qualities necessary to participate in it honourably.’ Even these hopes were short-lived. A collective petition by the families of the second rank accused Roederer of acting arbitrarily over the cost of equipping their sons. He replied that they simply were not paying for what they had ordered. Moreover: ‘their complaints are born of . . . an important manoeuvre, stemming from a culpable opposition to the government . . . I have had to resort to force, the only means left to me, to recover the funds, having exhausted all attempts at persuasion . . . ’

Whatever good relations may have existed with this second rank of notables in Umbria had now been shattered. Poignantly, the only case of violent resistance to enrolment in the *gardes d'honneur* came from within the ranks of the local administration itself. Bartocci, a notable of Foligno, was encouraged by his brother-in-law – the police commissioner – first to write an indecent letter to Roederer, in defiance of the order, and then to resist arrest by the Gendarmerie sent to fetch him. Predictably, an example was made of him, ‘It was not too tough, and it was necessary to halt an epidemic which was going to possess most of these families to protest in most unhelpful terms, against the selection of their children.’ This was the nadir of *rallie-ment*, the definitive crossing of the line from integration to assimilation.

The soft centre: a trivialised culture

The French saw *campanilismo* and Baroque Catholicism as the rotten twin pillars of the old order, and the sources of all its weaknesses. The periphery was, indeed, the product of its geography; poverty, superstition and barbarism were results of its isolation. However, the failure of the Italian ruling elites to correct this was a purely moral shortcoming. To the French, weak government had nothing to do with geography; it sprang from an obsession with factionalism and *clientelismo* rooted in the narrow horizons of classical Italian republicanism, aggravated by the cultural degeneracy fostered by the Tridentine Church. Close contact with the Italian elites led the French to
despair of them, rather than to assess the intractable practical problems they had had to face throughout the early modern period. Instead, the French saw Italy as what Edward Said has called ‘trivialized’.

Denina felt the luxuriant climate and Baroque piety were naturally linked and that the climate of much of lowland Italy led to sloth: ‘Where the fertility of the soil is united to dank air and a tepid, gentle climate, men are naturally inclined to idleness, and an effeminate, extravagant way of life’;\(^79\) it was also true of lowland Umbria and the Campania.\(^80\) These prejudices did not have to be impressed upon the French. When Méjean, Eugène’s aide-de-camp in Milan, condemned Moreau for failing to rule so docile a people as the Parmigiani, he merely conflated the plain and the highlands, the rural centre and the periphery; he got lost, not utterly confused.

Nardon’s castigation of Parmense dependency culture touched all classes, not just the Court and its clients. He concluded of the city and its environs that ‘these people are, in general, little given to work, and too given to soft living’.\(^81\) This was why he sought to create not only a boarding school for the emasculated Italian nobility in Parma, but also a technical college for the popular classes of ‘this country, where nature makes idle hands’.\(^82\) French assessments of the lowlands and cities did not vary, the length and breadth of the Italian departments. Vercelli, in the Piedmontese lowlands, had become a refuge for ‘the idle poor’, where easily available alms attracted able-bodied beggars, as well as temporary migrations of people from the mountain valleys.\(^83\) Its prefect commented, ‘If the nature of this area was put in one word, it would probably be apathy, rather than turbulence.’\(^84\) The assessment of the lowlands of the Sabina, at the other end of the imperial departments, and period of occupation, was no different: ‘Laziness and “non-emulation” block the development of the commerce this province is capable of…. This is equally because the abolition of feudalism has displeased the nobles, as because its people, in general, are docile.’\(^85\) As their rule spread from Piedmont, the French worked through these stereotypes, methodically.

In French eyes, softness, even cowardice, was also a hallmark of their masters, but never sheep-like stupidity. Dubois, the Director-General of Police in Florence, summed up these ‘working stereotypes’ when he said of the patricians, ‘There is nothing the Tuscans like to hear more than the call to obey, but if you try to trick them, to use subtlety, you are on their ground; and they are difficult to fool.’\(^86\) They existed on the legacy of past glories. The later generation of imperialists studied by Said saw in Egypt and India stagnant, atrophied elite political cultures: ‘Their great moments were in the past; they are useful in the modern world only because the powerful and up-to-date empires have effectively brought them out of the wretchedness of their decline and turned them into rehabilitated residents of productive colonies.’\(^87\) However controversial Said’s thesis may be in its original context – and that is beyond the competence of this essay to judge – it would
seem to have a ready application to the urban centres of the départements réunis. As was so often the case, it was the academician and proto-ethnographer, Degerando, who provided the clearest example of Said’s theory of cultural imperialism in this emphatically intra-European context. He felt contempt for the Roman upper aristocracy, and their perceived failure to offer leadership and rational administration: ‘It is a singular thing. They have a powerful memory of their ancient grandeur, but not the slightest trace of it in themselves. It is an idea that seizes their imagination, without ever penetrating their souls.’

The French looked deeper, however, and detected the corrupting effects of a shared Baroque culture on all classes in the great cities. After several years of policing the Romans, Norvins emerged with a contempt deep enough to rival that depicted by Said for a later and an extra-European context:

Carnival is a more powerful diversion for the Romans than the [current negotiations for] the Concordat. Bread and the games, that was what was essential for the ancient Romans, and that is how it is for the Romans of today. It is the same for almost all the people of the large towns. But I am quite certain that the Romans push these cravings further, and more fanatically, than the others – bread without work, gambling without spending. The former is the heritage of the previous government, the latter of current circumstances, where poverty is the equal of the passion for pleasure.

There could be few more explicit or denigrating descriptions of a ‘trivialized culture’ by an imperial ruler.

A truly remarkable aspect of Napoleonic rule was the French propensity to cast ralliement and amalgame to the winds with regards to the upper classes, and to turn unblinkingly from the road of integration to that of assimilation. They not only spoke disparagingly about the traditional elites, they ‘got rough’ with them. The slothfulness of the lowland peasantry and the people of the cities was shared by their masters, and the rot of Italian economic life was a moral failing, if aggravated by climate. Amour-propre lay behind it, as in Norvins’ portrait of the decadent nobility of Viterbo, near Rome, who refused all contact with the middle classes, ‘the result of which is enormous ignorance and an equivalent apathy towards the public good’. Ralliement may have been a lost cause in the Italian departments, but the experience of empire was making an ardent Bonapartist of an ex-noble. His predecessor in Rome, Raffin, had a republican past, but his comment that ‘the nobility is too rich already, and should not be given lucrative jobs’ would not have discomfited Norvins, born in a palais on the Place Vendôme. The hard task of trying to create a new generation of Roman jurists, educated in French legal culture, led Legonidec – ‘a severe Breton magistrate’ formed in the Parlement of Rennes – to decry the same stereotype, if in a different context. After
four years’ service in Rome, he said of the five young *juges-auditeurs* – posts created specifically to turn young Roman nobles into French magistrates – that they were unpromising, only one was interested in the work and that none really grasped the concept of regular employment.\(^93\)

It did not take some of the French long to feel provoked, or to learn to loathe native political culture. Literally in the first hours of the occupation of Rome, in January 1808, Miollis automatically interpreted the reactions of the papal government not as signals of resistance, however passive, but as those of intrinsic weakness. The cardinal secretary of state, Canoni, placed before Miollis a list of objections to ‘measures indispensable to our existence here’: the disarming of provincial corps who refused to take orders from the French; the sentencing of brigands in custody by French military commissions; Miollis’s order to halt the early release of prisoners in the galleys decreed by the papal authorities. The latter drew the tart, all-revealing sneer from Miollis, that the government had a tradition of extracting a fee from those so released, and then sending them over the neighbouring borders, ‘to infest our departments’.\(^94\) Miollis did not for a moment regard these actions as diplomatic protests; he saw them only as symptomatic of the lax, mercenary and irresponsible manner in which *ancien régime* governments avoided the enforcement of law and order. Before its future governor-general had even reached his new command, he had dismissed its existing political culture as decadent and trivialised.

Such a mentality could find very concrete expressions. In 1813 Napoleon raised four mounted regiments from the – hitherto – largely symbolic *gardes d’honneur*. The *gardes* were drawn from the wealthiest families of their respective departments who were, in theory at least, equipped for ceremonial duties at the expense of their families. His attempt to convert them into a fighting corps of 10,000 men in the last, desperate years of the empire represents more than a cheap expedient to reinforce his military effectives, however; it was a question of drawing the sons of the best families into the army, in the future interests of the dynasty,\(^95\) an effort to involve those provincial elites who formed *les masses de granit* in the defence of the regime in its hour of deepest need.\(^96\) When this policy was applied in the Italian departments, it assumed the magnitude of a campaign of moral regeneration that was itself the culmination of an arduous process of fostering a martial spirit in the hearts and minds of Italian males, a policy that carried more than a hint of cultural imperialism. In April 1813, Roederer, prefect of the Trasimeno, told his father that he had singled out a particular youth for the *gardes*. He was worth more than 100,000 francs in rents and carried ‘le plus beau nom d’Italie’, Connestabile Stoffa; but this was not Roederer’s reason for targeting him for active service:

His father is dead and his mother treats him like a little girl. She is a respectable woman who imagines she could not do better than to have
three priests bring up her boy. This young man is eighteen. Judge for yourself what a blow this will be for the poor mother! It creates a great good chance for this young man. There have been attempts to exempt him under thousands of pretexts.97

Roederer had to make Connestabile Stoffa ‘be all that he could be’, just as much as he had a duty to Paris to ensure that no young notable was exempted ‘when it was a question of someone rich and important’.98 Roederer’s words are replete with ethnic stereotypes, both in their direct intent towards the unfortunate, inoffensive young Umbrian aristocrat, and in what they reveal about the ethos of imperial France. Conscription was a cause for rejoicing, for it heralded the regeneration of a people, a discourse that culminated in the credo that martial, essentially masculine, virtues were the greatest pillars of an enlightened, modern polity. Military service was not just a public duty,99 but a whole process of social engineering. The term is crude, but wholly appropriate for a crude business: the deliberate intention of the French was the militarisation of an entire society, a social and cultural transformation of Italian life.100

French hopes for Italians either resided in the remote, classical past – as in Tuscany, Umbria and Rome – or were non-existent, so great was their contempt for the Genoese or Parmensi. For Lagarde, in Florence,

Nothing proves better the faults of former institutions and the running of these various small states than the estrangement of the inhabitants of this part of the Empire from the profession of arms; they have inherited none of the inclinations of their earliest ancestors or the warlike peoples who have successively invaded this beautiful part of the Empire.101

His colleague in Rome was more hopeful, but hardly rooted in the present:

Although the martial spirit is not at all alien to the inclinations of these people, they will never turn into warriors unless they are persuaded that serving is the quickest route to glory and honours. . . . This taste for the military life is all the more remarkable among the Romans, because it never entered into the policies of the former government; it was never fostered through education.102

Embedded in these remarks are the Enlightenment concepts, so central to the ideology of Napoleonic imperialism, which made possible the seemingly incongruous association between militarism and civilised life. For Enlightenment thinkers such as De Pauw and Buffon, a société polie could exist only within a société policée.103 Military service, far from brutalising youth, would curb the latent effeminacy of its privileged members, as well as the barbarism of its peasantry.
Weak states did not breed soldiers, empires did. Roederer, in Umbria, saw the creation of the *gardes d’honneur* as a chance for the first time in centuries for aristocratic youth to find a useful public role: ‘as the former government offered the young neither military nor administrative careers, many of them, as a result, are unoccupied’. It was wrong for the aristocracy to be idle: its only useful role was in the service of the state, and the Umbrians needed this opportunity for their own good, more than the French actually needed them. In the nobility, weak government allowed cases such as the young Stoffa to abound. The pervasive influence of Baroque Catholicism and centuries of weak secular government – or its total absence, in the case of the Papal States – had led to the effective emasculation of the Italian male, save for the Piedmontese and those *montagnardi* so isolated from all civilisation as to constitute a separate problem. This was not something they left unchallenged, even when it meant the disintegration of *ralliement*, and definitively crossing the line from any pretence of a mutual path of integration, to brutal assimilation. In Roederer’s case, however, it could prove so brutal that even Paris refused to support him to the end. By 1812–13, his attempts to form his contingent of *gardes* had degenerated into naked coercion of the kind he originally prided himself on avoiding. Earlier, he believed the use of force could be avoided, but only because Tournon, in the neighbouring department of Rome, had already set the tougher example, ‘which made it known to these families that it would be employed here, too, if necessary’.

Roederer was put to the test several times, however. When one of the greatest Umbrian families, the Baglioni – ‘who are as historic a name in Italy as are the Montmorency in France’ – sought exemption from the *gardes*, Roederer confided that, if they succeeded, it would destroy his position. They were connected to an illegitimate branch of the French Bourbons, close enough to be invited to family weddings and baptisms, and Roederer commented that the men and boys all bore a marked resemblance to Louis XVI, which he found comical and unprepossessing. He exploded with a well-informed rage that almost unwittingly exposes the deep cultural fissures between the French and the Umbrian nobility. It displays the intensely symbolic importance the creation of the *gardes* had acquired for the prefect of this unsteady department, the ultimate incongruity of imperial policy, and the ‘Alice through the Looking Glass’ world its servants were really forced to inhabit:

It is exactly from these families that hostages must be taken; this is just what the Emperor wanted to achieve, that much is clear, and I would be remiss in my duty, I would be a coward to exempt young Baglioni . . . I will take upon myself, the opprobrium for this action.

Roederer did, indeed, assume the opprobrium, for the Baglioni used their connections in Paris to exempt their son. The prospective conscript’s mother
was Caterina, née Oddi, the last of the other great family of Perugia, numbering several cardinals in their midst, whose brother had failed to stop the French looting Perugia’s artistic heritage in 1799. Roederer cited her as the linchpin of a local network of refractory priests and counter-revolutionaries: ‘It is certain that all the disinformation is known in that house two weeks before any kind of official post arrives.’ Thus, this case had become a proving ground between counter-revolution and the new state. Ironically, it was won by the Baglioni, through the residues of the *ralliement* it was intended to displace. They were saved by the links the family had forged with the wife of Marshal Berthier, Napoleon’s chief of staff, while Baglioni’s father had been under surveillance in Paris. In this case, successful ‘entryism’ had foiled assimilation. Roederer’s outburst exposes the policy of elite recruitment for what it had finally become, part of a counter-insurgency offensive, a deeply ironic return to the policy of the Second Directory, during the bloody retreat of 1799, when hostages had been taken among Piedmontese royalists.

All Roederer’s problems were replicated in Tuscany. Here, too, things began bullishly. In 1809, four of the most prominent noble families of Arezzo – an area notable for its ferocious counter-revolutionary past – refused to send their sons to the *gardes*, an act of defiance all the more striking because there was no need for them to go on active service. At the time, it was their status that worried the French, for ‘Each of these families enjoys a good reputation and the standing that comes with wealth.’ Their fathers were ordered to Paris, and when finally allowed home, they were kept under secret, but tight, surveillance to assess ‘the moral impact their return to Arezzo produces’.

Whatever the immediate impact, it did little good when the true test came. By August 1812, when the order came to send the Tuscan *gardes* to the front, there were only 27 to be found, from a quota of 100. The Director-General of Police confessed that even they were not really supporters of the regime, as the *gardes* had been regarded as a social, rather than a military formation until now. One ray of hope, he added, was that the young men themselves were not complaining the loudest; the main objections came from their parents and mistresses. Florentine women were, indeed, upset. When the cohort was mobilised, ‘a crowd of women and girls in tears followed it as far as the Porto San Gallo’, strikingly outlandish comportment from women of the propertied classes.

If the aristocratic youth of Tuscany was being won over, no one else was. Opposition intensified with the refusal of the government to apply the normal rules of conscription to these units, thus preventing the purchase of replacements for these ‘honoured’ sons, in contrast to the right accorded the poorest peasant. The Director-General of Police outlined the impact of this policy, ‘The *gardes d’honneur* . . . have upset the upper classes . . . the *vélistes* affect all classes, indirectly, and so provoke an even more general feeling.’

The most realistic assessment of the hopes for the reception of the French ideal of a virile, warlike nation-in-arms among the Italian upper classes is
probably to be found in the laconic understatement of Tournon, ‘To get the Romans used to conscription, you might consider favouring the use of replacements.’ Disunited in so many other respects, peasants in the hinterlands, urban patricians – pious or libertine by inclination – and youths of every stamp and station, from Connestabile Stoffa to the most audacious bandit chiefs, were puzzled and appalled by the philosophy at the heart of Napoleonic militarism. When set in the wider context of the literature of active, popular resistance to conscription, the almost universal detestation of this concept of a militarised society – as well as conscription per se – emerges in full, expanded to embrace the urban elites as well as the masses. This vision of the world was more than oppressive, it was alien. It is arguable that it was more than a lack of time to acculturate to conscription that prevented the development in Italy of the resigned obedience detected by Woloch within France itself. In Italy, ironically, there are more signs of acceptance among the masses of the lowlands and the great urban centres than among their betters. The assertion in a French context that ‘the regime placated wealthy families without permitting them a wholesale or definitive escape from the obligation of military service’, simply did not hold good among the Italian elites. The acrimonious creation of the garde d’honneur was the culmination of a process of alienation, or of the growing realisation of a fundamental incompatibility between rulers and ruled.

The ‘softness’, the evaporation of the virile qualities needed to forge a nation among the elites of the old centres, drove the French across the line to assimilation. Where elite conscription differed from that of the popular classes was that, although both elements of the Italian population were firmly believed to be in need of regeneration through l’école de la nation, the coercion of the gardes and vérites – the bourgeois equivalent of the gardes – was not driven by immediate military needs. Elite conscription was an ideological gesture and, at a more structural level, an attempt at the sort of cultural revolution more readily associated with backward rural populations. ‘Softness’ could not be tolerated in the propertied and influential under Napoleonic rule, for it permeated their political culture, as well as their social relations. Whereas the campanilismo of the periphery served to perpetuate and intensify the ferox, that of the centre seemed, at least in French eyes, to breed only homesickness and clawing familialism within the elites. The French believed that joining the grande nation would save the Italians from the campanilismo that even they admitted had thwarted their political development. They extended this to the cultural sphere, and saw in the Italians’ attachment to home another manifestation of their emasculation. Roederer was particularly scathing about this trait in the Umbrian nobles coerced into the military academies:

I do not understand how a measure that would send families into raptures in Paris, so excellent in itself and in its results, can so assuredly shock
these parents, especially the mothers, and even more in a country where
the taste for travel is found only among the peasantry; I think the Roman
must be the rarest foreigner in all the Courts of the whole world. They
make their will before they leave Spoleto for Rome, and on the way, they
want news of their relatives twenty times a day.¹²⁰

That Roederer confided these views to his father emphasises not only that
he held them strongly, but that he contrasted this reluctance to quit hearth
and home to advance a public career unfavourably with the course of his
own life. *Maladie du pays* might have been an excusable affliction in a private
soldier of the Grande Armée, but it was deplorable in its future officers,
leaving their mothers and the sight of their campanili was the imperative
behind the exile of the aristocratic young to France, but beyond lay the
more positive aspiration to broaden their horizons, to impart a vision of a
wider imperial world that would, in turn, make them leave their pettiness of
spirit – as well as their cosseted upbringings – well behind. When the French
went looking for home-bred role models for their gilded conscripts, they
drew them from a past that was imperial but rural, as well as safely remote.
No mention is made of the Machiavellian models of the Renaissance or,
indeed, the heroism of the Lombard communes so beloved of the neo-Guelphs
of a later generation of nationalists. Their vision was too narrowly conceived,
too petty, too ungenerous of spirit for the vision of Napoleonic imperialists.
Small was not beautiful in the Napoleonic vision of the world.

The tirades of Roederer and the snide comments of Tournon provide a
revealing list of the direct enemies of militarism that opposed the French
vision for a regenerated Italian youth: the strong tradition, in weak ancien
régime states, of reliance on patronage – itself a breeding ground for selfish
corruption – which places private concerns above public duties; the parochial-
ism inherent in the life of weak polities; and – perhaps the greatest evidence
of ineffectual government for French imperialists – the undue, indeed over-
weening, influence of the clergy, and of mothers, on the destinies of young
men. This was not the end of it, however.

The French meant business with the Italian upper classes. Eugène actually
pioneered the creation of a permanent regiment of gardes d’honneur in the
Kingdom of Italy in 1806. Two years later, he had a cause célèbre on his
hands when three young gardes tried to desert. Their leader, Branoni, was of
a good family from the newly annexed ex-papal city of Ancona; another was
from a Roman family of high standing. The military court, the conseil de
guerre, ordered the standard penalty, death. Eugène did not hide from his
stepfather its momentous import for the policy of ralliement, not only for
the kingdom but for the soon to be annexed Papal States:

They brought together heaven and earth to make me suspend this judg-
ment; I thought the example necessary to teach all our great nobles that
they are equal before the law, to all other classes of society. In a week, they will talk no more of it.\textsuperscript{121}

Eugène had carried out the execution the same morning he penned this to Napoleon. They were shot by their fellow gardes. These executions, at the very outset of Napoleonic rule in the ex-papal Marches, and in the early stages of the formation of the gardes d’honneur, was a singular incident; but the uncompromising attitude of Eugène – his determination to treat the scions of the elite in the same way as peasant rebels – should leave no doubts as to the purpose of Napoleonic policy, particularly when set beside the manner in which Roederer delivered his ‘dinner invitations’ in Umbria. It smacks more of St Just’s description of the Terror as a means to encourager les autres than of the conventional view of a parvenu regime bent on mollifying entrenched elites at the expense of republican principles. Above all, Italians were to learn the military virtues, including, where necessary, how to gun down their own.

A softness bordering on cowardice, and a campanilismo worthy of the tag ‘mother’s boy’ did not mean that the French thought for a moment they were dealing with anything but highly intelligent, sophisticated people. The Italian upper classes might have become ‘trivialized’, but this did not equate with stupidity. However, it was not an intelligence the French felt they could readily integrate. Roederer expressed both respect, and lack of respect, for ‘this sort of person’ to his father, when describing Baglioni père at the height of the struggle over his son’s conscription, ‘He is a very formidable man, very subtle, very able, who would make a good ambassador for the Emperor, but never a good citizen.’\textsuperscript{122} There is a great deal to ponder in this remark. Roederer, through his Umbrian experience, was returning to his family’s republican roots; the notion of civisme was on the nib of his pen, not at the back of his mind, in 1813, when the empire is generally supposed to be in its reactionary, ‘monarchical’ phase; there is a clear dichotomy in his mind between ability and morality.

Tassoni always feared that the Florentine patricians would outwit successive French administrators, and their political and social skills would foil reform. Lagarde, the French Director-General of Police, developed a comparable view, and paid them the backhanded compliment that ‘the Tuscans are more used to careful calculation, than to being noble or courageous enough to speak the truth’;\textsuperscript{123} ‘the Tuscan is neither ardent nor easily flattered’.\textsuperscript{124} When his attempts to refound the famous College of Santa Caterina in Parma collapsed around him – as aristocratic parents withdrew their sons in flight from the imposed militaristic ethos of the lycée – Nardon thundered against the traditions of campanilismo and Baroque piety, but he really believed he had simply been outmanoeuvred by Jesuits and Jesuit-trained placemen in the nobles’ retinues. If narrow-mindedness was its root cause, stupidity was not part of the equation:
The superb institution that is the College of St Catherine is slipping from my control: the holidays, the ignorance, the intrigue, the local rivalries, all combine to oppose my project. . . . The ambassadors, the ministers, the references, the importuning of every conceivable type, the tears of some mothers, who have been misled – these are the tactics they use.125

However, for the French, there was too much that was simply ignoble about the Italian elites and of too personal and cultural a nature to allow them to mix freely or effectively in the cause of integration. They might try to do their best with intrinsically intelligent Italians, in the context of *amalgame*, but they found their high culture too distasteful to bear, and puzzled often and at length over the seeming incongruities of native wit juxtaposed with religious ostentation and an overdeveloped taste for the visual. Beyond the intellectual furniture that rooted them in environmental determinism, beyond their belief in the emasculating repercussions of the triumph of Baroque piety, and their sense that *campanilismo* represented less the residues of classical republicanism than a public, collective expression of egoism and narrow horizons, the French felt more personal barriers between the Italian elites and themselves. They were of such a nature as to make the French not only perceive their *administrés* as ‘the other’, but to see themselves as such, and to draw back from the society they were meant to help integrate. All the French shared this, whoever they had been before they came to Italy, and wherever in Italy they were sent.
Towards a Gallic Laager

The roots of estrangement

During the last months of the occupation, Dubois, the Director-General of Police in Florence, wrote to his superiors in Paris, in these terms:

It seems to me that we must always worry that French officials in the conquered and reunited territories fail to understand the true character of their peoples.... They leave themselves all the more exposed to such errors, in that the French have an excessive tendency to keep to themselves and, for their part, the peoples of the conquered and reunited territories, feeling ill at ease with their conquerors, seek them out as little as possible, and prefer to keep out of their way. From there, a sort of wall goes up between them, that a few Court functions, or cold visitations and stilted conversations do not suffice, in fostering frank exchanges between them.¹

He was right. When, in 1811, the Ministry of Police-Générale asked for intelligence on ‘the inner reaches of high society, and the relationships and opinions of those who compose it’ in Rome, Norvins had to confess it would not be an easy job, mainly because of the estrangement between French and Italians, derived from their different cultural pastimes. The French could know little of such things

...in a city where all the great houses are closed, and where those that are open to socializing, are frequented by cliques solely interested in playing...prohibited forms of gambling, which are impossible to prevent, so intense is the passion for them in these circles.²

The deep social and cultural divide between rulers and ruled made it almost as impossible to police the centre, as geography and logistics did the wilds of the periphery. A self-made laager was the result of a deep contempt on the part of the French for the elite culture they found themselves amidst.
There was much in their immediate past, and in the deeper administrative traditions of Bourbon absolutism, that disposed the French to build that ‘sort of wall’. Alison Patrick has shown how quickly in the course of the Revolution, the administrators of the newly created departments turned from calling the public *nos concitoyens* to the more patronising and authoritarian *administrés*. However deeply ingrained such attitudes were within the ranks of the French bureaucratic elites, they tended to be reserved for the French popular classes. Across the Alps, there was a crucial difference. Vendean nobles might have been wicked in the eyes of the bureaucratic elites, but not alien. Napoleon might have detested, even feared, Chateaubriand and those he claimed to speak for, but he was not outside a shared elite culture. The French in Italy regarded the indigenous elites as both wicked, alien, and trivialised into the bargain. The wall that worried Dubois was a wall between elites, of a kind that did not exist in France. That erected against local elite culture by Tournon in Rome, and La Rivoire de la Tourette in Genoa did not arise from snobbery on either side; indeed, both men acquired their posts in the hope of building bridges between equals, as an exercise in *ralliement*. However, they found little fellow-feeling with Italian aristocrats, falling back, instead, on a sense of French elite culture. As the French obscured, and even obliterated, the lines of caste from 1789, they did so at the cost of extending the barriers between the enlightened and the unregenerated, which emerged early in the Revolution, to embrace some of the oldest families of the most ancient centres of culture and urban civilisation in Europe.

If the arrival of aristocratic young French *auditeurs* in the former Italian capitals was meant to be an arm of integration, it failed spectacularly. There were few more blue-blooded representatives of the old second estate in the service of the new regime than La Tour du Pin, in Florence. His behaviour towards the Tuscan elite proved closer to that of a representative on mission in the Year III, however. Even the Director-General of Police had to admit that he baited the upper classes, treated senior Tuscan magistrates with insolence, and threw two crucifixes at the feet of Capponi, the *maire*, to try to draw him into an argument over religious policy. His real assault on his ‘fellow nobles’ was his ruthless requisitioning of horses for the army, however. Dauchy pointed out to Paris, in a rare expression of sympathy for the Florentine elite, that almost their only luxury was their handsome cabs, in which they drove to the opera. La Tour, he reported, took particular pleasure in confiscating exactly these animals for the army:

> The vexatious and arbitrary manner in which he executed this operation, and the obvious pleasure he got from it – evident from head to toe in his demeanor – made him universally loathed. He does not lack spirit and intelligence, but he is very vain, and his extreme youth only makes it worse.
La Tour du Pin was thoroughly integrated to the new order, and it was exactly his capacity to do so that thwarted the extension of integration to his Florentine fellow-nobles.

In his memoirs, written under the restored Bourbons, the aristocratic Tournon noted of Fauchet, his colleague in Florence:

First an actor, then a revolutionary, then a courtier, the baron-prefect still reveals the red Jacobin bonnet under his cocked hat of office. . . . He treats the great, pure and illustrious Florentine nobility – who upheld a flourishing republic for centuries – with disdain. His rough manners, his contempt for religion, make him detested.5

As Tournon’s tenure in Rome unfolded, there was little to choose between their approach to the job, however. Italy effectively, if not consciously, welded these opposites together. The signs were growing, in seemingly small things, and here the final wave of French administrators can be seen drawing a conscious line between themselves and the Italians. After five years in Italy and two in Rome, the French public prosecutor of Rome’s Cour Impériale remarked that his Advocate-General, Boucher, now refused to speak Italian in court, and had announced he would henceforth even cease to sum up in anything but French. Boucher had first come to Italy in no small part because of his good knowledge of Italian.6 For all his brawling and scandal-making antics, Binet – the Hyde to Boucher’s Jekyll – engaged with the world around him, if in ways his superiors found unacceptable. The contrast between Menou and Tournon, or Binet and Boucher, begs the deeper questions that surround the process of imperialism, which are all the more important to confront when they emerge in a purely European context. Those who spent time governing Italians increasingly drew away from them. The nature of the evidence itself assumes great significance in this context, too. The unfavourable remarks made oft and again by the French about the Italian elites did not derive only from the mass of indigenous denunciations; they sprang from their own observations and direct experiences and were the product of living and working at the heart of Italian civilisation.

The French dealt with their distaste in two ways. First, they instinctively withdrew into themselves, refusing the normal channels of sociability – cultural entertainments and the company of the opposite sex. Then, from their self-imposed isolation, they decided to set the Italians an example. There were few better ways to erect the ‘sort of wall’ Dubois had come to worry about, and although official policy stressed acculturation, estrangement was really what the French in Italy came to want for themselves, if not for the future of the empire.
The rejection of sociability

The public sphere
The French regarded Italian forms of entertainment as trivial. This applied not only to the gross behaviour attendant on Carnevale among the urban popular classes, or the peasant dances so disparaged by Moreau de St Méry, but to most forms of elite cultural diversion. Dubois despised the penchant among Florentine men for billiards, and disdained their general patterns of social intercourse:

In Italy the sense of ‘society’ and the circle is barely in its infancy. The habit of going to the theatre every night is a barrier to it, and scarcely allows for even a snatched conversation, with no great point. . . . It is every night to the theatre; the rest of the time, one is inaccessible to everyone, unless one is in one’s lodge, or gives a brief audience on Saturday. . . . The best people do not go to the café.\(^7\)

Terne, in Rome, was shocked by the passion of upper-class Romans for gambling in private houses, not only because they were reduced to so trivial a form of amusement, but for the way it separated the sexes at social occasions, and the loose behaviour it induced among women, as well as men, when they bankrupted themselves at the tables:

On entering a grand house . . . you will find a circle of about twenty quite pretty women, which no man has either the custom or the inclination to approach . . . I got out of this milieu with no regrets; it is only attractive to gamblers. My sensibilities were revolted by the passions of the upper classes for this sort of thing, and by the way in which women lost money and reduced themselves to poverty, leading to the most shameful trafficking.\(^8\)

It might also be noted that Terne and Tournon were not prudish. Terne was astonished that Italian men were conditioned not to speak to attractive women at social gatherings, and vice versa.

Among the billiard-playing Florentines, none of the great families, nor the archbishop, was in the habit of receiving people at home, so if anything of real importance was discussed in public, it was over the wasteful pastimes of billiards and gambling. ‘There are no sociétés, properly so-called, because one would not find ten people in a house in Florence, in the evening.’ When Norvins damned the town of Frossinone for not having a salon, it was merely underlining the obvious barbarity of the periphery.\(^9\) When Nardon waved aside Parmense elite culture with the imperious remark that, ‘here one goes to a spectacle as in France one goes to the salon’,\(^10\) or Tournon
lamented of Roman society that ‘there must be no other country, anywhere, where the taste for reading is so little apparent’, the sound of doors slamming and bridges collapsing is deafening. The French were expressing more than contempt for the Italian elites; they were informing the centre that there was too wide a gap between their most soignés administrés and themselves for social amalgame or integration.

This disdain took concrete forms of expression. Whereas Junot and Menou involved themselves in Italian opera, Nardon welcomed its disappearance in Parma. He thought the opera buffa might provide a ‘half way house’ to wean Italians from the grosser aspects of their native opera, towards ‘proper’ theatre. It would be ‘a great aid for education and shaping public opinion’. However, his loathing went much deeper than aesthetic taste. Nardon saw the opera as an active agent of moral depravity that had to be eradicated: ‘The theatres in Italy today are horrible, and serve only to propagate indecency, corrupt morality, encourage bad taste, and harbour notions of violent thoughts and crude passions.’ Sociability on these terms had to be avoided. To attend such events was antithetical to the French civilising mission, a mission that, perforce, extended to the Parmense upper classes. Norvins felt the theatre to be such an important – and, indeed, defiant – an agent of that mission that he roundly condemned the weakness of Miollis and Tournon for suspending the Comédie of Rome during Lent. Norvins got his way, and it remained open.

The French came close enough to Italian high society and public entertainment to know they did not care for it. The French in Genoa, headed by their prefect, Marie-Juste Antoine de la Rivoire de la Tourette, were notorious for keeping to themselves. Born in 1751, Rivoire was not a rude Jacobin imbued with anti-aristocratic prejudice, but his loathing of the Genoese patriciate even reached the ears of the Director-General of Police in Florence, who remarked on Rivoire’s predisposition to believe he was surrounded by anti-French plots, and suggested this was the real reason for the inward-looking patterns of noble sociability. In practical terms, it meant that the Italian salon held no attractions for the French, that opera was a thing of horror to be stamped out and, ultimately, that sociability on any terms but their own was out of the question. The Italian urban elites had to come to them, making the only arena of social intercourse those ‘few Court functions, or cold visitations and stilted conversations’ that so worried even a senior policeman.

The penchant for spectacle over the spoken or written word in their leisure pursuits betokened a trivialised political culture to the French. They did not believe Italians made mature, rational distinctions between the sensual and the intellectual, between aesthetic taste and public business. Norvins condemned the Romans not only for their frivolity, but for their interpretation of piety, ‘these people who prefer processions to dancing, and sermons to the theatre’. Tournon considered Italy ‘a country where all men judge and
respect themselves, according to how much they spend, and by external show'.\(^{16}\) Degerando said of ‘the Roman’:

He is drawn to the visual – he is more interested in ceremony than in power; work is sacrificed for pleasantries; politeness and manners make more of an impression than deeds. . . . The highest ranks of the prelacy were distinguished by the right to gild the bridles of their coach horses in the same way as did cardinals . . . a right which is the ambition of every man. Everything in Rome was driven by such important considerations. . . . [They possess] great elegance, an easy grace. The Roman people is used to this; forms are what count for them. . . . The Roman is satisfied with this, even if it is accompanied by an order. Manners lacking, however, is a deeply felt offence.\(^{17}\)

The higher judiciary confined its business to ‘an exchange of courtesies’. It would be hard to find a closer correlation between cultural tastes and political culture than that drawn by the French in the Italian departments, nor would it be easier to find a more direct exposition of a trivialised, if once ‘high’ civilisation, given by an imperialist. It is a prototype of the portrait of decadent ancient cultures that became commonplace in the era of ‘classic imperialism’ later in the nineteenth century.

**Gender relations**

Whereas the satraps took Italian mistresses, their successors abhorred Italian women. Tournon, as a single man, had an entrée into Roman high society, but he drew the line at marriage, as he told his mother in no uncertain terms:

I want a wife of at least twenty. Any younger, and she would be too prone to adopt the mores of this country, which, in all Europe, are those most set against personal happiness. I swear that, although I am not really jealous by nature, I would only marry in Rome with considerable distaste. ‘Putting it about’ – for that is the term for it – is so general, so open among the higher nobility, that I would almost never want my wife to live alone, among these society women.\(^{18}\)

Tournon’s stern opinion of the cream of Roman womanhood and high society is all the more shocking, because he actually found much pleasure in their company:

One hears voices here so beautiful, that Paris could never even imagine them. This beautiful language is worthy of the sirens! . . . The Romans execute the greatest musical problems with inexpressible charm. Their singing is full of expression, and seems to be part of that voluptuous abandon that is the mark of their manners.\(^{19}\)
Here, again, the Italian penchant for the spectacle over the written or spoken word presented a barrier for the French. Tournon saw the attractions of Roman women and the whole of Roman *sociabilité* as resting on the purely sensual. As a conscious product of imperial French culture, he immediately recognised these attractions as shallow, inferior and unsatisfying to his own cultural and emotional needs.

However, there is more. Although Tournon would not have committed evidence of any sexual indiscretions to paper – least of all to his parents or in official correspondence, his most important personal actions attest to his prejudices. The ‘voluptuous abandon’ of Roman womanhood always ensured that they remained merely ‘my supposed *amours*’. When, before his marriage, his mother suggested that his sister come to keep house for him, Tournon’s depth of loathing for the Romans emerges unnuanced. ‘I love her too much to let her come here’ was his stark reply. He married a French noblewoman in her twenties, whom he brought to Rome in 1811 and kept firmly away from Roman society. These views, expressed privately, were reflected in official correspondence by Degerando: ‘High society women are very corrupt, but without the slightest hint of coquettishness about them. This corruption is a very deeply rooted thing, it is accepted, and does not stop them being devout.’

Dubois, in Florence, reacted in similar fashion. He referred to Sandra Maria Caponi, the great Florentine beauty and ex-mistress of the British ambassador, Lord Wyndham, with the unconcealed contempt he extended to all Italian women: ‘She conforms to the way of Italian women: she was a very rowdy Amazon when Wyndham wanted her to be. She then turned very docile under Reille, whose position did not allow uproar or commotion around him.’ He condemned Sandra Maria less for her behaviour than for her submissiveness, detecting in her the same artificial nature Tournon found in Roman debutantes. Just as Terne felt that Roman nobles let their women gamble to keep them in dependence, Dubois saw only slavishness in the apparent ‘manliness’ of Sandra Maria. It was a similar attitude applied to very different women, an outlook which submerged variation and complexity into a stereotype, but it was very prevalent among the French. Reille, the first senior official sent to Florence, did not set the pattern for the future of integration in Tuscany any more than his immediate superior, Menou. The young aristocratic *auditeur*, La Tour du Pin, sub-prefect of Florence, carried his contempt for upper-class Florentine women with almost Jacobin zeal. He openly consorted with ‘ordinary girls’ because – he said publicly – they were prettier and better conversationalists than the daughters of the nobility.

There was nothing sexist in these attitudes. The French were equally censorious of the behaviour and standards of the male Italian elites. Dubois lambasted the overtly double standards of the Florentines. Informing his superiors that the mayor, Fragoniani, not only made monthly payments to a foundling hospital, but also had been caught openly in his carriage with a dancer, Dubois did not hesitate to draw a wider conclusion: ‘These details
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will scandalize Your Excellency somewhat, reveal the real state of affairs here better than a host of reports; and they will prove to you how little you can judge Italy by French standards.24

Magistrates in Rome had a very dim view of the sexual mores they perceived around them. Legonidec, the procurator of the Cour Impériale of Rome, looked askance at the personal lives of the judges of the civil tribunal of Viterbo, where its septuagenarian president, Pazielli, married the ex-wife of one of his junior colleagues, in what looked like a deal for promotion, that led to further jealousies.25 Coffinhal had no doubt that Tomasso Lucchi, a judge of Rome’s civil tribunal, sold his wife to advance himself: ‘...having constantly employed the wiles of his wife, who is blessed with certain attractive attributes and is an excellent schemer in her own right, in order to assure his fortune and second his ambitions’.26

Legonidec, after four years in Rome, was still appalled by the sexual mores of most of the senior magistrates. When Ruffini returned to Rome, after a tour on the criminal assizes in Perugia, he had a ‘woman in tow’ who was separated from her husband – Ruffini too, was married – whom he even brought onto the bench to comment on cases. What shocked Legonidec most was that the Romans did not complain about ‘the disagreeable scenes’ that took place before their eyes, in open court. Ruffini’s colleague Cavi, the father of a large family, was considered worse, however. He combined the two Roman vices of financial extravagance – ‘he is covered in debts’ – and having an open affair with a married woman.27 Legonidec, in particular, was very censorious of the behaviour of Frenchmen like Binet, just as Coffinhal lambasted Miollis. However, they made a clear distinction between the French and the Romans, which was not entirely disingenuous; the French were far from home and, in most cases, they were young, single men. In contrast, the Romans and Florentines were behaving as they did, in their own homes, and in the heart of their own culture. The imperial rulers concluded that the Italian norm provided no restraints on elite mores comparable to those in France, thus creating a degenerate ‘other’. Given that this was their official view, the French had little trouble in believing many of the anonymous denunciations of Roman debauchery, perhaps even more readily than they accepted bloody tales from the periphery, upon which they had more sense than to act.

What really seemed to shock them was the lack of passion in Italian intimacies, not its excess. Tournon believed ‘the ménages of this happy town [Rome] are a very curious thing, indeed’, and recounted to his mother the highly stylised, frank and matter-of-fact ways in which affairs were conducted by both sexes, and by wives, in particular:

The wife has a lover who is well known by that title to everyone and, when he arrives, the husband, children and servants all withdraw; there is also a second lover, whose duty it is to carry the parasol and the gloves. Compared to the first lover, he is like a little star beside the sun, and his
only reward seems to be observing the joy of his rival. As for the husband, he just does in someone else’s house what has been done to him. . . . There is absolutely no question of jealousy. . . . They do as they please, and their only point of contact is the dinner table.28

Terne, his aide at the prefecture, shared these views, but added his thoughts on the extremes of character this behaviour also tempered:

It is rare for disinterested feelings to play a part in an affair, and if [financial] interest does not always dictate their choices, then it has been made on a passing whim which has mastered them momentarily. . . . The most extravagant expressions of amorous fever are bewilderingly indulged here. A wife will avow openly to her husband and family, whom she has chosen as a lover, and they will even give her advice on the matter. . . . So, it turns out that the famous ‘Italian jealousy’ scarcely exists in Rome. . . . One of their incontrovertible qualities is their frankness in such things, and their utter lack of coquetterie. The word does not even exist in their language.29

Terne not only pointed directly to the calculating nature of elite Roman social life, but the manner in which it served to regulate the innate irresponsibility of people imbued with trivial, inconstant natures. In their callous lust, or their ‘amorous fevers’, they stood condemned as decadent in the eyes of two of the chief imperial administrators.

Italian womanhood had few sterner critics than French women in Italy. Menou and Napoleon’s sister, Élisse, the Grand Duchess of Tuscany, clashed directly over the presence in Florence of Countess Albany, providing a key example of the shifts in attitudes of officialdom at work in the Italian departments. Menou was very fond of the Countess, like the Florentine public, according to Tassoni, but Élisse disapproved of her conduct and pressured her to leave the city. Élisse eventually backed down, but an audience between the two women ended in a direct clash of cultures. Élisse criticised the late poet Alfieri for his anti-Napoleonic views, provoking the reply from the Countess that all men were entitled to their opinions. Élisse rejoined that all women were not obliged to share the views of their men.30 Élisse saw in the Countess the same slavish devotion to men as did her chief policemen. There were fewer more sarcastic, patronising observers of upper-class Italian women or, indeed, of Italians, than Madame Récamier, herself no friend of the Napoleonic regime, but still one its foremost cultural arbiters. She wrote to her friend, Camille Jordan, from Turin:

The influence of Italy begins here, if not in terms of climate, then in its mores. The women have pretty young men for company, and priests for bodyguards. . . . Anecdotes, fashion and love affairs seem to me to be the main concerns of their little world. . . . The great Piedmontese nobles and the Frenchmen in the administration meet at court all the time, but they
still do not like each other. The vanities of rank may resemble the *grand monde* of Paris, but they appear as simply ridiculous when seen in so narrow a circle, and have no political import. . . . I don’t think there is a country where outward show is of such importance: The palaces preserve the old luxury of a large domestic staff, but when you arrive unexpectedly, you are shocked to pass through antechambers, salons, galleries, only to find the mistress of the house in a tiny back room, lit by a single candle. All in all, I think the custom here is to pay for the superfluous at the expense of the essential.31

Madame Récamier’s views are poignant, and worth quoting at length, because they mirror both the prejudices of French males, and also those of her strictly political opponents at the helm of the imperial regime. Contempt for a trivialised elite culture in general and of upper-class women, in particular, an acknowledgement that *amalgame* and *ralliement* were but skin deep and confined to the public sphere, and a more precise mockery of the Italian sense of public *figura*, were the hallmarks of a French attitude to Italian high culture that traversed gender and political boundaries. There was no sense of ‘sisterhood’ between Récamier and her Italian equals. Rather, the power of shared French identity emerges from her private reactions, binding her to a Gallic laager. However, perhaps the most damning comment on Italian womanhood comes from the wife of Antoine Roederer, the prefect of Umbria, who spoke Italian well and spent almost five years in Spoleto, at her husband’s side. In a letter to her father-in-law, she lambasted her Italian gardener for refusing to take orders from a woman, but turned her real bile on the women of the Umbrian elite:

I got up and took over running the house . . . five days after giving birth. They regard that as some sort of miracle in this part of the world, where the accepted wisdom is that, without exception, you have to spend forty days in bed after a birth. I, however, am a good little French peasant girl, healthy and of good heart.32

Here, too, stands the shared myth of France, a homeland filled with a brave, sturdy yeomanry, and a peasant heritage the young professionals on the periphery shared in the face of a decadent ‘other’. Far removed from the realities of Chouannerie, Madame Roederer reinvented herself as a female prototype of Jean Chauvin.33 Her self-image was not only in keeping with that of her male counterparts, it had no empathy or respect for Italian women of her own station, exactly because they were, in her eyes, weak, trivialised and decadent. She had to set them an example.

All this discouraged the most senior officials from having any other than the most formal contact with the Italian elites. In the case of the rank and file of the Gendarmerie, prejudice hardened into glacial official policy. The
Gendarmerie of the Italian departments was always maintained at a ratio of two-thirds French to one-third native within its six-man brigades, and intermarriage in the communities they served was specifically forbidden. When superior officers intervened to prevent such unions, it was often with genuine contempt for the locals, as in this outburst by a commandant in Piedmont: ‘It is important to prevent such abuses occurring if we do not want to witness gendarmes marrying everything Piedmont has to offer in the way of the worst and most distasteful kind of subject.’ Such marriages seem to have occurred, although they may have taken place in church only and without a legally binding civil ceremony, thus escaping the records, and so the attention, of the higher authorities. Humanity ‘had out’ in such cases, but the policy was to prevent it. The dislike of Italian sexual mores and, fundamentally, of Italian women, borders on the fears of contamination by ‘the other’ noted by Axtell in native–colonial relations in North America, rather than suggesting any ready European comparisons: ‘The generalized European fear of barbarism that worried colonial planters and leaders was given specific shape and meaning by the Indian embodiment of the “heathenism” that seemed so contagious to English frontiersmen.’ For ‘heathenism’, read Italian womanhood of all classes and regions.

In the most essential and intimate of ways, these attitudes to Italian woman made a nonsense of *ralliement* and *amalgame*, of the chances for real and lasting integration, beyond the public sphere. It was, perhaps, the grossest contradiction at the heart of their imperial mission in Italy, all the more so because this apartheid was largely self-imposed. The evidence from French men and women shows that they were made welcome by the Italian elites, whatever opinion they then formed of the sociabilité around them. If the biography drawn on his unpublished memoirs is to be believed, Tournon was well regarded by many of the great Roman families, and viewed as a prospective son-in-law. He was a welcome guest at the country house of the Duchess of Braschi, the environs of which he found agreeable ‘because its vegetation so resembles that of the beautiful valleys of the Auvergne’ rather than that of Latium. His disdain for their daughters was the barrier, nothing else. The marriage of d’Auzers, the French Director-General of Police in Turin, is not really an exception to this rule. He married into the Cavours, a ‘pariah family’ among the old Piedmontese nobility for its close links to the Borghese court. In its way, d’Auzers’ marriage was as great an admission of defeat for the policy of *ralliement* and integration, as Tournon’s outright refusal to countenance a relationship with an Italian noblewoman.

The immediate political consequence was an increasing desire among the French to replace indigenous culture with their own, and an attempt to do so in isolation from the Italian elites. If they would not mix, they could still follow the lead of Madame Roederer in Spoleto, and set their *administrés* an example.
The imperial example

The French decided to lead by example, once they perceived spontaneous integration to be unlikely. On the one hand, they would live the French way, in the realm of sociabilité, and make no significant compromises with the indigenous culture, incarnating the example of a superior civilisation. On the other, in the public sphere, officials determined to rule the Italian departments with a particular firmness; experience had taught them, they believed, that the imperial order could only be established by dictatorial methods. These were strategies born of despair, and might be labelled, respectively, ‘passive’ and ‘active’ assimilation, in that both entailed Italians being led, rather than any form of cooperation.

Living a French life

Tournon and Roederer have left the historian the best-documented examples of ‘living a French life’ among Italians. Their deliberate attempts to set an example cannot be doubted, and they were quite clear – and of one mind – about what ‘the French way’ meant. They were to impart frugality to the Romans, in place of the useless ostentation derided by Madame Récamier – whose own Parisian salon was not marked by sobriety⁴⁰ – and the merits of intellectual diversions over the spectacle. Italians were also to learn how to conduct themselves in mixed company, to engage in intelligent conversation with the opposite sex, and to treat women as equals, at least in the context of the salon.

Tournon began with the reformulation of espace itself, however. He told his mother, on taking up residence in the city: ‘[E]very Monday, I open my apartment to all comers. . . . My apartment. . . is very airy and tasteful, but also very simple. This is the only way to combat the magnificence of the Roman palaces, which are gilded, but lacking in all grace.’⁴¹ These first steps in his tenure of the prefecture reveal a great deal about the nature of the French civilising mission in the Italian departments and even more about those aspects of the French self-image that drove a wedge between rulers and ruled. Tournon’s immediate concern was to replace darkness with light, to open up cramped, confined spaces and create freshness from the stale, obscurantist debris of the old order. Although a noble, his almost automatic response to what he found in his Roman palazzo bears the essential hallmarks of the cleansing of public spaces through light and air so prevalent among the early revolutionaries studied in Ozouf’s work on official festivals.⁴² A shared culture, based on enlightened sensibilities – in the pristine sense of the term – drove Tournon’s initial steps in an alien Rome. That alien ‘other’ was defined by needless luxury and empty ostentation, but also by its ‘lack of grace’, a criticism the French often levelled at elite Italian taste; the neoclassicism of the Grand Siècle was now allied to the air and light of the Enlightenment, to forge not only a discernible French aesthetic, but also
a ready perception of its antithesis in Italy. The French perceived a clumsiness in the style of the late Baroque, a lack of cultural confidence hiding behind overstatement. However, where Tournon’s living example of good taste and bon sens cease to be passive agents, and merge with the concept of assimilation, is evident in his choice of words. Roman ‘magnificence’, Italian ‘lack of grace’, are to be fought – lutter. In such an approach to culture, even the opening of a window or the whitewashing of a wall became an overtly political act. Tournon the interior decorator consciously saw himself as a cultural imperialist. It was also evident in the practical steps he took to reorganise his household, an approach that mirrored exactly French actions in the public sphere all over the Italian departments, as they dismantled the ‘dependency culture’ of the old courts:

I have begun opening up the house. My staff comprises a head maid, a chief butler, a cook, a valet, four lackeys and a coachman; the luxury in which these people live is so exaggerated, that I have had to augment their number more than I would have liked. . . . It is absolutely essential to establish a system here that is utterly at odds with their customs.43

The combative spirit is still present, as is a clear wish to destroy Roman domestic habits, root and branch. Again, Tournon does not conceive of setting even a mundane example as in any sense passive. A new order was in evidence, down to the last domestic detail, for Tournon believed that this was what would most impress, and perplex, the Romans. Nothing could have been further from the approach of the satraps, nor does Tournon’s approach appear especially generational. His parents heartily approved of these domestic measures; indeed, when he felt compelled to increase his household after his marriage – ‘essential in a country where many families spend much more on it than do we’ – his mother was reported to be shocked.44

Extravagance and largesse in the courtly style were the preserve of the satraps, but quite emphatically not of scions of the Second Estate, an indication, perhaps, that the divisions between the French and Italian elites may have had deeper roots than the Revolution. They shared a general concern about Italian habits with a man who, had he served in their region during the Terror, would surely have been their nemesis. Nardon was aghast not at just the extravagance he detected at the Parmense Court, but the seemingly feckless way in which it was managed, ‘I found a bureaucracy living in luxury, in the old style of the dukes. . . . I dug out the accounts of the offices, and it all ran on credit.’45 The real clashes over gambling in particular, and how to confront Italian mores in general, tended to come between the satraps and the imperial bureaucrats, and had little to do with the vicissitudes of the Revolution. Nardon pressed successfully for a ban on all gambling in the
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ex-duchies of Parma and Piacenza, on moral and cultural grounds; he saw it as part of a battle to regenerate ‘this country, which is as full of ostentation as it is of poverty’, thus making a clear link between Italian vanity and the social pastime of gambling. He had to do so in both the face of opposition from Junot, and the loss of revenue to the state preserved by Junot’s support for – and patronage of – the great casinos of Parma. A whole way of life was going to be cut short, be it in Tournon’s bachelor flat, or Nardon’s ex-duchy.

French disapproval extended beyond the Court and civil service, and the initial period of direct rule. D’Auzers dwelt on the manner in which a member of the once great Scotti family of Piacenza, Ranuce, had ruined himself and reduced a great house to penury. Of his seven daughters, two were at the soon to be closed Ursuline convent in Parma; two lived with a notary and did housework for their upkeep; one was ‘a sort of governess’; the two youngest lived with other noble families ‘where they are cared for almost out of charity’. Despite the fact that this same report noted the prosperity of most of the rest of the family, D’Auzers seemed to find Ranuce’s fate predictable. Frenchmen and women of diametrically opposed backgrounds were united in their view of Italy, and their self-image, as its antithesis.

After his marriage, Tournon adapted his patterns of sociabilité to suit his new status, but made even fewer concessions to Italian social habits. He and his wife, Adèle, née de Pancemont – the daughter of a family of parlementaires from Nîmes – adopted an aggressively ‘reformist’ role, opening their house to the Roman elites, in a style wholly in keeping with the imperial mission. The character of their salon was stamped by cultural imperialism. In his unpublished memoirs Tournon is reported to have said:

In the home of the prefect, there was less din, and certainly less unseemliness and debauchery that made up for its scandalous past history. Un bon ton prevailed there, good manners, an honest cordiality. . . . The excellence of the food, the amiable nature of the welcome, the grace and perfect tact of the mistress of the house, the clever conversation combined with songs, concerts, dances, alongside courteous discussions about politics and public affairs, all gave these gatherings variety, and a charm that endured right to the end.

Restraint, directness and genuine friendliness replaced Roman lasciviousness, falsity and extravagance. Above all, the Tournons’ salon was a place of culture and intelligence. It was not about the visual, but the life of the mind, and a place where people knew how to behave. Even at table, they set a culinary example of superiority. Tournon asked his father to send 100 bottles of Cornas, the daily drink of their native northern Rhône, and also to throw in one or two cases of Côte-Rotie and Hermitage, the truly great wines of the
region, ‘in order to tell them of the wines of my country, and to set an
eexample of what is truly the best’. However, he went on to admit that this
ambience mainly attracted other foreigners in Rome, and the bourgeoisie,
rather than the nobility. By setting scions of both the noblesse dé pée and the
noblesse de robe in the heart of another ancient aristocracy, Napoleon had
created a model of their alien nature for posterity, and shown how infinitely
superior – and alien – the French nobility felt themselves to be.

The Roederers, in Spoleto, were a very different couple, chosen by Paris as
deliberate contrast to the aristocratic Tournons. Although the differences
of caste and income are evident, they are far less significant than the
similarities between this republican family and the Tournons. If Nardon, in
Parma, thought that the opera buffa might help incline Italians towards
‘proper’ theatre, the Roederers took it upon themselves to do just this in
their more peripheral prefecture. Roederer told his father with unrestrained
pride in 1812, even as elsewhere the empire was beginning to collapse:

Today we beheld the spectacle of the town illuminations; tomorrow
there will be an opera buffa in the theatre of the prefecture…. My wife is
the prima donna, and four women will play the other roles, accompanied
by several young, local musicians, such as there is to be had in Italy. The
opera has been written by the secretary-general of the prefecture [Dubois,
a Frenchman] … I decorated the hall in lace, myself…. Everything looks
very pretty, and in the best possible taste…. We used to have a dancing
troupe, too, in which my wife was the prima ballerina, but she is pregnant,
and her big stomach prevents her from dancing…. But she speaks Italian
very well, and she still carries herself so modestly, but so very gracefully,
and sings with such perfect ease and good taste.

Everything was improvised, even slightly ridiculous, but Roederer’s cultural
pride, and the importance he set on the whole exercise, are evident.  
Advanced pregnancy was not going to hold back Madame Prefect; the town
was going to get French culture, translated into Italian. An example was
being set.

Such examples were not always popular among Italians, at least according
to the French. While denouncing the impending failure of his project for
a state-run boarding school in Parma, Nardon sought to explain dislike of
new French lay teachers as the reaction of jealous, fearful natives, overawed
by the representatives of a superior culture. The Italian staff had ‘sunk into
a slothful routine’ – literally, lazy natives – and so they ‘watched a well
educated, energetic French colleague hard at work, with great difficulty’.54
Nardon was, obviously, describing a failed exercise in amalgame, but he
articulated it in terms redolent of a later cultural imperialism. The living
example could easily intimidate and provoke resistance. The French had their
answer to that, too.
How to rule

Administrators with extensive service in Italy believed, with remarkable uniformity, that not only did Italians need to be ruled by a modern, centralised and professional state, they would respond solely to a very authoritarian style, and men like Roederer, Tournon and Nardon were all too ready to give it to them.

In practice, this meant a deeper withdrawal into a French laager, as it entailed a further removal of real administrative and political power from Italians. However, when their comments are scrutinised, the occupiers considered they were making an important concession to Italian mores. They did not see menacing authoritarianism as part of their political culture; the image of the strong, decisive leader solely for Italian consumption simply being the fastest way to achieve the desired results. In 1807, the minister of public worship announced his intention to impose a Frenchman on the diocese of Piacenza, ‘drawn from that class of men...who know how to impose themselves by their character and experience’.55 Roederer told his father bluntly:

We find ourselves in a country where the upper class is very sagacious. They take the slightest hint. If the commander allows himself to be seen to hesitate, he is jumped on immediately, and loses the use of his arms. So, it is always, and always, and always yet again: he who is firm and just is the absolute master of the country.56

This marked the direct change in leadership from arbitration and negotiation to assertiveness. The Umbrian nobility were intelligent but very weak men, who appreciated strength in others, but had no creative notion of how to use power themselves, save to thwart constituted authority. The implication was that Roederer would not behave thus in a French prefecture. During the subsistence crisis of 1812, Roederer and Tournon took many matters into their own hands to avert real misery, at one point authorising the importation of grain from the Kingdom of Naples without waiting for approval from Paris. Roederer wrote home that, ‘We did not have time to meditate; the essential was to go forward, to go forward, to run. . . . It is very possible that in older departments, with longer administrative histories, such problems do not exist.’57 ‘We had to act within twenty-four hours’, he told his father later, ‘We did not have time to ask questions or wait for answers, and although the prefect of the Trasimène acts only on the authority of Paris, he often doesn’t even have that.’58

Perhaps they protested too much, and the isolation of the frontier unleashed the iron fist readily identified with Napoleonic rule, but this was not how they saw themselves or the fundamental character of the regime they served. Their ideal was a strictly regulated, thoroughly professional
bureaucracy, what the disgruntled Piedmontese patriot Carlo Botta called scathingly ‘government by geometry’. Yet their actions were anything but those of desk-bound ‘men in suits’. Nardon’s first act on arriving in Parma in the immediate aftermath of the revolt was to take to his horse – ‘I travel with but one gendarme’ – adopting the role of itinerant chairman of the valleys’ cantonal councils for several weeks. Norvins, too, traversed his vast district, and Roederer did his tours as prefect, even when not strictly required, and in the dead of winter. He confessed to his father:

This is from pure vanity of knowing I have got everything in order, and of having left nothing of real importance for anyone else to do; that is why I have stood up to the climate, and why I did not want to wait for the spring at any price, and this against the opinion of my doctor, even though I have asked to be transferred and to leave this region, whose climate is killing me.

It nearly did kill Nardon, an older man. His personal doctor told Paris that his nervous system was seriously weakened, his stomach was no longer functioning properly; he had violent migraines and was losing dangerously large amounts of blood because of his haemorrhoids. He added that Nardon had felt much better when he had some rest, took walks and stayed in Parma – out of the saddle – none of which he did for long. Nardon’s stark words to Junot on his arrival – ‘this country needs to be governed’ – drove him to the end. They all felt the same. Tournon told his father – a noble who had suffered gaol and emigration under the Terror – ‘What is needed [in Rome] is to establish a regime utterly at odds with their traditions’; Roederer told his, ‘I will make obedience a habit here.’ There is more than that their retreat into the style of the condottieri was a response to such attitudes. Equally, there are signs of ‘the white man’s burden’ of a later imperialism.

Their deeds, too, attest to the failure of integration, and the growing sense that only they could effect the fundamental, lasting changes essential for the future of imperial Italy. Locard, Parisian-born sub-prefect in Borgo San Donnino, rushed to the scene of epidemics, regardless of personal risk, and ‘fought and defeated the old, harmful customs’, putting in their place ‘the French system of administration and…new, healthier practices’ in every aspect of life. Impatience played its part, all too often, leading the French back to their laager. ‘I would like to seize the chance to rid myself of such a crowd of incompetent spendthrifts; I don’t know what to do with them’, Nardon complained in Parma. By the time he took over in Rome, Tournon felt he knew what to do, ‘In order to prevent anyone entering my offices who does not properly understand how business works, I have excluded all the Romans, and brought in Frenchmen’, while his sub-prefects ‘lacked the necessary
resolve’. More than once, Roederer and Tournon explained to their parents that their duty to take on so much of the administration themselves was unavoidable. Their capacity for work and commitment to the regime cannot be in doubt. Tournon painted a picture for his mother all too familiar to later colonial administrators: ‘I go to bed at eleven, and get up at six. . . . I cannot go to the theatre because it starts at ten. Only a quick drink with one or two people. . . . Those are my pastimes. The rest of my time is spent at the desk.’ When upbraided by his father for being remiss in his personal correspondence, Tournon had his reply to hand:

I am dying to reply to all of you, but on the other side of my desk are one hundred official letters that have a stronger claim on me. When duty confronts pleasure, duty must win, and all my good friends and correspondents will not take offence if the prefect of Rome spares them a thought, because to express it on paper might prevent him doing his job.

His father’s death, a few months later, nearly broke Tournon, but he did not even ask for leave, because of the unsteady conditions in the region. The Roederers had a very difficult time, and more than once the prefect expressed his wish for a transfer back to France. Madame suffered three miscarriages, all attributed to the severe heat, and their daughter was often ill in the summer. However, even as they recounted their fate, Roederer said the threat of an Anglo-Russian attack was exactly what would keep him at his post, though he had been on the point of asking to move, for the sake of his family. His wife’s attitude to duty embodies not only an example being set, but the ferocity of the laager mentality. While awaiting the birth of her second child, she told her father-in-law, ‘I swear to you that Spoleto is not where I want to have him, more than anything, I want my son to be utterly French.’ As imperial rule in central Italy collapsed around her, although worried about her children, ‘I have decided not to take advantage of the permission now granted, to return with them to France, because that would create a very bad impression here.’ The wives of many French officials in Tuscany told the Director-General of Police in Florence that they believed they, not their husbands, would be the first targets of any renewed counter-revolution late in 1813, and that ‘their throats. . . . would be cut first’. Their reaction was to demand arms for themselves and their husbands, although the Director felt there was no real danger. The Comtesse de Tournon stayed in Rome to the end, braving the jeers of the crowd, but insisting that the remains of her dead infant be exhumed, and carried back with her to France. Duty and courage sat side by side with intolerance and contempt and, as they stayed bravely at their collective post, the Tournons and Roederers were setting themselves apart, even as they set an example.
Regeneration: the culmination of assimilation

Everything the French encountered in the Italian departments instinctively drove them in on themselves. In the private sphere, they shunned social and even sexual intercourse with Italians; in the public sphere, they took the running of affairs increasingly into their own hands. However, the strength of the civilising mission was so highly developed that they were drawn out of their isolation, and continued to seek ways to regenerate their administrés, although their hopes turned increasingly to the long term, and they despaired, almost to a man, of any immediate success with Italians of all classes, the aristocracy most of all.

In France, sooner rather than later, Napoleon sought to bypass the generations of the old order and Revolution, replacing them with young men of his own making, principally through the rapid promotion of the auditeurs. In Italy, these young men – and veterans like Nardon and Lebrun – adopted the same view, arrived at by a mixture of enlightened optimism in the future and cynical exasperation with the inheritance of the past and the state of the present. The former ensured they retained their faith in the possibility of regeneration; the latter impressed upon them the need to act, rather than awaiting any natural process. Ozouf has incisively discerned two strands of thought regarding the concept – and process – of regeneration in the French Revolution, one rooted in Messianic Christianity, believing in immediate revelation, the other ‘that of Lycurgus, which proceeds from laws to mores’. The second, essentially illiberal interpretation of regeneration was the sole motor of Napoleonic imperialism in Italy, because it confronted the need to undo the past, as well as recognising that regeneration was a gradual process, and that fundamental progress hinged on education and the tight regulation of society.78 This corresponds in most significant respects to Wachtel’s theory of assimilation, in its propensity for coercion, and its underlying supposition of the justice of its uncompromising reforms. The messianic model can only really take place in a consciously formed polity, where a shared sense of identity can at least be supposed. The ‘Lycurgus model’ is more readily adapted to imperial expansion.

The kind of regeneration imposed on Italy often appears to break with that of the revolutionaries, and to move closer to Wachtel’s concept of assimilation, in one cardinal respect that indicates the proto-colonial, rather than the purely revolutionary, nature of the French project. However ruthless ‘assimilation’ actually is in Wachtel’s formulation, its goal remains inclusiveness, ‘assimilation appears on the global scale of a whole society, over a long period of direct [foreign] control’.79 The French thought exactly this, although historical circumstances curtailed their capacity to work in the long term, but their global vision of regeneration in Italy is not in doubt. They set about applying French revolutionary universalism to their set of Italian stereotypes. The revolutionaries, working in a single – and singularly
well-defined – national context, believed it possible to exclude their most dangerous opponents, what Ozouf has called ‘an ironic shift in the meaning of that noble word “regeneration” . . . [which] soon came to mean a society purged of its dubious members’.80 For long periods of the imperial occupation this totalitarian hope was absent; initially, the French did not seek to drive out anyone, not even the most militant peasant rebels, hence the continued – if intermittent – quest for _ralliement_ and _amalgame_, and their willingness to incorporate potentially traitorous nobles into imperial service. This desire to regenerate Italians justified harsh, tyrannical measures; it prevented the use of coercion in the course of the civilising mission from becoming ambivalent or even wholly contradictory.81

However, when confronted by repeated failure to rally Italian notables, the new generation of imperial bureaucrats and legists, just as much as those hardened in the defence of the ‘cause’ in the 1790s, reverted to the instinct to purge. The deportation of thousands of non-juring clergy and the ‘Golden Levy’ of the sons of the Italian nobility, are a reversion to type, at least in their execution. Yet something of the civilising mission behind assimilation can be found even in acts of such blatant coercion, as opposed to the need simply to cleanse characterised by the Terror. The Golden Levy sought to bring a new generation into the fold, not to cast it into emigration or the grave. However, the dispatch of Italian nobles to France still ‘assumed an individual so permeable to external influence that any instruction might easily be undone by counter-instruction’,82 hence the utterly ruthless reversion to revolutionary type so evident in the physical removal of so many clergy – including their chief – from Italy. The French attitude to the Italian Church was rooted in the Revolution, however they tried to hide the fact from themselves, for they believed it impossible and impervious to change,83 whereas in the Golden Levy remain the vestiges of revolutionary regeneration. The non-juring clergy were simply imprisoned to get them out of the way of society, unless and until they took the oath to the state; the young noble hostages, by contrast, were to be given a French education, in France.

Such a policy would have been unthinkable without a powerful sense of national identity and cultural superiority. The imperial experience of ruling the Italian departments gave renewed meaning to the concept of regeneration in a post-revolutionary world, as well as rekindling it among the men of the 1790s. France had been regenerated by a mixture of its native genius – which only needed the moment of revelation – and the steady application of good legislation; contemporaries had no need of those clear distinctions made by Ozouf, capable of bursting the image of a resurgent, but rational France to which they clung. Ruling Italy taught them, in their own eyes at least, that the work of the Revolution was far from over, that old battles were still to be fought, but on the alien soil of new imperial frontiers, and in the interests of future generations of ‘the other’. They had learned one great, salient lesson since the 1790s, to sustain their mission in Italy: within
France, the problem of how much of the old order to destroy had always dogged the revolutionaries; once over the Alps, it vanished into thin air, not only because the Napoleonic regime felt it was solved in France, but because the French saw nothing of great worth in Italy.

**Regenerating the young: education**

Nardon’s short-lived project to convert the former Jesuit noble college of Santa Caterina in Parma into a lycée open to all Italian nobles, is a symbolic moment in the transition from hopes residing in the messianic form of regeneration, to coercion. Strategically, Nardon’s project rested on the former; tactically – in its substance and execution – it was almost a caricature of the latter. Nardon and Junot sought to save the college and retain its clientele, which included the sons of some of the most illustrious noble houses from all over Italy, including areas beyond the départements réunis. If Nardon despaired of the fathers, his residual Jacobinism was aroused by the potential to regenerate the sons, within the space of a school term. The director of the new lycée told Paris:

> I can gather together 150 young men of the leading noble families of Italy, and I have got these little counts, marquesses and princes to enact *Le dragon de Thionville* and *La bataille d’Austerlitz*. . . . You can grasp all the political and moral advantages. It is complained that I am giving too military an education to these children; that is to say, it is not exclusively monastic. . . . I am breaking their ties to home a little, and their attachment to their families’ values. It gives a small taste of the right subjects that carry abroad the love of the laws and practices of my country.84

Nardon believed ‘messianic’ regeneration was at work among the boys, and overjoyed that several had asked – ‘as the favour dearest to their hearts’ – to take their military-style school uniforms home, to wear in the vacation.85 This was surely exaggeration, but he felt certain they adored the new order even as their parents withdrew them in droves: ‘The students do us the justice the Jesuits and their followers refuse to acknowledge… and [a striking thing!] although our discipline might be more severe than that of the Jesuits, the pupils have become so attached to us that they do not want to leave the College.’86

He recounted with pride how the three sons of the Prince della Spada tried to defy the servant sent to fetch them home, telling him to bring their father to Parma ‘to see the truth for himself’, a response that ‘corresponds perfectly to my hopes of raising and forming subjects devoted to His Majesty’.87

There are two powerful elements of original revolutionary idealism evident in Nardon’s project, bridging the values of the 1790s and the Napoleonic civilising mission. The first, clearly, is the faith in the swift conversion to the new order of aristocratic Italian youth. The second is the character of
the college, as conceived and briefly realised by Nardon, with Junot’s support. These two former men of the Left returned to their roots when confronted with the opportunity to regenerate the Italian nobility. Nardon planned to model the curriculum wholly on that of the imperial lycées, but his vision harked back to the regicide Le Peletier de St Fargeau’s ideas for tightly regulated boarding schools, where all external influences – and received wisdom of a pre-revolutionary kind – were to be excluded, ‘the price to be paid for total regeneration, which was not complete until the student emerged from the “republican mould”’. Yet, reflecting on his hopes after the collapse of the college, Nardon also shows a new aspect of imperialism at work in his mind, born of service beyond the Hexagon:

> I have dared to try to enter His Majesty’s thoughts, in allying to the force of arms, the gentle and seductive policies that conquer the spirit and win the heart. . . . And the idea of creating Frenchmen from foreign subjects, solely through the influence of education, seemed to me worthy of interest for the future.

Nardon came as close to using the term ‘hearts and minds’ as the discourse of the day permitted. Nardon’s vision, and the terms in which he expressed it, is that this is of a western European talking about other western Europeans and although that vision was rich in revolutionary history, it also contained intimations of a later imperialism. Orientalism was at work in a wholly occidental setting.

If Nardon’s project symbolises an ideological bridge between both the Revolution and the empire, between national regeneration and cultural imperialism, the emphasis must be on the symbolic, because it found favour neither with his masters in Paris, nor the Italian nobility. Aristocratic withdrawal from so alien and aggressive a project is deeply significant, but equally predictable. However, Nardon’s hopes were also dashed by his superiors. Paris rejected less his strategic goals than his concept of the college as pan-Italian, ordering its closure in November 1806 when most of its pupils had already been withdrawn by their parents. The real reason for this decision is in the margin of Nardon’s letter to the minister of the interior of 3 November 1806:

> It makes more sense for the government to spend this money on Italians under its domination, as they are the ones it has to nationalize. . . . The Emperor has no need of this intrusive kind of influence that begins in infancy to acquire the preponderance over Italy that is his due.

Here was a clear clash between the perceptions of the French in Italy, and their masters at the imperial centre, which ultimately derived from the over-confidence of the latter and the sense of isolation and embattlement of the
former. Paris took this decision in the hubris of the sun of Austerlitz, and would later repent. There was a further element, however. When a lycée was at last established in Parma, it was on the rigid template of those in the interior.\textsuperscript{90} Differing from Nardon’s project less in ethos or curriculum than in recruitment, it existed to serve only the notables of the department of the Taro. Here, the ‘government by geometry’ so despised by Carlo Botta, turned on itself. Nardon predicted the lycée could not survive without foreigners, as the Parmense nobles retained priests to educate their children at home: ‘The advantages of a public education are not enough appreciated here, and the lycée will please no one.’\textsuperscript{91} He was right. The lycée suffered recruitment problems throughout its life, especially between 1810 and 1813, when the exiled Roman clergy in Parma were illegally recruited as tutors by many leading families, noble and non-noble.\textsuperscript{92} In 1808, most of the pupils came from families in government service in the smaller towns of the periphery; those from the city were a mixture of sons of French civil servants and soldiers stationed there, and those of impoverished families of ex-courtiers or ducal servants.\textsuperscript{93} The lycée closed in 1809, and reopened in 1810, but the list of the 80 scholarships granted in 1813 was still dominated by similar boys.\textsuperscript{94} The school had hardly become a focal point for the ralliement of the local masses de granit sought by the government, any more than the instrument of pan-Italian integration envisioned by Nardon.

This failure to extend the influence of the imperial lycées much beyond the laager was replicated elsewhere in the départements réunis, as were the slender signs of success evident in Parma. The lycée of Alessandria, the second largest city in Piedmont, also failed to attract the sons of the nobility, but recruited well among local patriots throughout southern Piedmont, to the point where the authorities fought Paris to keep the lycée in the town, and many parents protested at the bursaries given to sons of garrison officers.\textsuperscript{95} This was still not the progress the regime wanted, however; the lycée remained an institution preaching to the converted. In Genoa, both the lycée and the new university struggled to attract the notables and nobility throughout the period, despite Lebrun’s high hopes.\textsuperscript{96} The French had slightly more success in Tuscany, where the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa built deliberately on Peter-Leopold’s plans to create a training school for bureaucrats, and the Imperial Academy created first in Pisa, then diffused to Siena and Florence, trained doctors and lawyers. There was considerable local opposition to all these institutions, only partly assuaged by the regime’s willingness to work in both French and Italian; only in Tuscany, where it was purest, were the French at all concerned with developing the Italian language.\textsuperscript{97} The University of Turin, under the direction of Prospero Balbo, continued to thrive, largely due to his careful, subtle, but highly determined defence of traditional mores and even of staff, against Napoleonic norms. His faculty and students represented less an example of amalgame or ralliement, than an uneasy and unnatural pairing of a virulently patriot medical and
crypto-royalist law faculty. His friend, the patrician Alessandro Saluzzo di Monsiglio, followed a similar strategy as rector of the lycée of Turin.

A constant element in the French policy of regeneration was to help all Italians recover their remote classical heritage, the only part the French believed worthy of the new order. The imperialists were quite clear in their own minds that the Baroque Church had robbed Italians of their true identities, and that a cardinal duty of the new regime was to set this right, enabling Italians to become their true selves again. In a later discourse, the French were there to unblock and recover a lost narrative, to act as liberators. In their own times, the memory of the past glories only served to reinforce the French view of the Italians as a fallen civilisation. As Tournon gutted and whitewashed his Baroque apartments in the cause of regeneration, and decided on the fate of Rome’s churches according to their relative artistic merits, he gave large amounts of time, effort – and government money – to save the city's classical past. The French showed little interest in the medieval or Renaissance heritage in Rome and Florence. Time and again, officials stated their belief that the only salvation for Italians, beyond assimilation by the new regime, lay in the remote past. In a sense, Napoleonic imperialism reaches its climax in this great irony. As the French convinced themselves that they were restoring the past which had been stolen, they systematically took from their Italian subjects of all regions and classes first their sons for the war, and then many of their priests – including the Pope – over the oath. Then, in the last throes of their rule, first the sons, in the ‘Golden Levy’, and then the fathers – simply as hostages – were taken to France. Initially, the French had looted the artistic patrimony and the coffers of the old regime; they ended by seizing its living representatives, lay and clerical. Imperialism, and the process of assimilation that represents its last resort, ended in kidnapping on a grand scale, all in the name of restoring a people to its rightful place in history.

Whatever their differences, Paris and its servants in the départements réunis clung to these hopes and methods, to the point that integration became assimilation of the most coercive kind. Nardon’s words to Junot – ‘Public education here is all very refined, but it does not make men: His Majesty must urgently create lycées’, – lived on among the French.

The Golden Levy, 1811–1813: from young hopefuls to hostages

After several years of thwarted integration, swelling passive resistance and the unsteady annexations of Tuscany and the rump of the Papal States, Nardon’s – and Le Peletier’s – vision re-emerged in the still more extreme form of the Golden Levy, just as the instinct for expulsion and purging resurfaced in the face of clerical intransigence. Roederer’s persecution of Connestabile Stoffa was but an early skirmish in what turned into a blatant, sweeping and carefully planned assault on the aristocracy of the départements réunis. The noble youth of Italy was not only to be pressed
into state service or education, but to be removed physically from the peninsula.

The targets of the levy were young men and boys, some of very tender age; nobles were destined for service as *auditeurs* or for military academies in France, bourgeois for the technical college at La Flèche. Effectively, the levy represented a return to the values and tactics of the college in Parma, but with a more sinister element to it, for whereas Nardon had hoped to draw students freely from all over Italy, Paris now sought its boys specifically from noble families noted as hostile to the regime. Nardon’s successor did not want it publicly known that he had actually designated the families involved for fear of trouble, but he fully agreed with the government’s intentions, not just in terms of immediate intimidation of its enemies, but for long-term change in the culture of the elite of the former duchies: ‘This is the surest way to mould them to the existing system, since otherwise, these families will perpetuate their old prejudices, and will keep their sons forever away from any kind of public career.’

On one level, the Golden Levy represents the vindication of Nardon’s original ideas; on another, it is the nadir of the policy of integration among the secular elites of the *départements réunis*, just as the arrest and deportation of the Roman clergy represent the collapse of the Concordat. The prefect turned his fire mainly on the great families of Piacenza. Early in 1813 D’Auzers forwarded his list to Paris. Daniello Scotti, the senior member of the greatest family, was a true product of acculturation by Tridentine Catholicism; his line, the Red Douglases of the violent Scottish borders, had arrived in Italy as Renaissance *condottieri*. D’Auzers concluded of him, ‘he is the oddest mixture of timidity and ardour’ who would not raise his hand to anyone, but still defied the regime during the period when the Roman priests were in Piacenza, by employing a succession of them as tutors for his sons, and inviting three, always the poorest, to dinner every Sunday....He is very unenlightened.’ His sons, and those of his kinsmen, Ranuce and Domenico, were ‘targeted’ for St Cyr, despite D’Auzers’ clear admission that they were not seditious men. Nor did he confine his attentions to the Scotti; the Landi, Mandellis and Maruffi families were also on his list. D’Auzers was not interested in real and present dangers; his goal was emphatically assimilationist:

All these families – the most important ones – are all more or less of the same arrogant stamp; that is to say, they are all reactionaries, and they put up only tacit opposition to us; in a word, they use a kind of ‘neutralization’, which thwarts the development of [a good] public spirit. It is not so much what goes on that must be changed, it is ideas that must be transformed in this country....This measure [the Golden Levy] must take place in Piacenza, just it has been applied in Turin, and as it is starting to happen in Genoa.'
D'Auzers spoke the facts. The Piedmontese nobility, so long courted by the regime, now felt the full force of the levy, along with 'soft' Romans and treacherous Parmensi. The memoirs of Massimo d'Azeglio afford an intimate and moving account of the experience of a leading Piedmontese noble family, when confronted by the removal of one son to the most prestigious French military academy at St Cyr, and another to the imperial civil service:

It was a bombshell for my father and the whole family. A man such as my father to feel wounded in the most hallowed of his rights, his authority as a father... the right to educate and direct his own children as he thought best, and to see two of them snatched away... by the enemy of his country... and to have no means of defence against him! It was enough to break his heart. I was not of an age to appreciate such things to the full, but well I remember the gloom that overshadowed the house for a time.105

One brother, allowed home after a year through his father's influence, pointedly became a Jesuit priest shortly thereafter.106 Thus a warrior nobility was driven into the arms of the Jesuits. Massimo d'Azeglio later became a passionate leader of the Risorgimento, ironically a powerful advocate of instilling martial spirit in those who 'were to be made into Italians', in his famous phrase. He did not extend this right to Napoleon, however, revealing that his objections to the policy were rooted more in its offence to national independence and its tyrannical application than its actual goals.

A marked cultural reaction to Napoleonic militarism emerged among the Piedmontese aristocracy. D'Azeglio’s father entrusted the education of his sons to the influential Jesuit, Guala, the director of the religious society, the Amicizie Cattolicia, that dominated Piedmontese aristocratic circles in the last years of the empire.107 The damage done to the cause of elite ralliement need hardly be laboured in this case, but it is still worth noting that D’Azeglio’s unfortunate brother was nominated for St Cyr by the prefect of Turin, Alexander Lameth,108 appointed on Napoleon’s specific recommendation in 1809, to replace Pierre Loysel, a man with a Jacobin past. This was part of ‘very deliberate effort to recuperate a consensus among the milieus of the old nobility, which seemed integrated into the new imperial society, but were at heart nostalgic for the old order.’109 In Genoa, Antonio Brignole, the son of one of the greatest patrician families of the old Republic, became a reluctant auditeur, protesting the ruin the blockade had brought to his family.110

Just as the imposition of the oath of loyalty on the clergy provoked resistance from the most peaceable sectors of Italian society, the Golden Levy too held surprises for the French. The most notorious case was that of the Count Patrizzi, a man generally considered so gentle, pious and unworldly as to be almost a simpleton, but another product of the Tridentine acculturation that marked Daniello Scotti. His steadfast refusal to send his son to France
led to his own arrest by the Gendarmerie, incarceration in Fenestrelles alongside many of the Roman clergy, and, perhaps the most insulting cut of all, his son’s despatch to La Flèche, among the bourgeois youth. Patrizzi called them sheep sent to ‘dastardly wolves’. They stayed there, and their father in Fenestrelles, until the fall of the empire in 1814. Few other Roman families took so firm a stand, but they used every excuse, particularly medical evidence and lobbying by Roman senators and deputies in Paris, to extract their sons from the levy. Their recourse to medical evidence reduced them to a desperation shared with the masses of bourgeois and peasant families all over the empire, in their attempts to save their sons from conscription; the failure of senatorial influence in Paris starkly taught them how empty all forms of mediation actually were under the new regime. There were some exceptions, the Baglioni of Perugia chief among them, but such clemency as was granted came from imperial sources – in this case, Marshal Berthier – and not from Romans in Paris. As a result, a Chigi and a Barberini went to St Cyr; the young Spada who had been removed from Nardon’s grasp in Parma, in 1806, went to Paris as an auditeur in 1812, along with a Doria, a Palaviccini, a Colonna – now to unlearn the feudal irresponsibility of the periphery – and an Odesacalchi. They followed in the steps of the sons of the Roman bourgeoisie, ordered to the school of Arts et Métiers in Chalons by the decree of 9 July 1811. The Romans were in a forced, unpleasant union with the other nobilities of the imperial departments; a bizarre process of unification was at work among the Italian elites in these years.

Worse was to come, however, as the war itself went from bad to worse. The thinly masked conscription of the sons was soon followed by the naked resort to taking hostages among the greatest families, the complete collapse of integration. Predictably, but significantly, the taking of hostages was seen as most urgent in the early centres of counter-revolution. D’Auzers moved swiftly against the leading families of Piacenza, singling out Bernardino Mandellis, a deputy for the department of the Taro, who had never actually bothered to take his seat, and Ferdinando Scotti, ‘a man firm in his opinions’ who would ‘benefit’ from a year in Paris. In contrast, those among the nobles of the city who seemed ‘open to new ideas’, like Francesco Maruffi, were left alone. Ferdinando Landi was deemed a powerful anti-French influence and ‘surrounded by priests’; he was too old and ill to be a hostage, ‘but his wife could be sent to wait on the Empress’, as she was well respected in the area. In one of his outbursts against the Golden Levy, Patrizzi asked Tournon how long it would be before his daughters were conscripted to serve in Napoleon’s brothels. He was not altogether wide of the mark.

The breakdown of any but hostile relations with the Italian nobility was expressed most baldly in Florence, where Fauchet, the prefect, and Dubois, the Director-General of Police, discussed how best to confront the mounting crisis in late 1813. There would be no ‘Golden Levy’, nor would ‘men of doubtful loyalty’ be incorporated into the National Guard. Instead, hostages
were be taken from the great families of the capital, and from Siena, Arezzo, Voltera, Pistoia and Montepulciano, whose ‘delegations’ were to be sent to Paris, thus removing some of the most dangerous and influential men who had figured in the revolts of 1799 and 1808. The Florentine bourgeois youths of the vélites – who had been enlisted with considerable effort – were now quietly relieved of guard duties, and replaced by regular troops. Élisse – initially a champion of Tuscan amalgamation – now wanted the bishop of Arezzo included in ‘a delegation . . . of the thirty principal nobles and landowners who will serve as hostages for the loyalty of Tuscany’.

Among the great Florentine names were those who had, by their own and even Parisian lights, tried to integrate. Frullani, Caponi and Cremani were marched off in the company of the avowedly anti-French bishop of Arezzo, and Coppi, the dangerous mayor of Livorno. Corsini – normally a very reserved, almost secretive man – spoke out at last, making a ‘violent scene’ at Court. At the dinner table of the Grand Duchess, the arch-diplomat and ambassador of Napoleon to the Roman magistracy only two years before, openly declared that he was going to Paris as a hostage, in full awareness that it was an act of tyranny. Dubois commented: ‘I do not doubt that these gentlemen were busy arranging things to await the outcome of the crisis in Italy, and to profit from it as they have always done under the successive governments that have followed one another in Tuscany.’ He was probably correct, in the particular, but this attitude betrays a failure to grasp Tuscan political realities, betraying a genuine lack of realism, as well as inflexibility. Dubois acknowledged that ‘It is scarcely known in Italy, to take an important decision without a little reticence or a secret, second thought’, but he could not tolerate it, or turn it to the advantage of the regime he served. If a single incident marked the end of French rule in Italy by anything but naked force, this was it. Yet, the most shocking aspect of the taking of hostages was not the policy itself, but the residual nature of the attitudes it revealed among the French. Their readiness to take hostage these men, boys and even some women, exposed their own immutable distrust of the society they ruled over for several years. If Italians appeared incorrigible to the French, the French inadvertently revealed themselves as no less so.

A Eurocentric colonialism?

One of the most powerful arguments driving subaltern studies, for the classical age of colonialism, is the disingenuous nature of most imperial perceptions of the extra-European ‘other’. Saidian Orientalism is predicated on the emergence of a uniform western vision of the east, which enabled the imperial west to subjugate it. Earlier still, Alatas argued a similar point about the myth of the lazy native, in the narrower context of part of South Asia, and Cooper has more recently refined this, in the case of French West Africa. French imperialism in Italy does not correspond to such cynical
analysis, per se, yet the conclusions that emerge from its study are just as unnerving in their own way.

The policy of the Napoleonic regime remained almost to the end one of inclusiveness, if not at any price. Even its most dastardly deeds, such as the Golden Levy, sought to bring Italians into the imperial fold, rather than drive them into a subaltern world. There were crucial exceptions to this: French efforts to rationalise mass conscription on grounds of climactic necessity, or the application of thinly veiled conscription to the elites through the creation of the *gardes d’honneur* are the clearest examples of ideology being bent to serve the *raison* of an increasingly desperate *état*. Nardon’s own desperation to hide from himself, as much as from his superiors, the assimilationist nature of his college in Parma is pathetically evident in his attempt to equate it to the list of Distinguished Foreign Pensioners that Colbert presented to Louis XIV: the latter were scholars and artists of great standing in their own countries, invited to come to France freely; the former were helpless teenagers, however blue their blood. There was also a convenience – if of a more subtle kind – in ridding Italy of its non-juring clergy, and so of the custodians of its cardinal cultural element, Tridentine Catholicism. The clergy alone – all the regulars and the most intransigent of the seculars – were simply to disappear. Yet, even in these instances, a wider policy of acculturation can be discerned, however ruthless, however arrogant. The French proposed to replace a degenerate culture with something they believed to be better, and to do so they unflinchingly, knowingly, assaulted the Church and the nobility. Conscription was about cannon fodder, but that fodder was French, as well as non-French, and those who survived it were meant to be *hommes régénérés*, a new breed of Jean Chauvins, for a better, French, world. They were not meant to return a subaltern caste of men, but future leaders. The French ran too many risks to have been entirely cynical. The rulers persisted with the twin policies of integration, *ralliement* and *amalgame*, almost to the end, and when they pushed them aside, it was only to resort to a more brutal, assimilationist form of inclusion. Unlike latter colonialists, the regime never abandoned Italians to a subaltern eternity.

However, the opinions frankly and frequently expressed by the French in closest contact with their Italian *administrés* tell the worrying story of familiarity breeding very deep contempt. The more familiar the French became with Italian culture, and especially elite culture, the less their hope for regeneration, and the more they drew into themselves. The policy and practice of acculturation increasingly survived because Paris willed it, and because the French in Italy were still sufficiently imbued with enlightened values to sustain them in the face of a world they perceived as fallen. Aimé Césaire began his now classic assault on post-war colonialism thus:

A civilization that proves incapable of solving the problems it creates is a decadent civilization.
A civilization that chooses to close its eyes to its most crucial problems is a stricken civilization.
A civilization that uses its principles for trickery and deceit is a dying civilization.\textsuperscript{124}

The French flung all this at the Italians, almost line by line, concept by concept, in the conviction that the Revolution, and its subsequent acculturation into a longer national tradition, had saved their own civilisation from ruin. Italians could not solve the many-headed crisis of their own ancien régime; they took refuge in Baroque Catholicism and campanilismo, rather than confront current realities; they were schemers and intriguers, not state-builders. The French hammered out their damning stereotypes not in the Institut, but in the field. The inklings of a later colonialism, bent on the creation of a subaltern image of the native, and aimed at entrenching it in imperial policy for all time, is far from dominant in Napoleonic Italy, but its early sprigs are discernible. The cardinal aspects of these early growths are, in sum, that they came from direct, fairly prolonged contact with the Italian ruled, and that this is a matter between western Europeans.

These were the aspects of French domination that shaped Italian attitudes to the French. Where a wider historical perspective and the hindsight granted by a knowledge of their internal correspondence reveal an abiding desire to include the ruled in the workings of imperial government, often at relatively high levels, contemporary Italians saw only change as fundamental as it was coercive. They lived alongside Frenchmen who preferred their own company and culture, and were unbending in the public sphere; they saw, in turn, their own public sphere uprooted and destroyed. In such circumstances, Italians of all classes, but the elites most of all, perceived themselves as subaltern, and reacted accordingly: they withdrew into their own private spheres, thus creating a society more fragmented and more withdrawn than had existed hitherto. Their world was now rooted less in the confines of campanilismo than in the family and an ever-decreasing circle of tightly knit families. The Enlightenment project teetered on an abyss of its own making, in its own homeland, as a result of unprecedented and sudden internal imperial expansion.
Conclusion: a Subaltern Italy?

The French state and the peoples of Italy went their own ways in 1814, but the nature of the break is deceptively clean. The French legacy endures, but the widely accepted definition of that legacy is neither comprehensive enough, nor close enough to the realities of the problems of contemporary Italy, to stand unchallenged.

Too often, the heritage of the *epoca francese* has been narrowly – and over-optimistically – believed to be centred on state-building. The ready assumption is that the experience of Napoleonic rule supplied later generations with the model of the modern state needed to achieve unification and modernisation. This is true, but only part of the greater, more pervasive and complex experience of imperial subjugation. The subsequent history of modern Italy surely reveals that the process of state-building had a negative, as well as a positive, impact on the peninsula. The imposition of alien norms, state-driven social control, secularisation, to say nothing of the more tangible traumas of conscription and centralisation, fostered the abyss between the ‘real’ and the ‘civil’ countries that so preoccupies contemporary thinkers. This estrangement between the state and the citizen harks back to Napoleonic imperialism; indeed, it is the mirror image of the great ‘borrowing’ of the French model of the state. The unreliability of that same model was already evident in the confused, often contradictory reactions of the French to their own denouement in Italy.

The end of the new regime

As military disaster mounted in central Europe, from early 1813 onwards, and the collapse of Napoleonic hegemony loomed, the weaknesses – but also the achievements – of French imperialism emerged more clearly than before. The French saw themselves as men besieged in their laager; these last hours were marked not only by contempt and suspicion, but even more by confessions of pure ignorance. As they steeled themselves first for a final stand and a hasty departure, the French readily admitted the existence of a
'hidden Italy’, but they could not admit that they had actually created this subaltern world, that their cultural arrogance and the rigidity of their political culture had driven a once public sphere underground.

The imperial order responded to collapse in deeply contradictory fashion. Whereas the French in Italy prepared to face the renewed threat of counter-revolution with defiance, Paris made a series of piecemeal concessions that are guides to the salient areas where first integration and then assimilation had foundered, rather than as concrete indications of the state of security south of the Alps. On the one hand, the authorities in Florence set about taking hostages among the great patrician families and shipping them to Paris; a wholly contradictory response to the rising threat emerges in the dry facts of the curriculum vitae of the young Genoese aristocrat and reluctant auditeur, Antonio Brignole. Brignole had only accepted his post because the wars had cost his family two-thirds of its revenues, and admitted as much to his superiors. However, he noted that earlier in 1813, the government had given his family back their old fief of Novi, in the shape of an imperial majorat. This did not entail the restoration of feudal, judicial authority, but it did give them its revenues. In the same year, he became prefect of Montenotte.1

The ‘restoration’ of Novi to its former lords, in however diluted a fashion, was a very symbolic retreat by the regime, for Novi had been among the most notorious havens not only of counter- but of anti-revolution, a bastion of smuggling and support for the great bandit chief, Mayno, and a centre of passive, religious-based resistance to the Concordat. Amalgame had turned into surrender; assimilation was reversed, as the regime compromised – and borrowed – from feudalism, in a last, desperate gamble. As Napoleon returned their chief, Pius VII, to Rome, in Tuscany the French in Siena remembered the pogrom of 1799, when the Jews were burnt alive, and lived in terror of another revolt.2 As his prefects desperately, and ruthlessly, sought to fill the cohorts of the gardes d’honneur and pondered with dread the thought of arming their national guards, Napoleon suspended conscription in the Tuscan and Roman departments. As the imperial armies retreated to the frontiers of ‘the interior’, the senior officials in Tuscany, Élisse at their head, steadfastly refused to withdraw French officials from the Apennine periphery to the relative safety of Florence:

The hardest thing to prevent, at present, is to stop the heads of the civil administration recalling their employees to the centre, under the pretext of forming an armed corps: to allow this, would be to send out the signal to revolt, and to destabilize everything.3

Few were as honest in the last days as Casanova, the police commissioner of Genoa, newly arrived from duty in Barcelona, who said of his new administrés:
Your Excellency should deign to consider that the Ligurians have lost everything, their independence which they held on to for a very long time, and a vast commercial trade that allowed them to live in opulence; their country is sterile, they have to import all their necessities... since [their commerce] has been destroyed, their common bond is poverty. In these circumstances, it is too much to ask them to love us. It is enough for us not to be hated.

In restoring Novi to Brignole, to compensate for the losses of the blockade, Paris stumbled to act on similar conclusions. The police of Tuscany were less philosophical about the comportment of their own major, ruined port, Livorno, as the last shadows fell. Its mayor, Coppi, was thought to be in league with the British, and his newly created national guard was a virtual fifth column; Livorno was simply ‘a dangerous place’, where the French had come to fear the latent violence of the lower classes.

The crucial difference to emerge between Paris and the French in Italy is not a clash over immediate tactics – how best get the support of the Italian elites – but of a more fundamental nature. The French in Italy felt the policies of ralliement and amalgame were wholly discredited by 1812–13, to the point that even what had been achieved had been a mistake. The voice of the Corsini faction had been too much heard in Paris, thundered Dubois late in 1813; it was all due to ‘the vanity of Menou, who gloried in rejecting those loyal to France, filling their posts with those who were most against us’. As the French, the patriots and the Jews in Siena braced themselves for the worst, he noted that Chigi-Zondadari, the cardinal archbishop believed to be behind the pogrom of 1799, was still there. After years of appeasement, there was only one way to hold Tuscany, ‘we need Frenchmen.... The fear of the blue coats is still alive in this country.’ In Rome, Norvins said there were still too many priests and too many churches, the purge of the clergy had not gone far enough. This was less the voice of the Mountain than of the Hébertistes, less that of Robespierre at the tribune than of Carrier from Nantes or Collot d’Hébois, from Lyon. Only in Piedmont, where Menou had retained the patriots placed in local power by Jourdan, and in the Roman departments, where for utterly different reasons, the campaign of passive resistance had prevented the amalgamation of most of the old elites, were there relatively few demands for the emphatic reversal of years of attempts at amalgamation. Napoleon freed Pius VII to a chorus of abuse from his own men. The common strand amidst this utterly contradictory set of reactions is that of perceived failure, and it probably outweighs the contemporary reality of incongruity between Parisian and local responses.

The French were both right and wrong in their assessments, for the panic and fear of 1813–14 were hardly the best perspective on their handiwork, although it certainly released their inner feelings onto official paper. The geography of the collapse gives some indication of the impact of French
rule, but perhaps less of its lasting influence. The end of the occupation revealed their great success, in the restoration of order in the Piedmontese departments, which saw no resurgence of banditry or rural revolt in 1814. This betokened more than a firm French police presence; the willingness of the Piedmontese elites to avert a return to violence at a delicate moment is the clearest possible sign of true integration. The Piedmontese elites had thoroughly absorbed the desire felt in France, during the late Directory and the Consulate, to reorient public life along peaceful lines, and to avoid a slide back into the cycle of violence of the 1790s. They had shared this experience simultaneously with the French, and merged with them. However, the end of French rule in the Tuscan Apennines is almost a portrait in anti-revolution. The French and native patriots outside the major centres – and even in Livorno – felt very threatened in 1813–14; almost instinctively, they assumed a return to the mass insurrections of 1799 and 1808, fears redolent with a self-knowledge of how hated was imperial rule. Small armed bands emerged in the valleys, preventing the collection of taxes and the process of conscription. The countryside was virtually in their hands. For most of 1813, the only military force in Florence was a contingent of Croat cavalry, withdrawn in November;10 the arrival of Murat’s 30,000 Neapolitan troops was hailed as the only source of protection in the region, so scant were French forces in central Italy.11 If anything, the conditions for mass rebellions were more propitious in 1813 than in 1808 or even 1799, but the bands did not choose to concert, even when it was clear Murat had changed sides. In real contrast to 1799 or 1808, at no point did they attempt to attack even provincial centres like Arezzo or Pistoia, nor the great cities of Florence and Siena. There was no popular upsurge to restore the old order in Tuscany, but there was a clear and successful attempt to do away with the most odious and onerous aspects of the new regime. The violence and disorder that prevailed on its periphery notwithstanding, true counter-revolution was scarce, yet this in no way equated with support for the French.

‘The hidden Italy’: the Italian laager

The most lasting legacy of the epoca francese was probably not the creation of the new public sphere, but the destruction of that of the ancien régime, and the subsequent response of Italians of all classes – but of the elites in particular – to the void before them. Whereas the ancien régime had often been characterised by the capacity of the public and private to interweave and interact, the new order drove a wedge between them, a gap further widened by the distaste shown by the French for Italian forms of sociability. Italians, many of whom had initially welcomed the French, now had either to abandon their traditional mores, or turn in on themselves. Most followed the latter path, thus creating a ‘hidden Italy’, alongside the edifice of the new public sphere. Parallel to the arrival of the modern state came the withdrawal
of Italians into a new private world, more clearly delineated from, and often shaped in defiance of, officialdom. The Napoleonic occupation did not create the essence of this very private sphere, but it saw the first, most definitive and sharpest formulation of the line between the *paese civile* and the *paese reale*, a dichotomy which stands at the heart of the modern history of Italy, Paul Ginsborg’s ‘deeply deformed relationship between state and citizen’.

The French knew this. Their scathing observations about Italian pastimes and sexual mores, even in official correspondence, show they sensed where their cultural intransigence – even more than their insistence on administrative uniformity – was leading. Indeed, the French are the best source for the nature of these very secret worlds. A poignant example of how the occupation changed patterns of sociability was discerned by the French police in the Corsini family in Florence. Dubois noted how collaboration had given the family undreamed of power, but at the expense of something less tangible but precious enough to alter their behaviour:

> The two Corsini brothers pass for parsimonious men in Florence; they are as withdrawn as their father was generous and expansive, and it makes them unpopular in the country. Nevertheless, they are without doubt, their past politics not withstanding, the leaders in Tuscany as regards their *ton français*, their wealth, their mores, their ability to manipulate affairs and their clear sightedness. . . .

Integration brought estrangement, as well as influence; the ability to wield patronage now came at the price of social exclusion. They received few visitors, Dubois remarked succinctly. Interwoven with Dubois’ observations is a feeling that adopting more restrained – ‘refined’ – French mores had cost them a sense of inclusion in a milieu they had long clung to precariously because they were, in truth, a recently risen papal family, barely on the edge of the true elite of the old Republic. The collaboration of the Cavours, in Piedmont, brought them far fewer rewards and even greater social opprobrium. Savoyard absolutism had shaped a nobility less practised in manipulating shifting political tides than the Tuscans, and with a deeper repugnance for the loss of their sovereign and their national independence, but these qualities were intrinsically welcomed by the French. Balbo, Peyretti di Condove and others could well get on in Paris without the Cavours’ help; those who stood resolutely apart – Thaon di Revello, Alfieri di Sostengo and other great military and diplomatic families – could simply ignore the Cavours, without fear of consequences for imperial patronage or careers they did not want. These cases pertain to collaborators, people striving to work with the new regime, for whatever motives, but who integrated only at the cost of estrangement from an Italian laager, as exclusive as that of the French.

Italians proved very adept at creating a ‘hidden Italy’, and the French were sensitive enough to catch glimpses of it, as they dominated a public
sphere they knew to be cut off from Italian realities. The ‘underground post service’ famously circumvented officialdom by disseminating news about the imprisoned Pius VII. In 1809, the prefect of the mountainous, isolated department of the Apennines seethed about the ability of locals to circulate an oration by the Pope, and an image of Pius at the foot of the cross, as well as copies of prayers composed for him in Rome, noting similar things had gone on in 1807. In 1808, he pointed to the irony of the ability of ordinary people to spread such news, in so remote an area:

This is rough country of mountains and without main roads; it is cut off from civilization…but it is certain that the inhabitants get news of the Pope…. People spread supposed protests, decrees, seditious writings that originate in Rome.14

Dubois, in Florence, also noted how news seemed to spread across the seemingly remote Tuscan valleys: ‘It is remarkable that, in general, the countryside…is more infected with rotten lies than with ignorance of events.’ He was sure the parish clergy operated a ‘conspiratorial postal system’, but admitted they could not do so without ‘runners’, and that not a single informant emerged from their numerous ranks.15

These observations stemmed from a cause célèbre. The deeper point is how little the French knew of the daily circulation of the thoughts of Italians. The police realised that the elites of Florence and Siena availed themselves of private communication networks – coach drivers, colporteurs, street vendors and tradesmen who travelled with their work – but could not penetrate them. In the ‘roadless, almost inaccessible mountains’, the prosecutor of the criminal court of the Apennines noted signs scrawled on rocks and hillsides everywhere, and admitted the French could not decipher them.17 After four years of occupation, the senior policeman in Florence could still ask aloud, ‘Are these people happy, behind their outward resignation and their genuine calm?’ Five years earlier, the prefect of Turin spoke of ‘this deaf resistance’ around him.19 The French gathered a mass of statistics about many aspects of Italian life, but they knew they had not penetrated what has subsequently become il paese reale. The contrast is striking with the very different style of imperialism practised by the East India Company in the same period, where the British penetrated the rich, complex communications networks they found, and so learned about India.20

The French were the architects of their own isolation from the Italian elites, but their policies also resulted in isolating Italian nobles from each other. As the French destroyed Italian higher education, they singularly failed to replace it with public institutions congenial to the elites. The fiasco of the College of Santa Caterina in Parma was reproduced at the tertiary level as the great universities of Parma and Pisa, among others, were closed, and those of the satellite kingdoms were barred to citizens of the empire.
Conclusion: a Subaltern Italy?

Where a generation before, aristocratic Italian youth often left home to board with the Jesuits in Parma, Siena or Bologna as a matter of course and for years on end, not unlike their English counterparts in the same period, going on to universities outside their countries of birth, those who reached early adolescence under Napoleon were kept at home, in a private world of clerical tutors and family influences, that is, in exactly those conditions most disposed to engender intense religiosity and campanilismo. The Roman priests exiled to Piacenza were withdrawn from their lodgings with local families and herded into an unfurnished, windowless ex-convent, specifically because they were being employed as tutors to the children of leading families. This actually allowed the priests to regroup, their new communal life providing the discipline and mutual support to defy the French over taking the oath of loyalty. The authorities considered it a risk worth taking to save the children of Piacenza from their influence.

However, the resort of the nobility to private, as well as clerical education, denotes a new cultural trend that took them away from the public sphere, into an increasingly private world very different from that shaped by the noble colleges under the old order. Prospero Balbo, the rector of the University of Turin and ultimately responsible for all the lycées of the Piedmontese departments, had his sons educated at home ‘emphatically removing [them] from a public system of education he believed to be “corrupt”’. Although the commitment of the Balbo family to public service remained strong – Cesare, Prospero’s son, became a mentor to Cavour and prime minister of the Savoyard state – the emphatic volte-face of Cesare d’Azeglio points to a new, and more typical cultural ethos among the Italian elites. Ironically, reaction to Napoleonic rule entailed even more change than collaboration.

Italian nobles successfully protected their sons from the influence of the imperial lycées, but their efforts could not preserve the world the French destroyed; retreat into privacy was no substitute for the shared, pan-Italian culture imbibed in the noble colleges or universities, the social experiences they offered or the prosopographical horizons they had long afforded their alumni. The future magistrates, administrators, bishops and statesmen of Italy no longer met, mingled and learned together. They did so at home and their close friendships were now principally with boys of their own regions. Where once had been a real, if subtle, shared Italian culture among the elites, there were now only hearth and home, and yearnings for a pan-Italian world lost to direct experience. The young nobles who formed the Concordi of Turin worshipped the idea of Italianità, but had none of the direct knowledge acquired naturally by earlier generations. Italians under Napoleonic rule were denied the education Carlo Buonaparte received at the University of Pisa, closed by his son in 1808.

The police files chronicle the birth of private networks of sociability among the Italian elites. The Piedmontese nobility reconstructed their national history in literary circles outside the official academy and university, and
met in the charitable Confraternità di San Paolo, the public face of the deeply suspect Amicizia Cattolica. Florentine patricians also found subtle ways to ignore d’Osmond, the French bishop set over them without a papal bull, and the Concordat he represented. The Amicizia had had a small active following since 1802, but under the occupation it assumed a more important role. Aristocratic women were particularly important in the Amicizia’s resistance; the Marchesa Lucrezia Ricasoli rallied seven other noblewomen around her in 1808, in a society to preserve the charitable hospitals of the city, menaced by closure under the terms of the Concordat, thus not only trying to resist the French in their own way, but supplying a living contradiction to the licentious image the occupiers had of them. They met every weekday morning, ministering to the patients of the hospital for the incurable, the Bonifacio, and employing a priest to administer the sacraments there. Their menfolk founded a charitable association under the auspices of the Amicizia, but they remained more discreet, especially after the arrest of several prominent figures in the Turin society from 1811 onwards.

The nobility gravitated to the religious foundation of the Vincenzoguerra of San Firenze, which was not banned, celebrating their marriages and baptisms there, rather than the cathedral. Its favoured clergy taught the catechism to the children of the patrician families, and acted as their confessors, all of which agitated the police, as well as d’Osmond. A police report signalled the existence in Piacenza of an unofficial confraternity, La Toricella, to which all the grands seigneurs belonged, and whose members were sworn to oppose the authority of the French bishop set over the city. In neighbouring Parma, d’Auzers feared the influence over the young nobles of a Venetian priest, Colombo, employed as an accountant by the prominent Porta family. D’Auzers could do nothing about him, so unanimous was the protection Colombo received from the leading families, who supported the reading and conversation circles he led for their sons. Even prominent collaborators withdrew into nostalgia: Corsini and Fossombroni still met with several adjoints of Capponi, the maire of Florence, at the home of Signora Ricci: ‘All of them are great nobles of old houses, and pretend when together, to perpetuate a kind of small Florentine Senate. It makes it easier for Corsini to run the city behind the scenes.’ The same report dwelt at length on the inaccessibility of the Florentine patricians and their penchant for keeping to themselves. The French did not help their cause by intimidating and alienating Countess Albany, whose circle had been the focal point of Florentine society before the occupation. Instead of using her as a source of ‘entryism’, they threatened her so aggressively that her collaborationist friends, chiefly the Corsini and Corsi, kept their distance, and her anti-French friends became more secretive in their sociability. As a result, Florentine society became both more fragmented and more impenetrable.

The resilience of friendships and ancien régime networks among the Piedmontese and Tuscan aristocracies survived and grew stronger under the
noses of Napoleonic courts intended to replace them. Instead, the new public sphere remained hollow, as the ‘Florentine senators’ and the members of the former Royal Academy of Turin transferred themselves to private worlds. The true heritage of the occupation for these nobilities was the power of friendship and kinship over political change. The great families also did their best to rally around each other, in the face of restored governments initially suspicious of those tainted with collaboration with the French. No regime was more suspicious of this than the Savoyards, but few elites were as closely knit or attuned to the nuances of collaboration as the Piedmontese. The good offices of Cerutti, Thaon di Revello and Alfieri di Sostegno, all of whom had refused to serve Napoleon but remained in Turin, returned Prospero Balbo to high office in 1818, but they also ensured the Cavourians remained excluded from society, to say nothing of office, for decades.34 The social, if not political, solidarity of the Florentine patriciate helped to ensure there was no purge within their ranks on the restoration of Ferdinand III in 1814.35 In Genoa, the unpopularity of annexation to Piedmont after 1814 perpetuated the estrangement of the great nobles from public life well into the 1820s, but their brief reappearance in an effort to restore the old Republic in 1814 showed both their internal unity, and the wider support and influence they could still wield. Serra, a moderate patriot who had served the French, rendered the great patrician De Ferrari his due, when he came out of the shadows in 1814 to challenge British hegemony in Liguria, ‘he gave incontrovertible proof of his sang froid and his adroit moderation’.36 These efforts in the public sphere proved in vain, but a world had survived the French.

The bourgeoisie, particularly the liberal professions, were easily drawn into anti-revolution through the ‘black market’ of conscription fraud. The negative impact of conscription on the Italian masses was revolt and resentment, which found echoes among the notables as doctors and notaries provided false medical certificates and other documentation to conscripts, and the participation of propertied and poor alike in the quasi-legal world trade in buying substitutes for those conscripted. Conscription, so synonymous with state-building, actually drew the nominally respectable – potential members of the masses de granit – into activities that engendered disrespect for authority, at the very least. A considerable portion of the liberal professions of the départements réunis were engaged in cheating both the state and their fellow citizens, thus standing the supposed societal influence of mass conscription on its head. In so doing, they revealed a remarkable capacity to create wholly new business networks, producing subtle, complex financial webs the French courts despaired of untangling. A major consequence of conscription for the Italian bourgeoisie, as well as on the popular classes, was the fostering of a spirit of contempt for constituted authority, which was far more pervasive and corrosive in form than counter-revolution, which abated after 1814. Disrespect for authority and the creation of parallel,
mock institutions found ready participants among the traditionally disruptive youth of the rural elites, who defied or ignored the public sphere. There was ‘a society of young rowdies’ in Sorgana, a village near Borgo di Taro, meeting thrice weekly, ‘who discuss events and hand out mock sentences, who speak a jargon among themselves . . . and who march about armed, especially when the municipal council is in session’.37 Whereas under the old order, such behaviour formed part of the ritual of competition for control of the public sphere, the occupation transformed youthful participation into contemptuous, if impotent, revilement of authority. The difference is important.

As the French shut out Italians from the public sphere, so Italians, in turn, created their own networks, parallel to and independent of, the Napoleonic paese civile. This was not a phenomenon confined to handfuls of radical revolutionaries or integrist clergy; it would be of little real significance otherwise. Furet discerned in the political clubs of revolutionary Paris, the seeds of irresponsible political behaviour and the origins of a lack of respect for public institutions.38 The Italian departments witnessed such tendencies on a much greater scale, and in more enduring form. To enter the world of the Italian elites during the French occupation, is to witness the origins of the rift between il paese civile and il paese reale that is at the heart of modern Italian history.

The deeper problems posed by these trends is not the emergence of politicised secret societies such as the Carbonari, who were composed of marginal sectors of the elite and wielded more influence on the imaginations of future generations than on their own times. Rather, the unfortunate spectre for the future of Italian political culture lies in a more general, less dramatic, and almost apolitical turning inwards and away from engagement with public life. Ironically – but, perhaps, significantly – in the same period when the processes of unification and political modernisation began, the Italian elites were more fragmented than at any other point in modern times, nor were the masses – traumatised by conscription – so instinctively hostile to state authority. Mazzini spoke a powerful truth, probably far more than he knew or intended, when he described the inheritance of the French Revolution and Napoleonic rule as only a bare skeleton of sterile institutions for the new Italy, unworkable without a powerful native ethos to drive it.39 The French destroyed the old public sphere, but did not really succeed in filling the void of their own making. Italians of all classes responded with ingenuity and subtlety, but they were forced to do so in ways that pulled them away from the structures of the modern state and, indeed, from legality. They either opposed the new regime, or simply organised their lives to avoid it. These reactions were hardly unique to the Italian departments, but they carry a vital import in a specifically Italian context, nonetheless. Campanilismo survived centralisation and the family drew closer together to shut out government, whether as peasants struggling to avoid conscription or nobles.
escaping the ‘Golden Levy’ and the godless lycées. The Church was there to support them at every turn. Thus, the essence of the new regime was repelled, but in such a way as to atomise Italian society.

**Borrowings: the Restoration period, 1814–1859**

In his ethnographical study of colonial North America, Axtell introduced the concept of ‘borrowings’ as an important key to interpreting the relationship between the British settlers and the native Americans. Although Axtell did not argue that the process of ‘borrowing’ was ever in any way equal, his approach assumed a degree of reciprocity between the two cultures, however imbalanced. The major problem in adapting Axtell’s approach to the wholly European context of Napoleonic Italy, lies less in the more obvious differences in the levels of technology and modernity between native Americans and Italians in the late eighteenth century, than in that ‘borrowing’ was a one-way street in the départements réunis. The Italians drew greatly from French institutions and norms in the century ahead but, with the single great exception of the concept of the all-embracing Savoyard University, the French took nothing from Italy, save its art treasures and conscripts. The occupiers saw nothing of significant value in contemporary culture. Axtell notes how, in a strange environment, the settlers had to borrow extensively from the Indians; for all their notions of being adrift in an alien landscape, the French made no such compromises. Tournon and Roederer did not ‘take to the hills’ at the height of summer, at least not for protracted periods; rather, like the Jamestown colonists faced with malarial swamps, they remained at their posts in true colonial obstinacy.

When an analysis of the nature of their legacy is informed by the concept of ‘borrowings’, Axtell’s salient dictum acquires a strong, pervasive relevance in post-Napoleonic Italy: ‘[T]he way people of one culture use or adapt another culture’s artifacts (ideas, material objects, institutions, language) is more diagnostic of cultural change or acculturation than what they adopt.’

That is, within those aspects of the French legacy kept or soon revived, a distinction must be made between those institutions or practices that fundamentally altered Italian society, and those which Italians felt could be conveniently detached from the matrix of the Napoleonic state, and used simply as adjuncts within their own culture. The latter, rather than the former, was what most of the Italian elites of all political shades intended, when they argued for the retention of bits and pieces of the imperial regime, whatever the long-term impact of such borrowings actually produced. Axtell advises in his own historical context:

> [T]he strong possibility that an Indian who has given up the feathers, buckskins and wigwams of his ancestors has not surrendered his Indian identity, his instinct for survival, or even his ancient sense of superiority
to the invaders. Adaptation is less often a sign of capitulation than of capitalization.\textsuperscript{41}

Such hopes forged an unlikely bond among the young Piedmontese aristocrats of the Concordi, Cardinal Consalvi in Rome and nationalist agitators from the Carbonari to Mazzini. ‘Borrowings’ could only be made if they bolstered indigenous identities. Outside the narrow ranks of avowed unitary nationalists, Italians divided over the feasibility of borrowing from the French without damaging their own culture. Reactionaries felt it could not be done at all; radical reformers argued the opposite; the assimilation preached by Carlo Denina was alien to them all. Only the specific and particular could be drawn from the \textit{epoca francese}, for the collective experience of French cultural imperialism had shattered any real belief in an essential compatibility of French and Italians.

An interesting window on what parts of the French legacy the Ligurian elites preferred, and sought to reject, emerges very clearly during the brief moment in 1814 when they hoped to regain their full independence, before the Congress of Vienna handed them over to the Savoyards. The collaborators and moderate reformers of the Serra–Pareto faction, who had dominated Genoese municipal government during annexation, rallied to patrician initiatives to restore the Republic, and all the political factions attended the mass in the cathedral of San Lorenzo to hear Cardinal Spina proclaim \textit{Orate pro Republica nostra} after over a decade.\textsuperscript{42} Perhaps more informative are the inclusions and omissions the united Ligurian elites chose to make, in organising their stillborn polity. The outward structures of the French judicial system – justices of the peace, civil tribunals, and the criminal and appeal courts – remained, and a Ligurian equivalent of the Cour de Cassation was set up, to fill the void left by apparent independence. Conversely, the courts were not to be staffed by the new generation of professional magistrates, but by lawyers serving on a rota, supplemented by ‘the most distinguished citizens of each circuit’. The post of public prosecutor was retained for criminal courts, but abolished in the civil tribunals. Although French practices in criminal affairs were valued in a region where government had been weak in the face of a lawless periphery, there was also a deep-seated desire to return to a more arbitrational, less remote judicial system. A Ligurian Gendarmerie was created in 1814, to fill the gap left by the French withdrawal, but it was to be answerable to civilian magistrates. Much of the Civil Code remained, but highly significant exceptions mark the failure of \textit{ralliement} in Liguria. All French legislation on marriage and divorce was abolished, as was the equal division of property among heirs. The Revolutionary–Napoleonic concept of the family was emphatically rejected, the essence of what the French propertied classes obviously valued most in the Code. The \textit{État Civil}, the instrument of conscription, was abolished. In each of these cases, the laws of the old Republic were restored in their entirety.\textsuperscript{43}
The likes and dislikes of the Ligurian elites, in their brief moment of complete independence, offer surer guides to the relative successes and failures of integration than French police reports. When the *masses de granit* of the Republic of St George were allowed their own voice in the post-imperial world, they chose a careful blend of old and new. Their retention of the Gendarmerie and criminal prosecutors were borrowings that reflected an atavistic desire to control the periphery; the survival of French court structures proved the claims of Ligurian patriots that there was a real desire for quicker, more efficient justice. Everything else revealed starkly that the unbending, professional bureaucratic state had few friends. Arbitrational, almost amateur, administration of justice was a restoration in spirit if not in form; the core of French mores was swept aside in the thoroughgoing rejection of its concept of family law. Ligurian selectivity reveals both the unpopularity of French cultural imperialism and their successes in administration and policing. Institutions could be detached from their origins, in this perception of the French legacy, if they were staffed and run in a traditional spirit utterly at odds with that of their creators. In a final irony, of staggering proportions, the Genoese patricians petitioned the Congress of Vienna to be allowed to remain part of France rather than be put under Piedmontese rule – as was their fate – should they fail to regain independence. Their request was a backhanded and belated acknowledgement of *ralliement*, but it was even more a sign of the resilience of *campanilismo*.

The ‘Ligurian moment’ of 1814 reveals patterns common to all the restored Italian states of the Apennine spine, until they were absorbed into the unitary state. The successor states of imperial France strove, usually in vain, to rival its capacity to preserve order, particularly on the periphery, and to meet its high professional standards in the administration of taxes. No regime was more aggressively reactionary than the restored Savoyard monarchy; it dismissed every official in place and republished the royal almanac of 1798. However, even in its most virulent, early moments, the monarchy retained French tax officials and structures, and quickly substituted its own version of the Gendarmerie – the Carabiniere Reale – across the countryside. In the 1820s, under the decidedly reactionary rule of Carlo Felice, the French administrative units – the departments and arrondissements – returned in all but name. This most reactionary regime ‘borrowed’ from the French, on its own terms, and without fear of ideological compromise. In the Papal States, Consalvi, and most of his successors, also strove for efficient, disciplined police forces on the French model, but with less success than in Piedmont. The Tuscan countryside, too, saw a decline in levels of public order under the restoration, and security issues played an important part in bringing many great landowners into the ‘nationalist’ fold, in 1859, if less so in 1848.44

Yet the emphatic conservatism in the ‘Ligurian moment’ was also powerfully echoed both before and after 1814. The detestation of the family
The legislation of the Code was matched by the response of Piedmontese jurists and the Law Faculty of the University of Turin, during the occupation. Whereas Tuscan magistrates disliked the harshness of French criminal legislation and tried to blunt its sharp edges, the Piedmontese adapted to it. Their quiet path of resistance emerged over the secular character of the Code’s social legislation, and throughout the occupation, magistrates and academics worked towards as conservative an interpretation of these sections as possible, especially those on divorce. The Law Faculty responded first with a conservative textbook on the Code as a whole by Vittorio Brun, and then with J.B. Ferrero’s *Jurisprudence du mariage sur le rapport moral: Traité tendant à concilier les lois de Code Napoléon, de l’organisation des cultes et de l’enseignement public*, which became the standard reference book for the Cour d’Appel. The Cour enforced the new laws on the family to the letter, but always with an explicit – if technically unofficial – emphasis on traditional Catholic morals. Confronted with legislation they disliked, the Piedmontese *togradii* took refuge in a rigid, formal legalism. In common with the Genoese in 1814, they chose to approach the French legal system in a genuine sense of piecemeal borrowing, as opposed to wholesale rejection or acceptance.

The experience of Cesare Balbo poses many intriguing questions about both the lasting impact of Napoleonic rule, and the concepts of borrowings and integration in an imperial context. Balbo firmly believed the French paradigm could be ‘borrowed from’ extensively without damaging the fabric of Italian culture; he also avowed that the aggressive, secular and militaristic nature of French nationalism made it fundamentally incompatible with Italian civilisation. His *Storia d’Italia* emphatically condemned imperialism as antithetical to the spirit of latent Italian nationalism. Balbo spilt a great deal of ink lamenting his own participation in the despoilment and annexations of Florence and Rome as a young *auditeur*. Although clear in his own mind that whatever he drew from the French example was an empirical, piecemeal borrowing and no more, Balbo sought to borrow a very great deal indeed. He openly admired the Napoleonic system of government, and the institution of the Council of State, and wrote honestly of Napoleon’s ‘brilliant mind’. He never denied his belief that efficient public administration equated with the French model. It was certainly possible to admire Napoleon while loathing his policies, but to ‘borrow’ so powerful a centralising agency as the Council of State and impose it on an atomised political culture based on arbitration and informal links of *clientelismo* was not without consequences for Italian society. Balbo denied this, rather than draw back from the possibility of going too far. He desired consciously to restrict reform to the limits of borrowing, and to depict it as pure integration.

However, his policies betray a level of *amalgame*, of genuine acculturation that he could not confront. His approach to his own experience, and his extensive historical scholarship, shield the contradictions at the heart of Balbo’s admiration for the alien political culture of the French; they verge
on what Gayatri Spivak has termed ‘this sanctioned ignorance... [that is] inseparable from colonial domination’. Balbo could think of no alternative to break Italian subalternity – demonstrated for him beyond all doubt by the success of the Napoleonic conquest – save direct imitation. He represents the human dilemma created by any imperial order. His outlook came to dominate the Savoyard state and the political culture of paese civile, after Unification, but his personal experience of power and responsibility under Napoleon was very rare, compounding the ‘sanctioned ignorance’ of his failure to acknowledge the line dividing borrowing from integration.

When Italian elites in the former imperial departments – as quite distinct from those of the satellite kingdoms – chose to ‘borrow’ from the French, few did so in the light of practical experience of the inner workings of Napoleonic institutions; rather, in the spirit of a collective memory of how they had been ruled. The intensive introduction of the people of the départements réunis to the ways of the modern state did not embrace meaningful participation in a model of public administration, still less an exercise in self-government. Their experience was not one of ‘nation-building’. The French had engineered this through their increasing unwillingness to amalgamate all but a handful of Italians at any but subordinate levels of the administration. Thus, its creators had come to see their bequest of the Code to the départements réunis as akin to Axtell’s assessment of the arrival of firearms among the Indians, something that might remarkably transform indigenous society, but that could only be obtained from outsiders, and depended entirely on them for creation and repair. Again, where the analogy breaks down is not because of the different levels of ‘modernity’ between native Americans and Italians at the turn of the nineteenth century, but because the former learned how to use their ‘borrowing’ effectively and without instruction, whereas the French felt their Italian administrés were incapable of coping alone with the Code. Those Italian jurists who sought to borrow the Code in greater depth than the Ligurians in 1814, or than many of the restored regimes, deliberately filled the gap left by imperial tutelage by transforming Dal Pozzo from the semi-acculturated nuisance depicted by his French colleagues into a legal seer. Dal Pozzo did not suffer exile in 1814, but served as tutor to the future king, Carlo Alberto, and vented his opposition to the virtual abolition of the Code by the restored monarchy, in private legal practice, where he defended not only ‘political’ offenders, but took on ‘test cases’ where he believed the superiority of Napoleonic legislation might be demonstrated. He was only hounded into exile in London after the 1821 revolution, but whether regarded as a sage or a subversive, after 1814 – in a purely Italian context, rather than one imposed by the French – Dal Pozzo became at last a cultural intermediary and a serious person in the eyes of his peers.

John Davis rightly argues that the ‘advanced’ northern regions of post-Unification Italy provide ‘endless examples of the survival of forms of private
power and influence that remained almost untouched by the presence or realities of the State until 1900 or beyond’.53 An examination of the north under Napoleon, sensitive to historical geography, helps answer why. The nostalgia of the ‘Ligurian moment’ found many concrete echoes elsewhere. As French rule neared its end in Tuscany, the police noted a reluctance among the Florentines to join Murat’s belated attack on the empire, because they might lose even the sham Court Napoleon had given them under Élisse: ‘The Tuscans, and the Florentines above all, prefer their politics to be on a personal level; they prefer their country to any kind of honour or to any other political climate.’54 The Tuscans feared foreign domination too much to oppose it, but they still regretted not being the masters of their own fate. It was their hope, the French rightly concluded, that the Austrians would liberate, and then choose not to rule them; they sought not to be ruled at all.55

On his return, Ferdinand III may have shown himself pro-clerical, but there was no witch-hunt of collaborators; the leading patriot, Giovanni Fabbroni, became secretary of the ducal Council of State in 1814 and remained close to the centres of power thereafter.56 The careful, passive resistance of the Tuscan magistracy to the harshness of French criminal legislation was also rewarded when Ferdinand III, however reactionary in some respects, restored the Leopoldine codes and abolished capital punishment. In general, the Tuscan restoration proved successful exactly for these reasons, and the unpopularity of Austrian rule in Tuscany grew not only because it was reactionary, but increasingly centralised as well.57 Such sentiments were evident even in Piedmont, where centralised absolutism had been at the core of the policies of the monarchy for a century before the Napoleonic conquest. It came from very different sources, but pointed to a dissatisfaction with the spirit, if not entirely the workings, of Napoleonic rule. In its first, idealistic years, the monarchy itself sought to devolve local government to what might be termed ‘the natural leaders of the community’ – the clergy, the nobility and village elders, in the countryside – in order to foster a more ‘natural’ hierarchy than that of a professional bureaucracy.58 From the other end of the political spectrum, Dal Pozzo launched an attack on centralised government from his London exile in 1830, by offering 600 lire prize money for original research into ‘the ancient national assemblies of Savoy, Piedmont . . . and the Duchy of Genoa’.59 These views contrast to his holistic faith in the Code; as an individual, he represents the complexities stemming from the experience of cultural imperialism, and the subtle nature of borrowings in a post-imperial order. Exclusion from the levers of power and authority under the French had allowed a preference for traditional political culture to survive, as well as a relative ignorance of how the new regime actually worked.

After 1814, arbitrational political culture and the independence of the periphery soon reasserted itself. The ‘natural unit’ based on the traditional
cores returned as a fact of life, and remained after Unification in 1859, although these natural units did not correspond readily with those regarded as axiomatic in modern Italy. The Church and the landowning elites, both outside the experience of Napoleonic rule, resumed the direction of the cores. It is not surprising that local elites schooled in the politics of intimate, personal relationships between rulers and ruled, resented Unification and ‘continued to address suppliche in the old style to indifferent offices’. Their powerful presence in local life soon forced the unitary state to abandon plans for regional devolution, and drove it down a centralising, authoritarian road. The failure of the French to incorporate Italians into state service then made Italian regionalism the preserve of reaction. Napoleonic rule made a powerful, if often blunt, impact on Italy but also revealed, in its workings, more fundamental geopolitical and cultural truths.

Subaltern Italy: the unitary state and ‘darkest Italy’

There can be a fine theoretical distinction between Wachtel’s concept of integration and Axtell’s borrowings, often only made clear by the somewhat holistic implications of the former, as opposed to the more eclectic and functional characteristics of the latter. The responses of the restored Italian states of the early nineteenth century and of the post-unitary state offer one the clearest, emphatic examples of what delineates these theories from each other. The regimes of the early period, and even many elements within the revolutionary opposition to them, chose to ‘borrow’, ad hoc, from the edifice of the Napoleonic state and the political culture of the French Revolution. However, by the late nineteenth century, powerful intellectual currents emerged from within the elites of the new unitary state, deeply imbued with the ethos of the civilising mission, as first defined by the French, and with a deeply self-critical image of their country, an image and critique that correspond so closely to that evolved by the French that its intellectual heritage seems clear.

The aggressive insistence on centralised institutions and cultural conformity displayed by the Italian political classes emerged less in the decades immediately after Unification, than as they realized how weak their state actually was. This should be seen as a facet of modernisation, with the neo-Napoleonic state as its agent; Francesco Crispi was less the precursor of Mussolini than the reluctant heir of Napoleon. Crispi and the loyal, bourgeois electorate that kept him in public life for so long, learned by hard experience that their nationalist vision could only survive through centralisation, uncompromising anticlericalism and a determination to educate the masses in patriotism. Christopher Duggan has encapsulated the Crispian assessment of the 1880s as one sensing that ‘the habits of absolutism and a lack of patriotic sentiment still seemed everywhere in evidence’. Increasingly, mass mobilisation for foreign war or imperial expansion seemed the panacea.
This essential truth of Crispi’s debt to Napoleon seems unshakeable, all the more so for being unacknowledged. Implicit in the slide of the unitary state into centralisation and anticlericalism is the location of its origins in French cultural imperialism, and here, the spectre of the subaltern nature of the Italian nation-state must be addressed. The integration of first the Piedmontese and then other sectors of the Italian elites into the ethos of the Napoleonic state occurred at the remove of more than a generation. The first determined, coherent steps to rebuild the French edifice in Piedmont came only on the heels of the military catastrophe of 1848–49; after Unification, it was driven largely by a sense among the ruling classes that Italy was, in the time-honoured phrase, ‘the least of the great powers’. They located the main reasons for this in the shortcomings of their fellow citizens and administrés. This was just as deep-seated and enduring a legacy of imperial rule as the institutions and structures to the unitary nation-state, a collective outlook among the leaders of the new nation that merits exploration in the context of ‘the subaltern’. Even as Crispi introduced British parliamentary procedures and almost doubled the electorate for local government in 1888–89, he tightened central control of the prefects and greatly strengthened the powers of the executive. When faced by the mounting challenges of ruling the unitary state, the Italian political classes fell back on imported French norms, where and when it mattered.

Denina was, indeed, a prophet, not in his belief that Italy would become a subalpine France under the leadership of Napoleon, but because his essentially negative view of his countrymen came to characterise the intelligentsia of the unitary state. The opinion-makers of the new nation displayed a loathing for their fellow citizens at least equal to the contempt felt by Denina and the French for an earlier generation of administrés. The ‘civilising mission’ was reprised after 1860, this time in a national rather than an imperial context, but in terms essentially the same. Denina had a close intellectual heir in the Sicilian intellectual Alfredo Niceforo, whose L'Italia Barbara contemporanea of 1898 reiterated every negative meridional stereotype, and transposed virtually every stereotype the French applied to the people of the départements réunis to the south. In his brilliant exploration of the impact of these southern stereotypes on the character of the post-unitary state, Dickie stresses that Niceforo wrote consciously as a southerner, but with the spirit and the aims of an Italian nationalist. Denina wrote in the same vein, as a Napoleonic imperialist. An attempt to link Denina and Niceforo, and by more than implication, Napoleonic imperialism and Italian nationalism in its Crispian form, becomes plausible not solely in the details of discourse – Niceforo invokes the civilising mission and positivist colonialism far more explicitly than the French or Denina – but in a common origin. The experience of Napoleonic imperialism did more than alienate large sections of the Italian population from the modern state, it instilled a subaltern mentality in those who supported that state. After 1814, first Cesare Balbo and his
collaborators in the former imperial departments, and then, after Unification, politicians like Crispi and intellectuals like Niceforo, adopted an attitude to political modernisation predicated on the belief that ‘whether a culture survives or dies depends in large measure upon its capacity for creative adaptation’, the concept of borrowings described by Axtell applied to the modern state.67

When the experience of Napoleonic rule is repositioned in the context of imperialism, and when Balbo and Crispi, Denina and Niceforo, are seen as part of a post-imperial order, the subaltern origins of their view of Italy and Italians open, in turn, a new perspective on the way the ruling elites of the unitary state responded to the ‘problem of the South’. It is not always flattering. Ranajit Guha’s insight, in the context of post-colonial historiography in India, that ‘the cultural regime of colonialism clearly outlived the Raj’,68 may have a strong relevance in post-Napoleonic Italy, not only in terms of institutions and social responses to them, but in the collective mentality of Italian nationalists. Guha has pointed directly to the intellectual continuum between the Indian bourgeoisie and the British, based on their common assumption that ‘the colonial state (was an organic extension of the metropolitan bourgeois state and colonialism…an adaptation, if not quite a replication, of the classical bourgeois culture of the West’.

Italian nationalists did not endure such long colonialism, and so cannot be accused of ‘happy accommodation with imperialism’ in so direct a manner; the hated restorations of 1814 saved them from this. Their sense of awe at the Napoleonic achievement endured, however, despite their attempts to cast their calls for imitation in terms of borrowings, rather than as confessions of their own assimilation, if not to French political domination, then to a view of themselves and their countrymen as a subaltern people, incapable of generating a native modernity. There is a fruitful analogy with the portrait drawn by Fred Cooper of extra-European political visions:

\[
\ldots \text{in the shadow of Europe not solely because Europe’s self-perceived movement toward state-building, capitalist development and modernity marked and still mark a vision of historical progress against which African, Asian, or Latin American history appears as ‘failure’: of the ‘nation to come to its own,’} \ldots
\]

A neo-colonial past bred a neo-colonial response, both in terms of an aggressive nationalism bent on freeing Italy from the domination of other powers, and a sense of inferiority that demanded imitation.

Gioberti stood against these tendencies with more coherence than many of his contemporaries, and this perhaps explains his wider popularity during the restoration. Beyond the level of nationalist political thinkers, currents of municipal republicanism resurfaced in 1814. The aggressively nationalist Tuscan intellectual, Antonio Zobi, in the midst of lauding the Napoleonic
model of government, singled out its greatest failing and weak point as the absence of elected local councils.\textsuperscript{71} The atomised, but vibrant world of municipal politics and factionalism was the political geography Italians had drawn for themselves, below the tides of war and diplomacy. Many Italian giacobini readily grasped this during the triennio, even if subsequently they abandoned it. Fred Cooper has warned that:

Politics in a colony should not be reduced to anticolonial politics or to nationalism: the ‘imagined communities’ Africans saw were both smaller and larger than the nation, sometimes in creative tension with each other, sometimes in repressive antagonism.\textsuperscript{72}

This was very true of Italian political culture at the turn of the nineteenth century, and probably still so at the turn of the twentieth, in no small part because of their subaltern experience of imperialism. Municipal republicanism, however lively, however inclusive by the standard of the times, was too narrow a vision for the French, for the unitary state, and even for many of the restored regimes. Napoleonic imperialists, restored absolutists and Italian nationalists were as one in seeing only the seeds of reaction and stagnation in campanilismo; that clientelismo entailed reciprocity or that arbitration was central to the administration of justice depended on ‘imagined communities’ too narrow and traditional for them. Conversely, the shared culture of post-Tridentine Catholicism – and its secular expression in the mobility of the world of the universities and great boarding schools – was too broad a vision for both the First Empire and the unitary state. The old order moved naturally between the parish pump, a collective piety that transcended classes and borders, and a universal intellectual humanism. The ancien régime, for all its flaws, had allowed that ‘creative tension’ to exist between these visions of the world. This was not the vision of the nation that prevailed in 1859, however. The French legacy lived on because it was an imperial, proto-colonial experience for all Italians, admirers and opponents alike. Even those Italians most bent on creating a strong, modern, united Italy – perhaps them most of all – were trapped in the subaltern by the proto-colonial nature of Napoleonic rule. It could not have survived the course of the nineteenth century, had powerful Italians themselves not been thoroughly imbued with that sense of the subaltern. Equally, it could not have survived and found new life in the context of the Mezzogiorno, had all Italians been of the same cast of mind.

On the parting of the ways: men and measures

The true legacy of the Napoleonic occupation of Italy was its impact on people, occupiers and occupied, Italians and French. Individuals and communities survived to fight another day. Some did so more unscathed than
others, and the list of casualties is, perhaps, more obvious with hindsight than it appeared at the time, although historiography has often chosen not to enumerate winners and losers on their own terms, but on those of the later battles for nationalist unification and economic modernisation. To tabulate the relative winners and losers of the epoca francese in terms of unification and industrialisation, is to take at once too long and too short a view of the significance of the occupation, and too abstract an approach to the history of the two centuries that followed.

The political and cultural unity among the French, so evident in the départements réunis, did not long survive the collapse of the empire in 1814. France entered into a period of cultural, political and, indeed, spiritual division so intense and so protracted that even Furet’s estimation that France came to terms with its revolution by the 1880s seems too short. The unity of purpose within the Gallic laager in Italy gave few hints of the horrors of the June Days, the Commune or Vichy, but that was to be the path France went down after the collapse of its continental empire. Tournon survived the change of regime in 1814 by returning to his Catholic, aristocratic roots while prefect of the Gironde. His memoirs sought to recast him as a reluctant anticlerical and appalled servant of Napoleon, although this did nothing to fool his close acquaintance, the true Catholic reactionary, Victor de Broglie, who said Tournon shared the indifference to religion, excommunication and the fate of the Pope, common at the time. Dupont-Delporte, his colleague in Parma, proved less adept at survival; having served Napoleon as a prefect in the Hundred Days, he remained in the wilderness between 1815 and 1830, his loyalty to the Revolution – widely defined – being rewarded only with the fall of the Bourbons in 1830, when he became prefect of the Seine-Inférieure (Paris); this did not prevent him begging for a post under Louis XVIII in 1814. Dupont’s henchman in the sub-prefecture of Piacenza, Caravel, took a different political path, gaining office under the Bourbons and becoming the scourge of the Left in the department of the Ardennes in the 1820s, just as he had harried the Roman priests in Piacenza ten years before; almost the mirror image of his former prefect, his public career evaporated with the Revolution of 1830. They still fared better than the aristocratic La Rivoire de la Tourette, whose last appointment turned out to be that of prefect of Genoa. Until his death in 1819, he desperately tried to live down his involvement in the d’Enghein affair and his close links to Savary, but failed to obtain even a pension from Louis XVIII, to say nothing of a post.

The sum of these personal stories is twofold. Obviously, they make flesh of the deep divisions of post-1814 France, revealing the shattered unity of the Napoleonic era. However, there is a deeper lesson which emerges only in the context of the imperial experience of the First Empire, and in comparison with the fate of the Italian elites these men ruled and so despised. It was now the turn of the French to learn to how to serve new masters and navigate
the shifting tides of political fortune. Given that they were doing so within their own culture, in a world of their own making – and not in the grip of an invading ‘other’ – it is debatable if any of them fared as well as the Italian elites did under imperial rule, or under the restored regimes post-1814.

Degerando interpreted the continuity of civilisation he found among the highest secular Roman magistrates with the powerful contempt of both the revolutionary and the invader:

Religion, such as it is conceived of by enlightened men, and felt by virtuous men – such as it exists generally in France – [is] the fruit of a reasoned and reasonable conviction, its principle is the improvement of morality. [This is] scarcely even perceived among the Romans.77

When tracing the origins of this sense of the eternal, Peter Brown expresses a view probably closer to that felt by the *togati* of Napoleonic Rome, when describing the Christianised Rome of the late empire:

In the city with the longest Christian tradition in the Latin west collective memory still looked past the great basilica-shrine of St. Peter to the world of Romulus and Remus. A sense of the vast antiquity of Rome was matched by a sense of the proximity of a numinously radiant universe. On reaching the top of St. Peter’s, many Catholic Christians would still turn their backs on the saint’s basilica, to bow with a reverential gesture, to the rising sun.78

It is both futile and fruitless for a modern historian to attempt to trace degrees of cultural or political continuity in the manner of Degerando or Denina, and nothing of the kind is intended. Nevertheless, the elites of Rome, and the traditional centres – whoever they were – had been conditioned over centuries of invasion and disruption, to cope with ‘the other’, to become adept at entryism and to proceed with care in public life. These skills were often in evidence in the *epoca francese*, but their limited results produced a complex heritage.

At the risk of drawing exactly the kind of parallels that so date and limit the thoughts of Degerando and Denina, the French had probably proved the most intransigent, unbending conquerors – or liberators – of Italy since Constantine. Just as the first Christian emperor refused to make the traditional sacrifices to the gods on entering the city in triumph, so Tournon and his men rebuffed Roman society, the last in a line of such conquering entries that stretched back to the annexation of Piedmont in 1802. The Italian ability to cope with political instability was tested to its limits, a challenge which revealed at once the capacity of the elites to survive and even prosper under so alien a regime, and to retain control of the public sphere. The elites of the old order succeeded in the former, but the refusal of
the French to allow them meaningful participation in the latter would have serious consequences for the future evolution of the state, especially after Unification. The survival of their determined entryism is found in the bare bones of the career of Cosmo Barnaba Corsi, a scion of the Florentine patriciate, who entered public life at the age of 12, as a page boy to Élisse Bonaparte, was transferred by his father to the Church in 1814, and became a cardinal in 1842.79 The French were dealing with elites far more practised in survival than they were themselves.

Nevertheless, something had changed in Italian public life. What Anthony Cardoza has termed ‘the long goodbye’ of the Piedmontese upper classes may have begun well before his chosen period of post-Unification Italy, and have been much wider, geographically. The Corsi, once pillars of Tuscan political life, now retreated into the safety of the Church in the manner of the relatively despised Corsini, whose papal – as opposed to republican – origins had marginalised them. The public sphere receded. The rural bourgeoisie, even at its lowest levels, proved more than adept at borrowing from, and integrating with, the fluctuating political world, often in ways that defied all constituted authority, old or new, secular or sacred. In 1806, Giovanni Ugazzo, a Roman by birth but long a baker in Santa Croce, near Sestri di Levanto on the Ligurian coast, bought a bien national, a chapel that had belonged to the Capucin friars until the French closed it and secularised them, an action often taken as a sign of ralliement. However, the chapel contained a highly popular local Madonna, and he soon reopened it for services, many held illegally at night. The bells rang, the novenas were sung as they had always been, and the crowds flocked to the Madonna with offerings, a percentage of which Ugazzo kept for himself. When the police ordered him to stop, he declared – turning the rhetoric of the Revolution on its makers – that the chapel was his property, and he would do with it as he chose. Rolland, the prefect, intervened and stopped the ceremonies, but Ugazzo knew his rights and kept the Madonna safely locked up, defying both the parish priest and the prefect, who wanted it for very different reasons, and he continued to earn a living by ‘opening her up’ for those willing to pay to pray to her. Ugazzo needed the money because of his complicated private life; he lived openly with a woman who had left her husband for him – and by whom he had had a child – while conducting another affair with a young woman to whom he was engaged, who styled herself ‘the Princess of Santa Croce’. He had two sets of in-laws keen to ‘return him to his duties’, but they had yet to ensnare him.81 Ugazzo was his own man, come revolution or counter-reformation, with all the complexity, independence of spirit and contempt for authority such individualism necessitated.

In 1809, the prefect of the Apennines declared that, although the poor mountain valleys of his department could not survive without the archaic, thoroughly illegal activities of the batti birbi, he believed they would soon end, with the arrival of alternative sources of local employment. Indeed, he
hoped the batti could be persuaded to use their skills to help the new regime, acting as special couriers on delicate missions all over Europe, and especially in the new war zones of Spain and Portugal. In 1814, the lands of the batti passed under the House of Savoy; in 1819, the Savoyard Foreign Ministry received news from its governor in Genoa, of batti using a multiplicity of forged paper to elude the authorities, and making pests of themselves, in the time-honoured manner.

No mere political regime could hope to assimilate such people, or to integrate them on any terms but their own. In their different ways, the batti, the baker and the parents of the bishop, all refused to become subaltern. They did so at the price of defying the modern state but, equally, the French had accorded them no meaningful role in that state. Thus, it remained both hostile and alien to them all.

Histories of the epoca francese usually stress the importance of Napoleonic imperialism for the erection of the modern paese civile in Italy, and emphasise its transforming qualities in the public sphere. However true this is – and there can be few closer forms of institutional imitation in historical experience than that between the Napoleonic empire and the post-unitary state – the impact was just as formative in defining the paese reale that emerged from the wreckage of the old order, to provide a fresh form of opposition to political modernity. The negative, reactive impact proved deep and enduring; it taught Italians to hate the state as never before. This trauma, common to all classes of Italians throughout the imperial departments, arrested the development of Italian political culture, whatever its contributions in terms of institutions and structures. Those changes discerned as crucial for a polity to escape subaltern status so carefully discerned by historians of South Asia – from the religious to the militant, from crime to insurgency, from bondsman to worker – were actually made harder in Napoleonic Italy to achieve because of French imperialism. Nevertheless, the human reality of diffuse, persistent opposition to the new state also ensured that the mass of Italians left outside the edifice of the regime did not come to see themselves as subaltern, whatever the future political classes of Italy may have made of them. Paul Ginsborg, in his history of contemporary Italy, argues effectively that no regime ever succeeded in bringing the paese reale and the paese civile properly together. A great part of that story began under Napoleon, in the départements réunis. For the French, the collapse of the empire in 1814 shattered the cultural unity and confidence they had exported to Italy. With the unsteady return of the Bourbons, a century and a half of self-doubt and mutual recrimination replaced the powerful imperial vision of the First Empire. The civilising mission turned inwards, thus giving France and Italy elements of a shared experience of a kind little expected in the wake of Marengo.

There is a deeper irony that sometimes seeps through the archives. In March 1814, 22 French gendarmes deserted when ordered to withdraw from
the Tuscan departments, reportedly to remain with their ‘wives’, local women they had married illegally, in church, without the obligatory civil ceremony or official permission. Beneath it all, there had been French acculturation after all. Or, conversely, perhaps Stendhal was right in *La Chartreuse de Parme*, and the French were truly irresistible in every respect. Either way, the very nature of the subaltern is its humanity.
Notes

Introduction: Never the Twain Shall Meet

10 Ibid.
12 For example: Jonathan Friedman, Cultural Identity and Global Process (London, 1994).
14 For a recent overview: Nigel Aston, Christianity and Revolutionary Europe, c. 1750–1830 (Cambridge, 2002).
20 For a bringing together of these terms, drawn respectively from Voltaire’s Siècle de Louis XIV and his Histoire de la Russie: Pocock, Narratives of Civil Government, pp. 83 ff.
23 V. Gioberti, Del primato morale e civili degli italiani (Turin, 1932 edn) 3 vols, I, p. 94.
30 Archives Nationales de Paris (ANP) BB5 313 (Rome) Boucher to Min. Justice, 15 May 1813.
33 Robinson, ‘Imperial Theory’, p. 49.
36 ‘Entryism’ is a relatively recent term for a very well-established phenomenon in early modern Italy. It is deployed skilfully in a recent study of the rise of the Medici in Florence, and my use of it is predicated on: Jonathan Davies, Florence and its University during the Early Renaissance (Leiden, 1996).
39 Osvaldo Raggio, Faida e parentela, lo stato genovese visto dalla Fontanabuona (Turin, 1990).


Alex Grab, ‘State Power, Brigandage and Rural Resistance in Napoleonic Italy’, *European History Quarterly*, 25 (1995) pp. 39–70. It should be noted that, although the epicentre of the 1809 revolt fell within the Kingdom of Italy, this same area in the Apennines west of Bologna had belonged, not to the Habsburgs, but to the Papal States, prior to Napoleonic rule.

The mountains are as a rule a world apart from civilisations, which are urban and lowland achievements. Their history is to have none, to remain almost always on the fringe of the great waves of civilisation, even the longest and most persistent, which may spread over great distances in the horizontal plane but are powerless to move vertically when faced with an obstacle of a few hundred meters: Braudel, *Mediterranean*, I, p. 34.


Pocock, *Narratives of Civil Government*, pp. 83–7 on Voltaire’s concept of ‘four ages’ of civilisation, separated from each other by long periods of barbarism, but all connected by a reverence for classical civilisation. This outlook is especially strong in his *Siècle de Louis XIV*.


The process of regeneration was devoid of any notion of ‘reception’. This was not a question of passing on a tradition that would then be remoulded – ‘creatively received’ – according to the nature of different peripheries: Peter Burke, *The European Renaissance. Centre and Peripheries* (Oxford, 1998) pp. 2–13.


62 Ibid., pp. 312–17.

63 Ibid., p. 379: Woloch sees this survival as incongruous with the jury system, and points to a tendency to divert some cases from the criminal to the correctional courts, as a form of plea bargaining. He describes this rigidity of sentencing as ‘the equivocal legacy of Beccaria’; in this context, perhaps a sign of how Beccaria’s ideas were more in line with those of French jurisconsults than those in Italy. It certainly underscores the reality that his ideas did not often penetrate to local level, or influence the practical conduct of magistrates in weaker states.


67 Henry Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition. An Historical Revision* (London, 1997) p. 318. Kamen also notes that Italian observers disliked the Spanish model of the Inquisition, and were perpetually alert to supposed attempts by Philip II to foist it upon them. They disliked, especially, its anti-Semitism: pp. 308–9.


71 The sense of cultural inferiority felt by sections of the French intelligentsia towards Rome, in particular, during the eighteenth century, outlined by Christopher Johns, does not seem to have infected the generation of the auditeurs, even those from ancien régime backgrounds, like Tournon: Johns, *Canova*, pp. 11–13.


This preoccupation runs through all Gramsci’s work, which he conceptualised as ‘the passive revolution’. For a lucid recent discussion: L. Riall, *The Italian Risorgimento. State, Society and National Unification* (London, 1994) pp. 1–5. The term is also central to Ernest Gellner’s seminal essay on the place of patronage in Mediterranean societies, in which the essence of a patronage system is that ‘it always belongs to some pays réel which is ambivalently conscious of not being the pays légal’: E. Gellner, ‘Patrons and Clients’, *Patrons and Clients in Mediterranean Societies*, eds E. Gellner and J. Waterbury (London, 1997) pp. 1–7, at p. 3.


Ginsborg, ‘Explaining Italy’s Crisis’, p. 28.

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6 Ibid., pp. 44–104.

7 Ibid., pp. 58–60.

8 Pesendorfer, *Ferdinando*, p. 166.


17 For these appointments: ANP F1e 81/2 (Ligurie).

18 ANP F1e 81 (Ligurie) Deputies of the town of Albegna to Min. Int. undated (c. summer 1805).


21 ANP F1b II (Tanaro) S. Prefect, Alba, to Min. Int. 13 prairial year xiii/28 June 1805.


24 Ibid., 10 April 1812.


Notes

28 ANP F1e81 (Ligurie) Paolo Perazzo to Min. Int., 17 June 1805.
29 For a vivid account: E.A. Brigidi, Giacobini e realisti, o Viva Maria: Storia del 1799 in Toscana (Siena, 1882) pp. 394–400.
31 ANP F7 8805 (Toscane) D. Gen. Police, Florence, to Min. 3 arrond., 30 April 1813.
32 ASM Ministero Esteri (Regno d’Italia) IIA Divisione, cart. 93 (Toscana, 1808) Tassoni to For. Min. 8 November 1808.
33 Ibid., 5 November 1808.
34 ANP F7 8809 (Arno) Maire of San Sepulero to S. Prefect, Arezzo, July 1813.
35 Ibid., 20 July 1813.
37 AST Serie I, cartella 9, Elenchi di Sospetti, 1799 (dossier Prov. Alessandria).
38 ANP F7 9936 (Marengo) Barrocchio to Min. Police-Générale, 18 May 1809.
39 This analysis is primarily based on a reading of Chris A. Bayly, Empire and Information. Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780–1870 (Cambridge, 1996) especially pp. 352–61.
40 The standard account of the 1799 rising in Tolfa remains O. Morra, L’Insorgenza antifrancese di Tolfa durante la Repubblica Romana del 1798–1799 (Rome, 1942). Virtually all references to the 1799 revolt made here, are drawn from it.
41 Raggio, Faída, especially pp. 132–8.
42 Turi, Viva, pp. 25, 86–95.
43 Ibid., pp. 16, 74, 248–70.
44 Zobi, Storia, III, pp. 417–25. This account is ignored by Turi, who asserts that the revolt was the work of only a handful of rebels, and that ‘the noble/clerical/popular anti-French coalition was well and truly broken’: Turi, Viva, pp. 279, 287.
53 Turi, Viva, pp. 65–70.
54 ANP F1e81 (Ligurie) Isengard to Min. Int., undated (1805).
55 Ibid. 5 messidor, year xiii/14 June 1805. Perazzo to Min. Int. 17 June 1805. Remedi to Min. Int. 20 prairial, year xiii/30 June 1805.
58 Turi, *Viva*, pp. 262–75.
64 ANP F1cIII (Stura) List of 500 highest taxpayers, 1812.
66 Ibid., pp. 344–7.
69 Broers, ‘Policing Piedmont’, *passim*.
71 ASG Prefettura Francese, Pacco 116, fasciolo 155 (Alta Polizia) S. Prefect, Novi to Prefect, 13 April 1813.
72 ANP F7 8834 (Gênes) D’Auzers to Min. 3 arrond. 22 April 1813.
73 Archivio di Stato Genova (ASG) Prefettura francese, Pacco 30, fasciolo 42 (Rivolte e brigandaggio) Gend. Comdt., to Prefect, 23 Nov. 1806.
75 ANP F7 8822 (Gênes) D’Auzers to Min. 3 arrond. 3 July 1810. Prefect to Min. 3 arrond. 26 April 1810. D’Auzers to Min. 3 arrond. 3 July 1810.
76 ANP F7 8822 (Gênes) Police Comm. Genoa, to Min. 3 arrond. 28 Sept. 1811.
77 ANP F7 8797 (Apennines) D’Auzers to Min. 3 arrond. 5 Feb. 1814. F7 8833 (Gênes) D’Auzers to Min. 3 arrond. 7 March 1814.
79 ANP F7 8797 (Apennines) D’Auzers to Min. 3 arrond. 25 May 1813.
80 Ibid., 10 May 1813.
81 ASM Ministero Esteri (Regno d’Italia) IIA Divisione, cart. 91 (Toscana, 1808) Tassoni to For. Min. 7 May 1808.
82 Ibid., 23 January 1808.
83 Turi, *Viva*, pp. 66–70.
84 Ibid., p. 70.
85 ASM Ministero Esteri (Regno d’Italia) IIA Divisione, cart. 90 (Toscana, 1808) Tassoni to For. Min. 16 January 1808.
86 Ibid., 16 April 1808.
88 ASM Ministero Esteri (Regno d’Italia) IIA Divisione, cart. 92 (Toscana, 1808) Tassoni to For. Min. 9 Aug. 1808.
This is based, in large part, on the account of the revolt given by Tassoni to the government in Milan, being by far the fullest account of the rising, and the only one to refer to events after the first clash between the rebels and the Gendarmerie near Monte Varchi: ASM Ministero Esteri (Regno d’Italia) IIA Divisione, cart. 93 (Toscana, 1808) ‘Riservata’ Tassoni to Eugene, 12 Nov. 1812.

ASM Ministero Esteri (Regno d’Italia) IIA Divisione, cart. 93 (Toscana, 1808) Tassoni to For. Min. 5 Nov. 1808. Tassoni to For. Min. 19 Nov. 1808; 19 Nov. 1808; 26 Nov. 1808; 29 Nov. 1808.

ANP F7 8798 (Arno) Prefect to Min. 3 arrond. 15 May 1809.

ANP F7 8799 (Arno) S. Prefect, Arezzo, to Prefect, 1 June 1810.

ANP F7 8803 (Arno) Dubois to Min. 3 arrond. 15 Jan. 1811.

ANP F7 8809 (Arno) Dubois to Min. 3 arrond. 20 Aug. 1813.


ANP F7 8809 (Arno) Prefect to Min. 3 arrond. 23 Nov. 1813.


ANP F7 8893 (Rome) Prefect to Min. 3 arrond. 22 May 1811.


Broers, Politics, p. 156.

ANP F7 8894 (Rome) Norvins to Min. 3 arrond. 19 July 1811.

ANP F7 8907 (Rome) Comm-Gen. Police, Civitavecchia, to Norvins, 3 June 1811.

ANP F7 8894 (Rome) Min. 3 arrond. to Min. Police-Générale, 14 Aug. 1811.

ANP F7 8894 (Rome) Norvins to Min. 3 arrond. 31 Oct. 1811.

ANP BB5 314 (Rome) Miollis to Napoleon, 13 Aug. 1809.

Broers, Politics, pp. 150–61.


ANP F7 8936 (Trasimène) Prefect to Min. 3 arrond. 15 May 1812.

ANP F7 8934 (Trasimène) Prefect to Min. 3 arrond. 8 March 1811.

Ibid., 7 Jan. 1811.

119 ANP F7 8934 (Rome) Prefect to Min. 3 arrond. 27 Oct. 1811.
120 ANP F7 8889 (Rome) Prefect to Min. 3 arrond. 23 Nov. 1810.
121 ANP F7 8934 (Rome) Prefect to Min. 3 arrond. 24 Nov. 1811.
123 ANP F1C III 1 (Rome) Min. Int. to Prefect, Feb. 1812.
124 ANP F1C III 1 (Rome) Min. Int. to Napoleon, Feb. 1812.
129 Ibid., pp. 142–3.
132 Ibid., 23 June 1811.
137 ANP AF IV 1615 ‘Adieux de Pie VII à son peuple’.
141 Sutherland, *Chouans*, p. 218.
145 ANP BB18 871 (Taro) Extrait d’un Jugement, Commission Militaire Extraordinaire, Parme, 28 April 1806.
149 ANP F7 8809 (Arno) Dubois to Min. 3 arrond. 7 Oct. 1813.
Notes

153 ANP F7 8799 (Arno) Prefect to Min. 3 arrond. 4 June 1810.

154 Northern Tuscany saw substantial, widespread peasant militias attack the French around Pisa and Pistoia, areas which were actually the first to see anti-Leopoldine disturbances in 1790, and it has been pointed out that the valleys around Arezzo were not the first to rise, even in 1799. Turi, Viva, pp. 51–84.


156 ASM Ministero Esteri (Regno d'Italia) IIA Divisione, cart. 93 (Toscana, 1808) Tassoni to For. Min. 26 November 1808.

157 ANP F7 8818 (Gênes), Comm.-Gen. Police, Genoa, to Min. 3 arrond. 24 June 1809.

158 Turi, Viva, p. 287.


160 Broers, Napoleonic, pp. 200–2.


162 Leveroni, Cicagna, pp. 151–77.

163 Broers, Napoleonic, pp. 222–8.


166 Cingari, Giacobini, passim.


171 Raggio, Faida, passim, for this in the Fontanabuona from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century.

172 ANP F7 8834 (Gênes) Police Comm. Genoa to Min. 3 arrond. 4 Oct. 1813.


174 Ibid., p. 6.


Royal and Catholic Army, whose leadership always struggled to break the hold of localism on its troops.

177 W.B. Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred: Parish Priests and Indian Parishioners in Eighteenth Century New Spain* (Stanford, 1996) p. 462. Taylor’s general analysis of relations between priests and rural communities, and his general observation that tensions between priests and people over popular religion ‘usually expressed a spirit of local independence from outside authority’ in Indian highland regions all bear close comparison with the Italian peripheries in the same period.


180 ASM Ministero Esteri (Regno d’Italia) IIA Divisione, cart. 93 (Toscana, 1808) Tassoni to For. Min. 5 November 1808.


183 Broers, *Politics*, explores Spina’s activities, passim.


188 Guha, ‘Historiography’, p. 42.


2 The Last Stand of the Old Regime

1 Davis, *Conflict*, pp. 18–19.

2 ANP F1e 81 (Ligurie) Salicetti to Min. Int. 28 prairial, year xiii/29 May 1805.


4 Ibid., pp. 95–6. For their initial confirmation in office: ANP F1e 83/84 (Ligurie) Lebrun to Min. Int. 18 Jan. 1806.

5 See the reports for each province collected in ANP F1e 81 (Ligurie).

6 ANP F1e 83/84 (Ligurie) Prefect, Apennines to Lebrun, Dec. 1805.

7 ANP F1e 83/84 (Ligurie) Lebrun to Prefect, Apennines, Jan. 1806.


10 For an examination of these missions: Broers, *Politics*, pp. 44–9.

11 ANP F1e 81 (Ligurie) Perazzo to Min. Int. 17 June 1805.


17 G. Drei, *Il Regno d’Etruria, 1801–1807* (Modena, 1935) p. 46, note iv refers to 4000 trials in the provincial centres, involving 12,000 patriot families.
18 Pesendorfer, *Ferdinando*, p. 131. On the poor response to French celebrations, see: ASM: Regno d’Italia, Ministero Esteri, IIA Divisione cart. 91 (Toscana 1808) Tassoni to For. Min. 22 March 1808.
21 Ibid., p. 461.
22 ASM: Regno d’Italia, Ministero Esteri, IIA Divisione cart. 31 (Toscana 1808) Tassoni to For. Min. 29 Nov. 1808.
23 On the love of the Florentines for Countess Albany: ASM: Regno d’Italia, Ministero Esteri, IIA Divisione cart. 31 (Toscana 1809) Stefano Fucci to For. Min. 6 May 1809. Idem, 1 July 1809.
25 Ibid., pp. 311–12, 330–2.
27 ANP AF IV 1065 (Dossier: la Toscane) Tassoni to Min. Int. 24 Aug. 1802.
29 ANP F1e 85 (Parme, Plaisance et Guastalle) Lebrun to Min. Int. 15 June 1806.
31 ANP F1e86 (Parme, Plaisance et Guastelle) Nardon to Min. Int. 16 May 1807.
32 Ibid., 24 Oct. 1807.
36 ANP F1e 87/8 (Parme, Plaisance et Guastalle) Nardon to Min. Int. 10 Dec. 1808.
38 AG AC4 – 41, Junot/Parme et Plaisance 1806, Decree of Marshal Junot, 13 March 1806.
39 AG AC4 – 41, Junot/Parme et Plaisance 1806, Junot to Nardon, 22 March 1806.
40 Ibid.
43 ANP F1e 85 (Parme, Plaisance et Guastelle) Moreau de St Méry to Eugène, 8 nivose year xiv/29 Dec. 1805.
45 Paltrinieri, *Moti*, pp. 39–42, dismisses a pro-Bourbon counter-revolution or an English plot. Yet, despite much evidence, he, too, exaggerates the role of the clergy.
47 ANP F1e 86 (Parme, Plaisance et Guastalle) Nardon to Min. Int. 15 Feb. 1806.

50 ANP F1e 86 (Parme, Plaisance et Guastalle) Lt. Lacroix to Lebrun, undated (c. Feb. 1806).
51 AG C4 – 6 (Correspondance, Armée d’Italie, 1806) Capt. 3 Light Infantry Regt. to S. Prefect, Bobbio, 22 Jan. 1806.
52 ANP F7 8926 (Taro) Min. 3 arrond. to Min. Police-Générale, 5 March 1806.
54 ANP F1e 85 (Parme, Plaisance et Guastalle) Directeur, Admin. de la Guerre to Min. Int. 16 Jan. 1806.
57 ANP F1e 85 (Parme, Plaisance et Guastalle) Lebrun to Min. Int. 15 Jan. 1806.
58 AG C4 – 6 (Correspondance, Armée d’Italie) Capt. 3 Light Infantry Regt. to Lebrun, 22 Jan. 1806.
59 Ibid.
60 ANP BB18 871 (Taro) Judgement of Special Military Commission, Parma, 31 March 1806.
62 ANP F1e 87/8 (Parme, Plaisance et Guastalle) Piero Cragnari to Min. Int. 26 Aug. 1805.
64 ANP BB5 302 (Taro) Lebrun to Min. Justice, 17 frimaire year xiv/8 Dec. 1805.
66 Paltrinieri, Moti, pp. 113–14.
67 Ibid., p. 91.
69 ANP F1e 85 (Parme, Plaisance et Guastalle) Moreau de St Méry to Eugène, 8 nivose year xiv/29 Dec. 1805.
70 ANP F7 8926 (Taro) Min. 3 arrond. to Min. Police-Générale, 20 February 1806.
72 Paltrinieri, Moti, pp. 35–6.
73 ANP F1e 83/84 (Ligurie) Prefect, Apennines, to Lebrun, 26 Dec. 1805.
74 AG (Correspondance, Armée d’Italie) C4 – 6 (1806) Lebrun to Min. Int. 15 January 1806.
75 AG (Correspondance, Armée d’Italie) C4 – 6 (1806) Lebrun to Min. War, 8 Jan. 1806.
76 It should be noted that on 23 January, a new revolt broke out in the Val di Trebbia, when ‘the tocsin was sounded as soon as the (French) troops withdrew’, but there were now enough forces in the area to crush it immediately: ANP F7 8926 (Taro) Insp-Gen. Gend. Imp. to Min. Police-Générale, 4 Feb. 1806.
77 Paltrinieri, Moti, especially pp. 114–22.
78 Ibid., p. 136.
80 ANP F/1bI/166/15 Dossier: Hugues Nardon.
81 ANP F1e (Parme, Plaisance et Guastalle) Nardon to Min. Int. 15 Feb. 1806.
82 Paltrinieri, Moti, p. 143.
83 The details of this organisation are ANP F7 8926 (Taro) and F1e 86 (Parme, Plaisance et Guastalle).
84 ANP F1e 86 (Parme, Plaisance et Guastalle) Nardon to Min. Int. 11 June 1807.
86 AG AC4 – 41, Junot to Nardon, 19 April 1806.
87 ANP F1e 86 (Parme, Plaisance et Guastalle) Subdelegate, Piacenza to Nardon (undated, c. July 1807).
89 Opinions, p. 115.
90 Paltrinieri, Moti, pp. 118–21.
91 ANP BB5 296 (Gênes) Bigot to Min. Justice, 17 messidor, year xiii/6 July 1805.

3 Forging the New Regime
1 ANP F1e 86 (Parme, Plaisance et Guastalle) Lt. La Croix to Lebrun, undated (c. Jan. 1806).
4 ASM Ministero Esteri (Regno d’Italia) II Divisione, 253 (Liguria, 1805) Commissario delle Relazioni Commerciali to For. Min. 21 June 1805.
5 Ibid., 16 Jan. 1806.
7 ASM Ministero Esteri (Regno d’Italia) IIA Divisione, 90 (Toscana, 1808) Tassoni to For. Min. Milan, 15 Jan. 1808.
9 For both the Negros, and the wider phenomenon, see Broers, ‘Revolution’, Part II.
12 AG C4 – 6 (Armée d’Italie, Correspondance, 1806) S. Prefect, Bobbio to Prefect, Gênes, 22 Jan. 1806.
16 ANP F/1bl/172/4 Dossier Michele Re.
17 ASM Ministero Esteri (Regno d’Italia) IIA Divisione, 91 (Toscana, 1808) Tassoni to For. Min. 4 June 1808.
18 ANP F7 7016 (Bulletins, Florence) Dubois to Min. Police-Général, 12 Nov. 1813.
20 ASM Ministero Esteri (Regno d’Italia) IIA Divisione, 90 (Toscana, 1808) Tassoni to For. Min. 27 Feb. 1808.
21 Ibid., 5 March 1808.
29 ANP F/1bl/160/2, Dossier: Fauchet. Fauchet to Min. Int. 6 June 1809.
30 Lebrun actually stayed on in Genoa longer than had been planned, because of the Piacentino revolt, but his departure was bitter, and Menou assumed many of his functions, when originally an executive office had been regarded as only transitional.
32 Ibid., pp. 6–7.
33 ASM Ministero Esteri (Regno d’Italia) IIA Divisione, 91 (Toscana, 1808) Tassoni to For. Min. 9 Jan. 1808.
34 ASM Ministero Esteri (Regno d’Italia) IIA Divisione, 92 (Toscana, 1808) Tassoni to For. Min. 6 Sept. 1808.
35 ANP F1e 85 (Parme, Plaisance et Guastalle) Nardon to Min. Int. 20 Sept. 1806.
36 ASM Ministero Esteri (Regno d’Italia) IIA Divisione, 92 (Toscana, 1808) Tassoni to For. Min. 9 Aug. 1808; and 20 Aug. 1808.
37 Ibid., 30 Aug. 1808.
38 Ibid., 6 Sept 1808.
42 AG C3 – 6 (Ordres et Correspondance du Prince Eugène, 1805–10), Eugène to Napoleon, 28 December 1808.
Notes


46 Ibid., p. 214.

47 AG C4 – 4A Junot to Cardinal Archbishop, Parma, 19 April 1806; Junot to Cardinal Archbishop, Parma, 28 April 1806.


55 ANP F7 3690 (Sture), Min. Int. to Menou, 9 July 1807.


57 See the map in Michael Broers, *Europe under Napoleon, 1799–1815* (London, 1996) p. 73.

58 ANP 29-AP-15, A. Roederer to P-L. Roederer, 15 March 1812.

59 Radet wrote a trenchant defence, too controversial to appear in his lifetime, and even the sanitised version published by his family reflects his combative character: A. Combier (ed.), *Mémoires du Général Radet* (St Cloud, Tapie, 1892).

60 ANP F7 9832 (Rome) Vendero to Min. Police-Générale, 7 March 1810.


62 ANP F7 9832 (Rome), Prefect, Apennines, to Min. 3 arrond. 16 March 1810.

63 ANP F7 9832 (Rome), D’Auzers to Min. 3 arrond. 27 March 1810.

64 ANP F7 9832 (Rome), Prefect, Marengo, to Min. 3 arrond. 16 Aug. 1809.


66 ANP BB5 313 (Rome) Binet to Min. Justice, 26 May 1811.


70 Ibid.

71 ANP BB5 302 (Taro) Nardon to Min. Justice, 2 June 1808.

72 ANP BB5 302 (Taro) La Grave to Min. Justice, 24 May 1808.


76 ANP BB5 313 (Rome) Binet to Min. Justice, 26 May 1811.


84 Ibid., 24 Sept. 1812.
85 Ibid., 8 March 1813.
87 ANP BB5 306 (Marengo) J. Maggiora to Min. Justice, undated.
89 ANP BB5 302 (Taro) D’Auzers to Min. Justice, 26 Nov. 1808.
90 ANP F7 8934 (Trasimène) Norvins to Min. 3 arrond. 16 Sept. 1810.
91 Ibid., 24 Sept. 1810.
92 ANP F7 8934 (Trasimène) Min. 3 arrond. to Norvins, 20 Oct. 1810.
93 ANP F7 8934 (Trasimène) Norvins to Min. 3 arrond. 14 Oct. 1810.
95 ASM Ministero Esteri (Regno d’Italia) IIA Divisione, 93 (Toscana, 1808) Tassoni to For. Min. 29 Nov. 1808.
97 AG C4 – 4A Decree of 13 March 1806.
98 ANP F7 6531 (Rome) Prefect to Min. 3 arrond. 10 January 1811.
99 Ibid., 14 June 1811.
100 AG C4 – 4A Decree of 13 April 1806.
102 For the correspondence on this process: ANP BB5 302 (Taro) and AG C4 – 4A (Correspondance du Gouverneur-Général des États de Parme, Jan–July 1806).
103 ANP BB5 314 (Rome) Miollis to Napoleon, 13 Aug. 1809.
108 ANP BB5 315 (Rome) Min. 3 arrond. to Min. Justice, 6 Feb. 1812.
110 Ibid., 1 Oct. 1810.
111 Ibid., 16 Jan. 1811.
113 For the individual members: Nardi, *Napoleone*, pp. 92–104.
114 See in particular: Antonielli, *Prefetti, passim*.
117 ANP F1bl/161/3, Dossier: Gandolfo.
120 See the correspondence in: ANP F1bl/158/38, Dossier: Dupont-Delporte.
121 ANP F1e 83/84 (Ligurie) Lebrun to Min. Int. 18 Jan. 1806.
122 See the correspondence in: ANP F1b I/168/1, Dossier Nardon, Hugues.
Part II  The Phantom of Integration: *Ralliement* and *Amalgame* in the Imperial Departments of Italy

2  ANP F7 6523A (Toscane: Rapports) Min. 3 arrond. to Dubois, Aug. 1810.

4  ‘In the Eye of the Storm’: Law and Order in Napoleonic Italy

11  ANP F7 6531 (Rome) Prefect to Min. 3 arrond. 10 January 1811; ibid., 25 January 1811; ibid., 9 April 1811; ibid., 12 August 1811.
12  AG AC4 – 41, Decree of Marshal Junot, 13 March 1806.
13  AG AC4 – 41, Junot to Nardon, 22 March 1806.
16  ANP F7 6531 (Rome) Prefect to Min. 3 arrond. 14 June 1811.
17  Ibid., 9 April 1811.
18  The details of this organisation are ANP F7 8926 (Taro) and F1e 86 (Parme, Plaisance et Guastalle).
19  ANP F1e 86 (Parme, Plaisance et Guastalle) Nardon to Min. Int. 11 June 1807.
20  AG AC4 – 41, Junot to Nardon, 19 April 1806.
21  ANP F1e 86 (Parme, Plaisance et Guastalle) Subdelegate, Piacenza to Nardon (undated, c. July 1807).
22  ANP F7 8799 (Arno) Dubois to Min. 3 arrond. 24 Feb. 1810.
23  ANP F7 6531 (Rome) Prefect to Min 3 arrond. 9 April 1811.
24  Ibid., 11 June 1811.
25  Ibid., 10 January 1811; ibid., June 1811.
26  FLP/BA, C0645. I. Correspondence. A. General. Box 16. Folder 11. (Miollis, Sextius, 1808) Miollis to Eugène, 26 April 1808; idem, 30 April 1808.
29 Emsley, Gendarmeres, pp. 67–8, 90–2.
31 ANP F7 8899 (Rome) Norvins to Min. 3 arrond. 7 Sept. 1812.
33 ANP F7 8888 (Rome) Note in the margin of Norvins to Min. 3 arrond. 1 April 1811.
34 ANP F7 8889 (Rome) Prefect to Min. 3 arrond. 22 Nov. 1810.
35 Wickham, Mountain, defines its own period around the central point that the deep divisions between the ‘mountain and the city’ did not take root in the Tuscan Apennines until the High Middle Ages.
36 This phenomenon was not confined to the territories of the départements réunis. The government of the Kingdom of Italy drew on lowland and urban fear of the periphery to great advantage in the revolts of 1809, both along the Apennine spine in the Emilia-Romagna, and in the Po valley, against the Alpine rebels. On the Apennines: Grab, ‘State Power’, passim. On the Po valley: C. Bullo, ‘Dei movimenti insurrezionali del Veneto sotto il dominio francese, e specialmente del brigantaggio del 1809’, Nuovo Archivio Veneto, xv (1898) pp. 353–745.
40 Ibid., 9 Sept. 1813.
41 Ibid., 14 Jan. 1813.
42 Archivio Comunale di Bra (ACB) Mazzo 2708 (Corresp. 1811–1813), Maire to Prefect, 2 April 1812.
44 AG-C4 – 93 Reille to Gen. Dumoulins, 29 Dec. 1807. They were soon reinforced by Veterans Companies: Reille to Miollis, 15 Jan. 1808.
45 See the numerous petitions in ASF Buon Governo, Filza 464 (1808).
47 Ibid.
50 ANP F7 8937 (Trasimène) Prefect to Min. 3 arrond. 25 June 1813. Min. 3 arrond. to Prefects, Trasimène and Rome, 21 July 1813.
51 Axtell, European, especially Part IV, ‘American Encounter’.
52 Davis, Conflict, p. 8.
53 Axtell, European, p. 246.

One of the central theses of Davis, *Conflict*. For a regional study, with similar conclusions: Broers, *Napoleonic*.

ANP F7 7016 (Bulletins, Florence) Dubois to Min. Police-Générale, 17 March 1813.


ANP F7 8840 (Sture) D’Auzers to Min. Police-Gen., 11 May 1812.

Ibid., 23 May 1812.

Ibid., 22 July 1812.

Ibid., 24 Dec. 1812.

Ibid., 11 May 1812.


ASC, Epoca Francese, Mazzo 154, S. Prefect, Alba, to Prefect, 18 Jan. 1814.

Ibid.

ASG Prefettura Francese, pacco 30, faiscl 42 (Révoltes, brigandages) Petition of Mayor and People of Apparizione to Prefect, 23 July 1806.


Ibid., 28 fructidor, year xii/14 Sept. 1804.


ANP F7 8919 (Sture) D’Auzers to Min. 3 arrond. 24 Aug. 1811.

Ibid.

ANP F7 8917 (Sture) D’Auzers to Min. 3 arrond. 24 Aug. 1811, 18 Jan. 1811.

Lefebvre, *Napoléon*, p. 386.

ANP F7 8000 (Arno) Prefect to Min. 3 arrond. 22 June 1810.

Ibid., 11 May 1810.

ANP F7 8000 (Arno) Dubois to Prefect, 17 July 1810.

ANP F7 8931 (Taro) Prefect to Min. 3 arrond. 9 Aug. 1811.

ANP F7 8794 (Apennines) D’Auzers to Min. 3 arrond. 2 July 1810.

ANP F7 8919 (Sture) D’Auzers to Min. 3 arrond. 2 May 1811.

Ibid., 11 July 1811.

Ibid., 21 July 1811.

ANP F7 8919 (Sture) Min. 3 arrond. to d’Auzers, 17 July 1811.

ANP F7 8799 (Arno) Dubois to Min. 3 arrond. 14 Oct. 1809.

ANP F7 8936 (Trasimène) Norvins to Min. 3 arrond. 26 July 1811.

Ibid., 4 Sept. 1811.

ANP F7 8936 (Trasimène) Min. 3 arrond. to Savary, 30 Oct. 1811.

ASF Buon Governo, Filza 464 (1808) Petition of Passenini and Nenci, of Bettole, to Buon Governo, 21 March 1808.
Notes 321

93 ASF Buon Governo, Filza 461 (1808) Bartoloni, priest of Pieve San Stefano, to Pres. Buon Governo, April 1808.

94 ANP F7 8892 (Rome) Norvins to Min. 3 arrond. 3 April 1811.


5 Denunciation and the Limits of Ralliement: Mentalité Baroque in the New Regime

1 ANP BB5 313 (Rome) Coffinhal to Min. Justice, undated (autumn, 1810).
3 Fitzpatrick and Gellately (eds), Accusatory Practices, op. cit.
4 The states of the Italian peninsula came under several different Inquisitions, from the sixteenth to the early nineteenth centuries: Venice had its own Inquisition, the islands of Sicily and Sardinia came under that of Spain. The rest of the peninsula, save the small Republic of Lucca, came under the Roman Inquisition, but it was generally acknowledged that, in the mainland of the Kingdom of Naples, it had no presence outside the capital.


6 C. Giorgini, La Maremma Toscana nel Settecento. Aspetti sociali e religiosi (Teramo, 1968).
8 Broers, Politics, pp. 38–40.
9 See particularly James Buchanan Given, Inquisition and Medieval Society: Power, Discipline and Resistance in Languedoc (Ithaca, 1997), a study which stresses the central place of the Inquisition in the process of state-building on the frontiers of the newly expanded French state. Given’s work reveals how early the divergence began between the relationship between the Inquisition and the secular power.

10 ANP F7 8936 (Trasimène) Petition of the Leading Landowners of Canton Santa Maria, to S. Prefect, Perugia, 13 May 1811.
11 ANP F19 1072A Petition of the Inhabitants of Rancolungo, Jan. 1811.
12 See the correspondence to the Ministry of Police-Générale in ANP F7 8936 (Trasimène).
13 ANP F19 1072A S. Moscatelli to Bishop of Perugia, 29 Aug. 1811.
14 ANP F19 1072A A. Brizii, of Perugia, to S. Prefect, Perugia, 31 July 1811.
15 ANP F7 8936 (Trasimène) Prefect to Min. 3 arrond. 17 April 1812.
16 ANP F7 8936 (Trasimène) S. Prefect, Perugia to Min. 3 arrond. 3 July 1811.
17 ASF Buon Governo Filza 466 (1808) Anon. to Pres. Buon Governo, July 1808.
19 ANP F78796 (Apennines) S. Prefect, Sarzana, to Prefect, 9 July 1811.
20 ANP F78796 (Apennines) D’Auzers to Min. 3 arrond. 13 Sept. 1811.
21 ANP F78796 (Apennines) Min. 3 arrond. to Prefect, 4 Oct. 1811.
22 ANP F7 8823 (Gênes) Min. 3 arrond. to D’Auzers, 19 July 1810.
23 ANP F7 8818 (Gênes) D’Auzers to Min. 3 arrond. 19 June 1809.
This proved a perennial problem for French imperialism. An analysis of French rule in West Africa between 1895 and 1930 traces a shift in the French approach. In the first phase, up to 1918, they were driven by republican interventionism, emphasising the need to establish and enforce progress and modernisation through direct French rule, followed by a more conservative approach after 1918, which put more stress on accommodating local elites and working through them: Alice L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize. The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895–1930* (Stanford, 1997).


See the copious correspondence in ANP F7 8933 (Taro), particularly: D’Auzers to Min. 3 arrond. 23 Nov. 1813. Idem, 18 Dec. 1813. Prefect to Min. 3 arrond. 12 Jan. 1814.


Wickham, *Mountain*, pp. 349–50, on the long history of ‘rule by consensus’ in Tuscan mountain villages in the early Middle Ages.

ANP BB5 314 (Rome) Anon. to Min. Justice, undated (c. 1809).

Ibid., undated (c. 1811).


ANP F7 8868 (Ombronne) Dubois to Min. 3 arrond. 15 July 1811.

ANP F7 8888 (Rome) Norvins to Min. 3 arrond. 1 April 1811.

ANP F7 8805 (Arno) Dubois to Min. 3 arrond. 29 Dec. 1811.

ANP F7 8866 (Ombronne) Min. 3 arrond. to Prefect, 7 July 1809.

ANP F7 8795 (Apennines) Prefect to Min. 3 arrond. 24 Aug. 1810.


ANP F7 8795 (Apennines) Prefect to D’Auzers, 12 Oct. 1812.

ANP F7 8867 (Ombronne) Prefect to Min. 3 arrond. 4 June 1810.


ANP F7 8864 (Montenotte) Prefect to Min. 3 arrond. 21 April 1812.

ANP F7 8866 (Ombronne) Dubois to Min. 3 arrond. 13 July 1813.


ANP F7 8821 (Gênes) Prefect to Min. 3 arrond. 4 Jan. 1810.

ANP F7 8868 (Ombronne) Prefect to Min. 3 arrond. 29 Dec. 1810.


ANP BB18 144 (Arno) Proc. Cour Prévôtal, Florence, to Dubois, 8 Sept. 1811.


55 In the judgement of Richard Andrews: ‘Themistocrats enforced their ethos. Sons who betrayed family and professional obligations were punished. . . . Confinement or exile by lettre de cachet . . . was the principal weapon and recourse of themistocratic and other propertied families against sons and daughters who rejected paternal authority, disgraced the family reputation . . . or violated professional codes’: Richard Andrews, Law, Magistracy and Crime in Old Regime Paris, 1735–1789, vol. I, The System of Criminal Justice (Cambridge, 1994) pp. 269–70. A large number of those held under lettre de cachet in the Bastille, between 1659 and 1789, were the children of magistrates or other royal officials: Arlette Farge and Michel Foucault, Le désordre des familles: Lettres de cachet des Archives de la Bastille (Paris, 1982).

56 I have been very influenced by the arguments put forward in Stefano Mannoni, Une et Indivisible. Storia dell’accentramento amministrativo in Francia, vol. I, La formazione del sistema (1661–1815) (Milan, 1994) pp. 479–89, which emphasises the concern of the early Consulate, and of Roederer in particular, to protect the individual in the judicial system, without weakening the primacy of the public administration; it could not discard the judicial role of the prefects and the conseils de préfecture (many of whose attributes soon came to be shared with Police-Générale). In this context, the main point is that such distinctions mattered little to the revolutionaries of the Terror period, and not at all to the absolutist monarchy. See also: Paolo Colombo, Governo e Costituzione. La trasformazione del regime politico nelle teorie dell’età rivoluzionaria francese (Milan, 1993) pp. 66–76: The goal of post-1789 regimes was to strengthen the police and to establish a clear relationship between ‘police’ and the judicial process; the new order sought to divest the police of its former arbitrary and indefinite character, while still enabling it to protect both the public and private ‘tranquillity’.


58 ANP F7 8825 (Gênes) Police Comm. Genoa to Min. 3 arrond. 21 March 1811.


60 ANP F7 8825 (Gênes) Min. 3 arrond. to Police Comm. Genoa, 4 May 1811.

61 ANP F7 8936 (Trasimène) Prefect to Min. 3 arrond. 4 Jan. 1811. Norvins to Min. 3 arrond. 25 March 1812.

62 ANP F7 8899 (Rome) Prefect to Min. 3 arrond. 22 Aug. 1812. Norvins to Min. 3 arrond. 27 Sept. 1812.

63 ASG, Prefettura Francese, Pacco 116, Fasciolo 155, S. Prefect, Novi, to Prefect, 4 June 1813.

64 ASG, Prefettura Francese, Pacco 116, Fasciolo 155, Petition of Lorenzo Carbone, May 1813.
Amalgame: the Problems of Integration within the Imperial Administration

2 ASM Ministero Esteri (Regno d’Italia) Cart. 90 (Toscana, 1808) Tassoni to For. Min. 19 Jan. 1808.
3 Marrotta, Menou, pp. 1–2.
4 The definition of Piedmontese excludes Savoyards, whose territory had become part of France in 1792. Thus, it does not embrace such leading administrators as J-B. Carelli, public prosecutor on the Cour d’Appel/Impériale of Florence, or Gandolfi, the prefect of Ombronne department (Siena). The former’s links, especially, were with the magistrates of Lyon; the latter served his entire career in the French administrative system.
5 Romagnani, Balbo, II, p. 192.
6 ANP BB5 319 (Arno) Montiglio to Napoleon, undated (c. Aug. 1808).
7 Ferdinando Dal Pozzo, Opuscoli di un avvocato milanese, 8 vols (Milan, 1817).
10 Moulard, Camille, I, p. 11.
11 Ibid.
12 ANP AP-29–AP-16, A. Roederer to P-L. Roederer, 16 Nov. 1812.
14 A recurring theme in: Cesare Balbo, La Vita di Cesare Balbo (Turin, 1859).
16 Ibid., 15 June 1811.
17 Ibid., 1 Oct. 1810.
In fact, the Cour Impériale of Florence would number only 30 in the end, itself a sign that Paris was losing faith in the capacity of the Tuscan elites to integrate usefully.
326 Notes

58 ACG Municipio Francese, Filza 317 (Stabilimenti religiosi) Mayor to Prefect, 30 Dec. 1813.
59 ACG Municipio Francese, Filza 328 (Commissarii di polizia) Mayor to Prefect, 3 March 1813.
60 ACG Impero Francese (Corrispondenza, 1811–12) Registro 223 Mayor to Police Commissioners, 4 June 1812.
61 ANP BB5 296 (Gênes) Lebrun to Min. Justice, 1 jour complémentaire, year xiii/18 Sept. 1805.
62 See the correspondence in ANP BB5 296 (Gênes).
63 ANP BB5 296 (Gênes) Bigot to Min. Justice, 17 messidor, year xiii/6 July 1805.
64 ANP BB5 296 (Gênes) Prefect to Min. Justice, 11 March 1811.
65 See the copious correspondence in ANP BB5 302 (Taro).
66 For these appointments: ANP BB5 302 (Taro).
68 ANP BB5 302 (Taro) Nardon to Min. Justice, 17 Nov. 1806.
69 Ibid., 19 Aug. 1806.
72 ANP BB5 302 (Taro) Mastelloni to Min. Justice, 4 May 1806.
73 Ibid.
77 Santini, Stato, pp. 160–3.
78 ANP BB5 296 (Gênes) Proc. Cour d’Appel to Min Justice, 20 March 1807. Brunet has detected a similar pattern in Roussillon, over the Revolutionary–Napoleonic period, where recourse to the courts fell away in a traditionally litigious society: Roussillon, pp. 483–6.
83 Ibid., 24 Sept. 1812.
85 ANP BB5 296 (Gênes) Lebrun to Min. Justice, 9 thermidor, year xiii/28 July 1805.
87 ANP BB5 302 (Taro) Vicenzo Lusardi to Min. Justice, 19 Feb. 1807.
89 Almanach Impérial, 1811.
93 ANP BB5 302 (Taro) Piero Fainardi to Min. Justice, 4 Aug. 1806. idem, 2 Dec. 1808.
94 Ibid., 2 Dec. 1808.
97 ANP BB5 302 (Taro) Garibaldi to Min. Justice, 28 March 1808.
98 ANP BB5 313 (Rome) Giulio Impaccianti to Min. Justice, 24 Nov. 1811.
99 Almanach Impérial, 1811, 1812, 1813.
100 ANP BB5 314 (Rome) Giuseppe Liverziani to Min. Justice, 1 Aug. 1811.
102 ANP BB5 317 (Florence) Carelli to Min. Justice, 6 April 1809.
106 ANP BB5 302 (Taro) Francesco Scaravigo-Formica to Min. Justice, 10 Sept. 1806; idem, 18 Sept. 1811; idem, 18 Dec. 1813.
107 ANP BB5 302 (Taro) Rossi to Min. Justice, 10 Aug. 1806.
108 Almanach Impérial, 1808.
115 ANP F1bl/157/37, Dossier: Croze. ‘Renseignements’, Prefect, Gênes to Min. Int. 8 March 1811.
116 ANP F1bl/166/34, Dossier: Littardi. ‘Renseignements’, Nardon to Min. Int. 25 April 1812.
117 ANP F1e 81 (Pays réunis et annexés, Ligurie) Isengard to Min. Int. undated.
118 ANP F1e 81 (Ligurie) Isengard to Min. Int. 5 messidor, year xiii/25 June 1805 for a particularly dangerous incident, in the last weeks of Isengard’s tenure of the post.
119 ANP F1e 81 (Ligurie) Lebrun to Min. Int. 17 thermidor, year xiii/5 Aug. 1805.
120 ANP F1bl/172/4, Dossier: Reboul-Berville. ‘Candidats propos à remplir la sous préfecture de Novi’, Internal note, Min. Int. 2 Dec. 1806. Prefect, Gênes to Min. Int. 11 Nov. 1806.
121 For his background and career: ANP F1bl/172/4, Dossier: Reboul-Berville. On his anticlerical battles in Novi: Broers, Politics, pp. 74–6.
122 ANP F1bl/167/28, Dossier: Montiglio. ‘Renseignements’, Prefect, Gênes to Min. Int. 13 April 1811.
123 ANP F1bl/156/45, Dossier: Bricoli. Lebrun to Min. Int. 5 March 1806.
124 See the correspondence in: ANP F1bl/156/45, Dossier: Bricoli. ANP F1bl/162/4, Dossier Heim.
125 ANP F1bl/157/6, Dossier: Caravel.
126 ANP F1bl/166/34, Dossier: Locard.
127 ANP F1bl/176/17, Dossier: Vulpillat. ‘Renseignements’, Prefect, Arno to Min. Int. 13 May 1813.
128 ANP F1bl/176/17, Dossier: Vulpillat. Min. Int. to Napoleon, 15 March 1809.
129 ANP F1bl/176/17, Dossier: Vulpillat. Élisse to Min. Int. 4 April 1809.
130 ANP F1bl/176/17, Dossier: Vulpillat. Min. Int. to Napoleon, 15 March 1809.
131 ANP F1bl/176/17, Dossier: Vulpillat. ‘Renseignements’, Prefect, Arno to Min. Int. 13 May 1813.
133 ASM (Regno d’Italia) Minstero Esteri, IIA Divizione, Cartella 91 (Toscana, 1808) Tassoni to For. Min. 4 June 1808.
134 ANP F1bl/176/17, Dossier: Vulpillat. Min. Int. to Napoleon, 15 March 1809.
135 See the correspondence in: ANP F1bl/176/17, Dossier: Vulpillat.
137 ASM (Regno d’Italia) Minstero Esteri, IIA Divizione, Cartella 91 (Toscana, 1808) Tassoni to For. Min. 4 June 1808.
139 ANP F1bl/172/4, Dossier: Ré.
140 ANP F1bl/157/9, Dossier: Cassani. ‘Renseignements’, Prefect, Trasimeno to Min. Int. 14 July 1812.
141 ANP F1bl/174/9, Dossier: Torre. ‘Renseignements’, Prefect, Apennines to Min. Int. 9 Sept. 1806.
142 ANP F1bl/167/27, Dossier: Montani. ‘Renseignements’, Prefect, Trasimeno to Min. Int. 23 April 1812.
146 Cited in Moulard, Camille, II, p. 123.
148 Ibid., pp. 797–8.
149 Ibid., pp. 798, 800–3.
150 James C. Olson, Red Cloud and the Sioux Problem (Lincoln, 1965).
152 ANP F7 7016 (Bulletins, Florence) Dubois to Min. Police-Générale, 21 March 1812.
153 ASM Ministero Esteri (Regno d’Italia) Cart. 94 (Toscana, 1808) Tassoni to For. Min. 17 Jan. 1809.
156 ANP BB5 317 (Florence) Giunti, Councillor of State, to Min. Justice, 2 April 1809.
159 Johns, Canova, passim.
161 ANP BB5 317 (Florence) Frullani to Min. Justice, 27 Nov. 1809.
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162 ANP BB5 319 (Florence) Frullani to Min. of Justice, 12 Dec. 1812.
166 ANP BB5 314 (Rome) Anon. to Min. Justice, undated.

Part III  Assimilation: Cultural Imperialism in a European Context?

2 ANP F20 102 (Rome) ‘Rapport sur Rome et les États romains, 1810’.
4 ANP 29-AP-15, A. Roederer to P-L. Roederer, 3 Dec. 1811.
6 Idem, Delle rivoluzioni d’Italia, 3 vols (Turin, 1814).
7 Denina, Essai, pp. 46–7.
8 Denina, Rivoluzioni, I, pp. 2–6.
9 Denina, Essai, p. 61.
10 Ibid., p. 19.
11 Ibid., pp. 189–90.
12 Ibid., pp. 69–70.
13 Ibid., pp. 60–1.
15 ANP F7 7016 (Bulletins, Florence) Dubois to Min. Police-Générale, 23 Jan. 1813.

7 The Myth of the Lazy Native

16 See especially: Hussein Syed Alatas, The Myth of the Lazy Native: a Study of the Malays, Filipinos and Javanese from the 16th to the 20th Century and its Function in the Ideology of Colonial Capitalism (London, 1977) which has been a seminal influence on this section, and from which, obviously, it takes its title.
18 ANP, 29-AP-15, A. Roederer to P-L. Roederer, 24 July 1813.
19 Moulard, Lettres, Tournon to his father, 11 Feb. 1810.
22 Moulard, Lettres, Tournon to his mother, 9 March 1810.
23 Moulard, Lettres, Tournon to his father, 19 March 1810.
26 Lattimore, Frontier History, p. 470.
28 Ibid., 23 Dec. 1811.
29 Alatas, Lazy, p. 8.
31 Moulard, *Lettres*, Tournon to his mother, 3 Nov. 1810.
33 Cited in Alatas, Lazy, p. 8.
36 Moulard, *Lettres*, Tournon to his mother, 1 April 1810.
42 A central theme of Broers, *Politics*.
47 For the old order: Giorgini, *Maremma*.
48 ASM Ministero Esteri (Regno d’Italia) II Divisione, Cartella 94 (Toscana, 1809) Min. Int. to For. Min. 10 May 1809.
49 ASM Ministero Esteri (Regno d’Italia) II Divisione, Cartella 90 (Toscana, 1808) Tassoni to For. Min. 23 Jan. 1808.
51 ANP F7 8791-2-3 (Apennines) Prefect to Min. 3 arrond. 17 Feb. 1810.
52 Ibid., 15 Aug. 1812.
53 Ibid., 11 Sept. 1812. Ibid., 5 Oct. 1812.
55 ANP F7 8791-2-3 (Apennines) Prefect to Min. 3 arrond. 5 Jan. 1813.
56 Both are found in Biblioteca Palatina di Parma: Fondo Parmense N. 475 and N. 548, respectively.
57 Moreau de St Méry, *De la Danse* (Parma, 1803).
61 ANP F7 6531 (Rome) Norvins to Min. 3 arrond. 25 Sept. 1812.
62 Ibid., 3 Nov. 1812.
63 ANP F7 7018 (Bulletins, Rome) Norvins to Min. Police-Générale, 23 Feb. 1811.
65 Ibid., II, p. 376.
66 ANP F7 8794 (Apennines) D’Auzers to Min. 3 arrond. 3 Aug. 1810.
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67 ANP F7 8899 (Rome) Norvins to Min. 3 arrond. 7 Sept. 1812.
70 ANP F7 8820 (Gênes) ‘Rapport sur François Assereto’, 3 April 1812.
72 ANP F7 8220 (Gênes) Min. 3 arrond. to D’Auzers, 17 April 1812.
74 ANP F7 8805 (Arno) Dubois to Min. 3 arrond. 16 July 1813.
75 For Norvins, the climate and their remoteness from Rome had allowed them ‘to conserve more the purity of their original character’: ANP F7 6531 (Rome) D’Auzers to Min. 3 arrond. 10 Oct. 1812.
76 ANP 29-AP-15, A. Roederer to P. L. Roederer, 12 June 1813.
77 Ibid., 12 Sept. 1813.
78 Ibid., 24 July 1813.
81 ANP F1e 85 (Parme, Plaisance et Guastalle) Nardon to Min. Int. 20 March 1806.
82 Ibid., 25 Aug. 1806.
83 ANP F7 8488 (Sesie) ‘Compte Rendu du département de la Sesie’, ventôse, year xiii/Feb–March 1805.
84 ANP F7 8488 (Sesie) Prefect to Min. 3 arrond. nivôse, year xiii/Dec. 1805.
86 ANP F7 7016 (Bulletins, Florence) Dubois to Min. Police-Générale, 16 Nov. 1813.
87 Said, *Orientalism*, p. 35.
88 ANP F20 102 (Rome) ‘Rapport sur Rome et les états romains, 1810’.
89 ANP F7 7018 (Bulletins, Rome) Bulletin, 16 Feb. 1813.
90 ANP F7 6531 (Rome) Norvins to Min. 3 arrond. 8 Oct. 1812.
94 FLP/BA C0645. I Correspondence: A. General. Box 16. Folder 6 (Miollis, Sextius, 1805) Miollis to Eugène, 31 Jan. 1808 (NB it is doubtful if this letter could have been written before 2 February 1808.)
97 ANP 29-AP-15, A. Roederer to P. L. Roederer, 28 April 1813.
98 Ibid., 11 June 1813.
100 Ironically, the de facto British ruler of Portugal, Beresford, enacted just such a sweeping process in Portugal between 1808 and 1813, with far greater, more lasting success than the French in Italy: A. Do Carmo Reis, *As revoltas do Porto contra Junot* (Lisbon, 1991), pp. 138–40, for a brief analysis of the orders of the day.
Notes

101 ANP F7 6523A (Rapports, Toscane) Lagarde. to Min. 3 arrond. Aug. 1810.
102 ANP F7 8888 (Rome) Norvins to Min. 3 arrond. 14 Sept. 1810.
104 ANP 29-AP-15, A. Roederer to P. L. Roederer, 21 July 1813.
105 Ibid., 24 Jan. 1812.
106 Ibid., 11 June 1813. On the Baglioni: L. de Baglioni, *Pérouse te les Baglioni* (Paris, 1909). The family certainly had a ‘fighting reputation’ in the fourteenth century, to the point that most of its principal branches were extinct by the 1580s. Two branches in France continued the martial tradition, but the family in Perugia had moved into papal service by the seventeenth century, and ‘enjoyed more power than influence’ acting as stalwarts of the papal government against the popular factions: pp. 29, 475–8.
107 ANP 29-AP-15, A. Roederer to P. L. Roederer, 20 April 1812.
108 Ibid., 24 April 1813.
110 ANP 29-AP-15, A. Roederer to P. L. Roederer, 24 April 1813.
112 ANP F7 8799 (Arno), Dubois to Min. 3 arrond. 3 Nov. 1809.
113 ANP F7 8799 (Arno), Min. 3 arrond. to Dubois, 20 Jan. 1810.
114 ANP F7 8799 (Arno), Dubois to Min. 3 arrond. 8 Aug. 1812.
116 ANP F7 8798 (Arno), Dubois to Min. 3 arrond. 12 July 1813.
118 In general, conscription met little overt resistance in these regions, as opposed to upland areas. For specific local examples: Grab, ‘Army, State and Society’; Broers, *Napoleonic*, pp. 318–25. These trends follow those discerned by Woloch and Forrest within France at the outset of Napoleonic rule. For a wider European perspective: Broers, *Europe*, pp. 70–7.
121 AG C3 – 6, Eugène to Napoleon, 28 Nov. 1808.
122 ANP 29-AP-15, A. Roederer to P. L. Roederer, 24 April 1813.
123 ANP F7 7016 (Bulletin, Florence) Dubois to Min. 3 arrond. 26 Dec. 1812.
124 Ibid., 4 Nov. 1812.
125 ANP F1e 85 (Parme, Plaisance et Guastalle) Nardon to Min. Int. 1 Sept. 1806.

8 Towards a Gallic Laager

1 ANP F7 8807 (Arno) Dubois to Min 3 arrond. 7 April 1813.
2 ANP F7 7018 (Bulletin, Rome) Dubois to Min. 3 arrond. 20 Sept. 1811.
5 Moulard, *Camille*, pp. 2–3.
7 ANP F7 7016 (Bulletin, Florence) Dubois to Min. Police-Générale, 21 March 1812.
10 ANP F1e 85 (Parme, Plaisance et Guastalle) Nardon to Min. Int. 10 Sept. 1806.
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12 ANP F1e 85 (Parme, Plaisance et Guastalle) Nardon to Min. Int. 10 Sept. 1806.
13 ANP F7 7018 (Bulletins, Rome) Norvins to Min. Police-Générale, 11 April 1812.
14 ANP F7 7016 (Bulletins, Florence) Dubois to Min. Police-Générale, 3 March 1812.
15 ANP F7 7018 (Bulletins, Rome) Norvins to Min. Police-Générale, 21 May 1812.
16 Cited in Moulard, *Camille*, II, p. 130.
17 ANP F20 102 (Rome) ‘Rapport sur Rome et les États Romains, 1810’.
19 Ibid., 6 May 1810.
20 Ibid., 12 Feb. 1812.
22 ANP F7 7016 (Bulletins, Florence) Dubois to Min. Police-Générale, 21 March 1812.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid., 1 July 1809.
28 Moulard, *Lettres*, Tournon to his mother, 7 June 1810.
30 ASM Ministero Esteri (Regno d’Italia) II Divisione, Cart. 94 (Toscana, 1809) Tassoni to For. Min. 6 May 1809. Ibid., 1 July 1809.
32 ANP 29-AP-16, Madame A. Roederer to P-L. Roederer, 23 Sept. 1812.
34 I am deeply grateful to Prof. Ettore Dezza of the Faculty of Law, Università degli Studi, Piacenza, for telling me of an oral tradition that recounts the marriages of three French gendarmes in this way in Borgo di Taro, about 1810.
35 I am deeply grateful to Prof. Ettore Dezza of the Faculty of Law, Università degli Studi, Piacenza, for telling me of an oral tradition that recounts the marriages of three French gendarmes in this way in Borgo di Taro, about 1810.
38 Moulard, *Lettres*, Tournon to his mother, 3 Nov. 1810.
40 See especially the account by the German composer, Reichard, from 1802 in Fierro, *Consulat*, pp. 800–3.
41 Moulard, *Lettres*, Tournon to his mother, 1 April 1810.
42 Ozouf, *Festivals*, passim.
44 Moulard, *Camille*, II, p. 130.
45 ANP F1e 86 (Parme, Plaisance et Guastalle) Nardon to Min. Int. 10 March 1806.
46 ANP F1e 85 (Parme, Plaisance et Guastalle) Nardon to Min. Int. 8 Aug. 1806.
48 ANP F7 8932 (Taro) D’Auzers to Min. 3 arrond. 25 Jan. 1813.
50 Moulard, *Camille*, II, pp. 126, 129.
52 ANP F1e 85 (Parma, Plaisance et Guastalle) Nardon to Min. Int. 10 Sept. 1806.
53 ANP 29-AP-16, A. Roederer to P-L. Roederer, 30 March 1812.
54 ANP F1e 85 (Parma, Plaisance et Guastalle) Nardon to Min. Int. 11 Sept. 1806.
55 ANP AF IV 1046 Min. Cultes to Napoleon, 7 March 1807.
56 ANP 29-AP-16, A. Roederer to P-L. Roederer, 3 Dec. 1811.
57 Ibid., 4 April 1812.
58 ANP 29-AP-15, A. Roederer to P-L. Roederer, 20 June 1812.
60 ANP F1e 86 (Parma, Plaisance et Guastalle) Nardon to Min. Int., 10 Feb. 1806.
62 ANP F1bl/168/1 Dossier: Nardon, Hugues, Giovanni Tommasini, Prof. of Medicine to Min. Int. 9 Sept. 1810.
63 ANP F1e 85 (Parma, Plaisance et Guastalle) Nardon to Junot 17 June 1806.
64 Moulard, *Lettres*, Tournon to his father, 11 Feb. 1810.
65 ANP 29-AP-16, A. Roederer to P-L. Roederer, 23 Dec. 1811.
66 ANP F1bl/166/34 Dossier: Locard Locard to Min. Int., undated (c. 1811).
67 ANP F1e 85 (Parma, Plaisance et Guastalle) Nardon to Min. Int., 1 March 1806.
68 Moulard, *Lettres*, Tournon to Degerando, 5 April 1810.
70 Moulard, *Lettres*, Tournon to his mother, 17 June 1810.
73 ANP 29-AP-16, A. Roederer to P-L. Roederer, 9 March 1812.
74 ANP 29-AP-15, Madame A. Roederer to P-L. Roederer, undated, Dec. 1812.
75 Ibid., 15 Nov. 1813.
76 ANP F7 7016 (Bulletins, Florence) D. Gen. Florence to Min. Police-Générale, 1 Sept. 1813.
81 The author is deeply indebted to his friend and colleague, Professor Wolfgang M. Schröder, of the Philosophy department of the University of Tübingen, for his fruitful observations on the concept of the civilising mission.
83 I have attempted a full discussion of this in *Politics, passim*.
84 ANP F1e 85 (Parma, Plaisance et Guastalle) Directeur, Lycée de Parme, to Min. Int. 25 Aug. 1806.
85 ANP F1e 85 (Parma, Plaisance et Guastalle) Nardon to Min. Int. 20 Aug. 1806.
86 Ibid., 11 Oct. 1806.
87 Ibid.
89 ANP F1e 85 (Parma, Plaisance et Guastalle) Nardon to Min. Int. 3 Nov. 1806.
91 ANP F1e 85 (Parma, Plaisance et Guastalle) Nardon to Min. Int. 3 Nov. 1806.
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93 ANP F17 7444 État des candidats, Lycée de Parme, 25 July 1808.
94 ANP F17 7444 Extrait des Minutes de la Secrétairerie d'État. Imperial Decree, 16 Sept. 1813.
97 Coppini, Granducato, pp. 158–61.
98 Romagnani, Balbo, II, pp. 52–72, 81–123.
102 ANP F1e 85 (Parme, Plaisance et Guastalle) Nardon to Junot, 17 June 1806.
103 ANP F7 8932 (Taro) Prefect to Min. 3 arrond. 2 Nov. 1812.
104 ANP F7 8932 (Taro) D’Auzers to Min. 3 arrond. 25 Jan. 1813.
106 Ibid., pp. 59–60.
109 Romagnani, Balbo, II, p. 222.
111 For the fullest account: Madelin, Rome, pp. 478–84.
112 Ibid., p. 480.
113 Ibid., p. 481.
114 ANP F7 8932 (Taro) ‘Notes sur les chefs de familles les plus marquants de la ville de Plaisance et qui seraient dans le cas d’être appelés à Paris’, 25 Jan. 1813.
115 Madelin, Rome, p. 483.
116 ANP F7 7016 (Bulletins, Florence) Dubois to Min. Police-Générale, 6 Nov. 1813.
117 ANP F7 7016 (Bulletins, Florence) Dubois to Min. Police-Générale, 19 Oct. 1813.
118 On the conduct of the bishop of Arezzo: Broers, Politics, p. 87.
119 ANP F7 7016 (Bulletins, Florence) Dubois to Min. Police-Générale, 13 Nov. 1813.
120 Ibid., 3 March 1813.
123 Puymège, Chauvin, passim.

Conclusion: a Subaltern Italy?

ANP F7 7016 (Bulletins, Florence) Dubois to Min. Police-Générale, 14 Nov. 1813.
Ibid., 24 Nov. 1813.
ANP F7 7016 (Bulletins, Florence) Dubois to Min. Police-Générale, 14 Nov. 1813.
Ibid.
Ibid.
Ibid., 28 Oct. 1813.
Broers, Politics, p. 173.
ANP F7 7016 (Bulletins, Florence) Dubois to Min. Police-Générale, 13 Nov. 1813.
Ibid., 15 Nov. 1813.
Ibid., 21 March 1812.
F7 8791-2-3 (Apennines) Prefect to Min. 3 arrond., 6 May 1809; 9 June 1809; 16 June 1809.
Ibid., 28 June 1808.
Ibid.
ANP F7 7016 (Bulletins, Florence) Dubois to Min. Police-Générale, 17 March 1813.
The central theme of Bayly, Empire.
ANP F7 8905 (Rome) S. Prefect, Piacenza, to Nardon, 2 Jan. 1811.
See Broers, Politics, p. 164.
E. Passerin d’Entrèves, La Giovinezza di Cesare Balbo (Florence, 1940) p. 6.
The Piedmontese nobility were seldom educated outside the kingdom, although almost all of them attended the University of Turin. Their experience was not typical in Italy, however.
Ibid., pp. 275–8.
ANP F7 8932 (Taro) ‘Rapport, 3 arrond. de Police’, 27 Sept. 1812.
ANP F7 8932 (Taro) D’Auzers to Min. 3 arrond. 1 April 1812.
ANP F7 7016 (Bulletins, Florence) Dubois to Min. Police-Générale, 21 March 1812.
Rosario Romeo, Cavour e il suo tempo, 3 vols (Turin, 1974) I, pp. 87ff.
Serra, Memorie, p. 137.
ANP F7 8927 (Taro) D’Auzers to Min. Police-Générale, 12 July 1809.
Furet, Revolutionary, pp. 93, 111–13.
Axtell, European, pp. 245–6. The italics are Axtell’s own.
Ibid., p. 246.
Serra, Memorie, pp. 137–9.
Ibid., p. 147.


53 John A. Davis, ‘Casting off the “Southern Problem”: or the Peculiarities of the South Reconsidered’, in Schneider, *Italy’s ‘Southern Question’*, pp. 205–24, 217.

54 ANP F7 7016 (Bulletins, Florence) Dubois to Min. Police-Générale, 27 Dec. 1813.

55 Ibid., 30 Aug. 1813.


57 Zobi, *Storia*, V, pp. 40–51, 99–108, 376–84, 497: Zobi was a convinced nationalist and centraliser, but points to aspects of ‘Austrianisation’ and centralising tendencies that antagonised many Tuscans outside committed political circles, prior to the 1848 revolution.


61 Ibid., pp. 37–8. Lyttleton also underlines the disappointment of many liberal supporters of Unification, particularly in Lombardy and Tuscany, who had hoped to see the end of Austrian centralisation, only to find it replaced by a unitary state equally committed to stifling regional autonomy: pp. 39–43.

62 Ironically, the presence of effective parliamentary institutions – unthinkable under Napoleon – provided the conduit through which the old culture of patronage survived and national political parties remained coalitions of local interests. Levy, *Italian*, pp. 3–5 stresses the regional nature of both Christian Democrat and Communist support in modern politics. Alessandro Pizzorno, ‘Amoral Familism’, on the consequences of the absence of patronage for a region. Tarrow, *Between Center and Periphery* emphasises the positive nature of the relationship between centre, periphery and political patronage.


64 A central theme of Duggan, *Crispi*, is his shift away from his early idealism – federalism included – arising from his experience of governing the unitary state. Duggan’s seminal biography charts this convincingly, but without direct reference to the Napoleonic heritage.

66 Dickie, Darkest, pp. 1–23.
67 Axtell, European, p. 247.
69 Ibid., p. 212.
72 Cooper, ‘Conflict’, p. 1519.
73 Cited in Madelin, Rome, p. 289.
74 ANP F1bl/158/38 Dossier: Dupont-Delporte, Henri-Jean-Pierre.
75 ANP F1bl/157/6 Dossier: Caravel, Frédéric Jean-François.
76 ANP F1bl/166/15 Dossier: Marie-Juste Antoine de La Rivoire de la Tourette.
82 ANP F7 8791–2–3 (Apennines) Prefect to Min. 3 arrond. 6 July 1809.
83 AST Segretaria di Stato per Affari Interni. Governatori e Comandanti: Mazzo 14 (1819) Governor of Genoa to For. Min. 8 Aug. 1819.
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