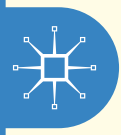

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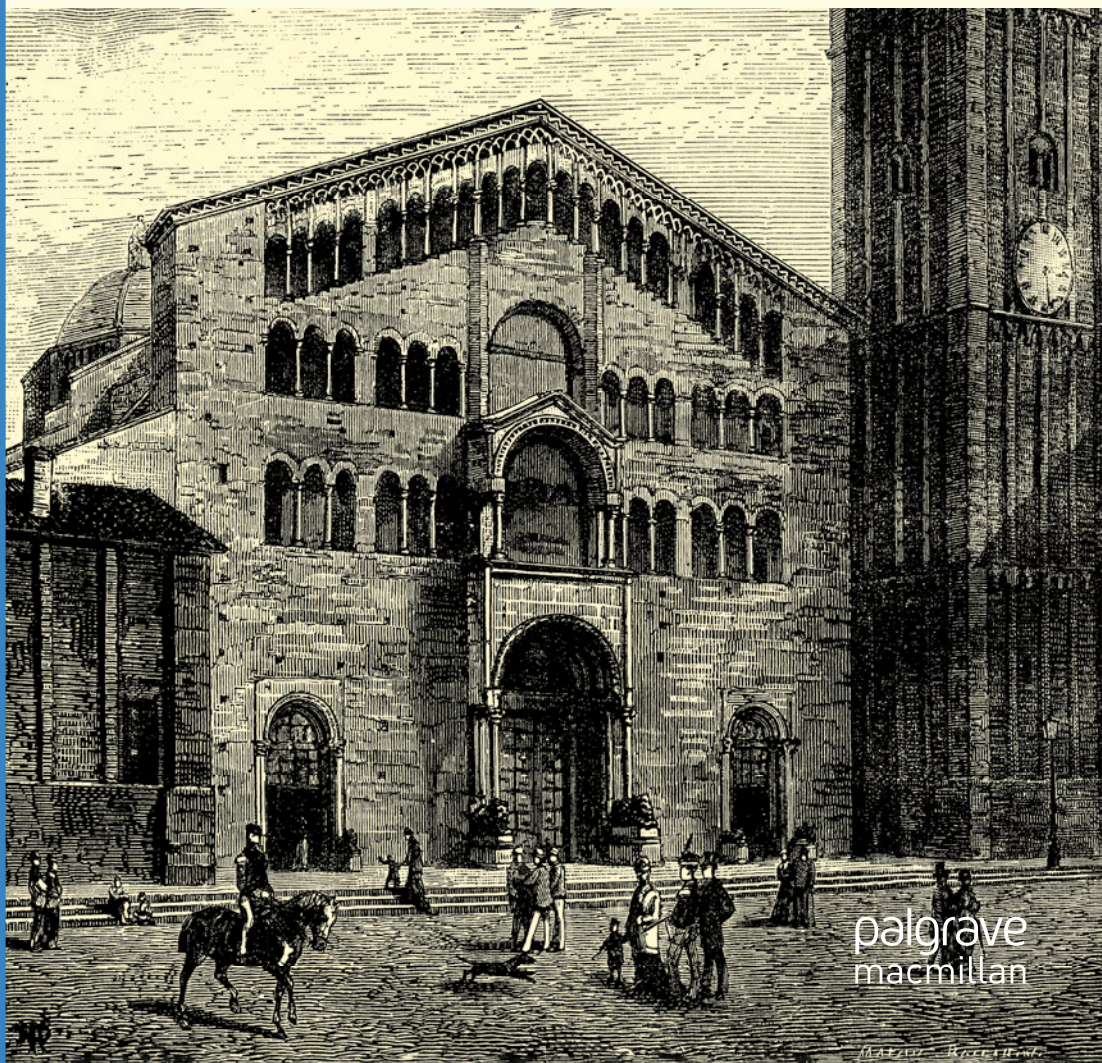
French Rule in the States of Parma, 1796–1814

Working with Napoleon

Doina Pasca Harsanyi



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To Anna and Michael

Preface

I started working on this study some years ago almost by accident. One of the main characters in *Lessons from America*, a book on French émigrés in the United States I published in 2010, was Médéric Louis Elie Moreau de Saint-Méry. One year after returning from the United States to France in 1800, Moreau was nominated adviser to the court of the duke of Parma, and immediately afterwards, Administrator General of the duchies of Parma, Piacenza and Guastalla. Following Moreau's career trail seemed a promising avenue and I travelled to Parma with the intention of beginning research for a political biography. The treasure troves I found in the archives and libraries of Parma, Piacenza and neighbouring communities soon induced me to change my plans. The more I read, the more this archival bounty persuaded me to delve into the historical experience of the States of Parma during the French era (1796–1814). The present book is the result of those inquiries.

Mount Pleasant, MI — Doina Pasca Harsanyi

Acknowledgements

I am delighted to acknowledge at long last the many debts I incurred while working on this book. David Laven has cheerfully, and ever so tactfully, steadied my first forays into Napoleonic scholarship: he has always been kindness itself and I am so pleased to have a chance to thank him. The debt I owe to Patrice Gueniffey can never be repaid, but it is a joy to put in writing my gratitude for these many years of constant generosity and friendship. At different times, following the rhythms of academic gatherings, I had the good fortune to discuss my work with Rafe Blaufarb, Alex Grab, Ruth Godfrey, Rozzy Hooper-Hammersley, Peter Hicks, Marc Lerner, David Markham, Edna Muller Markham, Alex Mikaberidze and Ron Steinberg. I could not be more grateful for their freely given advice and considered comments that made me rethink what I thought I knew and see more clearly the path this project was taking. My colleagues in the history department at Central Michigan University have been models of patience and altruism as they listened to me talk about Parma, Napoleon and not much else: a heartfelt thanks to all. In Parma, warm appreciations are owed to the personnel at Biblioteca Palatina and the Archivio di Stato, even more to Valentina Bocchi and Luigi Pelizzoni, a librarian's librarian who will find the answer to any question. I hope this book will go some way to convey my gratitude for the delightful conversations where professors Marzio Dall'Acqua, Claudio Bargelli and Carla Corradi Martini graciously shared their boundless knowledge and love for Parma's past. Meeting Wallis Wilde Menozzi and Paolo Menozzi was one of those strokes of luck one does not deserve but one accepts eagerly and wholeheartedly.

I wish to thank Palgrave Macmillan's anonymous reviewers for insightful recommendations that greatly improved the final version of the book. It was a pleasure working with Emily Russel, Steve Fassioms and Eliana Rangel, whose professionalism and unfailing courtesy did much to smooth the transition from manuscript to publication.

Contents

Abbreviations

AMAE	Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Paris
AMD	Archives du Ministère de la Défense, Vincennes
AN	Archives Nationales Paris
ASPc	Archivio di Stato Piacenza
ASPr	Archivio di Stato Parma
BP	Biblioteca Palatina Parma

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In December 1805, a violent insurrection broke out in mountain villages around the city of Piacenza in the States of Parma, Piacenza and Guastalla, a territory under French control although not fully included in the Napoleonic Empire. Authorities were taken aback. It defied reason that, only days after the much-publicized victory at Austerlitz, disparate bands of rural rebels arose at the sound of ancient alarm bells ringing across the Apennines (*campana a martella*) to test the will of the French state and its army. Although an isolated event, the violent popular rebellion forced senior imperial administrators and Napoleon himself to turn their attention to a peripheral territory best known for apathy and inertia.

The Duchies of Parma, Piacenza and Guastalla, commonly referred to as the States of Parma, stood rather incongruously on the margins of French-dominated Italy. A territory of about 6000 square kilometers, with a population of little more than 420,000 inhabitants (426,512 in 1815), tucked between the Piedmont, the duchy of Milan, Genoa and Tuscany, the small state had changed hands between the Hapsburgs and the Bourbons since 1731, when the Farnese line (rulers by papal decree since the sixteenth century) died out.[1] Eventually, the duchies settled for Spanish guardianship at the Treaty of Basel (22 July 1795). In 1796, when General

[1] For data concerning the surface and the population throughout the French occupation, see Lorenzo Molossi, *Vocabolario topografico dei Ducatti di Parma, Piacenza e Guastalla*

D. P. Harsanyi, *French Rule in the States of Parma, 1796–1814*,
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Bonaparte launched the First Italian campaign, Parma was undergoing a conservative restoration, in sharp contrast with the Enlightenment-minded reorganization carried out in Milan and Tuscany. Anxious to secure Spain's neutrality, the Directory (the French government as of 1795) instructed General Bonaparte to refrain from any interference in the political status quo in Parma. Consequently, the duchies missed the political shakeup of the sister republic phase—the only exception to the policy of revolutionizing conquered territories during the First Italian campaign. Alone in Northern Italy, Duke Ferdinand remained on his throne until his death in 1802, the year when—to paraphrase Victor Hugo—Napoleon was bursting through Bonaparte. Still undecided on how to deal with this peculiar situation, he sent Moreau de Saint-Méry to Parma, with orders to introduce vigorous French reforms without obliterating traditional institutions and without disturbing existing social hierarchies. The insurrection of late 1805 amply proved that being simultaneously in and out of the French web was not a workable arrangement, not in an increasingly centralized empire. Emperor (as of 1804) Napoleon switched gears, abandoned the pretense of autonomy and propelled the States of Parma on a track of accelerated conversion into a French department. He and his local representatives considered the process completed in 1808 when the territory, renamed the Department of Taro, was absorbed in the imperial system. Or rather, the new department absorbed the imperial system, efficiently and durably: upon surveying the first years of post-Napoleonic Europe, David Laven and Lucy Riall established that it was in the duchies that 'the most complete loyalty to the Napoleonic tradition was found'.[2] Probing how and why a periphery long at odds with the political movements swirling outside its borders turned into a model of Napoleonic integration was the starting point of this study.

Broadly speaking, two methodological paths tackle the Napoleonic period in Italy: modernization and colonialism. Both grapple with the double-sword nature of French rule, the mix of good and bad features that gave the regime a Janus face, in Alexander Grab's inspired formula.[3]

(Parma: Tipografia Ducale, 1833–1834). The above quoted data, listed for the year 1815, on pp. 24–25.

[2] David Laven and Lucy Riall, 'Restoration Government and the Legacy of Napoleon' in *Napoleon's Legacy. Problems of Government in Restoration Europe.* Edited by David Laven and Lucy Riall (Oxford: Berg, 2000), 1–26 (10).

[3] 'Napoleon's rule over Europe possessed a Janus face, combining reform and innovation with subordination and exploitation'. Alexander Grab, *Napoleon and the Transformation of Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 19.

Modernization approaches tend to focus on the good.[4] Early monographs addressed the period's political conflicts, legal frameworks and philosophical debates, and treated Napoleon's government there as the opening act for Italy's unification in a modern state.[5] By the second half of the twentieth century, historians had turned their gaze to signature Napoleonic administrative and judicial innovations, which cut through regional particularities to impose a uniform, centralized, secular governing apparatus throughout the peninsula—in short, kicking off the transition to a modern social order.[6] As Anna Maria Rao concluded in an excellent

[4] See Mark Elvin, 'A short definition of 'Modernity'?' *Past and Present*, 113 (Nov. 1986): 209–213, on the difficulties of settling for a precise definition of a concept he qualifies as 'elusive' despite its ubiquitous use. John Breuilly has reviewed the main directions of modernization theories and suggested ways to avoid the pitfall of determinism in 'Modernisation as Social Evolution: The German Case, c.1800–1880' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 15 (2005): 117–147. Slippery as the term modernization is, it will continue to inform our understanding of the Napoleonic period mainly because the historical actors involved believed in it, even though they did not use the same terminology. See the brief discussion in Philip Dwyer and Alan Forrest, 'Napoleon and His Empire: Some Issues and Perspectives', the introduction to the volume *Napoleon and His Empire. Europe 1804–1814*, edited by Philip G. Dwyer and Alan Forrest (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 1–16 (9–10).

[5] Benedetto Croce's historicism inspired many investigations focused on the movement of ideas and the evolution of theoretical models. A good overview of Crocean historicism can be found in David D. Roberts, *Benedetto Croce and the Uses of Historicism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987). Landmark monographs: Vittorio Fiorini and Francesco Lemmi, *Il Periodo Napoleonico 1799–1814* (1900); Francesco Lemmi, *Le origini del risorgimento italiano* (1789–1815) (1906). Notably, Lemmi extended the analysis to the Enlightenment in the second edition of the work: *Le origini del risorgimento italiano* (1748–1815) (1924). Later studies inspired by Lemmi's intellectual framework: Giorgio Candeloro, *Storia dell'Italia Moderna*, vol. I 'Le origini del Risorgimento' (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1956); Carlo Capra, *L'Età rivoluzionaria e napoleonica in Italia* (Torino: Loescher, 1978). Antonino de Francesco's recent work has focused on the Napoleonic era's impact on the political culture in the peninsula: *Antonino De Francesco, L'Italia di Bonaparte. Politica, statualità e nazione nella penisola tra due rivoluzioni, 1796–1821* (Torino: UTET, 2011); *Storie dell'Italia rivoluzionaria e napoleonica, 1796–1814* (Milano: Mondadori 2016).

[6] In a detailed review, Steven Englund paid homage to Stuart Woolf's pioneering examination of European integration for opening up the field to innovative historical studies that amount to 'nothing less than a scholarly renaissance in terms of quantity, quality, and novelty of approach …. They have so decisively redirected the river of Napoleonic scholarship that it no longer bypasses places named society, culture, administration, economy, education, all of which are now, thanks to them, known to be as important as the older, more familiar ports of call (constitution, civil code, conscription, high politics, etc.)'. '*Monstre sacré*: the question of cultural imperialism and the Napoleonic empire' in *The Historical Journal*, 51, 1 (2008):

historiography review, innovative methodologies greatly enriched our understanding of the moving parts that built the Napoleonic system in Italy, but 'questions of historical interpretation have remained basically the same'.[7]

Michael Broers' prodigious work, beginning with *The Napoleonic Empire in Italy: Cultural imperialism in a European context?* (2005), trained the spotlight on the not so good, namely on the inescapable fact that the Napoleonic empire was a state born of military conquest, governed by force, principally to the benefit of France. As such, Edward Said's orientalist thesis or historical anthropologist Nathan Wachtel's concepts of acculturation and integration pertaining to the European expansion in Africa and Asia supply critical insights into the way the French accumulated, exercised and eventually lost power. Broers amply showed that categories borrowed from colonialism studies are especially helpful in dissecting the Napoleonic empire's governing techniques, ranging from soft to hard, always geared towards coercion and control. The first step: *ralliement*, a form of integration that 'implied a wide-ranging societal acceptance and approval of Napoleonic values and institutions' on the assumption that enough Italians could be persuaded to 'absorb French laws, institutions and mores without prompting and coercion'. *Ralliement* generally moved towards *amalgame* or 'a policy entailing active participation in the regime and thus, submission to its mores'.[8] Ideally, the ensemble of administrative tactics culminated in *acculturation or assimilation* to

215–250 (217–218). Englund referred to Stuart Woolf, *Napoleon's integration of Europe* (London and New York: Rutledge, 1991). For the Italian Peninsula, influential monographs include Pasquale Villani, *Italia Napoleonica* (Torino: Loescher, 1973); Livio Antonielli, *I Prefetti dell'Italia Napoleonica: Repubblica e Regno d'Italia* (Bologna: IL Mulino, 1983); John A. Davis *Italy in the Nineteenth Century, 1796–1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) and *Conflict and Control: Law and Order in Nineteenth-Century Italy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1988); Alexander Grab, *Napoleon and the Transformation of Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003). See also the impressive collective work *Italia Napoleonica: Dizionario Critico*, edited by Luigi Mascilli Migliorini (Torino: UTET, 2011). In addition, many regional studies narrowed the focus to examine the interactions between local practices and imperial institutions.

[7] Anna Maria Rao, 'Old and New Trends in Historiography', in *Napoleon's Empire. European Politics in Global Perspective*. Ute Planert editor (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 84–100 (86).

[8] Michael Broers, *The Napoleonic Empire in Italy, 1796–1814. Cultural Imperialism in a European Context?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 23 and 123–124. The concept of *ralliement* builds on Nathan Wachtel's concept of *integration* understood as unforced incorporation of foreign elements into indigenous systems.

the centralized, scientific, secular, bureaucratic, that is, modern, model of state and society in which the French took so much pride.

As I worked my way through the voluminous files preserved at the State Archives in Parma under the laconic heading 'The French in the states' (*Francesi negli stati*), complementary insights from modernization and colonialism methodological threads helped me grasp the intricacies of life under French occupation in this distinctive periphery. What intrigued me most was Broers' statement that the French experiment in Italy ended in failure: '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 power. Yet fail they did'.[9] With this disconcerting assertion ringing in my ears, I returned to the archives with new questions: What counted as failure and what as accomplishment during the 12 years of French rule in the States of Parma? Who decided on the matter? To the point, what did the French think they were doing in this corner of Italy compared with what the Parmense thought the French were doing in their country? Looking for answers, I examined side-by-side local and French documents regarding the same set of circumstances. The archives and libraries in Parma and Piacenza are brimming with local testimonies to the French period: correspondence, diaries, and awkwardly worded reports from village mayors and priests, alongside diplomatic statements composed in polished French by Parmense notabilities. For the French side, I traced, from the same local archives to the National Archives, Ministry of Defense Archives and Foreign Affairs Archives in Paris the private writings and official records left by the French executives in place.

The Napoleonic period in Parma has attracted modest historical scrutiny, compared with neighbouring Liguria, Tuscany or the Kingdom of Italy. The archival material is still lightly processed—indeed, I believe part of the impact of this book will come from unearthing a wealth of fascinating primary documents. Parmense historians tend to see the French occupation as a transitional episode sandwiched between the more alluring times of Bourbon rule and Maria Luigia's reign. Surveys of Napoleonic Italy typically mention in passing an 'also annexed' territory that joined the empire in 1808.[10] The relative marginalization stems from the unusual

[9] Broers, *The Napoleonic Empire in Italy*, 2.

[10] A few recent articles have examined aspects of Napoleonic rule in the States of Parma, but interested readers must go back to the early twentieth century to find monographs of the

position on the Napoleonic chessboard, which, however, also accounts for Parma's relevance to the study of French-dominated Europe. Due to international arrangements, the territory turned into a laboratory for political experimentation. Successive French governing teams oscillated between hands-off policies and intensive assimilationist schemes; the hesitancy forced all executives in charge, and at times Napoleon himself, to improvise and rethink key elements of the imperial agenda. Locals became experts at scrutinizing, and making sense of, fluctuating if relentless outside pressures. Even when open revolt broke out, as in the case of the Apennine insurgency, there was no compact on the anti-French front. Rather, the insurrection brought to the surface deeply buried fractures as the citizenry split into pro- and anti-insurgent camps; the rebels themselves squabbled over their own motivations and objectives. Crucially, elite ambivalence—an issue discussed in depth in this book—more than made up for popular resentment and complicated political calculations. The hardest part of life under Napoleonic occupation was not finding ways to fight it: it was separating the potential for a new beginning from the exploitative opportunism of the French state. Imperial administrators, on their side, were no less torn. Caught between Napoleon's changing demands and the unpredictable reality on the ground, they struggled to be good occupiers, as they understood it: to bring good laws to people accustomed to bad laws and uphold the promises of an enlightened polity. For Napoleon's representatives, the hardest part was not putting down rebellions and imposing the French order; it was deciding the ratio between fulfilling their law enforcement duties and staying true to the progressive governance ethos that justified their power to alter the lives of people they had never laid eyes on. The Napoleonic system restructured identities and compelled both the French administrators and their *administrés* to negotiate with themselves before negotiating with each other. The way this happened in the atypical circumstances of the States of Parma weaken the aura of French invincibility. It revealed scores of vulnerabilities concealed under the imperial swagger; quite to the surprise of all involved,

entire period. Lenny Montagna, *Il dominio Francese a Parma 1796–1815* (Piacenza: 1926); Vincenzo Paltrinieri, *I moti contro Napoleone negli Stati di Parma e Piacenza (1805–1806). Con altri studi storici* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1927); Umberto Benassi, *Il Generale Bonaparte ed il Duca e i Giacobini di Parma e Piacenza* (Parma: Deputazione di Storia Patria, 1912). For current explorations see especially the contributions to the volume *Storia di Parma, vol.V. I Borbone: fra illuminismo e rivoluzioni*. A cura di Alba Mora (Parma: MUP, 2015).

this made the administrative machinery more intelligible and easier to handle.

French administrators and local residents tacitly agreed that there was something unique about an occupation, which, in Carlo Zaghi's words, 'triggered, at all levels, reflections, perplexity, rethinking, hopes, and ferments'.[11] Both sides had a stake in making a success of this extraordinary experience; however, the meaning of success varied with the 'hopes and ferments' that different groups, French and Parmense, placed in the French system. Recent research has emphasized the necessary collaboration between occupiers and occupied in Napoleonic Europe. I draw on these findings, but I argue that, beyond pragmatic deal making, citizens availed themselves of French ambivalence to interpret on their own terms the model of society landed in their midst. Despite the undeniable power imbalance, developments we now categorize as *ralliement*, *amalagame*, assimilation or indeed modernization did not just happen to them: local groups and individuals actively participated in the way French-imposed innovations worked—or not, as the case may have been—on the ground. To return to Michael Broers' inference of failure: the French may have failed to adapt their system to suit Italian interests; in their turn, Italians—Parmense in this case—did not fail to adapt the French system to suit their idea of what the future of their society should be. This study's main objective is to evaluate local capacity for agency and identify the strategies Parma's residents deployed to inflect to their advantage policies made in Paris and not necessarily with their interests in mind. The book does not have the ambition to be a complete monograph. The archive-driven narrative explores the workings of successive French administrations through the parallel lenses of Napoleonic officials and Parmense citizens, with the focus on collaborative processes that eventually shaped the Napoleonic era's legacy. To this end, each chapter includes granular analyses of relevant characters, events and occurrences that help distil day-to-day experiences, big and small, into the constant give-and-take that made this period so intriguing for all who lived through it and so rich in long-term consequences.

A final note on the use of toponyms: the duchies were composed of Parma, Piacenza and Guastalla, but the latter played a lesser role compared with Parma and Piacenza. During the first Italian campaign (1796)

[11] Carlo Zaghi, *L'Italia di Napoleone dalla Cisaplina al Regno. Storia d'Italia* diretta da Giuseppe Galasso (Torino: UTET, 1968), vol. 18, 100.

Bonaparte ignored the duchies' neutrality and redistributed parts of Guastalla as the French army redrew borders and swapped territories. Moreau de Saint-Méry's administration essentially ignored the city. On 30 March 1806, Napoleon awarded Guastalla and its environs to his sister Pauline who briefly enjoyed the title Duchess of Guastalla. Soon thereafter (24 May 1806) the Kingdom of Italy purchased the territory. For all these reasons, Guastalla is not included in the present book, the events discussed here concerning mainly Parma, Piacenza and their respective regions. Until 1808 when it became the Department of Taro, the country's official name was States of Parma, which tends to overlook Piacenza. For concision's sake, I follow custom and use either Parma or Parma–Piacenza to refer to the entire territory, and Parmense to refer to all the inhabitants. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from French and Italian are mine.

CHAPTER 2

Prelude to Napoleon

The Duchy of Parma was established in 1545 by Pope Paul III for Piero Luigi Farnese, presumably his own illegitimate son. With the city of Piacenza added the next year, the state was henceforth called the Duchies of Parma and Piacenza and ruled by the Farnese until the dynasty went extinct in 1731. Elizabeth Farnese, the last direct heiress of the family, married king Philip of Spain, a Bourbon, in 1714 and bequeathed the duchies to her son Don Carlos de Bourbon. Diplomatic-matrimonial games in the wake of the War of the Polish Succession complicated the situation: at the Treaty of Vienna (1738) Don Carlos agreed to give up the duchies in exchange for the larger, more prestigious kingdom of Naples and Sicily. He did not forget to take with him large collections of artwork along with the entire archive of the Farnese dukes, the former an act of naked robbery, the latter a thoughtless deed that caused untold subsequent administrative difficulties. Francis Stephen of Habsburg, Duke of Tuscany, took over provisionally until the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle (1748) stipulated the return of the duchies, enriched with the territory of Guastalla (a former Gonzague fief) to the Bourbons: Carlos' younger brother Philip accepted the throne and founded the House of Bourbon-Parma. The formal name of the state became the Duchies of Parma, Piacenza and Guastalla. In the meantime three Bourbon Family Pacts (1733, 1743 and 1761) negotiated the fine points of the duchies' loyalty to Spain and

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France equally. The marriage between Duke Philip and Louise Elisabeth, oldest daughter of Louis XV, tipped the scales towards France.

Louise Elisabeth, only 12 years old the year of her wedding (1739), spent nine years in Madrid, to be groomed into a Spanish royal bride. Her attachment to France never weakened and her first independent act upon acceding, with her husband, to the throne of the Duchies of Parma, Piacenza and Guastalla was to visit her father at Versailles.[1] Back in Parma, she gave birth to her only son, Infant Ferdinand (1751).[2] Ferdinand would grow into a puzzling character and a weak, though stubborn, ruler. Throughout his childhood, he watched his mother put all her energies into fashioning the duchies in the image of France—the France of the *lumières* imagined by the *philosophes* Louis XV's daughter very much admired. In this short time, she succeeded: Duke Philip had little appetite for governing and left most decisions to his wife. By the second half of the century, foreign visitors likened the duchies to a mini-France transplanted in Northern Italy, with its own Paris—the capital city of Parma—and its own Versailles at the ducal residence of Colorno, both re-designed by French architects and artists.[3] Love for France was the most precious legacy Louise Elisabeth bequeathed to her son whom she expected to continue her life's work: 'I am French, my son […] When I am no more, you will better judge my motives; if I live, I hope that my conduct will prove to you that my duty is my first love. Love France, my son: your roots are there; you owe the country respect and deference for being who you are'.[4]

[1] More details can be found in Henri Bédarida, *Parme dans la politique française au XVIIIème siècle* (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1930), 104–144.

[2] Ferdinand had two older sisters. Isabelle Bourbon-Parma (1741–1763) married Austrian Archduke Joseph, future Emperor Joseph II. Cultured and intellectually curious, she left several essays on education, marriage and politics. She was a dutiful wife but stood out at the court in Vienna for conducting a rather open homoerotic affair with her sister-in-law Maria Christina, Archduchess of Austria and an artist of some note. *Isabelle de Bourbon-Parme* (Bruxelles: Racine, 2002) by Ernest Sanger is a well-researched, sympathetic biography. Maria Luisa (1751–1819), a far less interesting character, married her cousin Infant Charles, future Charles IV of Spain. Many entertaining details on the three siblings in the collective biography: Juan Balansò, *Les Bourbons de Parme. Histoire des Infants d'Espagne, ducs de Parme* (Biarritz: J&D Editions, 1996), especially pp. 30–70.

[3] *Il Viaggio a Parma. Visitatori stranieri in età farnesiana e borbonica*. Testi raccolti da Giorgio Cusatelli e Fausto Razzetti (Parma: Ugo Guanda Editore, 1990).

[4] Letter from Louise Elisabeth to her son Ferdinand written in 1759 (no exact date), in Casimir Stryenski, *Le Gendre de Louis XV. Don Philippe, Infant d'Espagne et Duc de Parme. D'après des documents inédits tirés des Archives de Parme et des Archives des Affaires Etrangères* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1904), 440. The entire letter is reproduced on pp. 436–444.

Ralliement Avant la Lettre

The transformation began in 1749, with the appointment of Guillaume Du Tillot (1711–1774), a little-known French clerk employed at the Spanish court, to the position of councilor to Duke Philip. Within a month, Du Tillot rose to the rank of General Intendant of the Household, in charge of the court's expenses and book-keeping. Ten years later (1759), the duke nominated Du Tillot prime minister and essentially handed him over the reins of government. Marquis of Felino as of 1764, Du Tillot ran the duchies, unhindered, until 1771, and earned a European-wide reputation for competence and honesty, the very model of a well-meaning bureaucrat able to steer any society on the path to progress.[5] Local historians have carefully examined Du Tillot's 20 years at the helm of what contemporaries regarded as exemplary enlightened administration; these studies portray sympathetically a well-intentioned man bravely taking on the Herculean task of overhauling an order of things he found harmful to the people and to their rulers alike. 'Nothing, absolutely nothing escaped his knowledgeable, genial, and tireless innovations and reforms', wrote Umberto Benassi, summarizing the historical consensus.[6]

Overall, Du Tillot's rule consisted in wielding the power of the state to launch a holistic programme of systematic reforms meant to restructure every aspect of life in the duchies, from fiscal policies to agricultural practices, public education and cultural initiatives—an audacious undertaking historian Massimo Ammato aptly labelled 'social and economic

[5] Du Tillot perfectly fits the type of well-intentioned government official in tune with the philosophical aspirations of his time drawn in Carlo Capra, 'The Functionary' in *Enlightenment Portaits*. Michel Vovelle editor. Translation Lydia G. Cochrane (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 316–355. On Du Tillot, see Umberto Benassi, *Guglielmo Du Tillot. Un ministro riformatore dell secolo XVIII* (Parma: Presso la Rivista Deputazione di Storia Patria, 1919); Bernardino Cipelli, 'Storia dell'amministrazione di Guglielmo Du Tillot. Con introduzione di E. Casa'in *Archivio Storico per le province parmensi*, serie I, II (1893); Charles Nisard, *Guillaume Du Tillot. Un valet ministre et sécrétaire d'état. Episode de l'histoire de France en Italie 1749–1771* (Reprint Adamant Media Corporation, 2001); Giovanni Tocci, Il Ducato di Parma e Piacenza. Un Colbert alla corte di Parma' in *Storia d'Italia*. Diretta da G. Galasso (Torino: UTET, 1987), Vol XVIII, 79–103 (88–89). A digest of contemporary opinions on Du Tillot in Henri Bédarida, *Parme et la France de 1748 à 1789* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1928. Slatkine Reprints), 100–116. The discussion of Du Tillot's entire career is on pp. 71–120. Very informative too is the analytical overview by Claudio Maddalena, 'Il governo del ministro du Tillot' in *Storia di Parma*, vol. V, 101–138.

[6] Umberto Benassi, *Storia di Parma da Pier Luigi Farnese a Vittorio Emmanuele II (1545–1860)* (Parma, Luigi Battei, 1907), 162.

engineering'.[7] Vast as the programme was, the prime minister treaded lightly whenever possible because, as Claudio Bargelli showed in a recent astute analysis, the vision of enlightened ideal city ran frequently into the reality of financial constraints and decidedly unidealistic political power struggles.[8] The cautious step-by-step policy fits the political practice of *ralliement* outlined by Michael Broers for Italian territories conquered by the French armies, later absorbed into the Napoleonic state. The duchies were, throughout Du Tillot's tenure, an autonomous state under French and Spanish protectorate, Du Tillot himself serving at the pleasure of local sovereigns. Still, considering the free hand he enjoyed for 20 years and his systematic efforts at modernizing Parmense society by means of injecting new content into pre-existing structures, his actions were consistent with an early experiment in *ralliement*. Overt assumptions of French superiority, more precisely of the France of Louis XV being the right kind of state for the right time, underpinned Du Tillot's entire agenda. His closest advisers came from France to join a cast of French-speaking, French-educated local collaborators. In the historical arc between the beginning of the Bourbon reign and the fall of the Napoleonic regime, the interval dominated by Du Tillot (1749–1770) comes across as a dress rehearsal, heavy in forewarnings, for the future travails of French administrators struggling to integrate the duchies into the Napoleonic system. For this reason, it is worth recalling, briefly, just how extensive, and how thorough, Du Tillot's project was, and how swiftly it collapsed.

Administration, Legislation and Tax Collection

The duchies consisted of two halves, each run by a governor, one in Parma and one in Piacenza. The governors presided over all aspects of public life, from law and order mechanisms to commercial regulations and tax collection. At the local level, in Parma, Piacenza and several smaller urban centres, the citizenry relied on the civic corps of the *Anzianati*, composed of the most notable residents, that is, nobles joined by well-regarded property owners and professionals. A *podestà*, or mayor, assisted by

[7] Massimo Amato, 'L'ingegneria economica e sociale di Guillaume Du Tillot' in *Parma e il suo territorio. Un Borbone tra Parma e Europa. Don Ferdinando e il suo tempo*. A cura di Alba Mora (Parma: Diabasis, 2005), 136–143.

[8] Claudio Bargelli, *La Città dei lumi. La petite Capitale del Du Tillot fra utopie e riforme* (Parma: Monte Università Parma, 2020).

commissioners, ran every commune, large or small, and reported to the governor or to the nearest *Anzianato*. Justice was dispensed through a layered system of magistrates (*uditori civili e criminali*) that converged into several councils or local courts, the highest court being the supreme council established by Alessandro Farnese in 1589.[9] Du Tillot left all administrative and legal structures untouched and patiently worked with, rather than against, existing institutions. What he asked these institutions to do, however, went against entrenched habits and traditions. The years spent as intendant of the ducal household, with the mission of improving the state's finances, persuaded him that expanding the tax base was essential to the survival of the state. This implied curtailing the massive fiscal privileges feudal landlords, and above all the clergy, had enjoyed since the Farnese era. Du Tillot launched his premiership with demands that Church revenues be subjected to state taxation. What seemed at first glance a technical financial alteration soon turned into a metaphysical struggle between two worldviews.[10] It was a struggle Du Tillot did not seek but could hardly avoid.

Two fifths of the land in the Piacentino region, two thirds in the Parma region, and fully half of all arable land in the Borgo San Donnino were in the hands of the clergy. Ownership of such vast properties came with no taxation, no supervision and an array of additional entitlements. Tactfully, the prime minister sought cooperation from the papacy by means of his

[9] Details online of Farnese and Bourbon institutions in Giovanni Drei, *l'Archivio di Stato di Parma. Indice General, storico, descrittive, ed analitco* (Rome: Biblioteca Arte Editrice, 1941), 103–114.

[10] By the mid-1700s members of the clergy comprised roughly 10% of the population of Parma and up to 14% in the Piacenza region, all organized in 91 churches, and 21 female and 18 male convents, one more conservative than the other according to Franco Venturi, 'Parma e Europa' in *Settecento Riformatore*, *Vol. II La Chiesa e la Repubblica dentro i loro limiti 1758–1774* (Torino: Einaudi, 1976), 214, and Roberto Ghiringhelli, *Idee, Società ed Istituzioni nel Ducato di Parma e Piacenza durante l'età illuministica* (Milano: A. Giuffrè, 1988), 12. This was up from the 15 male and 24 female convents in the duchies at the end of the Farnese era: Umberto Benassi, *Storia di Parma da Pier Luigi Farnese a Vittorio Emmanuele (1545–1860)* (Parma: Luigi Battei, 1907), 125. The Farnese dukes 'spoiled' the clergy and accustomed its members and its orders to privileges they came to regard as inviolable rights. In time, the Farnese had reasons to regret their generosity: Ranuccio II, for instance, was aghast at the clergy's refusal to contribute towards the tribute imposed on Parma by Emperor Leopold II during the wars between France and the Empire (1691–1694). By then the status quo had become unshakeable and the duke could do nothing but vent in fits of helpless fury. Benassi, *Storia di Parma da Pier Luigi Farnese a Vittorio Emmanuele*, 68–70.

favourite tactic, attuned to the encyclopaedic spirit of the times: carefully compiled studies, based on empirical data that spelled out the devastating effects of clerical privileges upon local communities. These were sent to the Holy See in hopes that scientific proof of damages to poor villagers would mollify papal resistance. Disappointingly, the pope replied with a steady stream of rebuttals that reaffirmed the validity of clerical fiscal rights. Judging that he had showed sufficient deference, Du Tillot broke the stalemate in 1764, with *prammatica della manimorte*. The law abolished the ancient practice of mortmain, which allowed feudal lords—individuals or syndicates such as ecclesiastic orders—to appropriate the inheritance of their serfs or subordinates; the legislation also targeted current contracts not yet concluded. (It should be noted that in France the mortmain or *mainmorte* was considerably weakened throughout the eighteenth century, but officially banned only in 1790.) The *real giunta della giurisdizione* created the following year went a step further in affirming the state's authority by quietly abolishing fiscal privileges for Church properties.[11] A new supervisory body called *regio consiglio segreto*, composed of a minister of state and three councilors, valiantly took on the confusing maze of privileges and established a tax farm based on the French model. This and a few other measures, like taxes on leather products starting in 1765, eventually improved returns.

In essence, then, fiscal reform amounted to winning a few financial and legislative battles with the Church, to applause from local and French *philosophes* always happy to see the Church put in its place. Duke Philip did not exactly cheer but chose to stand on the sidelines and allow bureaucrats to replenish the state's coffers as they saw fit. The duke proved a lot less amenable when it came to cuts into his own budget or to changes in routines he cared about. Highlighting the arbitrary nature of reforms executed under less than reliable absolutist rulers, personal tastes weighed heavily on public policies. Informed that improving agricultural output depended on making more land available for pasturing, Philip simply refused to limit the domain set aside for pleasure hunting.

[11] Pierluigi Feliciati, 'La dominazione borbonica a Parma' in *L'Ossessione della memoria. Parma settecentesca nei disegni del Conte Alessandro Sanseverini*. A cura di Marzio dall'Acqua (Parma: Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Parma, 1997), 19.

Agriculture and Industry

Nudging into change people reluctant to give up longstanding privileges was bound to disappoint. Du Tillot put his trust, or rather his hope, in the persuasive capacities of scientific studies. The method foreshadowed Moreau de Saint-Méry's penchant for empirical surveys and yielded very similar results. The prime minister shared with landowners what he learned from the investigations he commissioned. First, primitive agricultural techniques largely accounted for inadequate outputs. A case in point: notwithstanding abundant grape harvests over the 1773–1779 period, widespread ignorance regarding bottling and preserving wine inevitably caused a good deal of the wine production to go to waste. Prices fell not because of diminishing demand but because growers felt compelled to sell before the wine turned (Parma–Piacenza is home to the popular Lambrusco wines). Second, the large wolf population made it hard to increase the flocks, but this nuisance paled in comparison with the aggravations caused by numberless internal custom dues that hindered transhumance. The wolves could be dealt with; feudal privileges remained intractable: feudal landowners rejected attempts to limit or tax herds moving on private lands, on grounds that such taxes ran against what they considered ancestral rights.

Economic historian Pier Luigi Spaggiari emphasized throughout his work the inertia of noble owners of fiefs, suspicious of the minister's enthusiasm for habit-altering reforms. The few slightly better off peasants who owned land lacked access to capital and, in any event, were too absorbed with their own survival to risk implementing changes shunned by their social superiors.[12] No wonder, then, that the administration's carefully drafted studies produced little more than an academic analysis with next to no impact on either the development of Parmense agriculture or the standard of living of inhabitants trapped between 'fraud and scarcity'.[13] With government recommendations ignored, attempts at

[12] Pier Luigi Spaggiari, *L'Agricoltura negli Stati Parmensi dal 1750 al 1859* (Milano: Banca Comerciale Italiana, 1966), especially pp. 41–42, 86–88 and 94–95.

[13] See Claudio Bargelli, 'Le Terre di Montagna tra frode e miseria. La vita quotidiana nel ducato di Parma nel secolo dei lumi' in *Aurea Parma*, 83, 2 (magio–agosto 1999): 265–284. The fraud involved mainly widespread smuggling. In a different study, Bargelli highlighted Du Tillot's concern that deprivation might worsen to the level of famine, which led him to monitor the grain trade, establish emergency barns and even resort to imports. Claudio Bargelli, 'Ubertose messi e pubblica felicità. Il commercio dei grani a Parma nel settecento'

reform did not go further than occasional experiments undertaken, on their own properties, by the few who needed no prompting, such as the philanthropist count Stefano Sanvitale.[14] Lack of cooperation further thwarted Du Tillot's ambitious plans for capitalizing on the fame of local varieties of cheese as well. For one thing, the army's needs for fresh meat limited the herds raised for milk, a problem compounded by a series of devastating epizooties (1703, 1713, 1738 and 1746). As mentioned above, Duke Philip's love of hunting killed the ambition of founding state-run cheese factories. In the meantime, stiff Lombard competition forced Du Tillot to resort to import tariffs to protect local specificity and discourage illegal sales.[15] Introducing the culture of the potato was the only agricultural innovation adopted with relative ease.

Industrial projects did not fare much better. As an unwelcome side effect, they set in motion waves of social discontent that gradually swelled into anti-French animosity, something that the prime minister simply did not think about. He certainly assumed locals would be glad to see, and work in, the textile factories set up around the duchies (Piacenza, Guastalla and Borgo San Donino). What he did not expect was that residents would resent being patronized by the numerous French artisans summoned to instruct them and by the French managers placed in charge of all aspects of the business. Silk manufacturing, for instance—the prime minister's favourite economic branch—was entirely run by French craftsmen brought over from Lyon. In time, this branch expanded enough to be considered a success, but in general, industrial initiatives suffered from the perception of being an imported pastime for resident foreigners.[16]

in *Aurea Parma*, 82, 2 (maggio–agosto 1998): 149–183. On everyday life in the Parma area in the eighteenth century, very illuminating is Spaggiari's analysis of a census commissioned by Du Tillot: Pier Luigi Spaggiari, 'Famiglia, case e lavoro nella Parma del Du Tillot. Un censimento del 1765.' *Studi e ricerche della Facoltà di Economia e Commercio.* 3, (1966): 163–236.

[14] Spaggiari, *L'Agricoltura negli Stati Parmensi dal 1750 al 1859*, 99.

[15] See Claudio Bargelli, 'Una vaccheria benedettina tra Sei e Settecento: l'organizzazione produttiva casearia del cenobio di S. Giovanni Evangelista di Parma' *Aurea Parma*, 2 (maggio–agosto 2007): 213–238, for an illuminating economic analysis of one exemplary cheese factory run by Benedictine monks from the fifteen through late eighteenth centuries. The article also offers a very helpful survey of the literature dedicated to the history of Parmesan cheese-making. See also the comprehensive survey by the same author: Claudio Bargelli, *Dall'empirismo alla scienza. L'agricoltura parmense dall'età dei lumi al primo conflitto mondiale* (Trieste: Ed. Goliardiche, 2004).

[16] A few prominent local businessmen, such as Pietro Cavagnari, took over the silk manufactures. Marcello Turchi, 'La fiorente industria della seta: imagine essenziale della Parma del

Cultural Policies

In his examination of Du Tillot's social-engineering agenda, Massimo Amato underscored the utopian nature of the entire endeavour: in the context of the Enlightenment's belief in rational reforms, Du Tillot was a dreamer.[17] Indeed, who but a dreamer would believe strongly enough in the power of reason to take on the Church, keep trying to spread the tax burden, and launch well-meant economic initiatives in the face of stubborn resistance and bitter animosity? Let us add to Amato's list the no less extravagant programme of reshaping, or re-engineering, to use the same terminology, Parma's cultural landscape. Duke Philip heartily approved: the prime minister's ambitions in such matters hurt no privileges, required no sacrifices of himself, and offered the duchies a chance to repair the damage caused by his brother's spoliations. Luckily for Du Tillot, the duke was too indolent to notice his minister's steady drive towards secularizing all aspects of life in the duchies.

State-sponsored cultural establishments materialized almost overnight. The Academy of Fine Arts, with statutes modelled on the French institution of the same name, opened its doors in 1752, followed by the Academy of Parma, likewise a replica of French academies, in December 1757.[18] Soon thereafter *Gazzetta di Parma* started bringing the news to interested readers (January 1760). The discovery of the *Tabula Alimentaria* came as a dream opportunity for Parma's scholarly community to claim its rightful place on the European scene.[19] Duke Philip gave his accord for the Ducal Museum of Antiquities (now the National Archaeological Museum of

Du Tillot' in *Parma Economica*, 4 (Dicembre 1987): 19–24. For details on French business activities in Parma see Bédarida, *Parme et la France de 1748 à 1789*, 179–186; pp. 121–186, on the entire French presence in the duchies during Du Tillot's administration. The ubiquitous presence of French managers made it difficult for local would-be entrepreneurs of modest means to access capital. Spaggiari gives the example of one Giuseppe Tassi who stressed the difficulties of enrolling sceptical villagers in long-term projects when called on by Du Tillot to provide capital to poor farmers for raising sheep for wool, the raw material for a factory he intended to set up. Spaggiari, *L'Agricoltura negli Stati Parmensi dal 1750 al 1859*, 42.

[17] Amato, 'L'ingegneria economica e sociale di Guillaume Du Tillot' *art.cit*, 140.

[18] The Academy of Fine Arts soon earned a European-wide reputation with annual painting, sculpture and architecture competitions, opened to artists from all European countries. Francisco Goya, a young artist just starting out at the time, sent a painting for the 1771 competition; he did not win the prize, but his later fame bolstered Parma's prestige.

[19] The discovery of the *Tabula Alimentaria* at Veleia in 1747 prompted the beginning of archeological digs meant to rival the excavations at Herculaneum and Pompei. The large

Parma), founded in 1760 to coordinate further excavations at Veleia, and for a new Royal Library (now *Biblioteca Palatina*) opened to the public in 1761. Du Tillot selected the learned Paolo Maria Paciaudi, freshly returned from a year of studies in Paris, for the dual position of director of the museum and chief librarian of the Royal Library, responsible for acquisitions and cataloguing in both places.[20] In 1768, Du Tillot invited the printer Giambattista Bodoni to set up shop in Parma, with generous government financial backing. Bodoni quickly became an international celebrity, widely admired for his technical prowess and stylistic creativity, his studio a tourist attraction on a par with the works of Parma's beloved Renaissance painter Correggio.[21] French architects and artists flocked to the duchies' capital to design and decorate, in French neo-classical style, buildings fit to house the new institutions.[22] It all amounted to an artistic

bronze tablet dating from 101 CE details administrative measures regarding welfare and food distribution.

[20] A Théatin priest influenced by Jansenist ideas and familiar with French intellectual approaches, Paciaudi (1710–1785) was exactly the kind of local aide Du Tillot was looking for. Indeed, a few clergymen generally receptive to Jansenism and hostile to the Jesuits responded to his entreaties, most importantly Adeodato Turchi, Archbishop of Parma, and Pietro Capellotti, Archpriest of Momigliano, the latter already pursued by the Inquisition for his liberal views. Crucial support came as well from the distinguished magistrates Giacomo Maria Schiattini, president of the chamber of magistrates, Aurelio Terrarossa, professor of law, Giambattista Riga, and count Girolamo Nasalli. They were joined by respected historians Ireneo Affò and Giuseppe Pezzana, the latter appointed first editor of *Gazzetta di Parma*. The commitment of this important segment of the educated classes helped Du Tillot stare down papal intransigence.

[21] For a well-researched recent biography and commentary on Bodoni's contributions to the printing arts, see Valerie Lester, *Giambattista Bodoni: His Life and His World* (Boston: David R. Godine, 2015).

[22] Appointed chief architect with the mission of rebuilding the ducal palace, Ennemond Petitot arrived in Parma in 1753. Later, he built the grand gallery of the *Biblioteca Palatina* in neoclassical style and launched several urbanism projects until Du Tillot's dismissal sent him into untimely retirement. A French duo, architect Pierre Contant d'Ivry and sculptor Jean Baptiste Boudard, were hired to modernize the ducal park at Colorno in the 1750s, which resulted in statue alleys and sculptural groups reminiscent of Versailles. Boudard also taught at the Academy of Fine Arts and helped train many artists who emulated his aesthetic principles. His neo-classical sculptures are still on display in Parma's main park, Parco Ducale. Marco Pellegri, *G.B. Boudard Statuario Francese alla Real Corte di Parma* (Parma: Luigi Battei, 1976). There is a vast bibliography on Petitot and his work in Parma. For quick reference see the illustrated biography Giuseppe Cirillo, *Petitot* (Parma: Grafiche Step Editrice, 2008). For a study on the transformation of the urban landscape in Carlo Mambriani, see 'La Città Ridisegnata' in *Storia di Parma*, vol. V, 139–179.