

# Napoleon's Empire

European Politics in Global Perspective

Edited by Ute Planert

War, Culture and Society, 1750-1850



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# Napoleon's Empire

## European Politics in Global Perspective

Edited by

Ute Planert

*University of Wuppertal, Germany*

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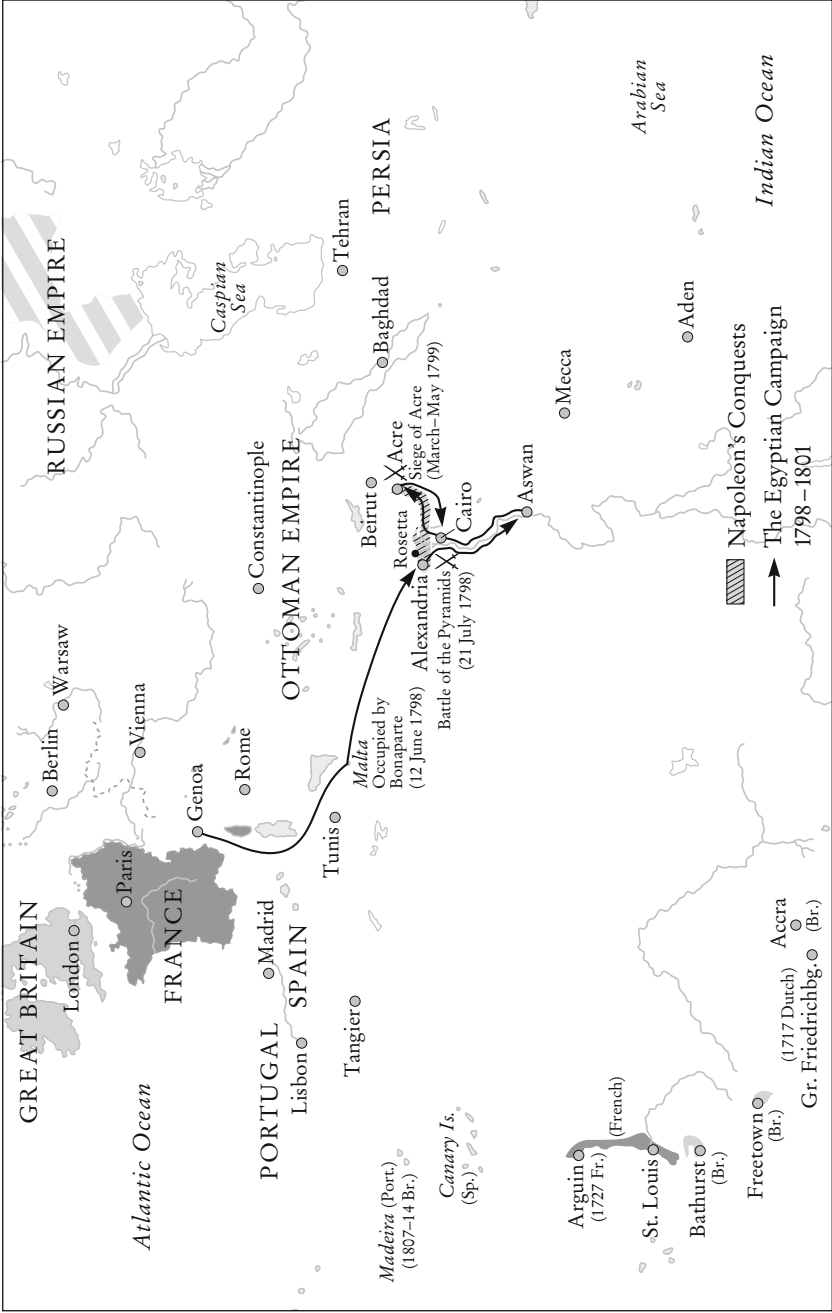
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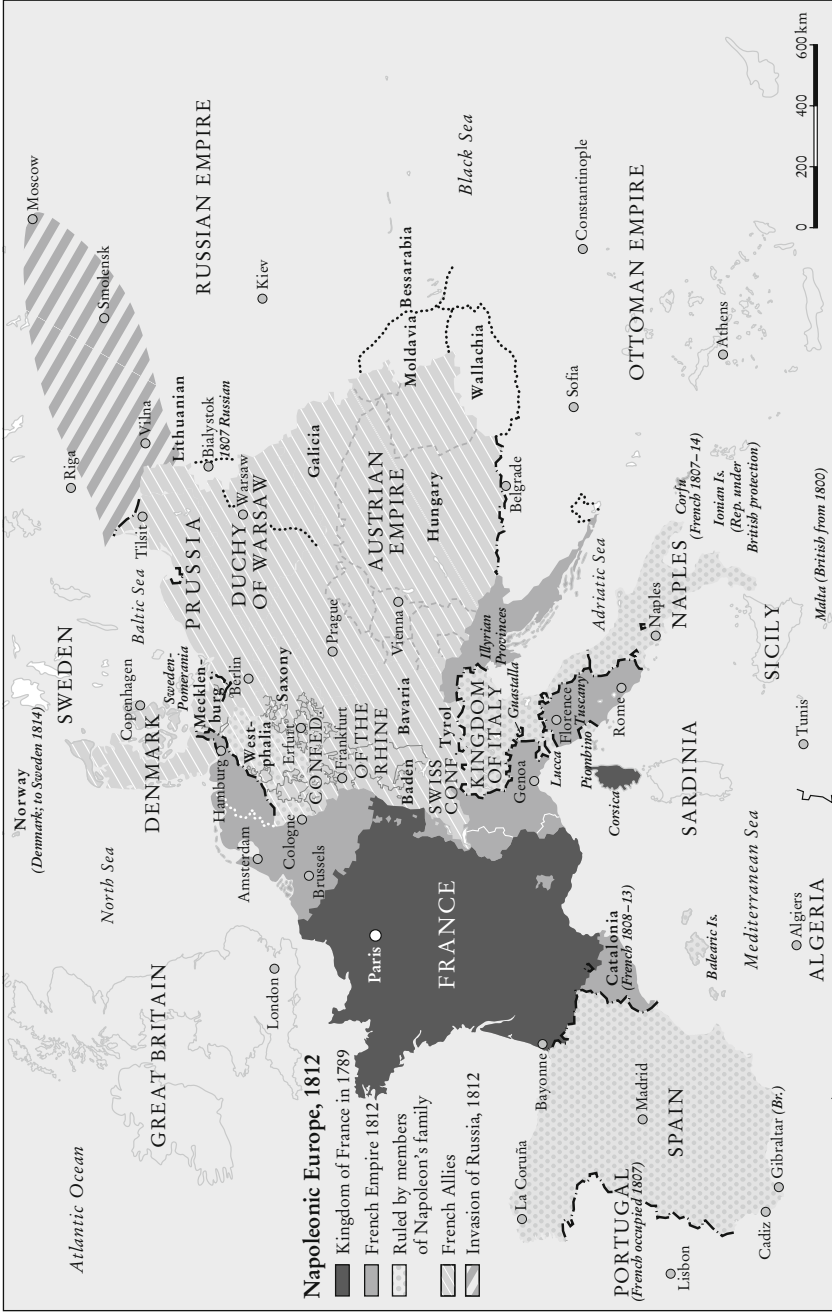
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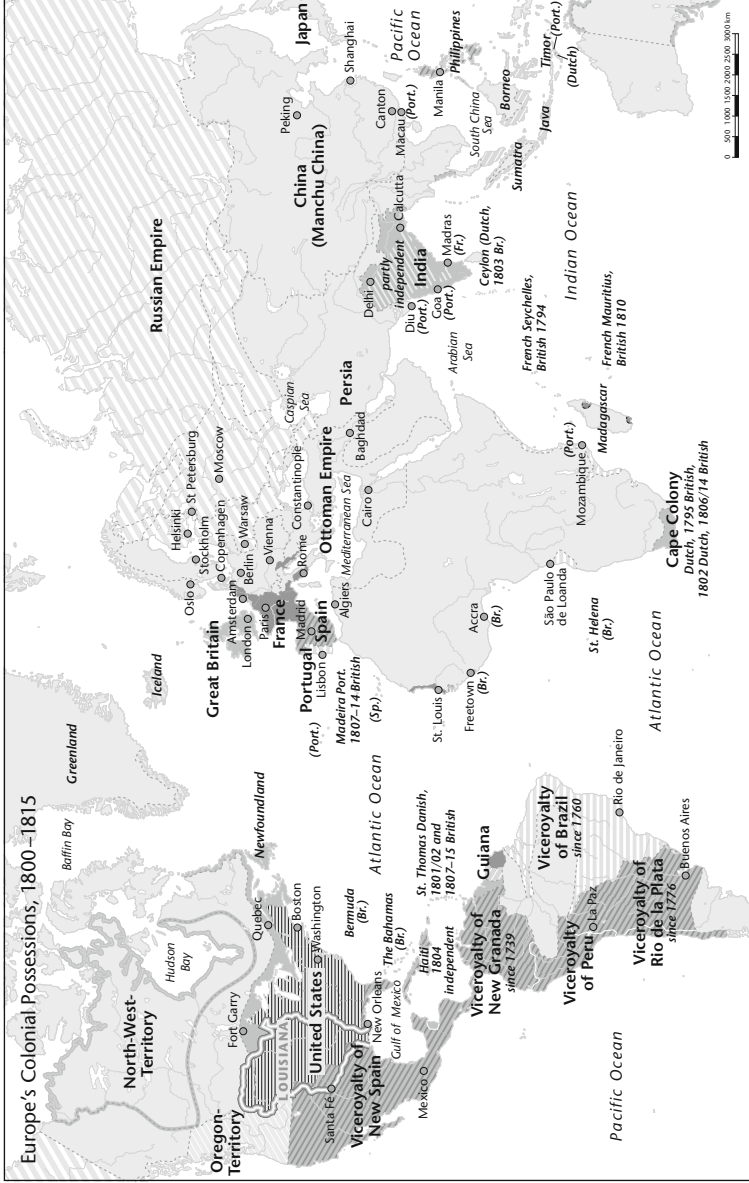
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Europe's Colonial Possessions, 1800–1815

- Great Britain and its Colonial Possessions
- France and its Colonial Possessions
- Spain and its Colonial Possessions
- Portugal and its Colonial Possessions
- Dutch Colonies (under British control 1795–1815, partially returned in 1815/17)
- Russia (including spheres of influence in Siberia and Alaska)
- United States of America (from 1783)
- Louisiana (1763 Spain, 1800 France, 1803 sold to United States)



# Latin America in 1830



# 1

## Napoleon and Beyond: Reshaping Power in Europe and the World

*Ute Planert*

When, in June 1815, the European great powers sealed the end of the Napoleonic era by signing the Final Act of the Congress of Vienna, the world had become a different place. There is hardly any other era as abundant in profound change as the decades around 1800, centered on the axis of the French Revolution and Napoleon's rule. Kings came and went, empires dissolved after having been in existence for a thousand years, entire continents declared their independence. The last war, which had raged for nearly a quarter of a century, turned Europe into a slaughterhouse and left its mark far beyond. The people of Europe suffered – according to various estimates – between 3.5 and 5 million deaths. They also witnessed limits to the power of the centuries-old reign of the church and nobility. From Norway to Latin America, common people held meetings and negotiated constitutions, struggled over the issue of slavery and found new ways to adapt the economy to changing conditions. The world of the *ancien régime* underwent inconceivable transformation and appeared to dissolve. Indeed, the change in political and social circumstances and the heritage of the Napoleonic era marked the dawn of western modernism resulting in an even greater European dominance over the rest of the world.<sup>1</sup>

French expansionism and Napoleonic hegemony profoundly reshaped the political and territorial structure of Europe. The necessity to mobilize resources for a decades-long warfare fostered new levels of state authority and brought about a bureaucratic modernization unknown even to the early modern 'fiscal-military state'.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, when monarchs and ministers gathered in Vienna in 1814 and 1815 to reinstate European stability, they neither did, nor even intended to, restore the pre-revolutionary order, demonstrating the misleading notion of the post-war era as a 'Restoration'.<sup>3</sup> Instead, after over two decades of revolution and war, they sought to develop an enduring peace and the maintenance of the monarchical principle under the new social and political conditions.<sup>4</sup> Apart from the Ottoman Empire, all European states and royal dynasties sent representatives to Vienna.<sup>5</sup> There the great powers established a political and territorial order

that corresponded to the interests of the victorious states and, at the same time, prevented the formation of a new continental European hegemonic power. In terms of territory and structure the Congress did not return to the Europe of the *ancien régime*. The strengthening of the modern state at the expense of small dynastic, religious and territorial entities eradicated during the Napoleonic era remained in place, whereas the great power's spheres of influence were shaped according to geopolitical and economic interests.<sup>6</sup>

Great Britain's maritime ascent during the centuries-long colonial rivalry with France had assembled the traditional naval powers of Denmark, the Netherlands and Spain as allies of Napoleon. By 1814 they paid for that alliance with a profound loss of importance. Following Napoleon's defeat, Great Britain emerged as the sole imperial world power. As August Neidhardt von Gneisenau, Prussian general and army reformer, sharply observed, Great Britain had nobody to thank more for its prominence than its former arch-enemy.<sup>7</sup> After 1815 the 'queen of the oceans' had no serious rival to fear, neither at sea nor in international trade. Colonial and continental politics, often regarded and examined as separate spheres by historians, were in fact more closely intertwined during the era of the Atlantic Revolutions and French expansionism than ever before.<sup>8</sup>

In the meantime, the restructuring of central Europe based on the Napoleonic model continued. The almost thousand-year old Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation collapsed completely in 1806 faced by the storm of the French Wars and internal quarrels.<sup>9</sup> Secularization and mediatisation put an end to the temporal rule of the Catholic Church and the sovereignty of small states and privileged domains.<sup>10</sup> Out of the 300 states that constituted the Holy Roman Empire only 38 survived its downfall. It was mainly Prussia and the former states of the Confederation of the Rhine that benefited from Napoleon's 'territorial revolution'. The enlarged states of the new German Confederation continued the Napoleonic policy of adjusting systems of measuring, weighing and coordinating currencies and the flow of goods in the *Deutscher Zollverein* (German Customs Union).

Thus, the years around 1800 laid the foundation of the economic performance of the German states and of the subsequent politics of unification.<sup>11</sup> Minor powers and the formerly proud Imperial Cities were left empty-handed. Only a few Imperial Cities such as Hamburg and Frankfurt, survived the reorganization as free city-states.<sup>12</sup> At Vienna the great powers also integrated the commercial republics of Genoa and Venice into larger states, marking an end to their sovereignty and long, rich mercantile traditions.<sup>13</sup>

The secularization that began with the French Revolution and spread with Napoleonic conquest was not reversed. Territories and domains of the church in central Europe, which had shaped the character of the old Holy Roman Empire, were wiped off the map. A vast number of abbeys were dissolved, resulting in dramatic consequences for the local economy,

infrastructure, education and social welfare.<sup>14</sup> Likewise, the dispossession of church properties in France and Italy was not reversed. The church's formerly substantial temporal power was broken and limited to the restored Papal States. Yet, even the pope had to accept a decrease in territory. Thus, relations between church and state in Europe were put on a new footing.<sup>15</sup>

The protagonists of the French Revolution had intended to establish a republic, yet in the end the monarchy emerged stronger than before from this period of transformation.<sup>16</sup> In Portugal, in the Austrian Netherlands and in several Italian states, such as Naples and Tuscany, enlightened reformers had tried to curtail the power of the church, to reform legislation and to modernize state, economy and society in the eighteenth century. Yet many of these efforts foundered on the resistance of their opponents or reached a deadlock after reform-minded monarchs had died.<sup>17</sup> The collapse of the old order in the wake of the French Revolution and the expansion of the Napoleonic Empire laid the foundations for continuing the reforms, removing traditional privileges and setting the course for a new social order. Drafting a civil code based on the principle of the equality of white men before the law, the freedom of trade and the protection of private property emerged as key characteristics of this development. These modern directives were also implemented in French colonial territories, where slavery remained in place until 1848 with only brief interruptions.<sup>18</sup>

By drafting the *cinq codes*, and particularly the *Code Civil*, Napoleon had created a comprehensive legal system that served as the foundation of civil society in many parts of the French Empire. Territorial shifts, and the fiscal and military requirements of war, contributed to strengthening the power of the state, to standardizing the judiciary and administration, and to hardening the grip of the state on its subjects by implementing a tight military, administrative and financial system.<sup>19</sup>

Napoleon's achievements in modernization survived his empire. The radical abolition of traditional privileges, standardized regulations and the implementation of a legal system enabled the development of an emerging capitalism; the political elites of the post-Napoleonic era approved and continued all these structural changes. Developing and expanding state infrastructure changed the perception of space and, along with the impact of the territorial reorganization, facilitated the exchange of goods and supported industrialization.<sup>20</sup> The *Code Civil* was still in force in many European states, although sometimes in different forms and versions, and acted as the model for several new constitutions in Latin America and Canada, and later in French-speaking African countries.<sup>21</sup> The successor states of the dissolved French Empire appreciated the efficiency of Napoleonic financial administration and the newly formed constabulary.<sup>22</sup> In many countries, the organization of the French military was considered exemplary and states modernized their forces along the lines of the Napoleonic model.<sup>23</sup> The French example of state modernization even had an effect in those countries

that explicitly distanced themselves from it. In this respect, the Napoleonic era actually had an integrative impact on Europe.<sup>24</sup>

All in all, the Napoleonic era was the hinge between the feudal state system of the Early Modern period and the bourgeois civil society that grew in prominence from the nineteenth century onwards. In many respects, reform policies of the French epoch drew on enlightened absolutist ideas and strategies, but were much more consistent in pursuing and adapting them to the necessities of the evolving bourgeois capitalist society. The degree of pressure applied by the Napoleonic Empire on European states and their willingness for reform – before and after 1815 – determined how far-reaching these changes would be. Considerable regional differences notwithstanding, the Napoleonic era in general triggered a push for modernization, which ultimately provided the cornerstone of Europe's global economic and technological dominance in the course of the nineteenth century.

The legacy of the Napoleonic Empire, negotiated at the Congress of Vienna, redrew the map of Europe and caused considerable shifts that would leave their mark on the nineteenth century. Even though the Congress advocated the concept of dynastic legitimacy in principle, the legitimacy of claims to power fell behind the politics of dominance pursued by the great powers. They restored the Papal States and the rule of the Bourbons in Spain and Naples. In contrast, they judged Poland's claim for independence and the restitution demands of the mediatized Imperial estates (*Reichsstände*) as incompatible with state security and consolidation. Louis XVIII, a Bourbon king, returned to the throne in France, albeit he – unlike his southern relatives – had to concede to political changes with the implementation of the *Charte constitutionnelle* in 1814. France regained her position as equal partner in the European Concert but had to withdraw to her 1792 borders after having lost many of her colonies.<sup>25</sup>

Moreover, Great Britain achieved its goal of curbing France's influence by surrounding it with militarily strong neighbor states. German-speaking territories that had been annexed by France were now allocated to the most important military powers in central Europe (apart from Austria) of Bavaria and Prussia. The Palatinate passed to Bavaria, whereas the prosperous industrial regions of the Rhine went to Prussia. Even though the Rhineland proved to be a political trouble spot during the nineteenth century,<sup>26</sup> its strong economy contributed considerably to Prussia's growing economic and political dominance. Austrian withdrawal from territorial claims in western Europe and expansion to the south and east, strengthened Prussia's geopolitical and economic claim to hegemony in the German Confederation.<sup>27</sup>

In line with security concerns over the English Channel, a new state emerged in the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Memories of Napoleon's plans to convert the harbor of Antwerp to 'a gun pointed at the heart of England' remained fresh. Intent on averting the danger of any future invasion from

the continent and curbing French influence along the Channel coast, Britain supported uniting the Habsburg Netherlands with the territory of the States General of the Netherlands to form the new United Kingdom of the Netherlands. Despite centuries-old political and religious differences, the size of the new state was to represent a stable block to future French expansion. Since the crowned heads at the Congress of Vienna considered monarchy the most secure form of government, they converted the former republic into a kingdom under the rule of the Orange dynasty, which had traditionally provided the hereditary governor of the United Provinces before the family fled to England.<sup>28</sup>

Despite the relinquishment of the Austrian Netherlands – a dynamic province which emerged as one of the leading industrial regions of Europe – Austria continued its modernization and pursued a strategy of realigning boundaries in order to turn a loose conglomeration of provinces into a territorial state.<sup>29</sup> Opposition to the self-coronation of Napoleon in 1804 had transformed the Austrian Empire into the multi-ethnic, unitary *Gesamtstaat* Austria ruled by a hereditary monarchy. After the Congress of Vienna, it covered a contiguous area west to east from Lake Constance to Galicia and Transylvania, and from Bohemia in the north to Lombardo-Venetia and Dalmatia in the south. The geopolitical focus of the Danube monarchy shifted clearly to the south and east and thus diminished its presence in German-speaking central Europe.<sup>30</sup> Accordingly, the ‘Eastern Question’ played an important role in Metternich’s foreign policy.<sup>31</sup>

Following the end of Napoleonic rule in the Kingdom of Italy, the political situation in the Apennine peninsula had to be reorganized. Due to divergent dynastic interests, a policy of unification was not feasible, yet it remained an intoxicating vision that lingered in the memory of those who were discontent with the situation after 1815. If at all, the term ‘restoration’, in the sense of a political restoration, applies to the Italian peninsula. The Habsburgs secured their claim to upper Italy, the pope returned to the, only slightly smaller, Papal States, and the Spanish Bourbon dynasty restored their rule in southern Italy. Finally the Congress of Vienna passed the dissolved Republic of Genoa on to the Kingdom of Sardinia and Piedmont, the greatest military power in Italy that – along with neutral Switzerland – was supposed to control France at her eastern border. Despite several efforts to restore the political and social authority of the *ancien régime*, the clock could not be turned back in the peninsula. After the end of French rule the Italian states evolved into constant trouble spots. It is hardly surprising that Europe’s mid-century revolutions started in Italy.<sup>32</sup>

In the north, the Napoleonic Wars had created considerable momentum in Scandinavia resulting in a new power balance in the Baltic area.<sup>33</sup> Sweden had lost her status as a European great power to Russia as early as the Northern War. The tsar, a temporary ally of Napoleon, used favorable circumstances to conquer Swedish Finland and attached it to the Russian Empire as an



autonomous Grand Duchy in 1809. The childless king of Sweden and the state council decided to elect Napoleon's Marshal Bernadotte as successor to the throne. Later, however, Bernadotte switched sides and lined up with the anti-Napoleonic coalition. In turn the allies compensated Sweden with Norway, taken from Denmark, for its loss of Finland to Russia.<sup>34</sup>

The Kingdom of Denmark emerged as the real loser in Scandinavia. Hard-pressed and bullied by Great Britain and its Scandinavian neighbors, it had inclined toward Napoleonic France. As a consequence, Denmark had to give up its union with Norway that had existed since the fourteenth century.<sup>35</sup> Despite objections by the Norwegian people's representatives, the Congress in Vienna neither questioned the transfer of Norway to Sweden nor Finland's incorporation into the Russian Empire.

At the same time, Tsar Alexander I successfully pushed his claim to Poland. Despite having adopted the first modern constitution in 1791, Poland had been wiped off the map as a sovereign state in 1795 following three partitions between neighboring Prussia, Austria and Russia.<sup>36</sup> Restored as the Duchy of Warsaw by Napoleon in 1807, the Congress succumbed to Alexander I's demands to affiliate Poland as a kingdom with Russia. Subsequently the new Polish state came increasingly under Russian control.<sup>37</sup> The Russian Empire, furthermore, enlarged its territory in two wars against the Ottoman Empire and Persia, as far as Bessarabia and the Caspian Sea.<sup>38</sup> All in all, the Napoleonic era brought about a power shift in Scandinavia, strengthened Russia's hegemonic claims in the Baltic and initiated its considerable expansion towards the west and southeast.<sup>39</sup>

Although the Congress of Vienna appeared to favor a balance of power and the mutual reconciliation of interests in order to establish a lasting international peace in Europe, two clear hegemons emerged. In the end, both proof and recognition of the supreme status of two imperial powers – Britain and Russia – demonstrated that they benefited the most from the changes around 1800. The Russian Empire in the east and, even more, the British Empire emerged as the real winners from the Napoleonic era.<sup>40</sup>

Since Great Britain did not pursue territorial claims at the Congress of Vienna but acted as an arbiter, the pivotal importance of Britain's conflict with Napoleonic France for its future as a world empire is often overlooked. If British security lay on the continent, her interests lay overseas. From the seventeenth century onwards, with the help of trading companies, the Royal Navy and accompanying legislation by the crown, Britain had gradually established a global trade empire.<sup>41</sup> If the Congress excluded colonial decisions during the liquidation of the Napoleonic Empire, it was only because Britain had already concluded most favorable bi- and multilateral agreements in advance. This approach was in line with Britain's long-standing principles of foreign policy. Her seemingly defensive strategy to urge for a balance of power in Europe was a precondition for an overseas expansionist policy.<sup>42</sup>

As Christopher Bayly and others have shown, Britain's tightened grip on Asia in the decades from 1780 to 1830 was of pivotal importance for her further ascent to global dominance in the nineteenth century.<sup>43</sup> In many respects, this axial era was at least as important for the reshaping of imperial spaces and global spheres of interest as for the changes in the political situation in Europe itself.<sup>44</sup> A brief review will illuminate the background to this development.<sup>45</sup>

As early as around 1600 England, the Netherlands and France started to establish trading bases and colonies, particularly in Asia and on the American continent, just as Spain and Portugal had done before. In several naval wars against Spain, England gained a foothold in the Caribbean and won over large parts of the lucrative transatlantic triangular trade with slaves from Africa for Caribbean plantations. The Netherlands displaced Portugal from East Asia in a couple of wars and evolved into the most important European colonial power thanks to the profitable spice trade. As Spain expanded to the Gulf of Mexico, Florida and California, Portugal subsequently targeted the plantation economy in Brazil and the slave trade with West Africa. The confessionally charged conflicts between Protestant and Catholic seafaring nations fighting over Dutch independence from Spain gradually ushered in the end of the Iberian powers' global hegemony.<sup>46</sup> In the seventeenth century European expansion was increasingly dominated by France, England and the Netherlands. Apart from confessional and security considerations, English foreign policy was guided more and more by mercantile interests. After driving back Portuguese and Spanish influence, and in response to the growing Dutch competition in international trade, England did not hesitate to enforce its lopsided Navigation Acts by fighting several wars against former allies. Since the end of the seventeenth century England had pursued a second Hundred Years' War against France over the supremacy of the seas resulting in the dissolution of the first French colonial empire.<sup>47</sup>

By 1650 the Dutch trading empire was at the peak of its power. Amsterdam had become the world's leading financial center and Dutch ships transported half of the world's trade. The wealth of the Netherlands was based on outpost colonies in the Pacific Ocean, particularly in Indonesia, on Ceylon and along the shores of India, as well as a resupply outpost at the Cape of Good Hope that would later emerge as the South African Cape Colony. As the world's first company to issue stock, the United East India Company (VOC) pushed European rivals aside and monopolized trade activities in the Pacific Ocean. It was the profitable Dutch spice trade to England that triggered the Navigation Acts and their requirement that commodities from and to England were to be transported by English ships only. At the same time, the Acts sought to ensure that the English benefited from the prosperous transatlantic trade with the growing settlements in North America.

William of Orange's accession to the English throne put an end to the long-standing conflict between the two Protestant naval powers. A division in the spheres of interest – the Netherlands focused on the spice trade with Indonesia, England on the textile trade with India – subsequently worked to England's advantage. If the textile trade between India and Europe, with its increasing population, proved to be a lucrative business, profits from the spice trade declined as a result of changing habits of consumption, growing competition and mismanagement within the VOC.

Simultaneously with England's rise – joined with Scotland in 1707 as the United Kingdom of Great Britain – the Dutch overseas trade lost its influence. The fourth Anglo-Dutch Naval War ultimately sealed the economic decline of the Netherlands as a global maritime power. In reaction to Dutch support for the rebelling colonists in America, the British navy fought a privateering war. Countless Dutch ships were captured and the already crippled VOC lost a fortune. Not only were the Netherlands forced to cede their Indian trading bases as a result of the peace of 1784, they also had to open up their ocean lanes and trade monopolies to the British, which aggravated the crisis in Dutch overseas activities.<sup>48</sup>

France's colonial interests, on the other hand, had initially focused on the American continent, namely Canada and the Caribbean, and only later expanded towards the Indian Ocean. Supported by Jean-Baptiste Colbert's mercantilist policies, a wide network of military outposts, missionary and trading bases emerged in the area of the Saint Lawrence River. By 1700, *Nouvelle France* gradually expanded to the Great Lakes and the Mississippi Valley, Louisiana and the Ohio Valley. Yet France increasingly had to compete with the English settlers who greatly outnumbered the French. Conflicts over settlements and spheres of interest were inevitable. The French holdings in the Caribbean, first and foremost Saint Domingue, were among the most lucrative colonies worldwide. The French East India Company, however, never reached the level of prosperity of its Dutch and British models. Attempts to set up a profitable plantation system on Madagascar ultimately failed.

Since the mid-seventeenth century France had held trading bases on the Indian subcontinent. It was mainly due to good relations with the South Indian princes that France could evolve into the most influential European power of the subcontinent a hundred years later. Trading circles in Paris, however, showed less interest in the Indian project than did their counterparts in Amsterdam and London, and France's colonial success attracted the attention of British rivals.<sup>49</sup>

In the years after the Glorious Revolution Great Britain increasingly engaged in continental European conflicts. It pursued a policy of balance of power, which provided the basis for its own overseas commercial and colonial expansion. All inter-European wars of the eighteenth century were accompanied by colonial armed conflicts, which gradually consolidated

Great Britain's overseas hegemony. Though initially dynastic and confessional concerns also played a dominant role, from the 1720s at the latest, commercial and economic motives came to the fore. Eighteenth-century politics were shaped more and more by the colonial rivalry between France and Great Britain, a conflict that lasted well into the nineteenth century and deeply influenced Napoleon's politics, too.<sup>50</sup>

From the War of Palatine Succession to the Seven Years' War all European cabinet wars corresponded to military conflicts on the North American continent. Even though Spain and the Netherlands were also involved in overseas wars, these armed conflicts were mainly based on the rivalry between French-speaking and English settlers, their fatherlands and the indigenous population of North America. While Spain lost its maritime hegemony and its status as a European great power in the course of the Wars of Succession, Great Britain established more and more naval bases in the Mediterranean and expanded her sphere of influence in Asia and America at the expense of France. Moreover, the lucrative monopoly in the slave trade with Latin America fell into British hands.<sup>51</sup> Finally, the Seven Years' War turned into a global conflict with fighting taking place on all continents, apart from Australia. Historians no longer consider it a mere inner-European conflict but a first world war and global conflict between France and Great Britain for overseas supremacy.<sup>52</sup>

In Europe, Prussia emerged as the most recent player in the fellowship of great powers after the Peace of Paris in 1763. After successfully defeating rival Austria and retaining Silesia, it increasingly dominated politics in central Europe. The outcome of the Seven Years' War had even more dramatic consequences at international level. Left with half the tonnage of the British fleet, France lost the biggest part of her early modern colonial empire. After the capture of Quebec nothing was left of a *Nouvelle France* that had once stretched from Newfoundland to the Great Lakes and from the Hudson Bay to the Gulf of Mexico. France kept the most profitable Antillean island, Saint Domingue, yet had to cede Louisiana to Spain. This served as compensation, since Spain had lost Florida to Great Britain. Great Britain therefore controlled the whole of North America east of the Mississippi.

In Asia, France and England competed heavily over supremacy in India. Since the 1740s, ferocious battles had been fought from which the French initially emerged victorious. The Peace of Paris in 1763 marked a watershed and ultimately opened up the Indian subcontinent to British interests. France lost all territories occupied since 1749 and kept only a few trading bases. Moreover, French holdings on the western coast of Africa fell into British hands. In contrast to previous wars, maritime and colonial influence in overseas territories was the main focus of the Seven Years' War. While Great Britain evolved from a supreme European to a global imperial power with a clear future in overseas expansion, France lost her status as a dominant colonial power in the Atlantic area and in India.<sup>53</sup>

The Seven Years' War left all nations involved financially exhausted. Even Great Britain, whose incomes from overseas trade continued to grow year after year despite the war, found itself forced to raise taxes to refill the empty state coffers. This decision came at a cost: the loss of the consent of taxpayers in her North American colonies. Tax reforms in France failed on the domestic front. At least the French monarchy successfully rebuilt the fleet by implementing an ambitious program, based on huge financial efforts adding to the strain on the French coffers.<sup>54</sup>

Politically France was more than eager to take revenge on the British and tightened up relations with Spain and the Netherlands, states that had also suffered from British ambitions. When the British started their campaign against the disloyal colonists in North America, they faced three countries hoping to challenge British dominance by supporting the new United States. The American War of Independence turned, in fact, into a global conflict with military campaigns occurring in the Caribbean, Europe, India and Africa, as well as North America.

Nevertheless, North America's new independence could not stop Britannia from ruling the waves. The Atlantic trade, of pivotal importance for the British economy, soon exceeded pre-war levels and offset tax losses. The Treaties of Versailles returned Florida to Spain, while France regained some Caribbean islands, access to the Senegal area and a few Indian outposts. Even though this did not change the international balance of power in general, France did win back a foothold in Asia and Africa. The fall of the Dutch naval power, on the other hand, accelerated due to the defeat the Netherlands suffered in the last of the Anglo-Dutch Naval Wars and its harsh peace conditions. The long-distance consequences of the war aggravated hostilities between pro-British, aristocratic Orangists and the pro-French, democratic Patriotic Party. This finally led to the foundation of the Batavian Republic and the Netherlands leaning closer to France. The coalition policy of the maritime powers established during the American War of Independence – Great Britain against the alliance of the smaller naval powers – seemed to remain unchanged till the end of the Napoleonic era.<sup>55</sup>

Until recently historians studying the Revolutionary and Napoleonic eras have focused on French hegemony over continental Europe. Yet the wars that shook Europe and the world from 1792 to 1815 represented much more than just a conflict between the *ancien régime* and revolutionary forces or the beginning of modern state-building amidst Napoleonic conquest. They were part of the centuries-old Anglo-French colonial dualism and also marked the final act in the struggle of the European powers for maritime hegemony.<sup>56</sup>

French support for the Irish rebellion in 1798 sought to weaken Great Britain. The proclamation of the Batavian Republic was followed by relinquishing the Dutch fleet to France. Subsequently Antwerp, after the French reopened the Scheldt River, became one of the most important

naval ports opposite the British coastline. When Napoleon endeavored to gain a foothold in Egypt it was neither a maverick's gamble nor the attempt to sideline an ambitious general. Instead, contemporaries considered the legendarily fertile Egypt as the key to Africa and Asia. The occupation of Egypt would have given France control over the lucrative Levant trade and laid the foundation for further imperial enterprises in Persia and India.<sup>57</sup> At the same time, taking possession of the Suez region would have disrupted the fast connection between Great Britain and her holdings in India, the foundation of expanding British rule in Asia during the years around 1800.<sup>58</sup>

After the failure of the Egyptian enterprise and the loss of numerous ships in the Battle of Aboukir, France's colonial ambitions focused again on America. Napoleon acquired Louisiana from Spain after renewing the former Bourbon Alliance and hoped to re-establish New France on the Gulf of Mexico. Moreover, the First Consul intended to reintroduce slavery in Saint Domingue, which had been abolished in the course of the French Revolution. Yet the resistance of the islanders, supported by the British and a rampant outbreak of yellow fever, thwarted those plans. Also, Britain's naval blockade established after the Peace of Amiens significantly hampered the transatlantic connection. In view of these difficulties, Napoleon finally decided to withdraw from America and sold Louisiana to the United States.<sup>59</sup>

The shipyards along the French coast operated at full capacity and, together with the ships of her allied maritime powers, the French fleet outnumbered the Royal Navy even after its losses overseas. It was hoped that an invasion of England would set the record straight, but it ended in a devastating defeat at Trafalgar from which the combined French and Spanish navies never recovered. It was only after Napoleon failed to challenge Britain's maritime supremacy that France turned to establishing a continental empire in Europe. Napoleon's strategy to bring Great Britain to its knees, not by military but by commercial means and to inflict the first economic war of modern times, initiated an intervention policy on the continent that in the end led to the downfall of the Napoleonic Empire.<sup>60</sup>

Thus, it was the French Wars that, once and for all, made Great Britain the indisputable mistress of the seas for the entire century to come. Between 1792 and 1814 Britain's naval rivals lost large parts of their fleets and many of their overseas holdings. The repercussions of the Napoleonic era rendered Spain unable to cope with the independence movements in its Latin American colonies; it retained only Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines. Portugal, allied with Great Britain, retained a presence in Africa but lost significant influence due to Brazil's independence.<sup>61</sup> The Dutch colonial empire was reduced to Indonesia. The Danes did not fare any better, despite their attempt to maintain an armed neutrality. As early as 1801, numerous ships were sunk or boarded in a sea battle off the coast

of Copenhagen. Six years later the Royal Navy forced the rest of the Danish fleet to surrender by bombarding the Danish capital. In the end, Denmark lost not only large parts of its own territory but also nearly all of its colonies beyond the Atlantic Ocean. Russia emerged as the unrivalled sea power in the Baltic. Despite many losses, the French colonial empire did not collapse entirely, but retained several Caribbean islands and some outposts in India, West Africa and the Pacific Ocean. Thus, the country was able to gradually expand its influence throughout the nineteenth century.<sup>62</sup>

Thus, none of minor powers were able to compete with the British Empire that not only held Canada in the War of 1812 against the United States, but also acquired profitable islands in the Caribbean and the Pacific and outposts all over the world. The holdings of Gibraltar, Malta and the Ionian Islands permitted Great Britain to control the Mediterranean. Britain also gained the Cape Colony, assumed to be the springboard for conquering Africa. While the potential of Australia only gradually came into focus, Great Britain had eliminated all colonial rivals in the Pacific during the decades around 1800. Against the background of crisis within the Ottoman, Persian and Mughal empires, the British were able to establish an authoritarian rule in India that laid the foundation for global hegemony.<sup>63</sup> The French Wars 'saw the greatest expansion of British imperial dominion since the creation of the colonies of settlement in Ireland and America in the seventeenth century.'<sup>64</sup> The British Empire after the Napoleonic Wars comprised of a worldwide network of formal and informal spheres of influence and of global markets that not only grew faster than continental European commerce, but were also more profitable and produced more investments.

Much of the historical literature on this period continues to address the fundamental changes during the era of revolutions and Napoleon's rule, outlined above as separate phenomena. On the one hand, international politics with its changing power distribution on a global scale and the, so-called, balance of power in Europe after the Congress of Vienna, and on the other hand, the focus on the challenge to the *ancien régime* and the modernization policies as a reaction to the Napoleonic wars and expansion. Yet both phenomena are in fact inseparable. Great Britain's economic capacity, based on her maritime supremacy, enabled the island kingdom to face the Napoleonic confrontation and emerge as the leading world power of the nineteenth century after having disposed of all her colonial rivals. Moreover, the Napoleonic Empire prevailed over the economic and political constraints of the *ancien régime* and, in so doing, fostered capitalist developments in economy, trade and industry, and in new approaches to state-building. After the Congress of Vienna, the European international system and many years of peace gave Britain the means to focus on her imperial status and economic supremacy that facilitated the establishment of a liberal free trade system which benefited the island and other European countries – at the expense of the extra-European world.

This volume addresses both the continental and global repercussions of the Napoleonic era in all areas influenced by the French Empire. This introduction serves as an initial overview and puts the structural changes of this transitional period between the Early Modern and Modern periods into the context of long term and correlating historical processes. In the first chapter Annie Jourdan presents a review of the new approaches in the global and entangled history of the Napoleonic Empire. This is followed by accounts from leading experts on key developments in nearly all states and regions that the French Empire controlled or influenced.<sup>65</sup> The contributions feature empirical findings linked to structural analyses against the backdrop of the existing historiography. Thus, many of these chapters challenge prevailing national narratives of interpretation by highlighting processes of intercultural exchange and communication.

The volume's first section on the European heart of the Empire starts with Brecht Deseure's and Emmanuel Berger's article on the '*neuf départements réunis*', discussing recent research trends in the territory of today's Belgium. Johan Joor examines the French era in the Netherlands, a long-ignored period of Dutch history, and describes its implications for Dutch colonial and global ambitions. Armin Owzar reviews different experiences with French supremacy in various German-speaking regions and emphasizes the heterogeneity of political references, thus making clear that 'Germany' had not yet come into existence. Anna Maria Rao underlines the impact of Napoleonic modernization on the Italian states. She highlights the regional approaches of recent research literature, which avoid an overly linear interpretation that anticipates the Risorgimento.

The second section of the volume is devoted to the Ibero-Atlantic world. Lúcia Maria Bastos Pereira das Neves illustrates how the flight of the Portuguese court to Brazil brought out domestic tensions in the mainland and reversed power relations between the center and the former colony. In the end it enabled the emergence of modernity in both societies. Jean-René Aymes outlines the consequences of the Peninsular Wars for France and Spain and deconstructs legends that politically instrumentalized the successful insurrection against France for succeeding generations. Stefan Rinke demonstrates that even before the Spanish invasion in 1808, Napoleon was a reference point for critical intellectuals in Latin America. Rinke examines to what extent the Napoleonic Empire expedited the end of Spanish colonial rule and influenced the newly formed societies in Latin America. Bernhard Gainot looks at the French Caribbean after the Haitian revolution. He argues that the subsequent re-establishment of the colonial system should not be seen as a restoration process, rather it represented the implementation of a colonial order based on racial segregation to an even greater degree than before. Thus, in the long term, it contributed to the collapse of French colonial imperialism.

Eastern Europe and Scandinavia are the focus of the third section. Though often ignored in studies on the French Empire, geopolitical restructuring



processes around the Baltic Sea shaped the future of the area in the nineteenth century. Denis Sdvizkov describes the crucial role of the Napoleonic Empire in the modernization of Russia. Obscured by mythologizing the Patriotic War of 1812, the czardom proved itself a docile disciple of Napoleon in regard to the organization of the army and the school system, public administration reforms, mechanisms of imperial rule and the molding of public opinion. In his contribution on Poland, Jaroslaw Czuby illustrates Napoleon's tremendous influence on Polish politics by founding the Duchy of Warsaw and what followed after 1815. Within this setting it becomes clear why Napoleon and France, in contrast to other European leaders and states, played such a prominent role in the Polish culture of state-building and remembrance.

Rasmus Glenthoy's chapter challenges the widely held view that Frederick VI of Denmark was Napoleon's most loyal ally. Instead he describes a kingdom that, despite its efforts to maintain neutrality and uphold state sovereignty, fell victim to international great power politics. As a consequence, the Danish-Norwegian composite state collapsed as it was forced to cede Norway to Sweden. Bård Frydenlund elucidates the war's socio-economic ramifications on Norway to demonstrate how, in 1814, a constitutional movement and new political culture emerged that survived even after Norway's incorporation into Sweden. Martin Hårdstedt presents the Swedish position within northern Europe's geopolitics, showing how the lost war against Russia over Finland became the starting point of a policy that finally led to a new dynasty and compensated for the loss of Finland with the gain of Norway. Max Engman explains the political background to the Russian annexation of Finland in his chapter. He makes clear that though the tsar primarily sought to expand Russian power to Constantinople and the Danubian Principalities, Finland became the target of Russian expansion because of its strategic importance for St. Petersburg. After the annexation, Swedish institutions were largely maintained and Russian centralization policies emerged only in the second half of the nineteenth century in response to the Grand Duchy's call for independence.

The last section of the volume focuses on Habsburg central Europe and the eastern Mediterranean. Martin Schennach outlines the reform policy pursued by the Habsburg monarchy in the contest against Napoleon and explores the degree to which the war contributed to the formation of an Austrian national consciousness. After the Peace of Schönbrunn, the Venetian and Austrian regions along the eastern Adriatic Sea were annexed by the French Empire, then called the Illyrian Provinces. Marko Troglrić, Josip Vrandečić (Istria and Dalmatia) and Peter Vodopivec (Slovenia) address the repercussions of these developments for the population of the Balkan states that include an impetus for administrative and religious modernization, but also implied oppressive tax increases and conscription, that soon made Napoleon's supporters dwindle to a small group of enlightened

reformers. Nevertheless, historical literature has long painted a predominantly positive image of Napoleon, due to the growing opposition against Habsburg rule during the nineteenth century.

Historians have often discussed whether the influence of Napoleon and his British and Russian rivals can be understood as the dawn of modernity in the Middle East.<sup>66</sup> Muhammad 'Alī in fact established a regime in Egypt along the lines of the Napoleonic example that opened the country to Western, and particularly French, influence. Yet, Jean-Marcel Humbert shows that the culture transfer did not function as a one-way street; a palpable Egyptomania swept France as a result. Even if Napoleon's invasion was not without its consequences, Muhammad 'Alī's policy is better understood in the context of political conflicts within the Ottoman Empire. Virginia Aksan illuminates the preconditions and friction lines of these struggles within power politics from the late eighteenth century, finally focusing on the reform policy of Sultan Selim III and the stimulus of the Napoleonic challenge.

The volume's final chapter by Michael Broers explores the nature of French hegemony. He demonstrates that French civil servants judged the countries and societies they engaged with according to their willingness to embrace French reform policies and the principles of the *Code Civil*. Thus, a profound set of stereotypes structured the relations between the administrators of the Napoleonic Empire and the territories and societies under French rule. In the French imperial imagination, a conglomerate of macro-regions and micro-landscapes evolved, ranked according to their willingness to adopt the French model – or the necessity to demonstrate French supremacy in other ways.

## Notes

I would like to thank Katherine Aaslestad for her support and helpful comments on an earlier version of the text. Although English references are given preference in this introduction, please note that for each country and area there exists a rich literature in the native languages that could not be mentioned here. Please consider the respective chapters of this volume for further references.

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in the modern era and characterize the decades around 1800 as a period of its own epochal importance, yet focus their research on the second half of the nineteenth century.

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# 2

## France, Western Europe and the Atlantic World. Napoleon's Empire: European Politics in a Global Perspective

*Annie Jourdan*

The remarks quoted below, admittedly composed on Saint Helena, are nonetheless at least partly true, as is confirmed by the expedition to the Orient of 1798 and by the secret missions of 1810 to Egypt, Syria and Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup>

Egypt, he said, should have been our Saint-Domingue and our American colonies, reconciling freedom for the blacks with prosperity for our trade, etc. This new colony would have ruined the English in America, in the Mediterranean, and all the way to the banks of the Ganges.

They make clear at the outset the extra-European dimension of Napoleonic ambitions and achievements. This dimension forms the subject of the present essay, which focuses primarily on the Western historiography of the Imperial period in a global perspective. What is immediately striking is the extent to which this historiography has changed since its beginnings.<sup>2</sup> We start therefore by outlining the main themes of the early historiography, then consider the shift in research over recent decades, and finally broaden the focus to global history. The result, it is hoped, will contribute to a better understanding of the Napoleonic period in both Europe and the Atlantic world.

From Napoleon's death to the 1980s and 1990s, the history of the First Empire was primarily a matter of contention.<sup>3</sup> In France, it set unconditional admirers against implacable opponents, that is, Bonapartists of all persuasions against republicans, liberals and royalists.<sup>4</sup> More importantly for our discussion, the historiography of the First Empire was Francocentric, in that French historians concentrated their attention on Napoleonic France itself, not on Europe, an entity inconceivable in the era of triumphant



nationalism and for this reason scarcely visible to them.<sup>5</sup> Some historians in France charged their hero with betraying the Revolution and leaving their country a lesser power than it had been; others acclaimed him for having carried the French flag to the height of its glory. Foreign historians, by contrast, reproached him for the humiliation, harsh treatment and economic ruin inflicted on their countries. Their reaction was to reject every part of the Napoleonic legacy, even when remnants of it were still in their possession.<sup>6</sup> The birth of nationalism in the nineteenth century led to the denial or omission of any contributions of foreign origin.<sup>7</sup> The history of a European country had to be a purely national history, wholly local in origin. Neighboring peoples and powers were not credited with playing any role, and certainly not Napoleon who, more than anybody, symbolized French arrogance and imperialism. This conviction was less firmly entrenched in Poland and Italy, where Napoleon had aroused high expectations over national unity and independence.<sup>8</sup>

With few exceptions political judgements on Napoleon have changed little since that time. The proponents of strong state power and *l'homme providentiel* have stuck to their position; so too have republicans, liberals and democrats, who refuse to accept that one man, however great, should hold undivided power and thereby threaten the liberty of all. But while those judgements on Napoleon have remained more or less the same, among most historians a clear change of approach has occurred. Increasingly, the focus of interest has shifted from the emperor to the empire he created.

A major turning point in this respect was made in the early 1990s by the British historian Stuart Woolf. Looking beyond the *homme exceptionnel*, Woolf directed his attention to the impact of the Empire at the European level.<sup>9</sup> Another important development was the arrival of large numbers of non-French historians in the field of Napoleonic studies.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, never has French history drawn specialists from so many nationalities, with a marked preference for the Revolutionary and Napoleonic periods – as Steven Englund reminded us in a recent issue of the *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*.<sup>11</sup> But foreigners no longer approach this period of French history as they used to, intent on settling scores with the former enemy and on restoring the reputation of their humiliated homeland. Instead, they view it from an original and detached perspective that equips them to debunk the myths about the period more effectively than French historians, too closely involved in their own history, were or are able to do. Not surprisingly, the emergence of this tendency coincided with the decline of the nationalistic interpretation of France's national history, a decline that was already apparent by the 1960s and 1970s and was influential in orienting historical research and interpretation in new directions.<sup>12</sup> Since then the view has become accepted that this was a period of intense exchange in Europe.<sup>13</sup> Napoleonic history is thus shaped by the expectations of different ages and different peoples.

The development of the European Union in recent decades has been a stimulus for scholars to look at transnational exchanges in a fresh light and to examine the interactions, mobility and transfers that, though they had doubtless always existed, increased sharply during the period studied here. Viewed thus, the Revolution and the Empire seem to have played a fundamental role in the transition from the Old Regime to modernity.<sup>14</sup> Together they brought twenty years of upheaval to Europe across a wide range of domains. The countries of Europe with which France formed alliances, or on which she imposed subjection or annexation, all came under French influence, whether welcomed or not.<sup>15</sup> The reforms to political, legal and cultural institutions, or those that accompanied the war and the militarization of society, transformed the face of the continent. The example of the Civil Code immediately comes to mind, but others include conscription, the gendarmerie and police forces, the legal system, a modern administration, the (partial) abolition of feudalism<sup>16</sup> and religious equality, from which the Jews, at least in theory, were no longer excluded.<sup>17</sup> In addition, the epoch invented what would become national culture, in particular the national museum, for which the prototype was the Musée Napoléon that ironically turned out to be more international than national and in 1815 very nearly became a museum of European arts.<sup>18</sup> This was also the epoch when education was secularized and rationalized, although concurrent with this change was the introduction of deeply patriotic curricula. Indeed, in a further irony, in countries like Prussia, Austria and Russia, which rejected French domination, reforms modeled closely on the French 'rationalist' system became necessary to encourage more effective resistance to the great warrior-leader of the modern age.<sup>19</sup> But even then these countries did not slavishly imitate France; instead, each adopted an original approach, as the studies already mentioned and those referred to below convincingly demonstrate.

The British historian Michael Broers, whose doctoral thesis was on Piedmont under Napoleon, has followed the route traced by Stuart Woolf. In 1996 he published two well-received studies: *Europe under Napoleon 1799–1915* (New York, 1996) and *Europe after Napoleon: Revolution, reaction and romanticism, 1814–1848* (Manchester, 1996). Around the same time, a number of English-language historians were studying the French Empire's impact in specific territories of which they were not themselves natives, including Spain (Esdaile, Tone), Prussia (Blanning, Simms), German Confederation (John, Rowe, Breuilly), Rhineland (Rowe), Northern Italy (Broers), Southern Italy (Davis) and Venice (Laven).<sup>20</sup> European historians, meanwhile, were turning their attention to the role the Revolutionary and Napoleonic period had played in their own countries. To their surprise what they discovered was not at all what they had been taught at school, and found instead that the exchanges and contacts built up during this twenty-year period had been fundamental in the creation of their respective nation states.<sup>21</sup> The flow of innovative monographs has continued, notably from

the younger generation of scholars, with valuable results obtained for all the settings listed here: Katherine Aaslestad, Karen Hagemann and Ute Planert on Germany; Johan Joor and Martijn van der Burg on Holland; Brecht Deseure on Belgium; Andreas Würigler on Switzerland; Jaroslaw Czuby on Poland; Armin Owzar on Westphalia; Jean-Baptiste Busall on Spain under Joseph Bonaparte. The last two focus in particular on constitutional and legal history, which had long suffered relative neglect and been the preserve of legal scholars. With these studies the national framework is superseded; history has become transnational.

But the movement has not stopped there. In recent years Napoleonic history has deliberately looked beyond the frontiers of continental Europe and studied the impact of revolutions and empires on a worldwide scale. The Napoleonic Empire had transatlantic repercussions.<sup>22</sup> Thus the war in Spain (1808–1814) and the abdication of the legitimate monarchs not only alienated the population of metropolitan Spain, it also led to revolt among the populations in South America.<sup>23</sup> The Continental Blockade added to the existing instability of the Atlantic world and, by closing Europe's ports to products coming from or going to the colonies, drew it deeper into the titanic clash between France and England. Communication between center and periphery was now impossible except through English intermediation, who exploited the situation to take control of the commercial networks thus opened up, much to the annoyance of the American Republic.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, on the worldwide scale, the greatest impact came not from the war itself,<sup>25</sup> but from the oppressive implications of the Continental Blockade for neutral countries, whose shipping could be boarded and forced to pay duties wherever in the world one or other of the two powers had trading stations or bases, only to then risk being stopped and plundered by the opposing side.<sup>26</sup> A French diplomat of the time related how this posed a serious threat to trade in the East, and how the capture of all their vessels had brought ruin for the Arab nations.<sup>27</sup> The fall of the Spanish monarchy had another consequence: the creation of a power vacuum in the South American colonies, which in time led to demands for independence from local patriots. An entire continent now embarked on revolution against its colonial rulers,<sup>28</sup> achieving its goals by the 1820s. Some of the leaders, including Bolívar, consciously adopted the Napoleonic 'look'. Robert Alexander recently showed the extent to which the Haitian dictators and the *caudillos* were attracted by this model.<sup>29</sup> A full-length portrait of Bolívar from 1826 illustrates the point particularly well.<sup>30</sup>

On the other side of the Atlantic, Napoleon not only strengthened his power in continental Europe but also revealed his intention of renouncing the French colonial empire, a shift in direction signalled by the sale of Louisiana in 1804. Loss of the colony, coming after that of Saint Domingue, tolled the knell for the French presence in the Americas. This was not the least paradoxical aspect of Napoleonic foreign policy. Even as

he achieved domination over the European continent, Napoleon abandoned the last of France's colonies in the Atlantic world.<sup>31</sup> Was he, as some authors have suggested, exchanging the Atlantic colonial empire for domination in the East? That may have been the dream, but it remained a dream: there was more than enough to occupy him in the western part of his empire.<sup>32</sup>

The impact of the First Empire was felt as far away as Africa and Asia, where the French and their allies lost their colonies to the benefit of the British. The Dutch, for example, lost the Cape Colonies, Ceylon and Java, while the Spanish lost Trinidad around the same time. The decrees instigating the Continental Blockade in November 1806 merely made the situation worse, since this extended to all seas, and thus to the whole world. For the countries affected, the impact was not only on their populations but also on their economies.<sup>33</sup> A new map of the world was taking shape, one over which Britain reigned supreme. Shut out of continental Europe, Britain responded by redeploying her forces over the high seas, altering the pattern of international trade and the concomitant strategies.

Napoleon transformed the world more than he thought and more than is generally believed; but not necessarily in the way that was expected or that he dreamed of. Regarding the Atlantic and the commercial blockade in general, many of his policies in fact backfired and harmed French interests. It was something he regretted on Saint Helena, where he noted that the 'unfortunate affair of Spain' had merely profited his British enemy, by throwing open to her 'the trade with South America'.<sup>34</sup> What is more, changes introduced in the European countries were not automatically based on the French model, and even when they were, they certainly did not reproduce that model in every detail. This is a point historians are now beginning to recognize. The reforming countries had other models to choose from and did, in fact, make use of them. Their declarations of independence, when they actually made one, tended to follow the American model, as David Armitage has suggested.<sup>35</sup> The same question can be asked about their constitutions, and here too there were several precedents to choose from: the American constitution – or constitutions<sup>36</sup> – and the Spanish model, that of Cádiz of 1812. Likewise, Prussia and Austria did not wait for Napoleon before drawing up their own civil codes.<sup>37</sup> Lastly there is the question of England's action and impact at international level and the repercussions in its domestic arena. Research on this subject is much needed: to judge from its growing size, the British Empire must have had a greater transnational influence than Napoleon's continental empire, not least because the Atlantic world was by no means Bonapartist. A global history needs to reflect this fact.

The Imperial regime cannot be fully understood by concentrating solely on Napoleon and his policies and propaganda. No matter how extraordinary and hyperactive Napoleon may have been, he could not be everywhere at once. American historian Isser Woloch has provided a valuable reminder

of how Napoleon gathered around him a group of able and energetic collaborators: Cambacérès, Regnaud de St. Jean d'Angély, Berlier, Boulay de la Meurthe and Thibaudeau.<sup>38</sup> Woloch could have added that Napoleon did the same in all the European countries. A few of these local figures paid for their collaboration with their lives (like Giuseppe Prina, finance minister of the former Kingdom of Italy); far more usually, however, they remained in power after the fall of the Empire,<sup>39</sup> and were able to continue the work of reorganization on uniform and rational lines begun by the revolutions and the Napoleonic Empire. In some instances the sovereigns themselves continued the task – as happened in the Netherlands where William I took over much of his predecessor's legacy.<sup>40</sup> The gendarmerie was renamed the *maréchaussée* and conscription was passed off as national militia service, but the inspiration for both came from the Napoleonic Empire. Other equally persuasive examples appear in studies by David Laven and Lucy Riall and by Michael Rowe.<sup>41</sup>

Meanwhile, Alan Forrest's research on Napoleon's men has cast new light on the everyday life of soldiers in the Imperial armies. Their letters that have come down to us provide a wealth of information about their experiences, their hopes and regrets, their fears and happiness. The picture that emerges is of young men who were inquiring and sensitive, and considerably more open to other people than were their officers, still under the influence of the prejudices and national stereotypes inherited from their social milieu. Some young soldiers, for example, wrote to their parents relating the exotic sights of the countries visited in the course of their campaigns; others met and married local girls and stayed on. In these cases the transfer was literal and not just symbolic. This too is a transnational cultural history, but has the additional advantage of supplying a corrective to approaches that depict French policy as exclusively imperialist, in the strongest sense of the word.<sup>42</sup> Doubtless, Frenchmen who considered themselves superior as the pure products of revolutionary *régénération* could be arrogant in their attitude, but to conclude that they held all foreign populations in deep contempt would be an exaggeration.<sup>43</sup>

Some recent studies have also examined the place of the First Empire in European memory. The research group set up by Karen Hagemann and Etienne François, later joined by Alan Forrest and Rafe Blaufarb, has chosen to approach the war from a cultural and social perspective. This legacy is impossible to ignore as war raged across the continent for more than twenty years,<sup>44</sup> with wide-ranging repercussions for societies and individuals. Yet to go from there to talk of 'total war'<sup>45</sup> is a very large step indeed, and the research published so far does not support a conclusion along those lines.<sup>46</sup>

Viewed from this angle, the Napoleonic legacy appears to consist mainly of continuing trauma for the people caught up in the conflicts. There was the trauma of destruction and violence caused by the war, but for an entire

generation there was also the trauma of enforced absence from home, the endless spells of service and even captivity in foreign lands.<sup>47</sup> At the same time, of course, there was the legacy of institutions, legal codes, laws, plus images and ideas, including revolutionary ones – like the right of peoples to self-determination and the, no less revolutionary, idea of the nation,<sup>48</sup> which does not mean, however, that the period saw the birth of modern nationalism.<sup>49</sup> On this point we need to agree on the exact meaning given to the term nationalism and then specify which is being used: nationalism as the process of nation building, or nationalism as the consequence of that process.<sup>50</sup> These multiple negative and positive legacies, whether they became part of memory or were excluded from it and forgotten,<sup>51</sup> are now the focus of interest for many European and non-European historians. Napoleonic historical scholarship is becoming richer and more varied, while new topics and international researchers are more numerous than ever. From Australia to Africa and America, from Russia to Europe, not excluding Poland, Turkey and Persia,<sup>52</sup> a growing body of research is extending our understanding not just of Napoleon, *l'homme extraordinaire*, and Imperial France, but of the world as a whole, a world thrown into turmoil by the events of a period more turbulent than any that had gone before.

Even these transnational studies are not immune to adopting a Francocentric or Eurocentric perspective. This is a criticism that can be laid against the collection edited by Christophe Belaubre, Jordana Dym and John Savage, *Napoleon's Atlantic: The Impact of the Napoleonic Empire in the Atlantic World*, and it seems necessary to qualify the conclusions suggested by its title.<sup>53</sup> For it is clear that the mere fact of a French presence on the American continent, whatever form it took, did not automatically signify the diffusion and acceptance of a French influence. Furthermore, not every European impact necessarily had Napoleonic origins. The taste of princes and *caudillos* for military uniforms could just as easily have come from Prussia, where Frederick II had introduced it in the eighteenth century and made it obligatory for the princes of his family.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, the modernization and rationalization of education was not a uniquely French concern, but was present before the French Revolution among Prussian philanthropists and Swiss educational reformers like Pestalozzi.<sup>55</sup> The same is true of the movement to codify laws, which was a major concern in several German states.

The present essay has also, up to this point, placed too much emphasis on the impact of the Napoleonic Empire in Europe and in the Atlantic world. It is important to reverse the perspective by citing a few examples that go against received wisdom. Specifically, instances where the French brought something back from their foreign travels. There was Moreau de Saint-Méry, émigré from Saint Domingue to Philadelphia, who copied the American method of street numbering when administering the States of Parma for Napoleon. He introduced a similar system in 1803, which was

adopted in France in 1805. Similarly, Talleyrand, from his first-hand observation of conditions in America, quickly grasped that in its future dealings with Europe the new republic would favor close relations with England, the former colonial master and enemy, rather than with France and Spain, the short-term allies.<sup>56</sup> Then there were the movements of migrants from Saint Domingue to the American continent, where their effect was not so much one of automatic *francisation* as a creolization, about which it would be useful to have more information.<sup>57</sup> For the French colony of Alabama, home to former Imperial military men,<sup>58</sup> refugees from Saint Domingue and French ex-patriots, Rafe Blaufarb has established that it was of limited importance. It was just enough to alarm the Spanish and American governments temporarily, not enough to influence the indigenous populations. Besides, most of these refugees soon went their separate ways, some to live in New Orleans, others to Philadelphia; only a few stayed on at Mobile, while the more restless elements went to fight in the South American wars of independence. In 1830, however, when they were allowed to return to France they rushed to do so. By and large these refugees had less influence on the host countries than the host countries had on them. This was the experience of Lakanal and Van der Kempf, a Frenchman and a Dutchman respectively, both revolutionaries previously attached to liberty and equality but who did not resist the desire to purchase slaves. The time they spent in the Republic of the United States altered their principles and, above all, reinforced their conformism.<sup>59</sup>

When a French influence was undeniable, its part in the modernization of the states concerned invariably took a substantially modified form, suggesting a 'creative relocation' and confirming the theories of Blaut, the historian of diffusion phenomena, on the creative role of peripheries relative to the center.<sup>60</sup> As already indicated, the constitutions adopted in Europe or South America could just as well have been modeled on that of the United States, or indeed that of the Cádiz Cortes of 1812, as on the Napoleonic models introduced in Holland, Westphalia or in the Spain of the *afrancesados*.<sup>61</sup> There is no doubt that the constitution desired by the Kingdom of Naples was based on the Cádiz text, not on that drawn up by Napoleon at Bayonne for his brother Joseph.<sup>62</sup> As for the Civil Code, we now know that this was modified depending on the country where it was applied.<sup>63</sup> When acculturation did occur, therefore, it was dynamic, creative and pluralist. Transnational historical studies need to be particularly attentive to this interactive dynamism, given that the national context in which a foreign institution is introduced necessarily modifies its form and content.

The foregoing remarks illustrate the extent of the evolution in Napoleonic studies and the diversity of the approaches being used by contemporary scholars. But they also suggest new lines of research, for although our

understanding of the Atlantic world in this period, including the Caribbean,<sup>64</sup> is much improved, we still know relatively little about the effects of the Napoleonic period in the East, in Asia and in Africa, or even in some of what are judged to be 'minor' states of continental Europe. What, for example, do we know about Switzerland at this time? Why was it the only country not to be fitted out with a monarchy – *monarchisé* – by Napoleon?<sup>65</sup> What do we really know about the effects of imperial policy in Scandinavia, in Turkey, in the Illyrian Provinces, or in the Arabian countries?<sup>66</sup> In truth, each state deserves to be studied as a unique case: each was subjected to multiple stimuli and interference, and each acted according to its own logic that reflected its particular structures and culture.<sup>67</sup> Where in-depth case studies have been conducted they reveal that the standardization sought and achieved by Napoleon was, in practice, far from perfect, not least because the Emperor himself was prepared to admit exceptions to the model – in Poland, Westphalia, Baden and Bavaria, even in Spain – if this would bring him extra money and men, and land grants for his marshals and the members of his new nobility.<sup>68</sup> As for contributions from non-westerners and their influence in the period studied here, they have been completely ignored, despite the rise of global history.

The strength of this global history, as currently practiced, lies in its undeniable capacity to produce sweeping syntheses of the diachronic and synchronic connections and interactions that create interdependence across the world. But without detailed monographic analyses on which to base these synthetic accounts, the bold outline is doomed to be merely suggestive and probably arbitrary.<sup>69</sup> There is a danger that global history will reveal networks, circulation and interactions where perhaps none existed or else that operated in other directions altogether. It also risks finding only what it wants to find, which usually means one or two important and high-profile changes – a perception obviously based on Eurocentric assumptions – while neglecting changes that are less visible because they are unintelligible to our European minds,<sup>70</sup> even though their importance may be greater in the long-term or for peoples that we continue to view as foreign or better still, as strange.

A reservation thus appears in order before concluding this introductory essay on Napoleonic historiography in France, Europe and the Atlantic world. Not because the Napoleonic Empire had no impact on European politics viewed from a global perspective – we have cited several instances where it did. Besides, for the lasting cultural impact of the Napoleonic epoch and the figure who personified it so completely, there is the compelling evidence of western cinema, arts and literature.<sup>71</sup> Yet some qualification is still required. For despite the many and varied influences, the borrowed and rejected elements, the images and myths, Napoleon's control did not extend over every region of the world.<sup>72</sup>



## Notes

1. Emmanuel de Las Cases, *Le Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*, ed. Marcel Dunan, 2 vols. (Paris, 1951): 2, 248. See also the comments made in 1810 and 1811, in Napoléon Bonaparte, *Correspondance générale*, Fondation Napoléon, 15 vols. (Paris, 2014): 10, Letters no. 23865, 23867 and 26134: 306–307 and 1290–1291.
2. Stuart Woolf, 'Napoleon and Europe revisited', *Modern & Contemporary France*, 4 (2000): 469–478.
3. Foreign historians revisited the period, of course, but from an anti-French perspective. The earliest were poets and pamphleteers, followed by those who were shocked by the level of invective. Jean Tulard, *L'Anti-Napoléon: La légende noire de l'Empereur* (Paris, 1965). See also Clive Emsley, *The Longman Companion to Napoleonic Europe* (London and New York, 1993); Thomas Nipperdey, *Germany from Napoleon to Bismarck, 1800–1866* (Dublin, 1996); Elisabeth Fehrenbach, *Der Kampf um die Einführung des Codes Napoleon in den Rheinbundstaaten* (Wiesbaden, 1973).
4. The best study of the French-language historiography is Natalie Petiteau, *De la mythologie à l'histoire* (Paris, 1999). In English, Pieter Geyl, *Napoleon: For and Against* (New Haven, 1949); Stuart Semmel, 'British Radicals and "Legitimacy": Napoleon in the Mirror of History', *Past and Present* 167 (2000): 140–175; Robert Alexander, *Napoleon* (London, 2001).
5. Woolf, 'Napoleon and Europe revisited': 470–472; Michael Rowe, 'France, Prussia, or Germany? The Napoleonic Wars and Shifting Alliances in the Rhineland', *Central European History* 4 (2006): 610–640. Rowe also notes Marxism's influence on historiography in the period 1950–1970. This current sought to demonstrate that the First Empire was moving in the direction of history, in other words, that it favored the rise of capitalism and the bourgeoisie.
6. See Michael Broers, *The Napoleonic Empire in Italy, 1796–1814: Cultural Imperialism in a European Context?* (Basingstoke, 2005), 287. This was also the case in Germany where some institutions persisted unchanged or underwent limited reforms. Obviously the Civil Code did not keep Napoleon's name. See Michael Rowe, 'Napoleon and State Formation in Central Europe', in *Napoleon and Europe*, ed. Philip Dwyer (Harlow, 2001), 214–224.
7. See in particular Woolf, 'Napoleon and Europe revisited', 476. For Woolf the goal was 'to go beyond the confines of national history'.
8. Europeans had already suffered from the wars waged by Louis XIV and from the French supremacy that ensued. Hence the blurring of the lines between the two traumas of Louis XIV and Napoleon, and their dream of a universal monarchy. A good bibliographic review of the earliest European writings in Geoffrey Ellis, *Napoleon* (London, 1997), 197–214.
9. Stuart Woolf, *Napoleon's integration of Europe* (London, 1991).
10. Obviously, attempts were made, from the outset, to write the history of the First Empire from a non-national viewpoint. In particular, Robert B. Holtman, *The Napoleonic Revolution* (Philadelphia and New York, 1967), and one of the earliest works on Napoleon's Europe, Owen Connelly, *Napoleon's Satellite Kingdoms* (New York and London, 1965).
11. Steven Englund, 'Napoléon et l'Europe: Le point de vue anglo-américain', in ed. Annie Jourdan et al. special issue of *AHRF*, 354 (2008): 131–153.
12. See note 10.
13. For example, on Italy, Luigi Maschilli-Migliorini, *Le mythe du héros: France et Italie après la chute de Napoléon* (Paris, 2002).

14. Modernity is understood as meaning the end of feudalism, the abolition of corporations and orders, and the secularization of society and, as for Weber, the rule of rationality. From this stems the autonomy of the individual and the notion of universal rights – in contrast to (religious or regal) heteronomy. See Marcel Gauchet, *La démocratie contre elle-même* (Paris, 2002), 336–340: during this process, politics, law and history acquired a preeminent role. See also John Breuilly, ‘Napoleonic Germany and State Formation’, in Michael Rowe (ed.), *Collaboration and Resistance in Napoleonic Europe: State-Formation in an Age of Upheaval* (Basingstoke, 2003), 121–152.
15. One could also use the terminology of Michael Broers on the existence of an inner, outer and intermediate Empire, to which could be added reliable allies and those who were unreliable. Broers, *Europe under Napoleon*.
16. Marx bemoaned Germany’s failure to understand the benefits to be derived from Napoleon’s policy, notably the abolition of feudalism. ‘In Germany, Napoleon was the representative of the Revolution, the prophet of its principles, the destroyer of the old feudal society’, quoted by Georges Cogniot, ‘Napoléon vu par Marx et Engels’, *Europe* 47 (1969): 42–51.
17. On the specific point of Jewish emancipation, the king of Poland succeeded in modifying the constitution granted by Napoleon. The Jews remained deprived of citizenship rights. Jaroslaw Czubaty, ‘The Attitudes of the Polish Political Elite towards the State in the Period of the Duchy of Warsaw, 1807–1815’, in Rowe, *Collaboration and Resistance*, 169–185. Quoted here, 176.
18. In addition to public national museums, national libraries and archives were invented in the nineteenth century. Napoleon himself was passionate about archives. But his own were genuinely European in that he brought them back from his many travels to enrich France’s Bibliothèque Nationale. In this respect he was indeed a European. Annie Jourdan, ‘A National Tragedy during the French Restoration: The Return of the Works of Art to their Countries’, in *Napoleon’s Legacy: The Rise of National Museums in Europe*, ed. Ellinor Bergvelt et al. (Berlin, 2009), 125–135.
19. David Laven and Lucy Riall (eds), *Napoleon’s Legacy*; Dwyer (ed.), *Napoleon and Europe*; Rowe (ed.), *Collaboration and Resistance*. Hans Ulrich Wehler speaks accurately of ‘defensive modernisation’, quoted in Breuilly, ‘Napoleonic Germany’, 122.
20. Unlike most European historians, who study only their own country’s relations with Napoleon, the English-language historians referenced here study countries other than their own, which accounts for the originality of their approaches.
21. In 1976, the great Dutch historian Kossmann could still contend that the First Empire was simply an ‘incident’ with no impact on the Netherlands. That is merely one example. Ernest H. Kossmann, *The Low Countries* (Oxford, 1978), 91.
22. The earliest consequence was, in fact, the Saint Domingue expedition in 1802. For the various projects of 1801–1803 in the Caribbean, Philippe R. Girard, ‘Rêves d’Empire: French Revolutionary Doctrine and Military interventions in the Southern States and the Caribbean, 1789–1809’, *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 4 (2007): 389–412.
23. See the contribution by Stefan Rinke and the next note.
24. For more precise details, Gabriel Paquette, ‘The Dissolution of the Spanish Atlantic Monarchy’, *The Historical Journal*, 1 (2009): 175–212; and Jeremy Adelman, ‘Iberian Passages: Continuity and Change in the South Atlantic’, in *The Age of Revolutions in Global Context, 1760–1840*, ed. David Armitage and Sanjav Subrahmanyam (Basingstoke, 2010), 59–82.

25. Napoleon's armies were barely present outside Europe, and the expedition to Saint Domingue in 1802 had ended in total failure. If there was war, it was rather a civil war between native conservatives and reformers, long before the struggle for independence. For the Caribbean, Laurent Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens, Revolution and Slave Emancipation* (Chapel Hill and London, 2004). For the Imperial revolutions, Jeremy Adelman, 'An Age of Imperial Revolutions', *AHR* 2 (2008): 319–340.
26. The Continental Blockade can be seen as a type of war: a maritime and economic war. Annie Jourdan, 'French Representations of the Continental Blockade: Three Kinds of Narratives For and Against', in *Revisiting Napoleon's Continental System: Local, Regional and European Experiences*, ed. Katherine Aaslestad and Johan Joor (Basingstoke, 2015), 40–55.
27. Gilbert de Merliac, *De la liberté des mers et du commerce* (Paris, 1818), 336.
28. Between 1804 and 1821 a series of revolutions unfolded that led to independence: San Domingo (1804), Venezuela (1811), Paraguay (1811), Argentina (1816), Chile (1818), Bolivia and Ecuador (1819), Peru (1821). For more details, Paquette, 'The Dissolution' and Adelman, 'An Age of Imperial Revolutions'.
29. Alexander, *Napoleon*, 63–89.
30. Reproduced in Christophe Belaubre et al. (eds), *Napoleon's Atlantic: The Impact of the Napoleonic Empire in the Atlantic World* (Leiden and Boston, 2010), 15.
31. In several letters of July 1810, he nonetheless states his intention of recapturing the Caribbean from the English, probably using the Dutch navy, now under French control, and for which he had high hopes. He also considered recovering Java, Reunion Island and the Cape Colonies. *Correspondance générale*, vol. 10, 1291.
32. On Napoleon's policy in the Caribbean and his ambitious projects in 1802 – that came to nothing – see Girard, 'Rêves d'empire', 389–412; Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens*, 402–422.
33. Because of the economic blockade, for example, the South American colonies could continue the slave trade without going through the mother country, which represented a first step towards emancipation. Paquette, 'The Dissolution', and Adelman, 'Age of Imperial Revolutions'.
34. *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*, vol. 1, 458.
35. David Armitage, *The Declaration of Independence: A Global History* (Cambridge and London, 2007).
36. For example, Paquette reports that some creoles of New Granada arrested in 1794 had in their possession the 'Constitution of Philadelphia (sic)'. Paquette, 'The Dissolution', 189.
37. Prussia completed its Civil Code in 1794; Austria in 1811, and its penal code dates from 1803. Bavaria for its part did not wait for Napoleon but issued its own constitution in 1808. Lastly, what can we say about Poland, which finished its one in May 1794, a few months before the Constituent Assembly published the first French constitution? Rowe, in *Napoleon and Europe*, p. 210; Czubyty, in Rowe, *Collaboration and Resistance*, 169–185.
38. Isser Woloch, *Napoleon and His Collaborators: The Making of a Dictatorship* (New York, 2001).
39. On this point, see the comparative study by Matthijs Lok, *Windhaven: Napoleontische bestuurders in de Nederlandse en Franse Restauratie* (Amsterdam, 2009).
40. Annie Jourdan (ed.), *Louis Bonaparte, roi de Hollande* (Paris, 2010). And Joost Welten, *In dienst voor Napoleons Europese droom* (Louvain, 2007). Which is not

to say that William drew his inspiration from French sources alone. He had been brought up in the Prussian tradition and gained political experience while governing the Principality of Fulda.

41. Laven and Riall, *Napoleon's Legacy*; Rowe, *Collaboration and Resistance*.
42. Alan Forrest, *Napoleon's Men* (London and New York, 2002).
43. The officials treated these populations with the same condescension as they did their own. The people as a whole, including the French, needed education and regeneration. The elites communicated more easily between themselves. The harsh comments of the French republicans about the depraved morality of the Italian populations recall those made by the revolutionaries about the French aristocrats. A different case is that of the Caribbean, where French generals toyed with the (horrible) idea of eliminating the black population. See the essay by Bernard Gainot in the present volume and the article by Girard, 'Rêves d'empire'.
44. The series is now entitled 'War, Culture and Society, 1750–1850' and also publishes English-language scholars, but the initiative for the project came from Berlin.
45. David A. Bell, *The First Total War* (Boston and New York, 2007).
46. Broers, *Europe under Napoleon*, speaks of a civilian, not a military, empire. I entirely agree with him; this is exactly the conclusion of my own research. But the debate is not over. For Bertaud, militarization affected every part of French society: Jean-Paul Bertaud, *Quand les enfants parlaient de gloire* (Paris, 2006). David Bell argues along the same lines. The need to qualify this view is suggested by the key role given to the Civil Code and the emphasis on civil and criminal law during the Empire.
47. Research by Alan Forrest, Joost Welten, Michael Broers and Ute Planert has qualified the picture as regards the effects of the war. For some it was a source of personal enrichment or individual happiness; for others, despite the suffering, it had a lasting effect and became fixed – and very often embellished – in memory.
48. I use the term revolutionary deliberately, since if these ideas were adopted in Europe, Napoleon never encouraged their diffusion.
49. On this subject, see the debate between Englund, Broers, Rowe and Jourdan in *AHRF*, or Ute Planert, 'From Collaboration to Resistance: Politics, Experience, and Memory of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars in Southern Germany', *Central European History* 39 (2006): 676–705. See also the articles by Michael Rowe referenced here.
50. One might also apply John Breuilly's distinction and describe nationalism as either process or project (Breuilly, 'Napoleonic Germany', 127–128).
51. Forgotten is that the restorations aimed to wipe out all trace of French influence in their nation. Forgotten also to rebuild the unity of the national community. Louis XVIII and William I made an explicit announcement of their wish to follow a policy of 'forgive and forget'. M. Lok, *Windvanen*. But very few restored princes behaved thus. Ferdinand of Spain, for example, took revenge by directing his hatred against patriots and liberals.
52. On Napoleon's strategic alliance with Persia in 1807, see Iradj Amini, 'Napoleon and Persia', *Iran* 37 (1999): 109–122. Chinese scholars are showing an interest in the Napoleonic era, Paolo Santangelo, 'Some Recent Interpretations of Napoleon in Chinese Historiography', *Cina, Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente* (1979): 98–108.

53. Belaubre et al. (eds), *Napoleon's Atlantic*. See my review of the book in *H-France Review*, vol. 11, 223, October 2011.
54. On this subject, Philip Mansel, 'Monarchy, Uniform and the Rise of the *Frac*, 1760–1830', *Past and Present*, 96 (1982): 103–132. Military uniform became established in Europe, notably in Germany (including Prussia and Austria) in the period 1760–1770. The vogue seems to have come from Sweden and Prussia. France was the last to accept the change and abandon the *habit habillé* or formal dress.
55. On the German educationalists, Basedow, Campe and Salzmann, see Arianne Baggerman and Rudolf Dekker, *Child of the Enlightenment: Revolutionary Europe Reflected in a Boyhood Diary* (Leyden and Boston, 2009), 49–79.
56. Moreau de St-Méry, deputy to the Constituent Assembly for Saint Domingue, took refuge in Pennsylvania after the Saint Domingue revolt. The Alien Act of 1798 forced him to return to France. For a time Bonaparte put him in charge of the States of Parma. For these networks, see Annie Jourdan, 'Théophile de Cazenove, Jacques-Pierre Brissot, and Joel Barlow: A Tale of Three Patriots', *Early American Studies* 2 (2012): 360–381.
57. For these migratory movements, see Maya Jasanoff, 'Revolutionary Exiles: The American Loyalist and French Émigré Diasporas', in *The Age of Revolutions in Global Context*, 37–58.
58. Half of these military men were of foreign origin: Poles, Italians, Germans, Spaniards, as Rafe Blaufarb points out in *Bonapartists in the Borderlands: French Exiles and Refugees on the Gulf Coast, 1813–1835* (Tuscaloosa, 2006).
59. Blaufarb, *Bonapartists in the Borderlands*, and Alfred Young, *The Democratic Republicans of New York* (Chapel Hill, 1967), 501.
60. James Morris Blaut, 'Diffusionism: A Uniformitarian Critique', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 1 (1987): 30–47. A new tendency is producing a radical reversal in the 'internalist account'. Lynn Hunt, 'The French Revolution in Global Context', in Armitage and Subrahmanyam, *The Age of Revolutions*, 20–36. See also Pierre Serna, 'Every Revolution is a War of Independence', in *The French Revolution in Global Perspective*, ed. S. Desan et al. (Ithaca, 2013), 165–182.
61. On the constitution given to Joseph for the Kingdom Spain, see Jean-Baptiste Busaall, 'Le règne de Joseph Bonaparte: une expérience décisive dans la transition de la Ilustración au libéralisme modéré', *Historia Constitucional*, 7, 2006, <http://hc.rediris.es/07/index/html>.
62. John A. Davis, 'French Rule in Southern Italy' in Rowe, *Collaboration and Resistance*, 85.
63. Nowhere in Europe was the model adopted as it stood. Modifications were made not only in Germany and Holland, but also in Italy and Poland. In other countries it was rejected outright. John Savage notes also the changes made Bolívar to the Civil Code of Louisiana in 1825. In Columbia it had limited success, Bolívar failing to get it accepted. In addition, the South Americans added elements of liberalism not present in the original. Savage 'Atlantic Codes: The impact of Napoleonic Law in the Nineteenth-Century Atlantic World', in Belaubre, *Napoleon's Atlantic*, 195–207.
64. Dubois, *Avengers of the New World*; Girard, 'Rêves d'empire'.
65. See the contribution of Andreas Würgler to the present volume. Berthier, Prince of Neufchâtel, told Stanislas de Girardin that Napoleon had wanted to name him king of Switzerland but that he had refused because the country was too poor to sustain a kingdom. Stanislas de Girardin, *Mémoires, Journal et Souvenirs* (Paris, 1829), 406.

66. These gaps are beginning to be filled, thanks in part to the 2012 conference, 'Napoleon's Empire. European Politics in Global Perspective', which included several historians of Switzerland, Scandinavia and the Illyrian Provinces. See their contributions in this volume.
67. This moreover is the criticism that Charles Esdaile made of Stuart Woolf's global approach. Esdaile, 'The Napoleonic Period: Some Thoughts on Recent Historiography', *European History Quarterly* 23 (1993): 422.
68. See the cited works by Broers, Rowe, Woolf, Davis, Czuby, Breuilly and Fehrenbach. In March 1811, Napoleon even authorized Davout to reintroduce labor dues in Germany if this would speed up work. *Correspondance générale*, vol. 10, 19 March 1811, #26317.
69. Christopher Bayly lists the great changes of the revolutionary period that reverberated around the world: birth of the nation state, rights of man, written constitutions, freedom to trade. The question remains of whether that world was thrown into turmoil as a result. What applied in South America did not necessarily apply in Asia, in the Arab world or in Africa. Conversely, what did we receive from these distant countries? This we are not told. Christopher Bayly, 'An Afterword', in Armitage and Subrahmanyam, *Age of Revolutions*, 209–217. See also Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World 1780–1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Oxford, 2004). For a welcome critique of global history, see D. A. Bell, 'Questioning the Global Turn: The Case of the French Revolution', *French Historical Studies*, vol. 37, 1 (2014): 1–24.
70. Examples in Juan Cole, 'Bonaparte's Army of the Orient and Euro-Muslim Creolization', in Armitage and Subrahmanyam, *Age of Revolutions*, 125–143; and Joseph C. Miller, 'The Dynamics in Africa and the Atlantic Age of Revolutions', *ibid.* 101–124.
71. On this topic, see the stimulating book by Alain Guérard, *Reflections on the Napoleonic Legend* (London, 1924).
72. A wave of disruption did indeed sweep the globe after 1806–1808, but this was due, above all, to the struggle being fought out between France and Britain. To use the words of Jeremy Adelman: 'For nowhere did European empires displace their rivalries more than across the Americas...', in 'Iberian Passages', 62.

# **Part I**

## **The Heart of the Empire: Histories and Historiographies**

# 3

## Unity and Fragmentation: Recent Research Trends on the '*neuf départements réunis*'

*Brecht Deseure and Emmanuel Berger*

A larger than usual crowd of spectators gathered on the Butte du Lion in June 2015 when, for its 200th anniversary, the Battle of Waterloo was restaged on the grandest scale to date. In a country identified primarily with defeat in Napoleonic memory, the last serious effort to take stock of the historiography of the period dates from the commemorations for the bicentenary of the French Revolution in 1989.<sup>1</sup> This chapter traces developments in the historical field between these two bicentenaries that mark the start and finish of a pivotal era in the history of Europe (and of the world beyond). For reasons of space and time, it does not attempt to provide a full overview of post-1989 historical writing on the Empire in Belgium<sup>2</sup> but is limited to, what we believe to be, the most significant developments in recent literature and presents a general overview of Belgian historiography and touches upon some of its main contributions and outcomes.<sup>3</sup>

### **The Belgian departments<sup>4</sup>**

Present-day Belgium comprises the historical territories of the Southern or Habsburg Netherlands and the Prince-bishopric of Liège, along with the microstates of the Duchy of Bouillon and the Principality of Stavelot-Malmedy. The last three were constituted independent states of the Holy Roman Empire, belonging to the Lower Rhenish Imperial Circle. The first was the part of the Netherlands that remained Catholic and loyal to Spain after the partition of the Netherlands at the end of the sixteenth century. Together they constituted a patchwork of counties, duchies and principalities, each of which retained a high degree of autonomy, despite being ruled by the same Habsburg monarch and sharing certain central institutions. After the Spanish Wars of Succession, the region passed to the Austrian branch of the House of Habsburg. Relations with the Austrian sovereigns were mostly peaceful until the accession of Emperor Joseph II who, in the



1780s, initiated a program of ecclesiastical and political reforms aimed at the unification and rationalization of the region's institutional and administrative structures. These initiatives clashed with local political traditions, which were organized around a set of medieval constitutions granting considerable political power to local patrician and ecclesiastical elites.

Protest against Austrian reform policies grew rapidly, culminating in the, so-called, Brabant Revolution of 1789. A coalition of old elites, a frustrated bourgeoisie and popular elements succeeded in overthrowing Austrian rule and establishing an independent Belgian republic. In marked contrast to the direction taken by the Revolution in France, a strong conservative current soon overshadowed the democratic element of this revolution. Though shortlived, the republican experiment contributed to the polarization between a conservative majority attached to the ancient constitutions and a reformist minority increasingly drawn towards the French revolutionary concept of liberty. Meanwhile, the Prince-bishopric of Liège experienced its own revolution, which, unlike that in neighboring Brabant, was distinctly democratic in character.

Franco-Austrian rivalry soon sealed the fate of both Liège and the Southern Netherlands. Both regions were twice conquered by French troops in the War of the First Coalition. An abortive first period of occupation in 1792–1793 was followed by a permanent French presence from 1794 onwards. In 1794 and 1795 the revolutionary rhetoric of liberation and fraternal assistance was accompanied by a harsh regime of military occupation and economic pillage. After the official annexation in 1795, both regions were steadily integrated into the French Republic and together subdivided into nine departments. The old regime was simultaneously dismantled. Although a civil regime was installed and the rule of liberty and equality introduced, French rule failed to enthuse the majority of inhabitants. In the northern and central departments in particular, there was widespread passive resistance to the republican government, principally due to its anticlerical policies and the burdens of taxation and conscription. The latter even sparked a popular rebellion against the regime in 1798, later termed the *Boerenkrijg* or Peasants' War. The establishment of the Consulate by General Bonaparte brought a reversal of the situation. By concluding the Concordat and reinstating Catholicism, Bonaparte removed an important obstacle to the acceptance of French rule. The political tensions eased and local elites started to abandon their former refusal to collaborate with the regime.

The political and social situation of the Belgian departments was relatively stable during the Consulate and the Empire. Nevertheless, taxation, conscription, Napoleon's conflict with Pius VII and the economic damage inflicted by the Continental Blockade prevented the regime from becoming truly popular. Napoleon himself enjoyed a certain degree of personal popularity, although it suffered due to the hardships resulting from his endless campaigning. In their reports to Paris on the *esprit public*, the prefects

regularly voiced their doubts as to the feasibility of turning Belgians into 'real' Frenchmen.<sup>5</sup> French withdrawal from Belgium in 1814 was met with general relief.<sup>6</sup>

### **Belgian historiography on 'The French Period'**

Treating the historiography on Belgium under the Empire as a separate entity is a somewhat artificial exercise. In practice, Belgian historians usually approach the Empire not as an independent era but rather as merely one phase in the country's, so-called, French period. This fact is indicative of the continued effect of a patriotic, national perspective in Belgian historiography on the era.<sup>7</sup> The term French period is misleading in that it suggests that the period is or has been seen as alien and belonging more to the history of a rival country than to that of Belgium itself. To some degree, these national frames of reference continue to influence contemporary historiography.

Beginning with Belgian independence in 1830, various political perspectives have manifested themselves in the historiography. Three axes can be distinguished around which politically charged interpretations of the era of French domination have developed.<sup>8</sup> The first concerns the legitimization of Belgian independence. Originating in the romantic climate of the nineteenth century, the, so-called, myth of alien domination represented Belgian history as a succession of foreign occupying regimes that, for centuries, had oppressed the freedom-loving Belgians.<sup>9</sup> The French period evidently figured in this succession, along with the Spanish, Austrian and Dutch periods. Napoleon's imperialism, in particular, was strongly criticized within this perspective. The second axis concerns the ideological differences between liberals and Catholics. Historians of both tendencies were prone to project their own opinions and ideals on the twenty years of French occupation, because it was so crucial to the country's subsequent development.<sup>10</sup> Whereas Catholics rejected the period outright for having ruined the idealized Old Regime society and introduced the scourges of modernity, liberals tended to celebrate the introduction of the principles of liberty and equality, the rights of man and the like. Nevertheless patriotic sentiments were sufficiently strong for many liberal historians to condemn the French intervention for its suppression of the Belgian identity. A third axis concerns the rivalry between the Flemish and Walloon parts of Belgian society. Pro-Flemish historians were generally more radical in their rejection of the French period, origin of their language's subordination to the dominant French, whereas pro-Walloon historians tended to stress the similarities in character and ideas between French-speaking Belgians and their French neighbors.

These political interpretations lost much of their influence in the course of the twentieth century. Yet Serge Deruette, in his 1989 review article

on Belgian publications issued for the bicentenary, found that the old debates still held considerable force.<sup>11</sup> His findings corroborated Marie-Rose Thielemans' analysis that a negative, conservative appraisal of the period tended to be more apparent in the work of Flemish historians, while their French-speaking colleagues generally held more liberal and thus positive views. The ideological positions are considerably less clear in the scholarship from later years, which were marked by the waning of national frames of interpretation and the rise of transnational historical perspectives. Generalized judgments on the period grew rarer as the focus shifted to specialized, topical research.

### Twenty-five years of recent historiography

It is noteworthy that, whereas the bicentenary festivities for the French Revolution strongly focused on the year of the Revolution's outset in 1789, bicentenary commemorations of Napoleon tend to concentrate on the end rather than the beginning of his rule. Evidently the storming of the Bastille enjoys a more iconic status in human history than the somewhat clumsy *coup d'état* of 18 *Brumaire* or even the grandiloquent *Sacre*. Above all, the values symbolized by 1789 command far broader support than those of 1799 or 1804 (or 1793–1794, for that matter). In Belgium, the collapse of the Napoleonic Empire has the advantage of marking the end of a distinctive period in national history, thus inviting reflection on its significance and legacy. Both Antwerp and Liège have chosen this point of view to stage exhibitions (in 2013 and 2015 respectively) devoted to the effects of French rule on local urban history, with Napoleon as figurehead in both cases.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, the spectacular restaging of events at Waterloo in 2015 was doubled by an exhibition at the Royal Museum of the Armed Forces and of Military History in Brussels, devoted to the battle and its significance.<sup>13</sup> The general public, meanwhile, was catered for by the publication of several acclaimed biographies of the great man himself.<sup>14</sup>

Despite all this retrospection, a comprehensive analysis of Belgium under the Empire is lacking. Indeed, Belgian historiography on the Napoleonic era is far from abundant. The amount of recently published research suggests that most professional historians have other priorities. Amateur historians by contrast seem not to tire of the period, as local historical journals continue to publish a steady stream of contributions on the impact of French rule at the local level. Of particular interest to these authors are sales of *biens nationaux*, conscription and the fate of Belgian soldiers in the *Grande Armée*.<sup>15</sup>

Not that professional historians are neglecting the period altogether, as the numerous Belgian contributions to the 2014 volume *L'Empire: Une expérience de construction européenne?* testify.<sup>16</sup> But the research tends to be scattered and fragmentary. The same phenomenon affects the preceding period

of the Brabant Revolution and, to a lesser extent, the succeeding period of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands. It would seem that Belgium's late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries fall, as it were, into a 'gap' in scholarly periodization for, while early modernists rarely venture beyond 1795, many modernists take Belgian independence in 1830 as their point of departure. The archival complexities created by the abolition of the Old Regime and the successive political upheavals contribute to making the hiatus hard to bridge.

Despite the lack of fiercely debated issues, certain topics have certainly received more attention than others. Firstly, an older tradition of research into institutional and administrative structures has continued to attract students. In his article on the introduction of the Napoleonic model of administration, Claude Wilwerth has pointed to that model's lasting influence on the organization of the Belgian state in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>17</sup> The most important advances have been made in domains relating to the maintenance of public order, that is, police and justice. Thanks to the transfer to the Belgian State Archives of records previously conserved at the courthouses, the judicial archives of the Napoleonic period have been made available to scholars. The State Archives have concurrently undertaken the immense task of inventorying these materials and publishing research tools (inventories and guides).<sup>18</sup> Research on public order matters has also been stimulated by the various commemorative initiatives for the bicentenary of the Directory in the 1990s.<sup>19</sup> On the occasion of these commemorations, many scholars have looked into the process of acculturation of French institutions by the local populations on which they were imposed. Such an approach is refreshing, since it goes beyond the traditional bipolar perspective that tends to focus on opposition and domination rather than on processes of transfer and exchange. An older historiographical debate launched by the *Occupants-Occupés* conference (Brussels, 1968) has thus been resumed. The present research focuses on the integration and/or rejection of judicial institutions exported by the revolutionary and Napoleonic armies.

Two directions of interest stand out in the work done by historians of law and justice. The first concerns the juridical professions and takes a prosopographical approach. In this domain, Jacques Logie did groundbreaking work in his doctoral thesis on the magistrates of courts and tribunals in Belgium (1794–1814).<sup>20</sup> The Belgian magistrature was completely replaced at the time of the annexation to France in 1795. Through its collective biography, Logie identifies the factors at work in the formation and affirmation of a socio-professional group that went on to play a central role in the formation of the modern Belgian state.<sup>21</sup> Analogous studies have been conducted on other legal practitioners such as notaries (Fred Stevens) and lawyers (Bart Coppein and Jérôme de Brouwer).<sup>22</sup>

The second direction of research into the history of the justice system concerns the norms and practices of criminal justice. The first reference

work was that edited by Xavier Rousseaux, Marie-Sylvie Dupont Bouchat and Claude Vael in 1999.<sup>23</sup> As in the case of the juridical professions, criminal justice is usually analyzed over the three regimes (Directory, Consulate and Empire) that, for Belgian historians, constitute the French period. Parallel to the attention given to the issue of acculturation, this periodization has the advantage of nourishing the debate on the process of ruptures and continuities between the Revolutionary and Napoleonic periods.<sup>24</sup> The issue has, in part, been elucidated by the research of Emmanuel Berger on juridical models, which finds a fundamental breaking point between the Directory and the Consulate.<sup>25</sup> Compared with the position in other European nations, the activities of the various jurisdictions (*tribunal de simple police*,<sup>26</sup> *tribunal correctionnel*,<sup>27</sup> *cour d'assises*<sup>28</sup>) have been the object of numerous studies in Belgium.<sup>29</sup> Despite the frequent criticism it attracted after the Directory, the new juridical model succeeded in functioning relatively well, considering the numerous social, economic and political crises of the period. Banditry remained one of the principal preoccupations of the French government up until the first years of the Empire.<sup>30</sup>

The second lever for the maintenance of public order, operating alongside repressive justice and charged mainly with the prevention of crime, was the police. Its two most prominent representatives, both created by the Revolution, were the *commissaire de police* and the gendarme. These two groups of functionaries were relatively slow to receive scholarly attention, but today there is abundant research on their activities and socio-professional identity. For the *commissaires de police*, the works of Catherine Denys on Brussels stand out.<sup>31</sup> The gendarmes get a thorough treatment in Aurélien Lignereux's study covering the whole of the annexed territories.<sup>32</sup> The result has been to clarify the role played by the gendarmes in the maintenance of public order. Hassan Ben Toutouh for his part has shown the crucial involvement of military reserve forces in hunting down deserters and draft evaders.<sup>33</sup>

From the Directory onwards this policy of surveillance stimulated the production of numerous instruments of control, such as passports and the collection of statistical data on the population. The measure that affected the largest number of citizens was the obligation to carry a passport. In her study on passports in the Dyle department, however, Anne Thiébaud stresses the fallibility of this document as an instrument for controlling the movement of individuals.<sup>34</sup> The other instruments of surveillance handed down to posterity were surveys (*enquêtes*) and statistics produced at the request of the government. Celebrated as the golden age of regional administrative statistics (Jean-Claude Perrot, 1977), the Directorial and Napoleonic regimes also developed judicial and criminal statistics. The genesis and functions of official statistics from the late-eighteenth century onwards, and their influence on politics and representation in nineteenth-century Belgium, have been investigated at length by Nele Bracke.<sup>35</sup> Xavier Rousseaux, Fred

Stevens and Axel Tixhon have analyzed the judicial and penal statistics for the Belgian departments, demonstrating that these served not only to measure crime but also to supervise the activities of magistrates.<sup>36</sup> Along with the surveillance of magistrates and convicts, the Consulate and the Empire developed police statistics destined to control ever-larger sections of society. This was the case notably with the elaboration of statistics on individuals detained under measures of high policing.<sup>37</sup>

The second domain to attract scholarly attention is that of socio-economic development. Since many studies in this area adopt a long-term perspective, largely exceeding the chronological limits of the Empire, we will mention only those of most relevance to the subject of concern here. Several doctoral theses have illuminated the socio-economic realities of the period. In his dissertation on sales of *biens nationaux* in the Dyle department, François Antoine has traced the socio-economic profile of purchasers over the longer term (1753–1846).<sup>38</sup> He concludes that the urban bourgeois elites were the principal beneficiaries of this vast transfer of property, at the expense of the agrarian classes. Anne Winter has traced patterns of urban migration in Antwerp during its transformation from a medium-sized regional center around 1760 into a major international port around the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>39</sup> Her study demonstrates the enormous social impact of the transformation that generated a massive influx of migrants from the countryside. Hilde Greefs has studied the commercial networks and patterns of sociability of merchants in Antwerp in the early decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>40</sup> Her detailed description of this dynamic and international group of entrepreneurs provides a clear account of these pivotal decades when Antwerp regained its commercial prominence as a result of the French opening of the River Scheldt. Joost Welten has delivered another prosopographical study; in his case devoted to the conscripts levied in the small town of Weert in the Meuse-Inférieure department.<sup>41</sup> With a thoroughly researched and methodologically innovative micro-study, he succeeds in offering a systematic and revealing account of the full impact of conscription at the local level. Welten and Johan De Wilde have also published a very readable modern Dutch edition of the memoirs of a Flemish soldier in the *Grande Armée*.<sup>42</sup>

Lastly, a goodly proportion of this scholarly attention has gone to the third domain that we will touch upon, that of politics. There has been much work on the socio-economic and political profiles of the new administrators. Katia De Ridder has studied the members of the Brussels municipality, from its installation until the fall of the Empire.<sup>43</sup> At department level, Jacques Logie has looked into the functions of subprefects, general secretaries and prefectural councilors between 1800 and 1814.<sup>44</sup> The dignitaries of the Escaut department have been studied by Conny Devolder.<sup>45</sup> A revealing piece of work is the volume edited by Piet Lenders on the recruitment of political personnel between 1780 and 1830.<sup>46</sup> The remarkable continuity

in the backgrounds and recruitment of political functionaries, despite no fewer than ten changes of regime, suggests that the advent of Napoleon and his politics of national reconciliation represented less of a change of direction than had previously been thought.<sup>47</sup>

Considerable attention has been devoted to matters of national identity and public opinion. The unresolved political allegiance of the inhabitants of the Belgian departments during and after the French period has puzzled contemporary administrators as much as historians. Sébastien Dubois has conducted a thorough investigation into the meaning and understanding of the word Belgium from the seventeenth century up to 1830. His interesting conclusion is that at the time of the French invasion the word had acquired both a political and a geographical content without implying a definite sense of nationhood.<sup>48</sup> Similar results were reached by Jean Stengers in his comprehensive study on the origin of the Belgian sense of nationhood.<sup>49</sup> Although most inhabitants of the *départements réunis* saw themselves as Belgians and, although they welcomed the fall of the Empire, only a few were sympathetic towards the idea of an independent Belgian state.<sup>50</sup>

Apart from Jacques Logie's research on the Belgian *esprit public* under the Empire, the main piece of work in this domain is the doctoral thesis of José Olcina.<sup>51</sup> Olcina meticulously researched public opinion in the Belgian departments between 1812 and 1814.<sup>52</sup> He found that it was much more variable than was formerly assumed. Belgian sympathy for France and its Emperor seems to have been determined by the vicissitudes of the Empire's military fortunes rather than by deep-seated feelings of Belgian patriotism.

Important work has been done on educational questions.<sup>53</sup> René Boudard has looked into the fortunes of the Imperial University in Belgium, while Matthias Meirlaen has written a doctoral dissertation on the teaching of history in Belgian secondary schools between 1750 and 1850.<sup>54</sup> Meirlaen's conclusion, that the political content of history teaching during the Consulate and the Empire was low, corroborates the findings of Tom Verschaffel in his article on the evolution of Belgian historiography under French rule.<sup>55</sup> They run counter to the well-established view that the teaching of history was a major channel for Napoleonic propaganda.

A last strand of research concerns political representation and recollection. Mention must be made of Philippe Raxhon's many publications on memories of the French occupation in Belgium in the nineteenth century and on political references to Napoleon in the same period.<sup>56</sup> Not strictly a work of scholarship, but of great empirical interest, is the study by Gustave Maison and Ann and Paul van Ypersele de Strihou on the visits of Napoleon to the Belgian departments as Consul and as Emperor.<sup>57</sup> Public ceremonial and official festivities under the Empire have been further explored by Ellen Burm, Christopher Buchholz and Liesbeth Van Nieuwenhuysse.<sup>58</sup> In his recently published dissertation Brecht Deseure has described the important

function of history in Napoleonic festivities.<sup>59</sup> As a rare systematic investigation into French representation policies in the annexed territories, it shows how references to the past were deliberately integrated into political discourse so as to legitimize French rule. In contrast to the established image of the Napoleonic period as an era of standardization, the politics of history prove to have been carefully adapted to the local context. Like many of the publications cited above, these findings nuance the traditional vision of French rule in Belgium as an era of rupture and opposition and, instead, draw attention to the processes of transfer, interaction and exchange.

## Notes

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1. Claude Bruneel (ed.), *Des révolutions à Waterloo: Bibliographie sélective d'histoire de Belgique (1789–1815)* (Brussels, 1989); Serge Deruette, 'La Révolution française dans l'historiographie belge récente: enjeux et sphères d'intérêt', in *La Belgique française, 1792–1815*, ed. Hervé Hasquin (Brussels, 1993), 459–468; Marie-Rose Thielemans, 'De Jemappes (1792) à Waterloo (1815): courants de l'historiographie belge aux XIXe et XXe siècles', in *La Storia sulla storiografia Europea sulla Rivoluzione Francese: Relazioni congresso associazione degli storici europei maggio 1989* (Rome, 1990), 209–260; Marie-Rose Thielemans, 'Les historiens belges et la période française', in Hasquin, *La Belgique*, 437–458.
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5. Brecht Deseure, *Onhoudbaar verleden: Geschiedenis als politiek instrument tijdens de Franse periode in België* (Leuven, 2014), 357.
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11. Deruette, 'La Révolution française', 459–468.
12. 'Bonaparte aan de Schelde. Antwerpen in een Franse stroomversnelling', Museum aan de Stroom, 23 March–30 June 2013; Jan Parmentier (ed.), *Bonaparte et l'Escaut: Le spectaculaire développement d'Anvers à l'époque française* (Antwerp, 2013); 'Liège au temps de la France', Archéoforum de Liège, 29 April–3 October 2015. The Diamond Museum in Antwerp furthermore staged an exhibition on Empire jewelry in 2010: Diana Scarisbrick, Lesja Vandezande and Jan Walgrave (eds), *Pour l'honneur et pour la gloire: Napoléon et les joyaux de l'Empire* (Antwerp, 2010). The city's urban transformation under the Empire had already been studied in a volume that appeared for the bicentenary of 1789: Piet Lombaerde (ed.), *Antwerpen tijdens het Franse Keizerrijk, 1804–1814: Marine-arsenaal, metropool en vestingstad* (Antwerp, 1989). In Namur, the exhibition 'Napoleon. Genie und Despot' was hosted by the *Musée provincial Félicien Rops* in 2008. It was accompanied by a French translation of the German catalogue: Gisela Vetter-Liebenow, *Napoléon, génie et despote: Idéal et critique dans l'art autour de 1800* (Namur, 2008).
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# 4

## The Napoleonic Period in Holland from a Dutch Historical Perspective

*Johan Joor*

### **Introduction**

The years from 1795 to 1813 formed a particularly dynamic period in Dutch history. In the space of a mere twenty years the people of the Netherlands experienced a revolution (1795), three military coups (1798, 1798 and 1801), two regime changes without military intervention (1805 and 1806), annexation by the French Empire and loss of independence (1810) and the restoration of national sovereignty (1813) under the future king, William I, son of the last Stadholder of the House of Orange-Nassau, who had died in exile seven years earlier. In addition to being rich in events, the period is also of great importance for the formation of the nation state. The Napoleonic years (1806–1813), during which the Netherlands first formed the Kingdom of Holland under Louis Napoleon and was then incorporated into the French Empire as the Dutch Departments from 1810, had a special role in this process.

### **The Batavian Republic and the road to the Kingdom of Holland**

On 5 June 1806, immediately after the proclamation of Louis Bonaparte as king of Holland on that day, Napoleon sent a declaration to the French Senate in which he explicitly stated that the new king of Holland would continue to serve in his formal function as Constable of France. The Constable was one of the high dignitaries created by Napoleon in the constitution of 1804. This military function was honorific and involved no practical duties. Nevertheless, Louis' title was of great symbolic importance, since with it Napoleon emphasized that the Netherlands henceforth fell under the supervision of French supreme (military) authority.<sup>1</sup>

The proclamation of Louis Bonaparte as king of Holland and the continuation of his service as Constable in 1806 signified the formal confirmation of Netherlands's dependency on France, which had been the case for

a decade. The Batavian Revolution, which ended the regime of Stadholder William V who fled with his family to England in early 1795, had already taken place with the help of the French revolutionary armies. Subsequently, France had honored the newly established Batavian Republic as the First Sister Republic, a change officialized by the Treaty of The Hague, on 16 May 1795, in which France recognized Dutch independence. At the same time the treaty stipulated French territorial annexations, the maintenance of 25,000 French soldiers (repeatedly renewed in subsequent years), an enormous indemnity of 100 million guilders, and a rigid offensive and defensive alliance.<sup>2</sup> The alliance obligations forced the Batavian Republic to follow French foreign policy, which led almost immediately to war with Britain and subsequently to the loss of most of the colonies, notably Ceylon, South Africa (*De Kaap*), Surinam and the islands of the Dutch West Indies. The Batavian government's freedom of action was limited by the French army of occupation, which Paris could use as an instrument of power should it want to modify Batavian policy to serve French interests. This was the case in January 1798, when Dutch Batavian radicals carried out a coup to force the proclamation and implementation of a constitution with the help of the French army. The new constitution was democratic and accorded equal rights for all citizens. It formally confirmed the equal status of religions that had been proclaimed in 1796 and by which the privileged position of the Calvinist Reformed Church had officially ended and public offices become accessible to members of all religions. The constitution was also based on the principle of one and indivisible, which signaled an intention to dismantle the historic political structure of the Dutch Republic.

The Dutch Republic, or the Republic of the Seven United Provinces, was formed during the rebellion against Spain in the sixteenth century and was finally officially recognized by the Spanish Empire as a sovereign state by the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. The Dutch Republic had risen to power during the seventeenth century. Its open-market economy, high agrarian production, phenomenal economic growth based on international expansion and trade, strong urbanization, political predominance of merchants and citizens rather than noblemen, social mobility, a tradition of debate and philosophical tolerance, and a rich culture exemplified by the splendor of Dutch painters, had made the Dutch Republic appear miraculous in comparison with other European states.<sup>3</sup> Its achievements seemed even more remarkable considering the small size of its population, slightly over 1.8 million in 1650.<sup>4</sup> But the Dutch Republic had lost her international political position with the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 and was overtaken in international shipping and trade by England and France in the 1730s. The political and economic situation subsequently became critical for the Dutch as a result of the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War of 1780–1784. The political setbacks and economic decline were blamed on the incompetence of the closed circle of regents, who monopolized offices and local power, and

on the regime of the Dutch Stadholder, who protected those regents and preferred to support the land army rather than the fleet. With the help of a radical opposition press, the protest was soon transformed into a massive proto-democratic revolutionary movement, whose members became known as the *Patriotten* or Patriots. Partly inspired by the American revolutionary movements, these Patriots allied with France against the Stadholder, who was allied with England and, through his marriage to the sister of Frederick William II, with Prussia. The Patriots were very successful and managed to seize power in several cities, including Amsterdam in 1787. The movement was stopped, however, by an intervention of the Prussian army, sent by Frederick William II to assist his sister in restoring order to her husband's regime. Many Patriots fled to France in the autumn of 1787, where they organized themselves politically and militarily as Batavian *émigrés* during the revolutionary years. Many of them returned in 1795 in the wake of the French revolutionary armies, which invaded the Dutch Republic at the beginning of that year. In several aspects the democratic Batavian revolutionaries of 1795 were the successors of the Patriots. But the radical Batavian revolutionaries differed fundamentally from the Patriots in their ideas about the political structure of the state. The Patriots still supported the old federal republican system, in which each of the seven provinces (and, within the provinces, the local authorities) was autonomous in the fields of administration, tax, finance and justice. The only areas of common interest for the Republic were foreign policy and war, which were debated by provincial representatives who met in the *Staten-Generaal*, or Estates-General, in The Hague. The radical Batavian revolutionaries developed a new concept of the state structure based on the one and indivisible principle mentioned above and, consequently, the dissolution of provincial sovereignty. According to them, democracy could only triumph if the federal structure and provincial sovereignty of the Dutch Republic were abolished and replaced by a unified state with a national government.

The constitution of 1798 took the radical step of replacing the traditional provinces by new districts with new borders and names, and with roughly equal populations. Representatives for the national constituent organ, or *Vertegenwoordigend Lichaam*, were elected by universal male suffrage. Their election was democratic and in proportion to the population. In the Estates General of the former Dutch Republic the votes had been unequally distributed between the provinces, while within the provinces, power had been concentrated in the hands of the representatives of a few privileged towns and of a few nobles representing the countryside. The province of Holland had been dominant and within this province the most important city was Amsterdam. The attempt to establish a unified state in 1798 soon proved unsuccessful. A second, more moderate coup took place in June in the same year, again with help of the French army. Despite this, the constitution continued to be upheld. However, the political purge initiated by the radicals



directly after the first coup, left its mark. Many Dutch revolutionaries were disappointed and the revolutionary process, including state centralization, started to slow down.

The French involvement in Dutch politics intensified after the *Brumaire* coup of November 1799. Napoleon Bonaparte immediately increased French military and financial demands and, from 1801 onwards, intervened more actively on the Dutch national political stage. In autumn 1801 he ordered a new coup. A new constitution for the Netherlands was proclaimed, less democratic than the constitution of 1798. In parallel with the policy of reconciliation pursued by the Consulate in France, the supporters of the Stadholder, or Orangists, were again allowed to participate in local, departmental and national administrations. In addition, the old federal structure and provincial borders were restored, to which the southern region of Brabant was added as an eighth department – a predominantly Roman Catholic region, which had been administered by the Estates General during the Republic. The Batavian Republic was renamed *Bataafse Gemenbest*, or Batavian Commonwealth. In the new constitution of 1801 the central government consisted of a traditional college of twelve men, called the *Staatsbewind*, or the Regency of State. Because of the peace talks in Amiens, Napoleon finally seemed willing to reduce the French army in the Netherlands. However, when hostilities between France and Britain resumed in the spring of 1803, he changed his mind. The Netherlands was of special interest to Napoleon because of its strategic geographical position, the strength of its navy and the still impressive financial resources of Amsterdam's merchants and bankers. A new conflict over the financing of plans for the invasion of England lay behind Napoleon's decision to execute another regime change in the Netherlands in the autumn of 1804. Napoleon asked the former Dutch revolutionary Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck, who had been his confidant and a representative at Amiens, to draft a new constitution. In this constitution, the Netherlands was still called the Batavian Republic or Commonwealth, but the single-headed state government was introduced, with the appointment of Schimmelpenninck as *Raadpensionaris*, or Grand Pensionary.

The new constitution appeared to have been already overtaken by events by the time of its proclamation in April 1805. A new coalition had taken shape on the continent and the subsequent Third Coalition War finally led to the proclamation of the Kingdom of Holland. In the war French troops were victorious at Ulm and Austerlitz. Meanwhile the destruction of the French fleet at Trafalgar in October 1805 forced Napoleon to concentrate his forces henceforth on the continent. To guarantee French hegemony on the continent and continue the war with England, he searched for a new continental order in which the French Empire would be surrounded by satellite states headed by loyal family members and other trustworthy relatives, who would be easy to control. Another regime change in the Batavian Republic was also part of these plans. Schimmelpenninck was insulted and

declared incapable on account of his supposed blindness. Meanwhile other magistrates in the Batavian government were put under pressure to request a protégé of Napoleon as new head of state. In addition, Batavian delegates were sent to Paris to negotiate the conditions, which were finally settled in a treaty, drafted by Talleyrand, on 24 May 1806. The Treaty of Paris foresaw the proclamation of Napoleon's younger brother Louis as king of Holland. The treaty also stipulated that Louis would retain the title and functions of Constable of France. Schimmelpenninck protested weakly by demanding a plebiscite. Needless to say, his protest went unheeded.

### The Kingdom of Holland under Louis Bonaparte (1806–1810)

Louis arrived in The Hague on 18 June 1806. In the first weeks he worked on a constitution for the Kingdom of Holland, which was proclaimed in August 1806. Under the new constitution the king could reign as an autocrat. He possessed all executive power and appointed all senior administrative, judicial and military officials. Assisting the king was a council of state, copied from the French constitution. The *Wetgevend Lichaam*, the legislature, remained but – in democratic terms – the organ was a pale shadow of past practice. Candidates were still elected by department, but only on a limited suffrage. The king appointed the members from among these nominees. The legislature met only once a year. The delegates were only allowed to discuss bills and had neither the power of initiative nor the right of amendment. Administratively more important were the ministers, who appeared under this name for the first time in Dutch history. Officially, the main tasks of the ministers were the supervision of the central administration and the strict execution of the decisions and orders of the king. In practice, the ministers gained some margin to act more independently, due to the king's frequent absences in later years. One of the ministries created by Louis was the Ministry of Justice and Police, through which modern police organization was introduced in the Netherlands.

Besides his work on the constitution, Louis focused on state finances. The Dutch national debt had reached the astronomical total of over 1.1 billion guilders, incurring almost 35 million in annual interest payments alone.<sup>5</sup> With the help of his minister of finance, Isaac Gogel, Louis tried to increase national income by the implementation of a new national fiscal system, which had been planned under Schimmelpenninck. Much to the anger of his brother he also economized on Dutch defense, demolishing fortifications, reducing the number of battleships and dismissing navy personnel. Napoleon was furious and Louis, torn between national Dutch needs and the orders of his brother, fell ill. He left his kingdom for health treatment in Wiesbaden less than a month later.

Louis returned to the Netherlands in September 1806 but had to leave again almost immediately, on orders to fight in the campaign against Prussia

as part of the Fourth War of Coalition. The overwhelming victories of the French armies meant that Louis had no difficulty executing his orders to occupy parts of Westphalia and East-Frisia, or Oost-Friesland, the latter of which later became an extra department of the Napoleonic Netherlands. Nevertheless, Napoleon was dissatisfied with Louis' performance and he dismissed his brother from his command (officially for health reasons). In November 1806 Louis entered The Hague for the third time that year. He was almost immediately confronted with new demands from his brother regarding the implementation of the Continental System, which was officially decreed in Berlin on 21 November 1806. As I have written elsewhere, the Continental System became the divisive element in the relationship between the brothers Bonaparte and, eventually, the main reason for the annexation of the Kingdom of Holland in 1810.<sup>6</sup>

From an administrative perspective the first months of 1807 were the most fruitful period of Louis' reign. By the law of 13 April 1807 the Kingdom was divided into ten departments; for the most part following the old provincial borders and retaining existing provincial names. The populous province of Holland, however, was split to form two new departments, Amstelland and Maasland, and a separate department, Drenthe, in the northeastern part, was formed. Also new was the replacement of the old colleges by a departmental government headed by the *landdrost*. The position of the *landdrost* was very similar to that of the prefect in France. His main task was the strict execution of all laws and orders of the central government. The new administration, with the introduction of this departmental government, was a milestone in the process of administrative centralization, which now finally got under way in the Netherlands.

Local government was also transformed. Cities were divided into two classes: municipalities of the first class, with populations of 5,000 or more, and municipalities of the second class, with fewer than 5,000 inhabitants. In the first class, a single head was also introduced by the appointment of a mayor or *burgemeester*, whose position was very similar to that of the French *maire*. The *burgemeester* was assisted by *wethouders*, analogous to the French mayor's *adjoints*. A further regulation for the municipalities of the second class was promised but postponed.

The administrative reforms introduced by Louis were mirrored in his colonial policy in the East Indian archipelago (present-day Indonesia). As mentioned before, the other Dutch colonies were lost to Britain after the Batavian Revolution and the outbreak of war. Louis' colonial reforms were, like his domestic administrative reforms, part of a longer process of change, which had been started during the Batavian Republic. This process included the replacement of the privately based colonial supervision of the Dutch East India Company or *Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (VOC), primarily concerned with generating private profit, by a governmental based administration, more attentive to general national and integrated colonial interests.

A new colonial policy had become urgent after the bankruptcy and final dissolution in 1799 of the erstwhile notorious VOC, founded in 1602. New plans were made and committees were set up, but, again, it was only under Louis Napoleon that a separate Ministry of Colonial Affairs was created and a public colonial administration with professional officials was introduced in the East Indies.<sup>7</sup>

With the death from diphtheria in May 1807 of Napoleon-Charles, the eldest son of Louis and Hortense, who was the daughter of the empress Josephine, Louis' energetic approach to state affairs ended abruptly. May 1807 signified a clear rupture in his reign; his personal administrative activity never again reached its previous level. The summer of 1807 also marked a sharp shift in the relationship between Louis and Napoleon. The French military victories in the Fourth War of Coalition resulted in the Treaty of Tilsit at the beginning of July 1807, by which Russia promised to enforce the Continental System. An effective enforcement of the Continental Blockade seemed to be within reach. There were weak spots, however, in Portugal and in the Netherlands, where smuggling was widespread. Napoleon increased the pressure to enforce the blockade, but Louis had just relaxed his decree closing Dutch harbors to all shipping. Napoleon was furious and when they met in Paris in August 1807, threatened his brother with annexation of his kingdom. To enforce his arguments Napoleon even ordered French gendarmes to cross the border to arrest suspected Dutch merchants. Louis was shocked and hastily returned in September 1807. Back in the Netherlands, Louis considered abdication. He asked his brother for permission to make another trip to Germany for health reasons, but it never came and instead Louis decided to leave The Hague and move to Utrecht.

His stay in Utrecht, which began in October 1807, was only for an interim period. Domestically, the new departmental and municipal administration was further regulated. In the field of foreign policy, the conflict over the Continental System continued to predominate. A new crisis erupted over Louis allowing captains of Swedish ships to unload colonial goods. Again Napoleon was furious and Louis hastily tried to pacify his brother with a new decree in January 1808, ordering the total closure of Dutch harbors. This attempt to pacify Napoleon seemed to succeed. At least he finally agreed to send a French ambassador to the Netherlands. With the imminent arrival of a French ambassador, Louis at last felt able to move his residence to Amsterdam. On 20 April 1808 he entered the Dutch capital. The city government welcomed him and offered him the beautiful city hall that had been built in the seventeenth century as a royal palace. The Amsterdam period of his reign lasted until his abdication on 1 July 1810. To his great disappointment, however, his stay in Amsterdam did not meet his expectations. The Amsterdam elite systematically stayed away from royal galas and dinners. There were also many protests against Louis' plans to reconstruct his new

palace and its surroundings. Disappointed by the hostility he encountered, he soon chose to stay at his hunting lodge, palace *'t Loo*, in the center of the Netherlands, or on his estate in Harlem, which he bought from the wealthy Amsterdam banker family Hope for 300,000 guilders and permission for two ships carrying coffee to enter in November 1808.<sup>8</sup>

The Amsterdam period was characterized administratively by a further attempt to consolidate public finances, a new regulation for religious affairs and a reorganization of the Dutch judicial system, which remained decentralized and based on local jurisdiction. Louis introduced a civil and a penal code, but his judicial reform met with limited success, due to a shortage of time to put a new judicial institutional organization into practice.

As mentioned above, it was the conflict over the Continental System that proved disastrous for Louis Napoleon. The relationship between Napoleon and Louis was already deteriorating in 1808 and reached its nadir with the closure of the border between France and Holland by Napoleon and the prohibition for Dutch ships to enter French ports in November 1808. Napoleon had, in fact, been working on an annexation scenario since the autumn of 1807. But the axe fell for Louis after his decision to again relax his strict policy closing Dutch ports and to permit American vessels to unload their cargo freely at the end of June 1809. Napoleon was outraged and wrote to his brother that France was on the brink of war with Holland. Louis immediately promised to reverse his decision, but this time his attempt to pacify his brother did not work. At the end of July 1809 the British invaded his kingdom, notably the isle of Walcheren in Zeeland. Although this invasion failed completely, it was nevertheless a key factor in Napoleon's decision to incorporate the Kingdom of Holland into the French Empire.

The actual incorporation was postponed because of Napoleon's marriage to Marie-Louise of Austria. From December 1809 until the beginning of April 1810 Louis stayed in Paris to discuss Napoleon's divorce from Josephine and to witness the emperor's wedding. He was, to all intents and purposes, a prisoner of his brother who terrorized him and accused him of insubordination and incompetence. For personal and political reasons Napoleon temporarily retained Louis as king. But he nevertheless forced him to accept a treaty whereby France annexed the southern part of his kingdom, below the River Waal. Other clauses of this Treaty of Paris, which was officially proclaimed on 11 March 1810, required Louis to deliver nine warships within six months and to allow a French military observation corps and a large contingent of French customs officials to police the blockade within the borders of his rump kingdom.

Louis arrived back in Holland in April 1810. As he had feared, the French observation corps soon turned out to be an occupation corps, which, slowly but surely, advanced on Amsterdam. At the end of June the arrival of French troops in the city was announced for 4 July 1810. Louis, who feared another

spell of captivity, did not wait to see the French arrive. He abdicated on 1 July 1810 and fled to Austria. He never spoke to, wrote to, or saw his brother again.

### **The French occupation or *Inlijving* (1810–1813)**

Louis had abdicated in favor of his second son, a step not recognized, of course, by Napoleon. A few days after Louis' flight the emperor annexed the Netherlands by the Decree of Rambouillet, which was issued on 9 July 1810 but had been drafted in advance. The decree ended Dutch independence in a few lines, by proclaiming the unification of Holland and the Empire in the first article. In the following twelve articles, the arrival of the former third consul Charles François Lebrun, then aged 71, as Napoleon's lieutenant general was announced, and special attention was paid to public finances. With one stroke of the pen the interest payment on the national debt was reduced to one third. As a compensation for the loss of independence, Amsterdam became the third city of the Empire (after Paris and Rome). As a result of the annexation, the Dutch East Indies were finally also lost to the British in 1811. For some years the Dutch national flag flew in only one or two fortifications in Dutch Guinea on the west coast of Africa and at Deshima, the small Dutch trading post in Japan.

As a result of the annexation, Holland fell under the French constitution of 1804 that established the Empire. In this regard the Decree of Rambouillet also foresaw the appointment of Dutch representatives to the French Senate, Legislative Body and Council of State. More important, however, for the almost two million Dutch in 1810, were the two decrees on administrative reorganization, proclaimed on 13 September and 18 October 1810. The first decree divided the territory of the whole former Kingdom of Holland into nine departments, two of which covered the southern part, which had already been annexed in March 1810. The second decree, named Organic Decree, applied only to the area above the rivers, corresponding to Louis' former rump kingdom. This territory, with a population of around 1.7 million, would become a separate administrative entity, known as the Dutch Departments, under its own governor-general and its own general government. The latter consisted initially of six members, including an Intendant for Interior Affairs and Finances and a Director of Police. The Intendant's office was soon split into two separate intendancies: Interior Affairs and Finances. The general government was based in Amsterdam. Three Dutch officials were appointed to it, including Gogel, Louis' former minister of finance, as Intendant of Finances. The general government had the task of supervising the execution of imperial decrees and general administration, and assisting the governor-general.

At the end of 1810 Lebrun was ordered to continue as governor-general, to which he reluctantly agreed. The new administrative configuration

came into force on 1 January 1811. From that date Louis' ministries were definitively dissolved, and the extensive decree of 29 *Pluviôse* Year VIII (17 February 1800), by which the Napoleonic departmental and local administrative order was regulated, also came into force. The implementation of this decree marked a further stage in the process of administrative centralization. The decree introduced prefects to the departments; they were appointed by the emperor and possessed strong executive powers. On the local level, the decree went a step further than Louis' system, because single-headed government was now introduced in all municipalities, including those with fewer than 5,000 inhabitants. In every municipality a *maire* was appointed, who was assisted by *adjoints*. Another aspect of the decree was the introduction of police commissars in every town with a population of 5,000 or more, which contributed further to the development of a professional police force in the Netherlands.

In addition to the administrative reforms and the extension of the police apparatus, the judicial system was also reorganized in early 1811. The introduction of the French Codes and French judicial institutions, with their hierarchy of tribunals and courts in the cantons, districts and departments, was ordered in the Organic Decree of October 1810. The new judicial system was planned to come into force on 1 January 1811 but, because of delays in organizing the central Imperial Court in The Hague, this operation was postponed to 1 March 1811. With the introduction of the Codes and the new judicial order, the amalgamation of different local and provincial courts and tribunals of the Dutch Republic, each with its own jurisdiction based on local authority, was finally ended and replaced by a uniform and centralized legal system. In July 1811 the last mayors and judicial officials were installed. It was with some satisfaction that Lebrun, in a letter of August 1811, reported to Napoleon on the success of his measures to introduce the *Régime français* in the Netherlands.<sup>9</sup>

As I have demonstrated elsewhere, the Napoleonic regime in the Netherlands was confronted with widespread and varied popular protest.<sup>10</sup> This was particularly the case after the annexation of Holland in July 1810. Discontent over conscription, the Continental Blockade and the regime itself were a constant undercurrent in the Dutch departments. But protests intensified sharply once the Russian catastrophe became officially known at the end of December 1812. Napoleon's image was shattered and almost immediately a storm of rumors broke out. Written and other forms of protest also proliferated and serious rebellions erupted in February and April 1813. In fact, public opinion never calmed down again. The waves of agitation went beyond the control of the authorities when the news of Leipzig became officially known on 3 November 1813. A massive revolt broke out in Amsterdam on 15 November 1813, leading to the flight of Lebrun and the subsequent collapse of the French regime in the Netherlands. A Dutch General Government in the name of the Prince of Orange was proclaimed in

The Hague on 21 November 1813, and nine days later William Frederic, the last Stadholder's son and the future King William I, returned from England in a fishing boat, landing on the beach of Scheveningen, from where he and his father and other family members had fled, also by fishing boat, at the beginning of 1795.

Colonial affairs were settled nine months later, by the Convention of London, signed in August 1814. By this convention Britain agreed to respect the Dutch colonial position as it was at the beginning of 1803. An exception was made for Demerary, Essequibo and Berbice, three Dutch colonial settlements near Surinam, which remained British. Strategically important South Africa, now Cape Colony, also remained British, as did Ceylon, which had officially been transferred to England by the Treaty of Amiens. Dutch rule was restored in Surinam, on the six Dutch Caribbean isles and in the Dutch East Indies, where the private VOC supervision did not return. International sea trade, which had been the mainstay of the Dutch Republic, did not, however, recover from the total collapse brought about by the Continental System. Moreover, Amsterdam definitively lost its primacy in the international financial market during the blockade. The result was a modest and more nationally structured and orientated Dutch economy after 1813, in which land trade was of increasing importance and the coastal provinces had lost their dominance.

### **Significance of the Napoleonic Period**

In conclusion, it is worth emphasizing the importance of the Napoleonic period for Dutch history. First, the whole period between 1795 and 1813 was important since the revolutionary movements led to the successful introduction of democracy, equal rights and the rule of law upheld by a constitution. Much of the revolutionary process was discontinued in the years after the 1798 coup, but civil rights and the principal elements of democracy survived. Second, within the period 1795–1813, the year 1806 marked a true rupture, because the proclamation of Louis Bonaparte as king of Holland officially put an end to the historic and unique republican polity of the Netherlands. The establishment of the monarchy under Louis paved the way for William, Prince of Orange, who, after his return from England, was initially inaugurated as sovereign by a solemn oath on a new constitution in Amsterdam in March 1814. Following the return of Napoleon from Elba, however, William proclaimed himself king of the Netherlands in March 1815, with a view to an imminent unification of the northern and southern Netherlands. His monarchy was secured and confirmed when he took another oath on a modified constitution as King William I of the United Netherlands in Brussels in September 1815.

Finally, the Napoleonic era is also of great importance for Dutch history because, after an incomplete attempt in the first years of the Batavian



Revolution, a lasting process of administrative, fiscal and judicial centralization and unification was launched under the successive Napoleonic regimes. A clear and formal separation was now established between the administrative and judicial powers, with the creation of a comprehensive and professional civil service and of a professional police apparatus at all operational levels. In short, during the Napoleonic period the structure of the modern nation state took form. In practice the process was only partly successful and remained incomplete, but with this institutional framework of the nation state, the first phase of the western modernization process (the second, and much later, phase being industrialization), can indeed be said to have taken off in the Netherlands under the Napoleonic regimes.

Despite its importance Dutch historians have paid limited attention to the Napoleonic period. Indeed, the whole period of 1795–1813 has long been neglected in Dutch history. An official policy of forgetting was introduced during the reign of William I, and from the late nineteenth century until well into the twentieth century historiography was dominated by an Orange-tinted nationalistic vision that masked the historical progress of the years 1795–1813.<sup>11</sup> In this vision the Batavian revolutionaries and Napoleonic reformers had been mere pawns of the French, and in their subservience to France had been more destructive than constructive for Dutch history. The period 1795–1813 was labeled the French period, which happily ended when Holland found its natural historical destination as a nation state under the House of Orange after 1813. Although Dutch historians in the 1930s started to nuance the negative description of the Batavian revolutionaries and to refer to those years explicitly as the Batavian rather than the French period, thereby emphasizing the specifically national input to the historical process after 1795, yet it was another two or three decades before a consensus emerged and the two concepts were combined as the Batavian-French Period, which is now the main term for the period 1795–1813.<sup>12</sup>

The historiography of the Batavian-French Period gained new momentum in the late 1980s, partly triggered by the bicentenary of the French Revolution in 1989. The growing interest came from both political and socio-economic historians. The former studied in detail the groundbreaking political work of the Batavian revolutionaries and explicitly redefined the period 1795–1813 as ‘the heart of the great transition in the history of the Netherlands’ – a transition that ran from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries.<sup>13</sup> A parallel development occurred in social and economic history. Following the rise of the discipline of New Economic History, especially New Institutional Economics, several leading Dutch social and economic historians started to stress the pivotal importance of the institutional reforms during the Batavian-French Period for long-term modern economic growth.<sup>14</sup> They indirectly confirmed the findings of some earlier New Economic historians that ‘The suffering and poverty of the Batavian and French period...were the price the Dutch had to pay to move from one

type of growth to another'.<sup>15</sup> It is striking, however, that within this new approach to the years 1795–1813 most attention is paid to the first years of the Batavian-French period. By contrast, and paradoxically, the Napoleonic years are still neglected and understudied, even though much of the reform process took place in the period 1806–1813.

Additionally, the process of centralization, unification and institutional reform was reaffirmed and continued in the transitional years of 1814–1815, under pressure and through the work of former Batavian political leaders and leading Napoleonic administrators, whose political or administrative careers continued under the new regime of the sovereign, and later king, William I. After the Belgian Revolution in 1830, the Kingdom of the United Netherlands was split between the southern Kingdom of Belgium and the northern Kingdom of the Netherlands. The Kingdom of the Netherlands continued to be ruled as a constitutional monarchy by the descendants of William I.

## Notes

1. Louis Bonaparte, *Documens historiques et réflexions sur le gouvernement de la Hollande*, 3 vols (Paris, 1820), vol. 1, 132–133.
2. H.T. Colenbrander, *De Bataafsche Republiek* (Amsterdam, 1908), 69–70.
3. Karel Davids and Jan Lucassen (eds), *A Miracle Mirrored: the Dutch Republic in European Perspective* (Cambridge, 1995). Regarding the special position of the Dutch Republic from a cultural and political-philosophical perspective, see: Jonathan I. Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall 1477–1806* (Oxford, 1995).
4. Richard Paping, *Urbanisatie en de-urbanisatie in Nederland 1400–1850*, 2009 <http://www.rug.nl/staff/r.f.j.paping/urbanisatietilburg2009powerpoint.pdf> (10 November 2014). These figures reflect recent research in historical demography and differ slightly from the long-standing population estimates, as presented in the influential study on Dutch economic history, Jan de Vries and Ad van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy: Success, Failure and Perseverance of the Dutch Economy, 1500–1815* (Cambridge, 1997), 50, esp. table 3.1 (population estimate of 1,850,000 to 1,900,000).
5. Jan Luiten van Zanden and Arthur van Riel, *The Strictures of Inheritance: The Dutch Economy in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, 2004), 49 (Table 1.9). The debt continued to increase and reached more than 1.2 billion in 1809.
6. Johan Joor, 'Le système continental et sa signification pour le Royaume de Hollande', in *Louis Bonaparte: Roi de Hollande*, ed. Annie Jourdan (Paris, 2010), 131–144. See also: Johan Joor, 'Significance and Consequences of the Continental System for Napoleonic Holland, Especially for Amsterdam', in Katherine B. Aaslestad and Johan Joor (eds), *Revisiting Napoleon's Continental System: Local, Regional and European Experiences* (Basingstoke, 2015), 259–276.
7. See Wim van den Doel, *Zo ver de wereld strekt: De geschiedenis van Nederland overzee vanaf 1800* (Amsterdam, 2011), 22–25 and 30–31.
8. Bulletin Fouché, 1 December 1808, in E. D'Hauterive and J. Grassion (eds), *La police secrète du premier Empire: Bulletins quotidiens adressés par Fouché à l'Empereur, nouvelle série*, (Paris, 1963), 453.

9. Archives nationales, Paris, AFIV (Secrétairerie d'État Impériale), 1724 (Hollande, Correspondence Prince Archichancelier, 1811), 16 August 1811.
10. Johan Joor, "'A Very Rebellious Disposition": Dutch Experience and Popular Protest under the Napoleonic Regime (1806–1813)', in *Soldiers, Citizens and Civilians: Experiences and Perceptions of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1790–1820*, Alan Forrest et al. (eds) (Basingstoke, 2009), 181–204.
11. For the official policy of forgetting, see Matthijs Lok, *Windvanen: Napoleontische bestuurders in de Nederlandse en Franse Restauratie (1813–1820)* (Amsterdam, 2009), esp. 117–167. See also: Matthijs Lok and Martijn van der Burg, 'The Dutch Case: The Kingdom of Holland and the Imperial Departments', in Michael Broers et al. (eds), *The Napoleonic Empire and the New European Political Culture* (Basingstoke, 2012), 100.
12. The leading Dutch historian of the traditional school was Herman T. Colenbrander (1871–1945). He was amongst others criticized by the Roman Catholic historian Louis G.J. Verberne (1889–1956), who stressed the importance of the religious emancipation and introduced the term 'Batavian Period'. Pieter Geijl (1887–1966) (also known as Geyl), the internationally known Dutch historian, was a strong supporter of Verberne's concept of 'Batavian Period'. The concept of 'Batavian-French Period' was introduced by Harry J.F.M. van den Eerenbeemt, a Dutch historian and sociologist, in his *Hertogenbosch in de Bataafse en Franse tijd, 1794–1814: bijdrage tot de kennis van de sociaal-economische structuur* (Nijmegen, 1955).
13. Niek C.F. van Sas, 'De metamorfose van Nederland', in N.C.F. van Sas, *De metamorfose van Nederland: van oude orde naar moderniteit, 1750–1900* (Amsterdam, 2004), 19. See also the work of Annie Jourdan, especially, *La Révolution batave entre la France et l'Amérique (1795–1806)* (Rennes, 2008).
14. See Michael Wintle, *An Economic and Social History of the Netherlands 1800–1920: Demographic, Economic and Social Transition* (Cambridge, 2000), 3; Van Zanden and Van Riel, *Strictures* (2004), 5–6, 52–84; Wantje Fritschy and René van der Voort, 'From Fragmentation to Unification: Public Finance 1700–1914', in Marjolein 't Hart et al. (eds), *A financial history of The Netherlands* (Cambridge, 1997), 64..
15. Erik Buyst & Joël Moky, 'Dutch Manufacturing and Trade During the French Period (1795–1814) in a Long Term Perspective', in Erik Aerts & François Crouzet (eds), *Economic Effects of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, Proceedings Tenth International Economic History Congress Leuven, August 1990* (Leuven, 1990), 65.

# 5

## Liberty in Times of Occupation: The Napoleonic Era in German Central Europe

*Armin Owzar*

‘In the beginning’ of modern Germany, there was neither reform absolutism nor the Prussian reforms; there was Napoleon, for it was he who introduced a new form of power politics and transformed society in a way never before experienced.<sup>1</sup> This *bon mot*, with which the historian Thomas Nipperdey (ironically referring to the historicist myth of great personalities) opened his monumental handbook on the history of nineteenth-century Germany, has been quoted often over the last three decades. It reflects the paradigm shift that has taken place since the early 1970s in research on the Napoleonic era in German Central Europe, which has led to a re-evaluation of French rule and the introduction of a new periodization. The result has been that the Prussian reforms, or the so-called wars of liberation of 1813 based on a supposed national awakening, are no longer considered as the starting point of contemporary German history. Instead, it was the invasion of the *Grande Armée* and the emperor’s political action that helped to unleash a modernization process with all its implied ambivalence. In particular, the years between the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806 and the Battle of the Nations at Leipzig in 1813 are seen as a kind of laboratory of modernity in all its facets, including the invention of new technologies, the development of innovative techniques of government, the rise of a new political culture and an all-encompassing transformation of society.<sup>2</sup>

Such a perspective, which tries to find the right balance between appreciation and criticism, is not completely new. Contrary to what one might expect from the historiography of Imperial Germany, most historians from the Bismarckian and Wilhelmine eras (who were largely liberal-oriented) had far fewer Francophobic tendencies. With a basically pro-constitutional attitude and a certain serenity resulting from the victory over France in the war of 1870–1871, they criticized Napoleon’s expansionism and imperialism – without denying the positive effects of his foreign rule for the German territories.

After the Treaty of Versailles, the German interpretative trend radically changed for nearly fifty years. Notwithstanding the continuing fascination with Napoleon, the number of relevant publications decreased perceptibly, so that one can speak of a *damnatio memoriae* that lasted until the early 1970s. The few German titles still dealing explicitly with this period mostly dwelt on the negative aspects. Due to a widespread revanchism that produced both Francophobic and anti-liberal tendencies, especially among Weimar's educated classes, the preference historians gave to sovereignty (both in its defensive and imperialistic versions) was disproportionately greater than any interest in constitutionalism. Needless to say, during the Nazi period the concept of political freedom almost completely vanished. Instead, it often became supplanted by anti-Semitic or anti-French stereotypes. Although such racist tendencies almost completely disappeared after 1945, for more than two decades the overwhelming majority of West and East German historians (though for different reasons) continued to neglect Napoleon's achievements in the introduction of civil liberties and adopted a perspective that prioritized the fight for national independence.

Since the early 1970s this nationalistic paradigm has lost much of its significance – a paradigm shift that corresponds to zeitgeist factors like the individualization, liberalization and Europeanization of Western societies. Though publications are still to be found in which negative attitudes predominate, most historians have been re-evaluating the implementation of political, administrative, cultural and socio-economic reforms by emphasizing the modernizing motives and effects of Napoleonic rule (while at the same time minimizing the role of Napoleon's exploitative expansionism). Today, this reinterpretation is manifest in numerous surveys<sup>3</sup> and source-books.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, in the context of several bicentenaries in the early 2000s, the Napoleonic era in German Central Europe was popularized by a number of complex exhibitions accompanied by lavish catalogues.<sup>5</sup> The numerous studies also published at this time included much innovative scholarship considering gender aspects, everyday life, collective experiences or mentalities, and utilizing cultural history methods and comparative or transnational and entangled perspectives. They are part of an international, mostly Anglophone and Francophone, discourse on Napoleon<sup>6</sup> and the Napoleonic era in Germany and Europe.<sup>7</sup>

To understand the complexity of the Napoleonic era and to evaluate the simultaneous processes of modernization unleashed on the one hand and the repression and exploitation practiced on the other, we will analyze this period systematically by (1) examining the precarious sovereignty status granted to the territories forming the Confederation of the Rhine; (2) discussing the (pseudo) constitutional character of political authority and measuring the possible discrepancy between reformist aspirations and reality; (3) analyzing the counter-productive effects of economic and trade

policies; (4) estimating the extent of military burdens, human losses and wartime destruction; and (5) evaluating the people's reaction to political authority and its fragile legitimacy.

### Sovereign or satellite states?

First of all, it is important to take into account significant local differences, not least due to Germany's geopolitical patchwork structure. The French occupation, the Final Recess of the *Reichsdeputation* in 1803 and the dissolution of the *Reich* in 1806 had led to an impressive re-parceling of the political landscape in central Europe, but Germany was still far from forming a geopolitical unit. It basically comprised three different kinds of territories: (1) the regions annexed by France between 1792 and 1811 and that had thus become integral parts of the Empire, turning their subjects into French citizens with all the corresponding rights and duties;<sup>8</sup> (2) the territories that formed the Confederation of the Rhine, founded in 1806 and dissolved in 1813;<sup>9</sup> and (3) Danish Holstein, Swedish Pomerania and the German-speaking lands of Austria and Prussia, which were allies of France, at least for a short time, and were thus indirectly impacted by Napoleonic rule.<sup>10</sup>

In the older historiography, German Central Europe's occupation by France and its subsequent integration into the Empire, or the Confederation of the Rhine, were considered an act of violation against the German nation. Meanwhile, Prussia's defeat in 1806 at the Battles of Jena and Austerlitz was felt to be the moment of Germany's 'deepest humiliation',<sup>11</sup> but at the same time the starting point of a national renaissance that paved the way for the kingdom to become the leading power, making possible the establishment of the first constitutional national German state of 1871. Whereas the middle states like Baden or Bavaria, while criticized for their collaboration with France, were acknowledged as German states and thus recognized in their general right to exist (at least at the federal state level), Berg and Westphalia were denounced as being satellite states governed by foreign rulers and existing only by Napoleon's grace – an argument that was intended to put their very legitimacy in question.

There can be no doubt that both Berg and Westphalia were satellite states closely bound to the Emperor's will and almost totally subject to direct military control. And this was true, albeit in weakened form, for all members of the Confederation of the Rhine. However, one may question whether there has ever been a non-artificial nation; one may also ask whether an evident lack of national sovereignty can be taken as *the* essential argument for calling into question the legitimacy of a state. Traditional historiography suggested that a hierarchy of criteria was headed by national sovereignty. But are there not other aspects, like standards of living or civil liberties, which should perhaps be given equal if not greater importance?<sup>12</sup>

## Constitutional or pseudo-constitutional states?

In terms of constitutional law, prior to coming under the dominating influence of France, central Europe had been dominated by pre-constitutional regimes and paralyzed by several decades of reform blockage. Given the feudal structures and widespread forces of inertia, attempts by enlightened absolutist rulers to reform the political system and modernize society were either incomplete, as the General State Laws for the Prussian states, or doomed to failure, like the Josephine reforms. A constitution limiting the monarch's sovereignty had not been introduced and all citizens had not become equal before the law. It was thus the *Grande Armée* that opened the way for a partial constitutionalization and parliamentarization of central Europe by taking over large parts of the German territories.<sup>13</sup>

These processes took a radical form on the left bank of the Rhine, which had become, as a consequence of the French occupation, completely integrated into the Empire. Here, a political system was imported based on the Empire's constitution and the *Code Napoléon*, which, for the first time on German soil, guaranteed some important universal civil rights, including the freedom of property, which contributed to transforming Central Europe's feudal society into a bourgeois society of equal citizens.<sup>14</sup> Slightly different was the situation in most of the territories then belonging to the Confederation of the Rhine.<sup>15</sup> In some states, the *Code Napoléon* was introduced (like in Anhalt-Köthen) or was in the planning stage (Bavaria); in other territories a modified version was adopted (such as in Baden). A *Rheinbund* constitution, however, was not imposed, as had originally been planned. Most middle states became constitutionalized and parliamentarized – first of all Westphalia (1807), which was certainly German Central Europe's most modern state on the right bank of the Rhine. As a constitutional monarch, King Jérôme exercised a power limited by law. The internal organization of the state prescribed the formation of a government consisting of four ministers with ministerial responsibility, a state council consisting of up to 25 members and a modern parliament representing the country's landowners, merchants and scholars. Overnight, all Westphalian subjects became equal before the law. All privileges for noblemen were ended and any discriminatory laws for religious minorities were abolished, thus emancipating the Jews.<sup>16</sup>

Westphalia had been chosen to serve as a model state with regard to the political and social system, and Napoleon was extremely optimistic about the extent of moral conquest his constitutional project might achieve.<sup>17</sup> Some states did indeed introduce a new constitution, like Bavaria in 1808, if they had not, like Württemberg, already abolished the old social order shortly before (in 1805). However, not all territories in the Confederation were given a modern constitution. In states like Berg or Baden it was only

proposed that one be implemented in the future, and all plans to introduce a parliament were postponed.<sup>18</sup>

Nonetheless, a reform process was launched in all the German states, often, as in Bavaria under Maximilian von Montgelas, on the initiative of a central personality.<sup>19</sup> Secularization, the emancipation of Jews, the abolition of serfdom, the implementation of economic freedom, the holding of public trials, and the reorganization of the administration are only a few – certainly the most important – of the groundbreaking reforms introduced in the German territories between 1794 and 1813, either directly or indirectly through Napoleon's initiatives.<sup>20</sup> After all, these reforms were implemented not only in those regions that had been annexed by the Empire or in the territories belonging to the newly-founded Confederation of the Rhine of 1806, but also in Prussia, which, after its defeat in 1806, was under enormous pressure to keep up with modern France and thus saw itself forced to launch a process of 'defensive modernization' to reform its outdated and inefficient system.<sup>21</sup> There has been a debate whether these Stein-Hardenberg reforms resulted mainly from external pressure or stemmed from inner-Prussian traditions.<sup>22</sup> Whatever the answer to that question, although these reforms also aimed at a complete transformation of state and society, not all of those implemented were sustainable.<sup>23</sup> Some reforms (like the emancipation of Jews in 1812) were incomplete or unrealized.<sup>24</sup> This applies in particular to Frederick William III's promise to decree a constitution, given twice, in 1810 and 1815, but never kept. Arguably this was only logical, since without the French pressure or threat, there was no longer a need to pursue further modernization projects.

This partial failure of modernization notwithstanding, successive generations of historians have pointed to the Prussian reforms as a shining example of a successful revolution from above, whereas the Napoleonic reforms have been disesteemed if not disregarded. Even Westphalia's basic law was denounced as a pseudo-constitution and its representative body, the Legislature or *Etats du royaume*, as a pseudo-parliament.<sup>25</sup> Between 1919 and 1970, generations of historians also minimized the impact of the accompanying reforms implemented under Napoleonic rule, partly because of the wide and unbridgeable gap between reformist aspirations and reality, partly too because the reforms functioned solely to camouflage Napoleon's expansionism.

It is certainly true that Napoleon pursued military aims with his constitutional initiatives. The whole Confederation of the Rhine, notably its member states of Berg and Westphalia, was designed to serve as both a buffer state between Prussia and France for military reasons, and a model state to initiate a process of modernization by which to win the population's hearts and consolidate Napoleonic rule over German Central Europe. State-driven propaganda campaigns, ranging from tendentious literature to political festivities and portraits of rulers, were supposed to magnify this effect (and



contributed to creating a new political culture).<sup>26</sup> However, that does not mean that the former Jacobin Bonaparte was not serious about the reforms or did not have the will, at least initially, to transform German society. On the contrary, the two objectives were inextricably linked. Without the occupation of German Central Europe, those radical reforms would not have been implemented at this time – and without those reforms, the occupation would not have been realizable.

It is also true that in many areas there was a huge discrepancy between reformist aspirations and political or socio-economic reality under Napoleonic rule<sup>27</sup> – especially with regard to social reforms, some of which were even foiled by a process of re-feudalization as a consequence of Napoleon's seigneurial policy.<sup>28</sup> Civil liberties were increasingly curtailed, and the situation was exacerbated by the censorship exercised by an omnipresent political police, so that even in minor affairs any critique of the government or the army incurred draconian punishments.<sup>29</sup> Also, legislative practice left much to be desired. On this point, however, allowance must be made for the variations from case to case. Whereas the empire's National Assembly was, at best, a simple pseudo-parliament, in the Westphalian States at least a rudimentary opposition did develop, though this parliament also disposed of only limited competences and was convened only twice.<sup>30</sup> All in all, it is undeniable that the political and social reality in both the empire and the Confederation of the Rhine was not in accordance with the constitutional charters or basic laws. For different reasons, such as the resistance of the old elites and Napoleon's tendency to prioritize military goals and put reformist or constitutionalist goals at the bottom of the list, Westphalia, like France itself, increasingly turned into a military or authoritarian dictatorship endowed with charismatic leadership elements.

However, in light of the *longue durée* over which modernization processes normally operate, one's judgment of the Napoleonic reforms should not be too harsh. To overcome the existing barriers and forces of inertia, to train an experienced and competent staff to realize their full potential, most of the Napoleonic reforms would have needed longer than three or seven or even thirteen years. After all, in contrast with the former reform blockage, Napoleon's intervention gave a jump-start to change in almost all areas of society. Though the time span only ranged from three (former Duchy of Arenberg) to 22 years (Mayence) some reforms at least were successfully realized. In addition to far-reaching technical improvements (particularly in road construction and in welfare provision for the sick and old), the most radical changes concerned the political system and societal order. Even if they were not always or everywhere realized as originally planned or were extensively revised, the Napoleonic reforms, combined with the Prussian reforms, paved the way for a new civic value system and thus helped to prepare the future transformation of political, judicial or social structures.

Also to be borne in mind is the basic point that there is always a difference between the input and output dimensions of reform processes. The discrepancy between reforms and reality that overshadowed the entire Napoleonic era may thus serve as an early case study in identifying the self-perpetuating dynamic political processes normally observed in contemporary history. One may also argue that this gap is especially significant in times of war, so that it cannot be ruled out that, in the event of pacification, Westphalia would have been re-constitutionalized and again exerted its function as a model state. Against this perspective, however, one may argue that a lasting and stable peace was unattainable in an authoritarian system based on personal charisma and dependent on military success. It may thus be considered as *the* basic dilemma of Napoleonic rule, both in France and in the Confederation of the Rhine, that war did not serve as a simple means to an end, to enforce expansion, but, in terms of social imperialism theories, as a basic element to stabilize the inner order. Thus, militarism and expansionism were integral parts of a political system that can be categorized as one based on charismatic leadership.

### **The imponderability of economic policy**

Finally, the instrumentalization of war is supposed to have overshadowed not only the reform program but all fields of policy. This is well illustrated by Napoleon's economic and trade policies. In order to build his rule over Europe (and conquer new markets for French products) Napoleon had to fight his arch-enemy, the British Empire. Since England was the world's biggest trading power, he tried to isolate the British Isles from continental Europe by means of the, so-called, Continental System or Blockade, which operated between 1806 and 1814. However, this form of militant protectionism, besides having serious counterproductive effects (like smuggling and corruption), hit the economies of France's allies, with disastrous economic consequences for some regions and some social groups. Whereas some (pre-)industrial regions profited from the draw-back on British competition and certain German businessmen benefitted from the increase in road building and the abolition of local and regional customs borders, other regional marketplaces were cut off not only from England but from the Empire (due to the protectionist closing of borders) or from the Iberian Peninsula (due to the Spanish campaign). In contrast to the annexed territories on the left bank of the Rhine, which in the main profited from French protectionist measures, other regions and cities were isolated and negatively affected from the beginning. The original idea of creating a tariff union between all the territories of the Confederation of Rhine was never realized. Many factories were thus forced to close down or lay off their workers. Meanwhile, prices and living costs increased dramatically and annual sales fell, leading to raw material shortages and stagnant markets, and even

disrupting industry in many areas. The numerous punitive actions (like confiscation) and draconian penalties exacerbated the general dissatisfaction with Napoleon's rule.<sup>31</sup>

Even more disastrous were the political consequences of Napoleon's response when the Russian tsar tried to undermine the Continental System. In order to put pressure upon him and to maintain the blockade, Napoleon felt obliged to intensify his expansionist policy and to penalize Alexander I by starting the fatal Russian campaign in 1812. This ended in a debacle, created widespread discontent, and destroyed Napoleon's charisma, especially among the Germans, thereby destabilizing central Europe's political system.

### The costs of war

Using permanent warfare in pursuit of political goals, whether economic (to impose the Continental System) or domestic (to stabilize the internal order), worked as long as the *Grande Armée* and its allies, the *Rheinbund* contingents, were successful, at least in the short term.<sup>32</sup> In the medium term, however, it created enormous costs for the army's budget and contributed to the deteriorating socio-economic situation. Inhabitants in all of German Central Europe's regions suffered from increasing costs and sacrifices. The need to finance the armies and Napoleon's wars was certainly not the only reason for raising taxes, but it was probably the most significant. In addition, new charges were introduced and contributions were collected. An additional burden was the compulsory service required from rural and urban populations and the board and lodging demanded for transiting troops. Troop marches were nothing new for the Germans. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, central Europe's territories had been continually affected by transits and quartering. But, in preparation for the Russian campaign and in the course of the anti-Napoleonic Wars, the armies were mobilized as never before. Even more pressurizing and burdensome was the general conscription that had been introduced and which gained in importance over the course of Napoleon's Peninsular War and his march on Moscow. On the positive side, compulsory military service may be evaluated as a progressive procedure in that it was based on the principle of equality. Every able-bodied man aged between 20 and 25 had to be registered and could be drafted in case of war, no matter if he were Christian or Jew, peasant or nobleman. On the other hand, most of those recruited were sent to the battlefields in Spain and Russia – from where only a tiny minority would return. For those who died on a campaign, and for the families forced to give up their sons and husbands, the suffering was no less real than for later generations.<sup>33</sup> In the last two decades, a new cultural military history employing innovative approaches to examine both individual and collective experiences and memories has

contributed much to understanding these psychological dimensions of the Napoleonic wars.<sup>34</sup>

### **Between enthusiasm and collaboration, protest and resistance**

It is no wonder then that people became increasingly disillusioned and discontented. Since public opinion had a direct effect on the stability of Napoleonic authority in the German territories, the governments took every possible measure to exert influence over the population in order to secure their hold on power – including political violence used to fight or intimidate opponents, loyalty-inspiring offers, bellicose propaganda glorifying French victories or constitutional reforms, supposedly intended to win the hearts of the population and to strengthen its belief in the legitimacy of Napoleonic rule.

Earlier historiography, both conservative and communist, created the impression that the overwhelming majority of Germans disliked the occupational regime from the beginning and that there were only a few Gallicized collaborators, whereas a significant number of people, increasingly motivated by a nationalist awakening, participated in resistance movements and, especially in Prussia but also in Westphalia or Tyrol, fought against the illegitimate foreign rule.<sup>35</sup> Historians working from this perspective generally focused on singular insurrections, particularly the Tyrolean rebellion of 1809 and the uprisings led by Ferdinand von Schill and Wilhelm von Dörnberg, two Prussian officers, in the same year. Special emphasis was put on the intellectual milieu that generated the spirit of 1813, notably the anti-Napoleonic and often bloodthirsty poems, pamphlets or speeches. The ancestral portrait gallery of those Francophobic freedom fighters is still familiar today, comprising Ernst Moritz Arndt, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, 'Turnvater' Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, Heinrich von Kleist, Carl Theodor Körner and Heinrich Steffens.<sup>36</sup>

There can be no doubt that all those personalities who played a specific role through the bicentennial commemorations had a real impact on contemporary politics.<sup>37</sup> Still, several questions remain. How representative of the German population were these, mostly Prussian, soldiers, poets and teachers? How widespread was nationalism and was it *the* driving force behind the fight against Napoleonic rule and against central Europe's conservative monarchical regimes during the era of Restoration? What were the causes that motivated or instigated the masses to fight, to tolerate or to support the system? What was the role of fear, loyalty and belief in legitimacy as based on specific ideas or charisma? What exactly did the people think about the occupation regime? How did they react to the increasing burdens and the growing gap between constitutional right and reality? Can a difference be noted depending on the social, denominational or regional background of the people? Can a shift in public opinion be discerned

between 1803, 1806 and 1813? Still to be analyzed are vast quantities of source material relevant to the political mood, stored at the National Archives of Paris and Berlin, at St. Petersburg's Russian State Library and in regional and municipal archives.<sup>38</sup>

Altogether, the results of the present analysis suggest that there was, at least initially, a huge and widespread enthusiasm, especially in the cities and in those territories that, immediately before, had been occupied by Prussia or had a Catholic majority (like the former Prince-Bishopric of Paderborn that became part of Westphalia). But many people in the southern regions detached from Hanover, in Bavaria, and even in Prussia's capital, Berlin, also enthusiastically welcomed the *Grande Armée*. Studying the local and regional historiography, one comes away with the impression that, except for some insurrections, the situation was fairly stable until 1810. In the following years, as a result of increasing political pressure and persecutions and the continuing impact of the blockade and military defeats, the political mood began to change slightly. Growing numbers of people came to resent Napoleonic rule or, as in Prussia, dependency on France. In particular, parts of the peasantry and the student population became dissatisfied and began to distance themselves from the authorities, which culminated in a number of protests. In contrast, the urban population (especially the members of the elite) gave no signs of unrest. From the beginning of 1813, however, the political mood worsened dramatically. A combination of disappointment with the constitutional reality, the exploitative character of Napoleonic rule and the economic bottlenecks created by the Continental System undermined the original fascination, leaving the overwhelming majority of the exhausted population disenchanted, especially in the countryside and the Hanseatic cities. Most people, it seems, finally felt relieved to be liberated – not so much from foreign rule, but from the 'dark side' of French occupation and its contributions, conscriptions and casualties, which were increasingly overshadowing the progressive aspects.<sup>39</sup>

One indicator of attitudes towards the Napoleonic regimes is the public mood at political rituals and festivities. One may analyze whether the majority warmly welcomed the princes, or expressed their reluctance or even stayed away from celebrations. Another pertinent indicator for measuring the intensity of anti-French or pro-Prussian sentiments is the proportion of the population that participated in the wars of liberation (*Befreiungskriege*) or freedom wars (*Freiheitskriege*), as the anti-Napoleonic wars of 1813 were usually called by nationalists or liberals, who thus contributed to popularizing an interpretation that was finally adopted by German historiography and helped to create an enduring myth. Though many announcements, pamphlets and poems were published celebrating the alleged liberation from Napoleon's tyranny and the French yoke, new research has convincingly proved that nationalism played no significant role in the events of

1813.<sup>40</sup> Anti-Napoleonic resentment resulted above all from a widespread disillusionment rather than from a newly awakening nationalism. If people showed any kind of loyalty, it was mostly towards their former rulers and dynasties.<sup>41</sup> Nonetheless, it was the exclusive concept of a German nation associated with a minority of Francophobe ultra-nationalists that became powerful in the long term.

## Conclusion

Soon after Napoleon's defeat at the Battle of Leipzig, the Confederation of the Rhine was dissolved.<sup>42</sup> First the Grand Duchies of Mecklenburg-Strelitz and Mecklenburg-Schwerin defected to Prussia and Russia, then Bavaria; finally, Württemberg, Baden, Hessen-Darmstadt and Nassau switched sides, whereas Saxony was put under temporary administration. While all these states would finally keep their autonomy in the newly founded German Confederation in 1815, Berg and Westphalia collapsed and their territories were widely distributed. Westphalia's southern parts reverted to the re-established Electorate of Hesse, its northern territories to the newly founded Kingdom of Hanover as successor to the Electorate of Brunswick-Lüneburg (ruled in personal union with the United Kingdom until 1837). The biggest winner, however, was Prussia, which annexed large territories that had formerly belonged to the Empire, Berg and Westphalia. In the west, Prussia now reached far beyond the Rhine so that it even bordered France, whereas Austria waived claims to expand its territory and thus withdrew from the German lands in the west. On the whole, these new boundaries were recognized during the Congress of Vienna (1814–1815).<sup>43</sup>

After 1813 the geopolitical and constitutional landscapes changed. With the end of the pressure exerted by Napoleon, the driving force behind 'defensive modernization' weakened considerably.<sup>44</sup> The effects were less noticeable in the territories on the left bank of the Rhine, which would keep the *Code Civil* until 1900,<sup>45</sup> and in the southern states, which were re-constitutionalized between 1815 and 1820. By contrast, the subjects of the most developed reform state, Westphalia, experienced a severe setback. Due to the kingdom's disintegration, its constitution was also abolished. The emancipation of Jews was repealed, the feudal order restored and the *Code Napoléon* suspended. It would take almost two decades until a new constitution was imposed in those territories now once again attached to the Electorate of Hesse; the inhabitants of the Prussian territories had to wait until 1848. Nonetheless, the social and political impulses given by Napoleonic rule are highly visible. One does not need to subscribe to sociological theories in order to acknowledge the all-encompassing process of modernization that had been launched in the space of just a few years, triggering effects for the rise of civil society and state-building that would be felt far into the nineteenth century.

One reason for this was that the spirit of Napoleon could not be completely eradicated. Over and above a general disorientation that had overwhelmed the broad masses,<sup>46</sup> the omnipresent Napoleonic propaganda and the rise of a new political culture had contributed to a general politicization of the Germans (often with an unintended anti-Napoleonic impetus). Meanwhile, the mobilization for military service in Prussia had strengthened the self-confidence of men and women who were increasingly demanding civil rights and participation.<sup>47</sup> That large sections of the population had experienced or benefitted from the revolutionary achievements imported from France would give rise to further expectations and liberal demands, especially among the members of the educated classes. Though some collaborators were dismissed, the majority of the former elites were able to retain their jobs in justice and administration. But even those citizens who had been dedicated supporters of the Napoleonic authorities could not help but admit the negative outcome of Napoleonic rule, above all the lust for power of its charismatic leader and the suffering inflicted by permanent warfare. It is Napoleon's charisma – his versatile and controversial personality – that still makes him today a projection screen for numerous controversial interpretations.<sup>48</sup> And it is the coexistence of phenomena like modernization and exploitation that makes the Napoleonic era in German Central Europe such a fascinating case study for the ambivalence of modernity in general.

## Notes

My special thanks go to Lise van der Eyk for a critical review.

1. Thomas Nipperdey, *Germany from Napoleon to Bismarck: 1800–1866* (Princeton, 1996), 1.
2. For the following overview of the development of the relevant historiography, including the current state of research and with further bibliographic data, see also Roger Dufraisse, 'Das napoleonische Deutschland: Stand und Probleme der Forschung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der linksrheinischen Gebiete', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 6 (1980): 467–483; Armin Owzar, 'Fremde Herrschaft – fremdes Recht? Deutungen der napoleonischen Verfassungspolitik in Westfalen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert', *Westfälische Forschungen* 51 (2001), ed. Clemens Wischermann: 75–105; Katherine B. Aaslestad and Karen Hagemann, 'Collaboration, Resistance, and Reform: Experiences and Historiographies of the Napoleonic Wars in Central Europe. 1806 and Its Aftermath: Revisiting the Period of the Napoleonic Wars in German Central European Historiography', *Central European History* 39 (2006): 547–579; Elisabeth Fehrenbach, *Vom Ancien Régime zum Wiener Kongress* (5th edn, Munich, 2008).
3. Hans-Werner Hahn and Helmut Berding, *Reformen, Restauration und Revolution 1806–1848/49* (Stuttgart, 2010), 49–413; Heinrich August Winkler, *Germany: The Long Road West 1789–1933*, vol. 1: 1789–1933 (Oxford, 2006), chapter 2.
4. Historische Kommission bei der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (ed.), *Quellen zu den Reformen in den Rheinbundstaaten* (Munich, 1992–2012).

5. *Baden und Württemberg im Zeitalter Napoleons: Ausstellung des Landes Baden-Württemberg*, 3 vols (Stuttgart, 1987); Veit Veltzke (ed.), *Napoleon: Trikolore und Kaiseradler über Rhein und Weser* (Cologne, 2007); Michael Eissenhauer (ed.), *König Lustik!? Jérôme Bonaparte und der Modellstaat Königreich Westphalen* (Munich, 2008); Bénédicte Savoy (ed.), *Napoleon und Europa: Traum und Trauma* (Munich, 2010).
6. For a recent biographical approach, see Philip Dwyer, *Napoleon: The Path to Power* (Paris, 2008); Alan Forrest, *Napoleon: Life, Legacy and Image. A Biography* (New York, 2011); Jean Tulard, *Napoléon* (Paris, 2011); Philip Dwyer, *Citizen Emperor: Napoleon in Power* (Paris, 2013). See also Jacques-Olivier Boudon, *Le roi Jérôme, frère prodigue de Napoléon (1784–1860)* (Paris, 2008).
7. Philip Dwyer (ed.), *Napoleon and Europe* (Harlow, 2001); Alan Forrest and Peter H. Wilson (eds), *The Bee and the Eagle: Napoleonic France and the End of the Holy Roman Empire, 1806* (Basingstoke, 2009); Claire Gantet and Bernhard Struck, *Révolution, guerre, interférences: 1789–1815* (Villeneuve d'Ascq, 2013). See also Armgard von Reden-Dohna (ed.), *Deutschland und Italien im Zeitalter Napoleons* (Wiesbaden, 1979); Christof Dipper, Wolfgang Schieder and Reiner Schulze (eds), *Napoleonische Herrschaft in Deutschland und Italien – Verwaltung und Justiz* (Berlin, 1995). For a current overview of the Napoleonic era in Europe, see Stuart Woolf, *Napoleon's Integration of Europe* (London, 1991); Michael Broers, *Europe Under Napoleon, 1799–1815* (New York, 1996); Roger Dufraisse and Michel Kerautret, *La France napoléonienne: Aspects extérieurs 1799–1815* (Paris, 1999); Annie Jourdan, *L'empire de Napoléon* (Paris, 2000); Geoffrey Ellis, *The Napoleonic Empire* (Basingstoke, 2003); Alexander Grab, *Napoleon and the Transformation of Europe* (Basingstoke, 2003); Thierry Lentz, *La France et l'Europe de Napoléon: 1804–1814: Nouvelle Histoire du premier empire* (Paris, 2007); Guido Braun, Lutz Klinkhammer, Gabriele Clemens, and Alexander Koller (eds), *Napoleonische Expansionspolitik: Okkupation oder Integration?* (Berlin, 2013).
8. In 1812, the Empire comprised all German territories on the left bank of the Rhine as well as larger parts of present-day Westphalia, present-day Lower Saxony, Bremen, Hamburg, and from here a strip extending to Lübeck. For the Empire in general, see Jacques-Olivier Boudon, *Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire: 1799–1815* (Paris, 2003); Aurélien Lignereux, *L'empire des Français 1799–1815: Histoire de la France contemporaine I* (Paris, 2012). For the Rhineland, see Sabine Graumann, *Französische Verwaltung am Niederrhein: Das Roerdepartement 1798–1814* (Essen, 1990); Michael Rowe, *From Reich to State: The Rhineland in the Revolutionary Age, 1780–1830* (Cambridge, 2003). For the Hanseatic cities, see Burghard Schmidt, *Hamburg im Zeitalter der Französischen Revolution und Napoleons, 1789–1813* (Hamburg, 1998); Helmut Stubbe da Luz, *Okkupanten und Okkupierte: Napoleons Statthalterregimes in den Hansestädten*, 3 vols (Hamburg, 1998); Katherine B. Aaslestad, *Place and Politics: Local Identity, Civic Culture and German Nationalism in North Germany during the Revolutionary Era* (Leiden, 2005).
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as well as numerous smaller states mainly located in present-day Thuringia and present-day Saxony. For a selection of regional overviews, see: Arthur Kleinschmidt, *Geschichte des Königreichs Westfalen* (Gotha, 1893); Charles Schmidt, *Le Grand-Duché de Berg (1806–1813): Etude sur la domination française en Allemagne sous Napoléon I<sup>er</sup>* (Paris, 1905); Walter Demel, *Der bayerische Staatsabsolutismus 1806/08–1817: Staats- und gesellschaftspolitische Motivationen und Hintergründe der Reformära in der ersten Phase des Königreichs Bayern* (Munich, 1983); Paul Sauer, *Napoleons Adler über Württemberg* (Cologne, 1997); Uwe Niedersen (ed.), *Sachsen, Preußen und Napoleon: Europa in der Zeit von 1806–1815* (Dresden, 2013).

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17. See Napoleon's letter to Jérôme dated 15 November 1807, Henri Plon and J. Dumaine (eds), *Correspondance de Napoléon Ier*, vol. 16 (Paris, 1864), 166–167.
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# 6

## Napoleonic Italy: Old and New Trends in Historiography

*Anna Maria Rao*

'No other country except Germany was so affected by Napoleonic rule.'<sup>1</sup> Thus Alexander Grab summed up, in an assessment made some fifteen years ago, the importance of the Napoleonic period in Italian history and the treatment it has received from historians.

For Italian historiography the Napoleonic period was a fundamental stage in the process of modernizing the Italian peninsula. It saw the Empire as a logical continuation of the revolutionary period – as the time of practical realizations, when it became possible to carry through reform projects initiated long before but that Old Regime governments had been unwilling or unable to complete. Even the nationalist historiography of the early twentieth century, for which the period marked a violent and ruinous interruption to an internal process of peaceful and gradual transformation, acknowledged it as having initiated the project for Italian political unification that would be central to the *Risorgimento*. This current also emphasized the role of new legal frameworks in the move towards a uniform state apparatus; the constitution of Year VIII and the same French legal codes and administrative laws being applied everywhere.

Scholarship has stressed the legal and administrative transformations that forged an almost entirely new form of state. In his history of the relations between power and institutions in Italy, Giuseppe Galasso used the formula 'administrative monarchy' to describe it and pointed to the institutional changes effected. These included: the creation of consultative bodies at central and local levels such as the state council on the one hand and communal and provincial councils on the other; the definitive adoption of the 'modern bureaucratic model', with its written rules for the rights and obligations of civil servants, recruitment by merit, remuneration for public duties, specialization and a hierarchical organization – in short, a general rationalization of the administrative process, based on the distinction between the private and public spheres, and on the separation of powers.<sup>2</sup>

The Italian geopolitical space, though it remained fragmented, was profoundly reorganized. In the period 1796–1799, the so-called *Triennio*, a

large proportion of this territory was under republican regimes. There was the Cispadane Republic, which brought together the papal cities of Bologna and Ferrara with the cities of Modena and Reggio Emilia, the domain of the Este family; plus the Cisalpine, Ligurian, Roman, Neapolitan<sup>3</sup> and Luccan Republics. Piedmont and Tuscany were annexed to France. When this network of republics collapsed in 1799 under the onslaught of the Second Coalition and the anti-French revolts (the *insorgenze*), the Italian patriots who took refuge in France responded by resurrecting the project for a single democratic republic.<sup>4</sup> These unitary projects were revived following the return of the French to Italy in 1800, and the assembly of notables convened at Lyon by Napoleon in December 1801 seemed likely to complete the task. But the peninsula remained divided between several states.

Political fragmentation, the dispersal of archives and libraries, the diversity (only then starting to break down) of local situations and administrative languages, and the strong regional dimension of historical scholarship were obstacles to a general history of the Italian peninsula in this period. Important syntheses by Carlo Capra and Stuart Woolf appeared in the 1970s<sup>5</sup> and have only recently been joined by Antonino De Francesco's overview of the political history of Italy under Bonaparte and the *Critical Dictionary of Napoleonic Italy* edited by Luigi Mascilli Migliorini.<sup>6</sup>

There has been no shortage of monographs. A bibliography published in 1971 devoted nearly eighty pages to the Revolutionary and Napoleonic periods.<sup>7</sup> An update to this bibliography for works published between 1970 and 2001, which came out in 2003, contains 110 pages for the decade 1789–1799 and 170 pages for the period 1800–1815.<sup>8</sup> These figures reflect not only the upsurge in output of monographs, a development encouraged by the bicentenary, but also the shift of interest away from what is defined as the Jacobin phase (1796–1799) and towards the Napoleonic period (1800–1815). More than once it has been observed that these dates should not be considered as sharp cut-offs and that it is time to stop viewing the *Triennio*, on one side, as a quintessentially political phase and the Napoleonic era, on the other, as when administrative practices triumphed. 'If politics was far from being forgotten after 1799, the republicans of 1796–1799 were far from being merely "hot heads" and also engaged in the new administrative practices.'<sup>9</sup>

The trend in studies of Napoleonic Italy can be observed thanks to a number of publications that have reviewed the state of historiography and identified future research topics. Two major conferences were held in the 1970s. The first, in 1974, examined certain fundamental aspects of the political, economic and social history of the period, including the abolition of feudalism, the peasant question, the cadastre, grain price movements, legislation on working conditions and the poor, prefectural recruitment and membership of electoral colleges in the Kingdom of Italy. Jacques Godechot addressed the question of the relationship between originality and imitation in Italian institutions with respect to the French model – this question

became a classic but has come in for increasing criticism in recent studies.<sup>10</sup> The second conference (1977), organized to celebrate the 180<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Italian tricolor flag, also treated a wide range of topics and problems: state-society relations, social changes, *beni nazionali* sales, property structures, formation of the bourgeoisie, brigandage and peasant revolts, medicine and hospitals, the universities, science, cultural institutions and archives and libraries.<sup>11</sup>

These conferences clearly refuted Jacques Godechot's criticisms of Italian historiography for its insufficient attention to economic and social history.<sup>12</sup> On the contrary, Italian historical studies in the 1970s were largely dominated by attempts to break free of the history of ideas associated with Benedetto Croce. The questions addressed were intensely topical: to understand how the Italian nation state was formed; to study the characteristics of its ruling classes; the role of the masses; the north-south divide; the economic foundations; and the political role of the bourgeoisie. The Napoleonic period was presented as an essential laboratory for understanding the origins of the Risorgimento and the Italian state and of contemporary Italy in general, and was seen as a key historical turning point. In his introduction to the proceedings from the 1977 conference, Marino Berengo placed the accent not only on administrative transformations but also on economic and social change. In 1791, in the plain of Reggio Emilia, the Church owned 20.8, per cent of the land, but by 1814 that proportion had fallen to 6.88 per cent. Similar figures were later obtained for Tuscany, Lombardy and the Kingdom of Naples.<sup>13</sup> But as Berengo pointed out, the decline in Church landholding was not accompanied by a reduction in the clergy's role in Italian life. Thus, in the case of Reggio Emilia, the number of clerics engaged in primary education, far from falling, actually increased.<sup>14</sup>

The 2003 bibliography lists the numerous conferences held between 1970 and 2001 and the studies published over the same period. Conferences and studies examine the same topics, at different spatial levels – village, town, region, department or regional state. *The Critical Dictionary of Napoleonic Italy* published in 2011 provides an even more significant point of comparison with the research trends of the 1970s. The dictionary entries reveal no innovation in terms of topics: the administration; legal codes and the constitution; the economy; the church; events; society; the arts; towns; and so forth. The most original topic with respect to the earlier period was Napoleon's presence in Italian film.

The questions of historical interpretation have also remained basically the same. Carlo Zaghi, historian of the Cisalpine Republic and Kingdom of Italy, laid the emphasis on the 'birth of a modern state'.<sup>15</sup> Yet Melchiorre Roberti had already used 'formation of a modern state' as the subtitle for his earlier study of Milan the 'Napoleonic Capital' (1946–1947). While deploring the lack of independence caused by the 'unbending Napoleonic will', Roberti also stressed the 'grandiosity of the construction erected by Bonaparte and

his associates'. 'Much of the legislation of the period, in both private and public law, remains today ... a fundamental element of our public law ... to which Italian jurists and politicians made a large contribution.'<sup>16</sup> These aspects are also emphasized in recent studies on Milan and Lombardy by Alain Pillepich, who repeats another leitmotif of interpretations of this period, that of the disparity between the scale of administrative transformations ('birth of the modern state') and the limited extent of economic and social changes (an 'imperfect revolution').<sup>17</sup>

Liberty and authority, originality and imitation, consensus and resistance, assimilation and integration, are typical pairings that recur in studies of this period. Italian historians have long felt it necessary to emphasize the role local ruling classes played in implementing Napoleonic reforms. This was a reaction against the Francocentric and top down perspective adopted in the early twentieth century in the work of historians like Pingaud on Milan and Rambaud on Naples.<sup>18</sup> At the same time, if Italian historiography delivered a much more positive verdict on the Napoleonic period than that seen in the historiography of other European countries, the current trend in both Italian and foreign studies is towards a revised assessment of the real effectiveness of the, so-called, process of modernization, by showing its contradictions and the burden it placed on the population. A point made by all concerns the strongly contrasting results of reforms in different Italian states, which are usually separated into three zones: the departments directly annexed to France; the satellite states; and the two large kingdoms of Italy and Naples.

In the case of Parma, for example, Francis Pomponi has pointed to the blurred line running between modernization, with its civilizing dimension, and colonization.<sup>19</sup> Studies of Piedmont, more than any, have tended to interpret the French presence in terms of an inability to understand the differences in mentalities and traditions of the annexed lands, leading to resistance and to a non-existent or weak consensus among the middle classes and lower social strata. Michael Broers has interpreted the revolts as an opposition to the state's modernizing action, particularly its repressive aspects, associated with the strengthening of the army and the police.<sup>20</sup> Lutz Klinkhammer has attempted to measure adherence to the new Napoleonic order in the Piedmont departments compared with the Belgian departments by a quantitative and typological analysis of the crimes dealt with by the courts, and concludes for the effectiveness of the new machinery of repression. The increase in rural theft and crimes against property are to be interpreted as forms of anti-Napoleonic resistance.<sup>21</sup>

Other recent studies tend to play down the impact of modernization, including in the case of the Kingdom of Naples, where the traditional view of the reforming action of Joseph Bonaparte and Joachim Murat was that it had been particularly effective compared with the faltering and inconsistent policy of the Bourbons. Pasquale Villani has consistently noted the



ambivalence that characterized the French presence, with radical reforming action on one side, war and conquest on the other.<sup>22</sup> Of late he has accorded less importance than in his earlier studies to the Napoleonic reforms of the French decade (1806–1815) in Naples,<sup>23</sup> focusing instead on their limits and costs.<sup>24</sup> According to the American historian John Marino the gulf between politics and society grew wider. ‘Reform from above is not change, but imposition of external will and alien categories upon the many foreign cultures below.’<sup>25</sup> The British historian John Davis has also expressed strong reservations about Napoleonic policy in Naples. ‘Like the Bourbons before them, the French were also to concentrate primarily on administrative problems: in economic and social terms the experience of the *decennio* was to be more superficial and contradictory.’ Davis does not hesitate to define the relationship between Naples and France as one of colonial subordination.<sup>26</sup> In his recent history of southern Italy (1780–1860) he repeats his criticism of the vision of Naples as a model for the Empire’s civilizing mission. Yes, the Kingdom of Naples underwent radical changes that can fairly be defined as modernization – such as the abolition of feudalism, the reform of taxation, justice, welfare, education and the introduction of codes of laws – but, Davis argues, these changes should be viewed in the context of the long-term crisis of the Old Regime rather than as the result of French ambitions.<sup>27</sup>

The fact remains that the abolition of feudalism was particularly momentous in the Kingdom of Naples. This is because the great majority of communities – more than 1,600 out of a total of 2,000, representing more than three million inhabitants – were under seigneurial jurisdiction. As John Davis also observes, ‘the law of August 1806 demonstrated that it was one thing to abolish feudalism where it no longer existed, but something quite different in Naples where it was a pervasive and deeply contentious reality.’<sup>28</sup> The abolition of feudalism had long been debated among Neapolitan reformers. Indeed, Jacques Rambaud acknowledged that on this point ‘national ingenuity’ had actually anticipated ‘French ingenuity’.<sup>29</sup> Certainly, the impact of the anti-feudal laws on noble families and on the populations varied greatly between different parts of the kingdom.<sup>30</sup>

The contradictions, exchanges and hybridizations have also been highlighted for the northern territories, grouped together in the Italian Republic that later became the Kingdom of Italy, where the Napoleonic experiment proved more stable and longer lasting. In the Italian Republic (1802–1805), the vice-president Francesco Melzi d’Eril attempted to strike a balance between the Austrian and French models, setting up administrations in the departments alongside the prefects, though these administrations were abolished in the Kingdom of Italy.<sup>31</sup> Alexander Grab has always adhered to the modernizing interpretation of the Napoleonic governments in northern Italy, but he too stresses the onerous nature of the new state, especially in its military aspects. He identifies conscription as ‘the most controversial and the most contested program imposed by the state.’<sup>32</sup>

As in France and elsewhere, popular resistance took the form of draft evasion, desertion, refusal to pay taxes or even to submit to civil registration.<sup>33</sup> Rebellion (and repression) was particularly violent in Calabria, in the Kingdom of Naples.<sup>34</sup> Studies emphasize the harsh repression by Napoleonic governments, who dealt severely with armed rebellion and desertion through policing and the courts, including the use of military tribunals.<sup>35</sup> But research has also shown the importance of the, so-called, policy of amalgamation for ensuring that these governments had the collaboration of the old and new nobility, the middle classes, and members of the civil service and military whose recruitment was based on merit rather than the privilege of birth. Without minimizing the resistance they met, the Napoleonic governments did not owe their longevity and effectiveness solely to the force of the military commissions, tribunals and army of occupation. They also depended on the collaboration of erstwhile activists in the republican movements, who would contribute to constructing the new state as civil servants, administrators and soldiers, even as teachers and publishers; and on the unequivocal support of all those who saw in the new state a guarantee of law and order. Even military service was not experienced solely as a burden but that it represented an instrument for forming citizens and, above all, a source of socially respectable employment. The strengthening of the state machinery, centralization and division of the territory into departments, all ran up against tradition and privilege yet, at the same time, they created numerous job opportunities and an administration that was closer to the citizen.<sup>36</sup> Of course, as a corrective to any nationalist vision, it should be recalled that in France too, the costs of modernization and the burden of the state were borne by the population and provoked resistance and uprisings.

The relationship between the Napoleonic governments and the Italian elites was not solely characterized by hostility and incomprehension, but also by exchange, communication and dialogue. All the more so because the men active in the political, administrative and military fields at this time shared a common cultural background, nurtured on the same French and Italian sources, like Machiavelli and Montesquieu, Beccaria, Voltaire and Filangieri. At varying levels of involvement their lived experience of the Revolution had been the same. As for Napoleon's own approach to politics, whether in Milan, Rome or Naples, his search for consensus never extended beyond the elites.<sup>37</sup> For the ordinary people he only ever envisaged a policy of repressive control. As he wrote to his brother Joseph in Naples, 'Only through a salutary terror will you rule the Italian populace.'<sup>38</sup>

A few recent Italian biographies of Napoleon have reverted to a generally positive assessment of his action in the peninsula, emphasizing the strong continuities between the Revolution, the Consulate and the Empire. Despite the elimination of every vestige of popular sovereignty, and despite the ascendancy of the executive over the legislative branches, men had been

transformed from 'subjects into citizens'.<sup>39</sup> Vittorio Criscuolo, while emphasizing the authoritarian, even despotic, nature of the government set up in May 1804, firmly rejects any analogy between the Empire and the dictatorships of the twentieth century and stresses the importance of the revolutionary legacy in Bonapartism.<sup>40</sup> The continuities between the Revolution and the Empire are also documented by Luigi Mascilli Migliorini.<sup>41</sup> Both authors consider not only the contribution of Napoleonic policy to Italian modernization but also the contribution made by Italy to the imperial vision, and highlight the particularities of the relationship between France and Italy within the Empire compared with other European countries. It was thanks to Bonaparte that Italy played a central role in the foreign policy of France under the Directory. And it was thanks to Italy that Bonaparte was able to create his image as a liberating and conquering general. The Italian question played a crucial role in the political life of France and in the transition from Directory to Consulate.<sup>42</sup>

In Italy, as Vittorio Criscuolo observes, Napoleon found an imperial model – the mythical model of the Roman Empire – to which he could claim to be the heir. By giving his child the title of King of Rome, he made this city, liberated from the temporal power of the pope, his second capital.<sup>43</sup> Luigi Mascilli reminds us of the power that mythical references to history, from classical antiquity to Charlemagne, held for Napoleon. Both authors stress the key role of the relationship with the church and the importance of religious questions. The ambiguity of Napoleonic religious policy could be seen in the limited freedom accorded to Jewish worship, the declaration of Catholicism as the official state religion in the constitution of the Italian Republic in 1802, and the Concordat of 1803 that was more favorable to the church than the French Concordat of 1801.<sup>44</sup>

The state of Rome, which from 10 June 1809 was annexed to the French Empire (as the department of the Tiber and Trasimeno), exercised a particularly powerful attraction on Napoleon and his agents. At the same time, the abolition of religious orders, the oath of loyalty to the new government and the deporting of refractory priests, could not but make a deep impact in the papal territories, as did the forcible removal of the pope himself from the Vatican. Nonetheless, *pace* Broers, Napoleonic policy in Rome was not a war against God.<sup>45</sup> In this instance too interactions and transfers proved particularly effective. Indeed, the papal power may have been a model for Napoleon.<sup>46</sup> The cultural milieu of the Italian cities, from Venice to Milan and Rome to Naples, was deeply attractive for French academy members, artists and musicians. And although resistance was not lacking, it was far less widespread and consequential than in 1799, either in Rome or Naples.

In Naples, moreover, following Joseph Bonaparte's departure for Spain in 1808, the government of Joachim Murat made strenuous efforts to secure the cooperation of the best elements and of the most competent men in the various branches of the administration. Murat went so far as to italianize

his name, from Joachim to Gioacchino, and in 1815 joined a war for Italian independence that led him to his death.<sup>47</sup> In the early nineteenth century the historian of public finance Lodovico Bianchini, who was by no means indulgent in his view of the Napoleonic period, noted that the government's reforming enterprise in Naples during the French *Décennie* had been possible through the force 'not only of arms but of opinions'.<sup>48</sup>

Other topics and aspects to have received attention from researchers include: the reorganization and reinforcement of the army, even in territories like Liguria with no clear military tradition;<sup>49</sup> the effects of the new family law on the lives of men, women and children;<sup>50</sup> the application in Italian cities of the new legislation on cemeteries;<sup>51</sup> cultural life, the role of intellectuals in administrative, political and social life, the creation of a public education system and reform of the universities;<sup>52</sup> the transformation of the nobility; and the new urban hierarchies produced by political change.<sup>53</sup> It was during the Napoleonic era that Milan, from being the mere capital of a duchy, developed as a major European political and cultural capital and the center of Italian political life.

Common to all these works is a greater attention than in the previous generation's historical writing to the legacy of the Napoleonic period in Italian political life. Under this heading are national political culture, constitutionalism, aspirations to political representation and independence, the increasing politicization of Catholicism, the enduring references to Bonapartism and Muratism in nineteenth-century political movements, the birth of a weapons culture and with it an idea of heroism attainable by anyone regardless of origin.<sup>54</sup>

Finally, a relatively recent development has been a renewed interest for treating Napoleonic Italy from a geopolitical perspective, as a country oriented more to the Mediterranean than to central Europe, the pivot of a Mediterranean policy that also drew upon the information and advice that the emperor solicited from Italian patriots. Among the latter was Matteo Galdi, author of one of the most audacious projects for diplomatic renewal in the *Triennio*.<sup>55</sup> His idea for a federation of the sister republics and Mediterranean countries with which to oppose England and the 'northern powers' was based on a vision of a global geopolitical equilibrium between the European countries and their colonies, which, as he wrote to the Dutch Secretary of State Van der Goës in 1806, could alone 'ensure world peace'.<sup>56</sup> He is one of the most striking and significant examples of the transformation in thinking about frontiers and Europe in Italy and the Mediterranean during the Napoleonic period.<sup>57</sup>

By comparison with studies from the second half of the twentieth century, more recent works on Napoleonic Italy – or rather on *Italies* in the plural, as Napoleon himself said<sup>58</sup> – have not significantly changed either themes or subjects. Where they do differ, however, is in their methods and approaches, and in the questions they ask. Revolutionary and Napoleonic

France is no longer treated as the model against which to measure how closely or faithfully Italy came by imitation. The study of the transition from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century is no longer fixated on the questions of origins – the origins of the nation, of the bourgeoisie and of the administrative state, for example. Instead of reasoning in terms of models to be applied or imitated, with varying degrees of originality, studies seek an understanding of exchanges, transfers and hybridization. Now that we all accept what Alexander Grab has called ‘the Janus Face of Napoleon’s Rule: Reform and Exploitation’, the debate is no longer over liberty versus authority.<sup>59</sup> The formation of the state and the administration remains a central issue for research and interpretation in Italian historiography, as in the English-language literature consistently attentive to the Italian case and the ‘New Napoleonic History’.<sup>60</sup> The studies in question are no longer concerned exclusively with centralization and local powers. The introduction of prefects on 26 January 1802 in the Italian Republic, and of intendants on 8 August 1806 in the Kingdom of Naples,<sup>61</sup> did indeed impose a network of central administrative control that reduced the role of local representation. But the focus in current work is tending to shift to social spaces and territorial control, and to the mobility and identity of individuals. In place of the state–resistance duality, an attempt is made to recreate the multiple possibilities opened up to individuals and groups for establishing relations with the administration, and through which they defined the limits to their actions. The path – or rather the paths – to modernization, were subject to a whole series of tensions, exchanges and encounters between pressures from above and pressures from below, and between central and local authorities.<sup>62</sup> Through this interplay were constructed new spaces and new systems for the identification and representation of citizens.<sup>63</sup> From these standpoints too, however, the Napoleonic period emerges as a crucial phase in Italian history. It left profound traces that the governments restored in 1815 were unable to eradicate.

## Notes

1. Alexander Grab, ‘From the French Revolution to Napoleon’, in *Italy in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. John A. Davis (Oxford, 2000), 25–50.
2. Giuseppe Galasso, *Potere e istituzioni in Italia: Dalla caduta dell’Impero romano ad oggi* (Turin, 1974), 161–167.
3. The title of Parthenopean Republic, widely used in scholarship, is incorrect.
4. Anna Maria Rao, *Esuli: L’emigrazione politica italiana in Francia (1792–1802)* (Naples, 1992).
5. Carlo Capra, *L’età rivoluzionaria e napoleonica in Italia 1796–1815* (Turin, 1978); Stuart John Woolf, ‘La storia politica e sociale’, in *Storia d’Italia*, III, *Dal primo Settecento all’Unità* (Turin, 1973), 5–508, republished as *Il Risorgimento italiano*, 2 vols (Turin, 1981); idem, *A History of Italy 1700–1860: The Social Constraints of Political Change* (London, 1979).

6. Antonino De Francesco, *L'Italia di Bonaparte: Politica, statualità e nazione nella penisola tra due rivoluzioni, 1796–1821* (Turin, 2011); Luigi Mascilli Migliorini (ed.), *Italia napoleonica: Dizionario critico* (Turin, 2011).
7. Vittorio Emanuele Giuntella, 'La Rivoluzione francese e l'Impero napoleonico', in *Bibliografia dell'età del Risorgimento in onore di A. M. Ghisalberti* (Florence, 1971), I, 77–118; Vittorio Emanuele Giuntella-Carlo Zaghi, 'L'Italia nel sistema napoleonico', *ibid.*, 389–445.
8. Anna Maria Rao and Massimo Cattaneo, 'L'Italia e la rivoluzione francese 1789–1799', in *Bibliografia dell'età del Risorgimento 1970–2001* (Florence, 2003), vol. I, 135–262; Renata De Lorenzo, 'L'età napoleonica', *ibid.* 445–643.
9. Anna Maria Rao, 'L'expérience révolutionnaire italienne', *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 313 (1998): 387–407; *idem*, 'Temi e tendenze della recente storiografia sul Mezzogiorno nell'età rivoluzionaria e napoleonica', in *Il Mezzogiorno e la Basilicata fra l'età giacobina e il decennio francese*, ed. Antonio Cestaro and Antonio Lerra, (Venosa, 1992), 41–85; *idem*, 'Mezzogiorno e rivoluzione: trent'anni di storiografia', *Studi storici* 37 (1996): 981–1041.
10. Armando Saitta (ed.), *Colloquio internazionale sulla storia dell'Italia giacobina e napoleonica, Annuario dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per l'età moderna e contemporanea, XXIII–XXIV (1971–1972)* (Rome, 1975).
11. Marino Berengo and Sergio Romagnoli (eds), *Reggio e i Territori Estensi dall'Antico Regime all'Età Napoleonica*, 2 vols (Parma, 1979).
12. Anna Maria Rao, 'La Société des études robespierristes, les AHRF et l'espace historiographique italien', *Un siècle d'études révolutionnaires 1907–2007, Annales historiques de la révolution française* 353 (2008): 275–293; *idem*, *Lumi riforme rivoluzione: Percorsi storiografici* (Rome, 2011), 138–141.
13. For an update, see Francesco Mineccia, 'Economia', in Migliorini, *Italia napoleonica*, 191–218.
14. Berengo, in *Reggio*, 655–656.
15. Carlo Zaghi, *Il Direttorio francese e la Repubblica cisalpina: Con una appendice di documenti inediti*, vol. I, *La nascita di uno stato moderno*, vol. II, *Battaglie costituzionali e colpi di stato* (Rome, 1992). See also the same author's *L'Italia di Napoleone dalla Cisalpina al Regno*, 2 vols (Turin, 1986) and *Napoleone e l'Italia*, ed. Aldo Di Biasio (Naples, 2001).
16. Melchiorre Roberti, *Milano capitale napoleonica: La formazione di uno Stato moderno 1796–1814*, 3 vols (Milan, 1946–1947), vol. 3, 547.
17. Alain Pillepich, *Milan capitale napoléonienne 1800–1814*, Préface de Jean Tulard (Paris, 2001), 277; see the same author's *Napoléon et les Italiens: République italienne et Royaume d'Italie (1802–1814)* (Le Mesnil-sur-l'Estrée, 2003).
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20. Michael Broers, 'The parochial revolution: 1799 and the counter-revolution in Italy', *Renaissance and Modern Studies* 33 (1989): 159–173; *idem*, 'The Police and the Padroni: Italian Notabili, French Gendarmes and the origins of the Centralized State in Napoleonic Italy', *European History Quarterly*, 26 (1996), 331–353; *idem*, *Napoleonic Imperialism and the Savoyard Monarchy 1773–1821: State Building in Piedmont* (Lewiston/Queenston/Lampeter, 1997); *idem*, *The Napoleonic Empire in*

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21. Lutz Klinkhammer, 'Domare il citoyen: La politica francese nei dipartimenti di lunga annessione (1798–1814)', in *La ricerca tedesca sul Risorgimento italiano: Temi e prospettive*, ed. Andrea Ciampani and Lutz Klinkhammer, *Rassegna storica del Risorgimento*, 88 (2001): 9–26; Anna Maria Rao, 'Cittadini o amministratori? Alcune considerazioni comparative sull'Europa napoleonica', *ibid.*, 195–204.
  22. Pasquale Villani, 'Il decennio francese', in *Napoli 1799–1815: Dalla repubblica alla monarchia amministrativa*, ed. Anna Maria Rao and Pasquale Villani (Naples, 1995), 181–184.
  23. On this designation, see Anna Maria Rao, 'Il "Decennio francese": appunti su una denominazione', in *Due francesi a Napoli*, ed. Rosanna Cioffi, Renata de Lorenzo, Aldo Di Biasio, Luigi Mascilli Migliorini, Anna Maria Rao (Naples, 2008), 177–194.
  24. Pasquale Villani, 'Bilancio storiografico', in *L'Italia nell'età napoleonica* (Milan, 2–5 October 1996), Rome, Istituto per la storia del Risorgimento italiano, 1997, 19–35; *idem*, 'Il Regno di Napoli nella crisi rivoluzionaria: dal riformismo illuminato al giacobinismo', in *Il Mezzogiorno d'Italia e il Mediterraneo nel triennio rivoluzionario 1796–1799*, ed. Francesco Barra (Avellino, 2001), 229–240. Taking the same approach, Costanza D'Elia and Raffaella Salvemini (eds), *Riforma e struttura: L'impatto della dominazione napoleonica nel Mezzogiorno fra breve e lungo periodo* (Naples, 2008).
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  26. John A. Davis, 'Naples during the French "decennio": a problem unresolved?', in *Villes et territoire pendant la période napoléonienne (France et Italie)* (Rome, 1987), 327–354. See also *idem*, 'The impact of French rule in the Kingdom of Naples (1806–1815)', *Ricerche storiche* 1990, 367–407; 'The Mezzogiorno and Modernization: changing Contours of Public and Private during the French Decennio', in *Fra storia e storiografia: Scritti in onore di Pasquale Villani*, ed. Paolo Macry and Angelo Massafra (Bologna, 1994), 691–708.
  27. John A. Davis, *Naples and Napoleon: Southern Italy and the European Revolution 1780–1860* (Oxford, 2006), 161–163.
  28. Davis, *Naples*, 235.
  29. Rambaud, *Naples sous Joseph Bonaparte*, 403.
  30. Anna Maria Rao, 'The Feudal Question in the Kingdom of Naples', in *The Napoleonic Empire and the New European Political Culture, War, Culture and Society, 1750–1850*, ed. Michael Broers, Peter Hicks and Agustín Guimerá (New York, 2012), 227–240.
  31. Francesca Sofia, 'L'esperienza politico-amministrativa della Repubblica italiana', in *L'affaire Ceroni: Ordine militare e cospirazione politica nella Milano di Bonaparte*, ed. Stefano Levati (Milan, 2005), 31–54.
  32. Alexander Grab, 'Army, State and Society: Conscription and Desertion in Napoleonic Italy (1802–1814)', *Journal of Modern History* 67 (1995): 28; see also *idem*, 'State Power, Brigandage and Rural Resistance in Napoleonic Italy', *European History Quarterly* 25 (1995): 39–70.

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36. On these aspects, Livio Antonielli, *I prefetti dell'Italia napoleonica: Repubblica e Regno d'Italia* (Bologna, 1983); Franco Della Peruta, *Esercito e società nell'Italia napoleonica: Dalla Cisalpina al Regno d'Italia* (Milan, 1988); Anna Maria Rao (ed.), *Esercito e società nell'età rivoluzionaria e napoleonica* (Naples, 1990); Frederick C. Schneid, *Soldiers of Napoleon's Kingdom of Italy: Army, State and Society 1800–1815* (Boulder, Oxford, 1995); Stefano Levati (ed.), *Ordine militare e cospirazione politica nella Milano di Bonaparte* (Milano, Guerini, 2005); idem, *La "buona azienda negli eserciti prepara la vittoria...e genera l'economia": Appalti, commissari e appaltatori nell'Italia napoleonica* (Soveria Mannelli, 2010); Maria Canella (ed.), *Armi e nazione: Dalla Repubblica Cisalpina al Regno d'Italia (1797–1814)* (Milan, 2009); Renata De Lorenzo (ed.), *Ordine e disordine: Amministrazione e mondo militare nel Decennio francese, Atti del Sesto seminario di studi "Decennio francese" (1806–1815)* (Naples, 2012).
37. See Livio Antonielli, 'L'amministrazione nell'Italia rivoluzionaria e napoleonica. I tre momenti di un grande progetto', in *L'Italia nell'età napoleonica*, 193–220.
38. Letter of 6 March 1806, in Vincent Haegele (ed.), *Napoléon et Joseph: Correspondance intégrale, 1784–1818* (Paris, 2007), 165.
39. Marco Meriggi, *Gli stati italiani prima dell'Unità: Una storia istituzionale* (Bologna, 2002), 32.
40. Vittorio Criscuolo, *Napoleone* (Bologna, 1997; new edn, 2009), especially 7 and 54.
41. Luigi Mascilli Migliorini, *Napoleone* (Rome, 2001).
42. See Rao, *Esuli*.
43. Criscuolo, *Napoleone*, 159–160.
44. See also Marina Caffiero, 'Le problème religieux', *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 334 (2003): 139–154; idem, 'Chiesa e vita religiosa', in Migliorini, *Italia napoleonica*, 91–118; Michael Broers, *The Politics of Religion in Napoleonic Italy: The war against God, 1801–1814* (London and New York, 2002); idem, 'How Many Divisions has the Pope? The Politics of Religion in Napoleonic Italy', in *Stato e Chiesa nel Mezzogiorno napoleonico*, ed. Costanza D'Elia (Naples, 2011), 393–408; Marina Caffiero, Veronica Granata, Mario Tosti (eds), *L'Impero e l'organizzazione del consenso: La dominazione napoleonica negli Stati Romani, 1809–1814* (Soveria Mannelli, 2013).
45. Broers, *Politics of Religion*. Against this thesis, see David Armando, "'Rendre les révolutions utiles": Politica e religione tra la Repubblica romana e la Roma di Napoleone', in Caffiero, *L'impero*, 111–135.
46. *Ibid.*, 135.
47. Renata De Lorenzo, *Murat* (Rome, 2011).
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52. Gianluca Albergoni, *I mestieri delle lettere tra istituzioni e mercato: Vivere e scrivere a Milano nella prima metà dell'Ottocento* (Milan, 2006); Alexander Grab, 'Public Education in Napoleonic Italy', in *Napoleon and his Empire Europe 1804–1814*, ed. Philip Dwyer and Alan Forrest (Basingstoke, 2007), 149–164; Anna Maria Rao (ed.), *Cultura e lavoro intellettuale: istituzioni, saperi e professioni nel Decennio francese* (Naples, 2009); Angelo Bianchi (ed.), *L'istruzione in Italia tra Sette e Ottocento: Lombardia, Veneto, Umbria* (Brescia, 2007); idem, *L'istruzione in Italia tra Sette e Ottocento: Da Milano a Napoli: casi regionali e tendenze nazionali, I-Studi, II-Carte storiche* (Brescia, 2012).
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## **Part II**

# **Re-Defining Imperial Order: The Ibero-Atlantic Area**

# 7

## Against the Grain: Portugal and Its Empire in the Face of Napoleonic Invasions

*Lucia Maria Bastos Pereira das Neves*

Writing in 1846, Caetano Lopes de Moura, by birth a subject of the Portuguese Empire, expressed his deep admiration for the French emperor in his *Histoire de Napoléon* – a biography in which the glorious events of the past were celebrated according to a certain model of nineteenth-century historiography.<sup>1</sup> The most puzzling thing is that the author, who came from a modest social milieu, was in fact of *metis* or mixed-race origin, born in 1790 in Bahia, Portuguese America. At the time of the book's publication he had been living in France for quite some time. Relating the Battle of Wagram he mentions that he 'was present at this unforgettable battle as a surgeon-major in the Portuguese Legion'. In his short account of meeting Napoleon at Ebersdorf he notes enthusiastically that 'his eyes were so full of life that anyone who looked into them was obliged to lower their own to the ground, such was the fire given off'. The enthusiasm is still more manifest when describing the fall of the French emperor: 'The great man has fallen ... but not really brought down from the eminent position he held and will continue to hold in history ... he has kept all his glory, all his genius, and all his moral greatness.' Caetano Lopes de Moura never went back to Brazil and spent the rest of his life in France. He died in 1860, after a lifetime dominated by two great figures, Napoleon and Pedro II, Emperor of Brazil.<sup>2</sup>

The example of Lopes de Moura is suggestive of the powerful fascination that Bonaparte exercised on a number of Luso-Brazilian intellectuals and politicians and, through them, on Portugal and its empire. By the profound change he produced in the histories of France, of Europe and its colonies – redrawing the political map, introducing the *Code Civil* and overthrowing several dynasties – Napoleon created the archetype of the modern hero.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, his actions also had distinctive repercussions in the Iberian empires, including that of Portugal, which were receptive to the broader context of the Old Regime crisis or an age of revolutions.<sup>4</sup>

In the Luso-Brazilian world, the difficult period of the French invasions (1807–1814) gave rise to contrasting representations and opinions concerning Napoleon and Imperial France. These representations, intended variously to

glorify or denigrate the past, to forge an image of the emperor as hero or demon, are essential objects of historical enquiry when, as Roger Chartier explains, they seek to confer on facts a meaning such as they possessed or were deemed to possess.<sup>5</sup> For those alive at the time, these representations and the attitudes they engendered indicate primarily the traps the period set for their memories of the events they lived through. For the historian today, on the other hand, they can also mark the stages in the Portuguese empire's transition, during this period of global Atlantic confrontation, from the Old Regime to a particular form of modernity, culminating with the redefinition of sovereignty between Lisbon and Rio de Janeiro in the 1820s.<sup>6</sup>

On 30 November 1807, General Jean-Andoche Junot described to Bonaparte his first impressions of Lisbon. He had entered the city at eight that morning and 'the prince regent, formerly most unsure over the course to take, had left for Brazil as soon as he learned that France had declared war'. In his correspondence Junot made another show of his deep disappointment that 'the object of so much fatigue and so many hardships of all kinds' – referring to Dom João – had escaped when so nearly within reach.<sup>7</sup> The general's disappointment, like his concern to justify himself to the emperor, is obvious; so too is that the sight of their sovereign fleeing was unprecedented for the Portuguese people and constituted an extraordinary event in the annals of the 'world we have lost'.<sup>8</sup>

The monarch's flight and the successive French invasions (Junot in 1807, Soult in 1809, then Masséna in 1810) caused political representations in Portugal to oscillate between contradictory sentiments. On the one hand there was the sense of political orphanhood caused by the prince abandoning his subjects; on the other, the hope of salvation from the 'claws of the hungry tyrant', that is, Napoleon, but which in the sensibility then prevailing also required the presence and action of a sovereign. For one of the fundamental traits of Old Regime political culture – at least in its Iberian variant – was that it retained a fundamentally pact-based vision of a contractual relationship between king and kingdom with rights and duties for each side.<sup>9</sup> The sovereign was the major source of justice and from him emanated the empire, appointments and privileges. By fleeing to Brazil, the Portuguese monarchy had broken the sacred pact and thereby sparked deep dissatisfaction. This was the price the Portuguese Royal court paid to preserve intact the imperial sovereignty of which it considered itself to be the repository.<sup>10</sup>

The uncertainties of the situation were recorded, with the slight exaggeration of a courtier close to the prince regent, the memoirist and economist Acúrsio das Neves, in his account of Dom Joao's conduct when he left Portugal: 'He wanted to speak but he couldn't; he wanted to move but, in a tremble, he couldn't manage a single step, he was on the edge of the abyss, and in his imagination the future appeared as dark and uncertain as the ocean upon which he was about to venture.'<sup>11</sup> By depicting the monarchy

as a family, with the father-like figure of the king at its head, indissolubly linked to the nation, the author was being true to Old Regime principles and acknowledging the unique importance of the sovereign's physical presence among his subjects.

Other monarchs of peripheral kingdoms had, it is true, sought refuge in their dominions from the Napoleonic onslaught, as in the case of the kings of Piedmont and Naples.<sup>12</sup> But Dom João was the first European sovereign to cross the Atlantic. In this way Portugal, a second-rank European power, managed to keep its sovereignty intact throughout this period, albeit exercised from the other side of the Atlantic by the regent, son of the queen who went mad in 1792. Although Old Regime structures were largely retained, this solution nonetheless represented the application of an original conception of empire, one elaborated several years earlier and that necessitated a new administrative logic.<sup>13</sup> But, while the territory of the former European kingdom would soon be incorporated, the reaction to this unfamiliar situation was a rising tide of 'melancholic and bewildered complaint from the people'.<sup>14</sup>

The departure and absence of the sovereign led to the creation of a regency council in Portugal, composed of representatives of the nobility, the clergy and the judiciary. Strict instructions set out its main lines of action. Basically, its orders were to keep the kingdom at peace and, in particular, to supply the French troops with everything they needed in the hope of maintaining good relations with Bonaparte. This was the position adhered to until the news arrived that Dom João had declared war on France on 1 May 1808 in the *Manifesto ou exposição justificativa do procedimento da Corte de Portugal a respeito da França*, drawn up by Rodrigo de Sousa Coutinho, who was once again minister and secretary of state for war and foreign affairs. Besides expressing an unshakeable loyalty to their British ally this document broke off relations with France and declared 'nul and void' the treaties that the French had forced the Portuguese to sign.<sup>15</sup>

Among the monarch's subjects there were some, like Acúrsio das Neves quoted earlier, ready to praise the regent for his 'great and fine resolve', maintaining that this was how kings became the true defenders of their people and saviors of the homeland. By and large, however, a completely different vision dominated the images associated with these events. They were a 'disorderly flight', an act of cowardice by the government, wrote later the liberal José Liberato Freire de Carvalho.<sup>16</sup> According to another refugee in London, who had heard 'words of blasphemy and despair' from the people of Lisbon who felt as though 'abandoned in the hands of the French', the course of action taken 'looked like an escape from a house on fire'.<sup>17</sup>

Initially, however, the arrival of the French in Portugal was cloaked in the guise of protection and friendship. France at this time was considered Europe's most polished and civilized nation, and the French occupation of Portugal gave hope to the educated sections of Portuguese society, who saw

in it a possibility for social change. Similarly, for the merchant elites, closer ties with France were an opportunity to shake off the control the English had long exercised through the commercial treaties and that were being targeted by French propaganda.<sup>18</sup> As a result General Junot appeared as a protector. He was met by a deputation comprising figures from the regency and liberal-minded men with links to the Masonic Order, who were eager to form an alliance.<sup>19</sup>

The other side of the picture, however, is the devastation that the invasions produced in the country. After pillaging and destruction came starvation and epidemics caused by the ruin of agriculture and animal husbandry in every region and from which the repercussions were felt for years to come. Similarly, where manufacturing activity had developed by the late eighteenth century it was harmed by the economic disruption of the kingdom and by the loss of foreign trade that followed the opening of the Brazilian ports and the signing of treaties in Brazil in 1810 giving even more advantageous terms to England. In addition, the former metropolis found itself short of specie, due to the financial outflow caused by the transfer of the court and the payment of tribute to the invader.<sup>20</sup> The consequence was that Portugal lost its traditional role as intermediary between Brazil and England and was plunged into an acute economic crisis.<sup>21</sup>

For traditional historiography, the most surprising reaction to this difficult context was that of the ruling classes.<sup>22</sup> A number of nobles and prominent churchmen sought to establish good relations with the invader and demonstrate their loyalty to French ideas. They had apparently not understood or noticed the changes at work across Europe, where the modern bourgeois order was emerging along the lines traced by the Revolution of 1789. Attached to their traditional role of councilor to the king, the upper nobility resented the loss of rights under the changes introduced by the Marquis of Pombal (1750–1777) and opposed the more centralized and rational administration that resulted and that was intended to ensure Portugal's continuing place among the European powers.<sup>23</sup> Few members of the upper nobility accompanied the sovereign on his journey across the Atlantic, the majority preferring to become a pillar of the Junot government. Junot, despite being in the service of an emperor of plebeian origin, dreamt of becoming a king, while the nobility wanted no change in the political and social order of the kingdom. Drawn to the image of Bonaparte as founder of an empire, though not as heir to the Girondins or Jacobins, the Portuguese elite gave the French unconditional support, and in May 1808 sent a written representation to Napoleon requesting a new, foreign king. The aristocracy expressed its wish to 'join the great family of which Your Imperial and Royal Majesty is the Beneficent Father and Powerful Sovereign'. It submitted to Napoleon, since he alone could 'heal the country's wounds and defend it against the dangers of slavery', and give Portugal the place 'it was intended to have among the European powers'. After a few complimentary remarks about Junot, there

came the request that the emperor of the French give them 'a prince of his choosing'.<sup>24</sup>

By this conduct the upper nobility successfully avoided the partition of Portugal between France and Spain, as laid down in the Treaty of Fontainebleau,<sup>25</sup> and above all the introduction to Portugal of Napoleonic legislation. In the aristocratic elite's short-sighted vision, Junot, more than Bonaparte himself, was '*l'homme providentiel*', the heaven-sent figure who could ensure a return to the regime of the elite's ancestors, to a pre-Pombal age, when the aristocracy, and it alone, filled the role of natural councilor to the sovereign, even if the latter had now become a foreigner.<sup>26</sup>

But this vision did not find universal acceptance. For the literate elite in Portuguese society – drawn from the judiciary, clergy, army and even a minority of the nobility – an absolutist state had no place in the new age. The events of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries were proof that if the monarchy was to have a future it would be necessary to rethink mercantilist commercial practices, reorganize the exercise of power and redefine the aristocracy's field of action.<sup>27</sup> This elite was attracted by the principles of 1789, notably the ideas of liberty and equality of rights, and had been swept along by the news of the French Revolution in its early stages and later by the proposals of the Napoleonic order. Its basic demand was for the establishment of the imprescriptible rights of man – such as freedom of expression and religious tolerance – but it also wanted to secure recognition for individual talent. Education was to be the instrument for transforming subjects into citizens, who, by means of a constitution, would be represented in an assembly and vested with the sovereignty of the nation. Composed of Portuguese who were 'constitutional by nature', this elite aspired to have both the Civil Code and a Charter like that Bonaparte had introduced in Poland. Another demand was for the separation of powers, with the executive function exercised by a state council, legislative power divided between two chambers, and an independent judiciary. Lastly, it called for a 'constitutional king', who was to be a 'royal prince' from the imperial family. What it was proposing for Portugal, therefore, was moderate constitutionalism.<sup>28</sup>

Another group – genuinely terrified by the idea of revolution and the possibility of a conspiracy among the most radical followers of the French – stayed loyal to the Braganza dynasty. This group, larger but less vocal than the former, advocated a return to the older form of constitutionalism, retaining the monarchy while reviving some of the kingdom's traditions that had fallen into disuse, such as calling the *cortes* or states general and respecting the, so-called, fundamental laws.<sup>29</sup> This group rejected any revolutionary solution that would give 'too much power to the people, since that [leads to] anarchy'; but it also rejected 'excessive power for those who govern, since that [leads to] despotism', in particular 'ministerial despotism', a term intended as an oblique attack on the policy initiated by Pombal.<sup>30</sup> Some supporters of this group even professed admiration for the French,



but at no point did the historical constitutionalists contest the claims of the Braganza dynasty. Rebellion might be acceptable if the fundamental laws of the kingdom were transgressed and the pact between the legitimate sovereign and his subjects broken, but that situation could still be explained by invoking the image of the innocent king misled by his advisors. From this point of view, the throne was held to be vacant not in law but in fact, since the oath of obedience and loyalty to Dom Maria I, the queen who went mad, had not been broken. However, it fell to the people, represented by its prosecutors meeting in the states general, to decide the guilt of Dom João, the prince regent, for his departure to Brazil. Confirmation of the verdict brought the right to choose another heir, following the line of succession, according to the historic customs of the kingdom.<sup>31</sup>

Loyalty to the monarchy and the Braganzas continued to dominate popular imagination among the lower levels of Portuguese society. For the majority of the inhabitants, moreover, the image of the French as protectors quickly faded. In its place there emerged another image, hostile to the invader who was seen as 'one who acquired property, extorted cash, and impoverished everyone'.<sup>32</sup> As a result, producers and merchants came to long for an end to the tyranny of the French, even if this could only be obtained at the cost of putting Portugal back, more firmly than ever, in a position of economic dependence vis-à-vis the British. The invaders reduced town and country to famine and unemployment, taking heavy tributes of harvests and livestock. Large sections of the population suffered at 'this unhappy time'<sup>33</sup> and watched with astonishment and disgust as churches were pillaged. This disorderly and chaotic situation was made still more arduous by troop movements, creating conditions for revolt against the invader. Members of the lower strata of society, however, did not form an organized movement with an ideological basis, but merely gave vent to explosions of discontent.<sup>34</sup> These often violent outbursts reflected the sense of insecurity that was fueled by the absence of the sovereign, food shortages, hostility towards the supporters of the French and rumors concerning abuses practiced by the foreign armies.

For the elites it was essential to maintain control over this wave of unrest. The role of intermediary, however, was played less by the constituted authorities than by members of the clergy, which reveals the importance religion retained in Portuguese society. In contrast to the ungodly invader, when the people fought for their sovereign it was because he conducted himself as a Christian prince, the protector of all his subjects; the practice of displaying his portrait when battles were won revealed the strength of feeling aroused by his absence. Ancient hopes for a savior now resurfaced.

In many respects the situation in Portugal between 1808 and 1811 recalled that of some two hundred years earlier, when Dom Sebastião was tragically killed at the Battle of Alcácer Quibir in 1578.<sup>35</sup> Occupied by foreign armies, the country became a second-rank power on the international scene and

was threatened by the expansionist ambitions of both France and the traditional enemy, Spain, and even of England. As noted above, the upper echelons of Portuguese society were split between the groups that supported the French presence and those that opposed it. While the physical presence of the king had immense significance in the imaginative scheme of the Old Regime, his absence across the vast ocean created a state of anxiety and fear with strong reactions in the lower social strata. Many contemporary texts contain odd stories in this connection. It was announced, for example, that Dom Sebastião was on his way to Portugal with a great army to fight Napoleon, who he would kill with his own hands. Then, as Father Antonio Vieira had announced, he would found the Fifth Empire of the world, as set out in the prophecies of David, Isaiah and Daniel.<sup>36</sup>

In a context marked by these tensions, it is not surprising that leaflets, pamphlets and newspapers – a mass of occasional prose, some of it originating in England or Spain – should have produced many images of Bonaparte, ‘the hero that Corsica has vomited into Europe’s face’.<sup>37</sup> These images were invariably associated with the forces of evil and symbols of violence. Some adopted a facetious tone. The *Special Recipe for Making Napoleons*, for example, was a sonnet written by ‘a money-making friend’ in which ingredients such as lies, spitefulness and impudence, were mixed together and cooked slowly in a stock, whence ‘a Napoleon in flight’ would soon emerge.<sup>38</sup> At the same time, in a not yet disenchanted world, full of sins that had to be redeemed through suffering, Napoleon became the latter-day symbol of evil, like the ‘child of sin’, the ‘seven-headed, seven-horned monster’ or the ‘red dragon’, like the Antichrist himself or one of his precursors. Reflecting the enemy’s fame and the enduring role of religion in Portuguese society, most political pamphlets, commemorative odes and official proclamations treated the first Portuguese victories against the invading forces – albeit secured with English help – as wonders that could not have occurred without a miracle. The traditional beliefs of the Old Regime were visibly not yet weakened in Portugal.

On a broader level, powerful forces were at work. In such early nineteenth century periods of political, social and economic upheaval the presence of charismatic individuals encouraged a recourse to a number of representations – deeply rooted in a distant past, these served as keys for explaining the present and as rationales supposedly capable of restoring order to the apparent prevailing chaos. This is the perspective in which the emergence of images representing Napoleon Bonaparte as demonic can be understood. In addition, what made those images possible was the information that circulated during the invasions in the form of printed material. The meaning of the images was diffuse, though clear to a cultivated elite, and was certainly also understood at the lower levels of society, revealing the fascination exercised by Bonaparte, midway between a concrete historical figure – an insignificant Corsican commoner who became emperor and held

sway over aristocratic Europe – and the myth of a new Prometheus. As these opposing representations took hold, they gave the first signs of a conflict within the Luso-Brazilian orbit between the Old Regime and the new world order that, for convenience, is labeled modernity. In these conditions, it would have been difficult for the archaic structures of Portugal's Atlantic empire to avoid severe upheaval.<sup>39</sup>

The final defeat of the French forces in 1811 did not bring an easing of the fears inspired by the spread of Enlightenment principles. Able to count on the British occupation for support within Portugal, the Portuguese court established in Brazil did all in its power to check the influence of French ideas which, since 1794, had been judged to have confused 'the freedom and happiness of nations with the license and gross impulses of the uneducated', taken away 'peace from plain folk', disturbed 'public order' and sought 'the ruin of governments'.<sup>40</sup> But there was no concomitant sharp decline in the fascination exercised by the French emperor. The reason here was not imitation but the continuing attraction of monarchy as a form of government and the limited appeal of a republic on the lines of the United States, even after the independence of Brazil. In addition to Caetano Lopes de Moura, already mentioned, two other examples are worth noting.

Count Dirk van Hogendorp was a Dutch general who joined the French forces, becoming a councilor of state in 1806 and a count of the Empire in 1811. He gained Napoleon's confidence and was promoted to the position of aide-de-camp to the emperor and took part in the Russian campaign. French by adoption, he faced difficulties at the Bourbon restoration and decided to emigrate to Brazil. The registers of the Intendance of Police in Rio de Janeiro recorded 'Count D'Hogendorp, living in Cosme Velho, originally from Heenvliet, age 56, noble, widowed, came from Nantes in 1816 to set up in farming'.<sup>41</sup> During his stay in Rio de Janeiro, foreigners would look him up at his home, where a kind welcome awaited everyone and where the quality of conversation attracted such visitors as the Archduchess Leopoldina and her husband, prince Dom Pedro. When Hogendorp died in 1822 he still had no inkling of the 100,000 francs bequeathed to him by Napoleon. Nevertheless, a newspaper obituary notice mentions the visits of Dom Pedro and the pension he had granted and the order that he would pay the funeral costs.<sup>42</sup>

The second example is Dom Pedro's own coronation as the first emperor of an independent Brazil on 1 December 1822. The newspaper *O Espelho* described it as 'a spectacle unique in Lusitanian splendor and admirable for America'.<sup>43</sup> Ever since the death of Dom Sebastião, no king of Portugal had been crowned, Dom Pedro's father had simply been proclaimed Dom João VI at a splendid ceremony in Rio de Janeiro in 1818. Baron de Mareschal, Austria's representative in Brazil and a fervent supporter of the Old Regime, did not fail to see in the event a weapon for warding off democracy, but equally he did not fail to note that a large part of the ritual had been copied

from the coronation of Napoleon. His observation was correct. The staging of the event was the work of a Bonapartist and disciple of Jacques-Louis David, Jean-Baptiste Debret, who came to Brazil in 1816 with a French mission.<sup>44</sup> In addition, on his coronation day Pedro I issued a decree creating a new honor, the Imperial Order of the Cross of the South, the preamble to which refers to the orders created in the past by his predecessors as kings.<sup>45</sup> Later on, in his role of good courtier, José da Silva Lisboa pointed to its resemblance to the Napoleonic Legion of Honor, whose beneficial effects on behalf of 'national spirit' were so successful because it was 'designed to reward distinguished merit and not unproductive birth'.<sup>46</sup>

If Jeremy Adelman is correct in saying that '[s]ocial revolutions were not the cause of imperial breakups, but their consequences', his assertion is more appropriate for the case of Spanish America than for that of Brazil.<sup>47</sup> For contemporaries, the transfer of the royal court to Rio de Janeiro did not immediately imply a breaking of the ties that had formerly united the two sides of the Portuguese Atlantic. In the aftermath of this unimaginable event, however, and running counter to the evolution of the South American republics, the former colony put itself forward as the center of the Luso-Brazilian Empire, whereas the Kingdom of Portugal, beset with all the difficulties of an occupied country, found itself relegated to the status of a peripheral region. This reversal of fortunes speaks volumes for the role the royal court still held in the collective imagination, making Lisbon feel like a colony while Rio de Janeiro acquired the role of metropolis, including vis-à-vis the rest of Portuguese America, which proved a key position in the subsequent history of the country. Dissatisfaction with this state of affairs lay behind the Portuguese liberal movement of 1820 and its setbacks in the following decades, and behind Brazil's bid for independence and the challenges facing the new nation. Yet, despite the change in government, if the greater role the idea of liberty acquired at this time necessarily implied a criticism of colonial domination the divorce between the two sides of the Atlantic was not inevitable at the outset. After Brazil became independent in 1822, the American provinces continued to swear an oath of loyalty to the Braganza dynasty, in the person of Emperor Pedro I, heir to the Portuguese throne.

In both Portugal and Brazil, however, as is clear from the images and representations of Napoleon and from other indicators, religion remained a structural force in political practices and a barrier to the development of a secular ideology.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, not even the profound shock caused by the radical changes introduced in the wake of the Napoleonic invasions and the transfer of the royal court to America could make any headway in that direction. An authentic public opinion had yet to be created and the undermining of the foundation of Old Regime society on both sides of the Atlantic had to wait for a different historical conjuncture and a new wave of political writings, the pamphlets and leaflets of 1820–1823 that

sought to propagate liberal doctrines through a political education. Even so, more than 20 years had to elapse before Portugal acknowledged that ‘a new century was underway’.<sup>49</sup> Between 1808 and the Revolution of 1820 and up until the liberal reforms of the 1830s, the country went through a series of traumatic experiences, including the loss of its largest colony and a violent civil war. Only then did Portuguese society really begin to replace myth and magical representation with a different political language descended from the principles of 1789 and consolidated, albeit in contradictory ways, by Napoleon.

In the case of Brazil, the process seems to have more closely followed the ‘labyrinthine model’.<sup>50</sup> Writings expressing liberal ideas circulated widely as a result of the French invasions and the reform movement of 1820, but Brazil’s independence in 1822, though piloted by the heir to the Portuguese throne himself, was limited in its effects to a dispute with Portugal for hegemony within the empire. The transfer of the court to the New World was accompanied by attempts to create a more cohesive Portuguese community, based on the ideas of Rodrigo de Sousa Coutinho, but the tensions within the empire did not cease.<sup>51</sup>

So it was that the Empire of Brazil, though it emerged in the age of revolutions, remained relatively insulated from the liberal influences that began circulating during the period of independence. The birth and early development of Brazil were the work of doctrines that a narrow intellectual and political elite had adapted to the conditions of an, as yet ill-formed, nation, one still enveloped in a world of irrational belief, founded on slave labor and controlled by colonial magnates who, for the most part, were ultra conservative.<sup>52</sup>

## Notes

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3. See Annie-Jourdan, *Napoléon: héros, imperator, mécène* (Paris, 1998), 57–84.
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13. See Kirsten Schultz, *Tropical Versailles: Empire, Monarchy and the Portuguese Royal Court in Rio de Janeiro, 1808–1821* (New York, 2001), 67–87.
14. Neves, *História geral da invasão*, 226.
15. *Manifesto ou Exposição fundada, e justificativa do procedimento da Corte de Portugal a respeito da França desde o principio da Revolução até a epoca da invasão de Portugal; e dos motivos que a obrigarão a declarar a Guerra ao Imperador dos Franceses, pelo facto da Invasão, e da subsequente Declaração de Guerra feita em consequencia do Relatorio do Ministro das Relações Exteriores* (Rio de Janeiro, 1808), 10. See also, Adelman, *Sovereignty and Revolution*, 228–229.
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17. 'O Portuguez' (1814), in Georges Boisvert, *Un pionnier de la propagande libérale au Portugal: João Bernardo da Rocha Loureiro (1778–1853)* (Paris, 1982), 70.
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23. Andréa Mansuy-Diniz Silva, 'Portugal and Brazil: Imperial Reorganization, 1750–1808', in *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, vol. I, *Colonial Latin America*, ed. Leslie Bethell (Cambridge, 1984), 469–508.
24. Arquivo Nacional (AN), Rio de Janeiro, Coleção Negócios de Portugal [Portuguese Affairs Collection], box 652, fol. 1<sup>A</sup>, document 3, December, 1808. This is the copy of the document which the governors of the kingdom later sent to Dom João.

25. The Treaty of Fontainebleau, signed between France and Spain on 27 October 1807, divided Portugal between the king of Etruria, the Spanish Minister Godoy and France. It also provided for the division of the Portuguese colonies. See Hipólito da Costa, *Correio Braziliense ou Armazem Literário*. London 5 and 6, (October and November 1808): 433–434, 533–537.
26. Adelman, *Sovereignty and Revolution*, 311.
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28. AN, Rio de Janeiro. Coleção Negócios de Portugal, box 654, fol. 2, document 45. Representation of the Portuguese asking for a constitutional king from the family of Napoleon and a constitution based on freedom of the seas and trade and legal equality. For a commentary on some points in this document, see António Manuel Hespanha, *Guiando a mão invisível: Direitos, Estado e lei no Liberalismo monárquico português* (Coimbra, 2004), 55–59; Neves, *Napoleão Bonaparte*, 185–229; and Ana Cristina Araújo, 'Revoltas e ideologias em conflito durante as invasões francesas', *Revista de História das Idéias: Revoltas e Revoluções* 7 (1985): 65–72, 77–90.
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43. *O Espelho*, Rio de Janeiro, 104 (15 November 1822).
  44. On the ceremony, see *Cerimonial da sagração e coroação do Imperador Pedro I, no dia 1º de dezembro de 1822* (Rio de Janeiro, 1822). For Mareschal's comments, J. A. F. de Melo, 'A Correspondencia do Barão de Wenzel de Mareschal' *Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro* 80 (1917): 131.
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  47. Adelman, *Sovereignty and Revolution*, 8.
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  49. Chateaubriand, *Mémoires d'outretombe* (Paris, 1997), vol. 1, 1083.
  50. Adelman, *Sovereignty and Revolution*, 7.
  51. *Ibid.*, 319; Guilherme Pereira das Neves, 'Del Imperio lusobrasileño al Imperio del Brasil (1789–1822)', in *Inventando la nación: Iberoamérica. Siglo XIX*, ed. A. Annino and F.-X. Guerra (Mexico, D.F., 2003), 221–252.
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# 8

## The Peninsular War and Its Repercussions in France and Spain

*Jean-René Aymes*

By way of introduction let me restate what I wrote in 1973:<sup>1</sup>

What the French call the ‘Spanish War’ was in fact several things at once. It was a war of independence, won by the Anglo–Spanish–Portuguese allies; an international war that engaged forces from four nations; a total war, with mass participation of the civilian population; and a civil war in which a majority of self-proclaimed ‘patriots’ opposed a minority that collaborated with the occupants; it was also a revolution, encompassing a social revolution, limited in extent; a political revolution, signaled by the promulgation of a liberal constitution in Cádiz on 19 March 1812; and a cultural revolution, through the open diffusion of propaganda materials made possible by a freedom of expression won from below.<sup>2</sup>

### **The role of Napoleon and his view of the ‘unfortunate Spanish affair’**

The earliest objective of the Spanish affair was not in fact Spanish but Portuguese, and, specifically, the French emperor’s plan to conquer Portugal where Britain had created a near-colonial situation. The disaster of Trafalgar in 1805 had left Napoleon without the means for a sea invasion, so he began by asking the Madrid government to allow the French army to cross Spanish territory in order to reach the neighboring country. After initial success, however, the military campaign in Portugal soon turned to defeat for the French, forcing them to retreat.

Napoleon’s intentions towards Spain remained basically unchanged. He wanted to make the country a subordinate ally, either by controlling its sovereign, or by placing a family member on the throne.<sup>3</sup> Whether he decided early on in favor of the latter action is uncertain, but he was pushed towards it by his conviction that no satisfactory results could be expected from either the weak Charles IV or his untrustworthy son, Ferdinand. One

of Napoleon's bad mistakes lay in backing Manuel Godoy who, though he was the favorite of the king and queen, was extremely unpopular with the population, which placed its hopes in Ferdinand. By saving Godoy and denying the legitimacy of Ferdinand's accession to the throne, Napoleon, hitherto admired in Spain, lost the support of the Spanish people.

### **The war viewed from the French side**

The war in Spain was unpopular with the French and inevitably undermined the love and admiration they felt for the emperor. As the prospect of a successful outcome receded, the conflict's human cost rose steeply. Among French citizens, those most hostile to the military action beyond the Pyrenees were the monarchists committed to the Bourbon dynasty and therefore to Ferdinand VII. In addition to the monarchists there were the Catholics – monarchists or not – who saw in Spain the quintessential Catholic country. Opposition of a non-ideological variety, linked to vested economic interests, came from the inhabitants of Roussillon and the Basque country, whose trading activities with the Spaniards were disrupted or brought to a standstill.

One of the insurmountable handicaps facing the Imperial army was a consequence of Trafalgar. That defeat, added to the failure of the Continental Blockade that Napoleon tried to impose, left the British controlling virtually the entire Spanish coastline – only corsairs were still able to operate on the French side.

Meanwhile, secret reports were reaching Paris – they would be made public during the Restoration – about the disunity and even open conflict in the higher levels of the French military command in Spain. For some it went as far as a refusal to go to the aid of colleagues who requested help. The Napoleonic generals, it may be added, took the view that King Joseph would be allowed to rule only when the whole country had been conquered and pacified by military means.

### **Guerrilla warfare**

Guerrilla activity during the war is attracting more interest than ever from Spanish, English-language and French scholars, and remains controversial on account of its association with two contradictory interpretations. On the one hand, the journalists and commentators of the First Empire and the French chroniclers presented the *guerrilleros* as little better than criminals, albeit formidable enemies; on the other hand, Spanish journalists and writers of patriotic propaganda saw their fighting compatriots as the expression of the nation in arms. The latter vision, after being widely accepted during the period of Franco, is challenged nowadays, either in a radical way, notably by the British historian Charles Esdaile, or in a more

nuanced approach by Spanish historians, including Antonio Moliner Prada and Francisco Luis Díaz Torrejón.<sup>4</sup>

The complexity of the *guerrillero* phenomenon as regards both its motives and origins is no longer in doubt. It has been established that many in the *guerrillero* bands had deserted from the regular army following its defeats. A taste for adventure and the quest for self-enrichment by extra-legal means were doubtless among the motivations, though more important was an understandable wish to take revenge for the exactions perpetrated by a brutish French soldiery.

The historian Ronald Fraser, for his part, has introduced a new factor based on the comment by an imperial general that what had been witnessed was 'the war of the poor against the rich'. There were indeed a few instances in Andalusia of agricultural laborers demanding land as the price of their support and sacrifices for the patriotic cause, or who dared to ask that large landowners also take part in the armed struggle. However, these facts, though confirmed, cannot, in my view, be generalized to the country as a whole.<sup>5</sup>

What modern historiography has not called into question is the involvement in the *partidas*, or guerrilla groups, of clergymen,<sup>6</sup> and of women who worked as cooks and nurses and even took part in the fighting.<sup>7</sup>

### **The war observed from the Spanish side**

What can be described as the traditional aspects of the war, the pitched battles of regular warfare, continue to interest a number of English-language historians and their French and Spanish counterparts.<sup>8</sup> But there has been a growing movement to study the war's more original aspects: the guerrilla activity mentioned above; and the long sieges of the cities of Saragossa, Gerona, Ciudad-Rodrigo, San Sebastián and Cádiz.

As regards my own contribution, I claim a small credit for having innovated nearly thirty years ago by making a detailed study of the 30,000 or so prisoners of war and civilian and clerical hostages who were deported to France, where they were locked up in fortress prisons, held in detention *dépôts*, confined to residences in towns, or put to work in labor gangs under the French *Ponts-et-Chaussées*, state road-building services.<sup>9</sup> If the detention *dépôts* could arguably be likened to concentration camps, in no sense was extermination ever among their objectives. Nevertheless, the war in Spain did initiate the chilling modern practice of mass deportation.

Apart from a few limited areas (interior of Galicia, extreme south-west corner of Andalusia, Extremadura), the whole of Spain was affected by the war, being occupied either permanently or temporarily, and in some cases alternately, by French or Spanish troops and by guerrilla fighters. The result was that the mass of the population, regardless of differences in social condition and occupation and depending on circumstances and period, was variously actor, spectator or victim of the conflict.

Except in the patriotic literature produced for propaganda purposes, Spanish historical writing has tended to understate the suffering endured by the population, preferring instead to emphasize its heroism.<sup>10</sup> In fact, the French were not alone in committing atrocities; the British forces, though allies of the Spanish, were also guilty of serious abuses, while the *guerrilleros* are known to have forcibly enrolled civilians, carried out requisitions and compelled, at times intimidated, inhabitants to provide food and lodging. The idealized image of a population that was generous towards guerrilla fighters, whose cause it wholeheartedly supported, requires substantial qualification.

Until relatively recently, Spanish historians tended to play down the seriousness of the violent popular risings of spring and summer 1808 and whose exact significance remains unclear. In late May, at Cartagena, the Marquis de Camarena la Real called for an end to the 'popular unrest' being stirred up by women and children.<sup>11</sup> So, at the same time that patriotic propaganda was celebrating the selflessness, dedication and heroism of the women engaged in the struggle against the French, the supporters of the old order were doing what they could to ensure that women's actions stopped at the right to express worthy opinions.

In a war where the spoken and written word served as a weapon to direct against the enemy, freedom of speech, which was secured at a local level even before the deputies in Cádiz had proclaimed the 'freedom to print', enabled those Spaniards with the inclination and the means to communicate their beliefs, hopes and demands to a wider public. Before the war the *Gazette Royale*, an extension of the central power, was unique of its kind but gazettes now sprang up all over the country.<sup>12</sup> Thousands of short pamphlets and tracts, the *folletos*, also appeared, some of them the work of authors who claimed to speak with the true 'voice of the people'. Never before had so many parish priests, monks, petty nobles, village big wigs, law officers, soldiers or obscure poets, sought to air their views and mobilize their compatriots.

The Spaniards who prided themselves on being patriots, or true Spaniards, clearly formed the great majority of the population. Their aims were to drive out the invaders, reject the outsider king, Joseph Bonaparte, and secure the return of the beloved Ferdinand, while defending the Catholic faith from the godless French and preserving the nation's independence and territorial integrity. This population was unified by the rallying call of *Patria, Rey, Dios* – Homeland, King, God – though the three terms did not necessarily appear in that order.

At another level, however, a division along political lines appeared. At Cádiz, in particular, the liberals were in conflict with the absolutists, referred to pejoratively as *serviles* or lackeys, who supported the Old Regime. During the war, however, these two groups made common cause against the French occupiers and against the Spaniards who collaborated with them.

The latter were known as *josefinos*, followers of King Joseph, or *juramentados*, individuals who had sworn the oath of submission to the monarch imposed by Napoleon. By the end of the war, *afrancesados*, literally the frenchified, had become the most common term. The *josefinos* were drawn mainly from among lawyers, state employees, local notables', prelates, members of the aristocracy, high ranking military men and writers. Most could be described as *ilustrados*, educated people committed to the values of the Enlightenment. Determined to preserve law and order at all costs and eager to obtain the moderate reforms needed to modernize institutions and revitalize the economy, they were in fact closer to the liberals of Cádiz than to the absolutists. For a long time there hung over the *afrancesados* the damning accusation either of treason or of not being true Spaniards. Their rehabilitation by scholars got under way carefully in 1953 with the work of Miguel Artola,<sup>13</sup> and continues at present in Spain and France.<sup>14</sup>

After 1813, some of the former *afrancesados* forced to leave the country would write and publish works, notably in France,<sup>15</sup> to justify their actions or to solicit an amnesty. Among the main reasons they gave for their collaboration with the French were: a belief that armed resistance was impossible; a wish for immediate peace; the undeniable fact that Ferdinand had renounced the throne and called on his subjects to submit; a horror of anarchy and the fear that the 'frenzied masses' would attack the rich; and the desirability of having official posts occupied by compatriots rather than foreigners. Finally, the *afrancesados* looked favorably on the new monarch for his educated outlook and liberal reforming ambitions.

## The government of King Joseph

Although they could hardly advertise the fact, King Joseph's Spanish ministers did, in their own way, form a resistance to the Imperial marshals and generals who were intent on operating independently of royal authority. A few of the ministers, including Francisco Cabarrús, of French parentage, could be qualified as ardently pro-French. But the others, detested by the French ambassador La Forest, were undeclared friends of the patriots. Their appointment reflected King Joseph's wish to be, if not actually loved, at least accepted by the Spanish people.

In pursuing this objective, he faced a series of handicaps, some of which were insurmountable. The army under his direct orders was small and suffered high rates of desertion. As noted earlier, Joseph faced hostility from virtually all the French marshals, while he for his part, and despite appearances, detested Marshal Soult, the commander of French forces in Spain. The royal government and administrative apparatus were chronically short of funds. Joseph wanted to be popular but had difficulty overcoming the disastrous image spread by patriot propaganda, scurrilous writings and caricatures in which he was depicted as Jojo the Bottle or King Gherkin, a

one-eyed puppet ruler, a misbegotten drunkard, who jabbered in a mixture of French, Corsican and Spanish.

In recent years King Joseph has received a cautious, pragmatic rehabilitation at the hands of historians, beginning with Juan Mercader Riba's groundbreaking works, published in 1971 and 1983.<sup>16</sup> A clear contrast can be drawn between Joseph Bonaparte on the one side and Napoleon on the other – who Spaniards held guilty of invading their country – and King Ferdinand, who in 1814 established a repressive, reactionary and obscurantist regime. This contrast is the basis for the change in recent years that has seen the government of the Emperor's eldest brother praised for its ambitious policies and for initiating progressive reforms in a manner reminiscent of enlightened despotism.

### Political revolution in Spain

The *junta* movement that is a focus for much present-day historical research gives rise to conflicting interpretations for at least two reasons. First, there are unanswered questions over when exactly the *junta* (committees) were formed and over their apparently simultaneous and spontaneous timing, over their membership and conduct, and over their relations with each other and with the central *junta*. If, as seems to be case, the local *juntas* were established and led by individuals from lowly origins, might these proletarians not ignite a popular revolution that would endanger the aristocrats and wealthy landowners? In the event this potential *jacquerie*, or French-style popular revolution, did not happen. Before very long the notables and the well-to-do, the great rural landowners and the churchmen had either taken over from the original founders of the *juntas*, or had found ways of defusing their demands. This is an idea I developed tentatively in 1973, since when it has become accepted and acquired depth and substance thanks to several remarkable studies, in particular those by Richard Hocquellet and Antonio Moliner Prada.<sup>17</sup>

The second reason for the high level of interest among historians in the nature and action of the local and regional *juntas* is related to one of the main political tendencies in modern Spain. The localism and provincialism characteristic of the Spanish State of Autonomies gives preference – for reasons of chauvinistic pride or political interest – to narrow, monographic studies with a highly local focus. As Richard Hocquellet showed in 2000, the emergence of the provincial *juntas* did not mean that the populations wanted to see Spain organized on federal lines. For understandable practical reasons the *juntas* acted largely independently of each other, but, faced with a collective danger, they all worked in favor of a unitary Spain, albeit without entailing the elimination of cultural and linguistic particularisms. This remark applies above all to Catalonia and the Basque country.

In the realm of political thought, from 1808 began to appear terms that, if not actually new, were invested with new meanings.<sup>18</sup> Instances include nation, national sovereignty, public opinion, regeneration and – not new at all – people and fatherland. Mention should also be made of revolution, a concept used simultaneously, though to mean different things, by the liberal patriots, the absolutist patriots and the pro-French *afrancesados*.

The institutional revolution was defined and developed in the *Cortes de Cádiz*, the Cádiz Assembly. Convening as a single chamber – itself a procedure identified with revolution – one third was made up of clergymen and contained a large number of judges, while the Third Estate was relatively absent. The deputies had no party affiliation and were not held to represent uniquely their own province or town. The *josefinos* were, of course, excluded from the Cortes, which they considered, as did the absolutists, to lack legitimacy in the absence of countrywide elections and since many of the deputies had been chosen from among the residents of Cádiz, a city with a reputation as a bastion of liberalism and subversive foreign doctrines.

For the absolutists, the constitution promulgated on 19 March 1812 was no more than an unacknowledged copy of the dreadful French constitution of 1791. This was the dominant view throughout the nineteenth century among Spain's ultra conservatives, of whom Menéndez Pelayo, whose works were considered authoritative during the Franco years, was a leading representative.

Over the decades, the constitution of Cádiz has been examined from every possible angle, notably as regards the complexity of its sources, its religious provisions, the promises it contained and what it omitted. The constitution was more topical than ever in Spain in its bicentennial year of 2012, when it was the subject of conferences and numerous publications.<sup>19</sup>

## Repercussions on the Spanish side

In all its aspects the war had a disastrous impact, although its full extent was slow to be appreciated in Spain. For Charles Esdaile, 'Trade and industry were devastated and many vital Spanish links with America were destroyed. Towns and villages were repeatedly pillaged, and in some cases reduced to ruins. The country was ravaged by famine, epidemics and massacres'.<sup>20</sup>

Ronald Fraser has devoted considerable space to a detailed and innovative study of the conflict's negative demographic impact. 'The cost of the conflict to Spain was a population loss of between 215,000 and 375,000 inhabitants, divided between those who died and the births that did not occur because of the war.'<sup>21</sup>

The year 1812, marked by famine in Madrid, was particularly tragic, as Goya's etchings series entitled *The Disasters of War* makes clear. As I have

written in another context, so devastating was the misery that the victims of epidemics and famine may well have outnumbered those of firearms.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to the new practice of mass deportation, the end of the conflict was followed by the emigration of thousands of Spaniards who became victims of a politically motivated government repression. The pro-French *afrancesados* were targeted, as were the liberal patriots even though they had remained loyal to Ferdinand VII. Hundreds who managed to avoid imprisonment found refuge, principally in England, less often in France, where the Restoration was unenthusiastic about taking in exiles seen as subversive individuals.<sup>23</sup>

Despite the fact that it concerned a glorious episode for the Spanish nation, the memory of the war was all but suppressed between 1814 and 1820 to satisfy the wishes of an ungrateful monarch and his mean-spirited advisors, instigators of a repressive regime that persecuted *Josefinos* and liberals alike. Not until the early twentieth century did scholars finally set about gathering together the countless *folletos* or tracts, poems, songs, plays, tales, satires, *zarzuelas* or operettas, which, following Ferdinand VII's death in 1833 and down to the present day, have shown that the memory of the war against the French, though overshadowed by that of the last civil war (1936–1939), has remained a source of inspiration in Spanish literature and, indeed, in other areas of artistic creation.<sup>24</sup>

The most comprehensive, and in its day the most original, study of the myth-making process as it applied to the war is that by Ricardo García Carcel.<sup>25</sup> This myth-making concerned, notably, the Madrid uprising of 2 May 1808,<sup>26</sup> the heroism of the inhabitants of Saragossa under siege,<sup>27</sup> the role of Andalusian *garrochistas*, lance-bearing shepherds, in the victory of Baylen,<sup>28</sup> and a number of *guerrillero* leaders (including Espoz y Mina, Father Merino and Díaz Porlier). But the glorification of the bravery of the fighters was accompanied by a concealment of the other side of reality, the cowardice and wait-and-see attitudes, the duplicity and betrayal. Finally, there was interference from ideology, in a particularly obvious form during the Franco period, magnifying the role of the clergy and reinforcing the image of the uprising as spontaneous, unanimous and anti-French.

The current historiographical debate is focused on the birth of the nation question in the Madrid rising of 2 May 1808, on the nature of the guerrilla activity and on the character and achievement of Joseph Bonaparte. In this connection, the victorious campaign of King Joseph and Soult in Andalusia in 1810 was the subject of a remarkable and original exhibition in Cádiz, which ended in January 2012.

The chauvinistic tendency to play up certain episodes and certain heroic individuals has been partly offset by the contribution of academic historians who have not shied away from describing the other side of the coin, in the form of desertion, the manipulation of selfish interests and submission from cowardice or calculation.



## Repercussions on the French side

Specialists of the Peninsular War, whether writing in French, English or Spanish, have seldom attempted a precise quantification of French losses. General Marbot, who took part in the war, spoke of '200,000 men killed or dead in hospital, to which must be added the 60,000 lost by our allies of various nations'.<sup>29</sup>

In conversation with Las Cases on Saint Helena in mid-June 1816, Napoleon sought to absolve himself with a clever combination of impudence, resentment, admission, *mea culpa*, false modesty and *pro domo* arguments:

That unfortunate war of Spain was a real affliction and the first cause of the calamities of France... I candidly confess, however, that I engaged very inconsiderably in the whole of the affair, its immorality must have shewn itself too openly, its injustice too glaringly, and the transactions, taken altogether, present a disgusting aspect, more particularly since my failure.<sup>30</sup>

During the Restoration and for many years afterwards, high- and low-ranking officers brought out their memoirs, in which they related wartime episodes, justified their own actions, identified the reasons for the failure of the campaign and delivered their opinions, at times severe, on those responsible for the fiasco. After Napoleon's death in 1821 the memoirists no longer had to worry about attracting reprisals or upsetting their readers and paid tribute to the illustrious figure they had loved and revered. More rarely, the commentaries took a bolder line that showed the influence of an ultra liberal, almost revolutionary, ideology. This was the position taken by Rocca in the conclusion to his *Mémoires*, in which he has nothing but praise for Napoleon's Spanish adversaries.<sup>31</sup>

Among the writers of memoirs, officers with a modicum of culture and with interests not limited to fortresses and good spots for ambushes, reacted in the same way as inquisitive tourists today. A number did, it is true, see Spain through the eyes of Bourgoing, Fischer or Laborde, but that was not the case for certain non-career soldiers endowed with a particular culture and curiosity, including pharmacists like Antoine Fée and Sébastien Blaze, or physician-surgeons like Dominique-Jean Larrey and Pierre-François Percy.<sup>32</sup> These memoirists produced a form of travel writing that presented a modern vision of Spain, made the country fashionable and created a romantic image of France's neighbor. But it is a matter for regret that the Spanish War, admittedly more disastrous than glorious for the French side, is the subject of so few symposia, conferences and publications north of the Pyrenees. The number of symposia on the topic in recent years has been very small indeed (Bayonne, Aix-en-Provence, Avignon). On a more positive note, however, at

the start of the twenty-first century several publishers brought out editions of memoirs, notably those of Marshal Suchet, Generals Thiébault, Hugo, Pelet-Cluzeau and Commander Parquin.<sup>33</sup>

### Concluding remarks

In any consideration of the repercussions of the war in the Iberian Peninsula it is impossible not to be struck by the contrast between France and Spain. To the north of the Pyrenees the Spanish people, whose conduct (barring isolated acts of atrocious barbarity) was judged heroic and admirable, saw their image partly restored. Everything else, however, was negative. The war had a high human cost and, for the Napoleonic armies until then believed to be invincible, the loss of prestige was immense. Indeed, even the cult of the emperor suffered as a result of the bloody and unpopular war. Finally, an intense anti-French feeling had taken hold in Spain that would last until 1823 and the intervention, on this occasion better accepted, of another French army, the hundred thousand sons of St Louis led by the Duc d'Angoulême.

In Spain, a romanticized myth grew up around the glorious war of independence. Propaganda concealed the heavy human losses and unprecedented economic disaster caused by the war. The war brought about a strengthening of patriotic, monarchical and religious feelings in the Spanish population at large. At the same time, however, a deep ideological division had opened up between the partisans of modernity and the ultra-conservatives, qualified by the former as *serviles*, a division marked by the victory of liberalism in the Cortes and the issuing of a liberal constitution, the establishment of freedom of expression and proposals for reforms on liberal, even radical, lines. What could not have been predicted was that Ferdinand VII, the longed-for one, when restored to the throne in 1814 would instigate a phase of reaction that lasted until 1820 and was characterized by a return to the Old Regime, absolutism, obscurantism, the restoration of the Catholic Church to a position of total power, and reprisals against both former liberal patriots and former supporters of the outsider king, Joseph Bonaparte. From 1814, the Spanish liberals forced to emigrate made their home in England, which was more welcoming than the France of Louis XVIII.

Although Britain was on the winning side, she could derive no political benefit from this situation, due to Ferdinand VII's refusal between 1815 and 1820 to sign an alliance with the country whose warships had destroyed his fleet at Trafalgar. On the other hand, Britain did derive advantage from the revolts that broke out in the Spanish colonies in America where the colonists moved to demand, and in some cases obtained, independence. Through its complete naval control of the Atlantic Britain now extended her influence, especially her economic influence, in the colonial world, as

well as in Spain and Portugal. On Saint Helena Napoleon gave vent to his intense and undiminished Anglophobia when seeing the immense benefit his intervention in Spain had procured for the enemy: 'She was enabled, from that moment, to continue the war; the trade with South America was thrown open to her; she formed an army for herself in the peninsula, and next became the victorious agent, the main point of the plots which were hatched on the continent'.<sup>34</sup>

## Notes

1. Jean-René Aymes, *Le guerre d'indépendance espagnole (1808–1814)* (Paris, Brussels, Montreal, 1973), republished as *L'Espagne contre Napoléon: La guerre d'Indépendance espagnole (1808–1814)* (Paris, 2003), and published in Spanish as *La guerra de la Independencia en España (1808–1814)* (Madrid, 2008).
2. The main general studies in English are, in chronological order of publication: William Napier, *History of the War in the Peninsula and in the South of France from the year 1807 to the year 1814* (London, 1828–1840); Charles Oman, *A History of the Peninsular War* (Oxford, 1902–1930); Gabriel H. Lovett, *Napoleon and the Birth of Modern Spain* (New York, 1965); Michael Glover, *The Peninsular War, 1807–1814: A concise Military History* (London, Hamden, 1974); David Gates, *The Spanish ulcer: a history of the Peninsular War* (London, 1986); John L. Tone, *The Fatal Knot: the Guerrilla War in Navarre and the Defeat of Napoleon in Spain*, (North Carolina, 1995); Charles Esdaile, *The Peninsular War: A New History* (London, 2003) and *Fighting Napoleon Guerrillas, Bandits and Adventurers* (New Haven and London, 2004); Christopher Hall, *Wellington's Navy: Sea Power and the Peninsular War* (London, 2004); Ronald Fraser, *Napoleon's Cursed War: Spanish Popular Resistance in the Peninsular War, 1808–1814* (London, 2007); Andrew Rawson, *The Peninsular War: A Battlefield Guide* (Barnsley, 2009).
3. André Fugier, *Napoléon et l'Espagne, 1799–1808* (Paris, 1930); Natalie Petiteau, 'Les justifications impériales de l'intervention en Espagne', in *L'Espagne en 1808: régénération ou révolution?* ed. Gérard Dufour and Elisabel Larriba (Aix-en-Provence, 2009), 9–23; Josette Pontet (ed.), *Napoléon, Bayonne et l'Espagne* (Paris, 2011).
4. See, among others, in chronological order of publication: Francisco Miranda Rubio, *La guerrilla en la Guerra de la Independencia* (Pamplona, 1982); Vittorio Scotti Douglas, 'La guerrilla espagnole dans la guerre contre l'armée napoléonienne' *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française*, Paris, special issue 336, 'L'Espagne et Napoléon', April/June 2004, 91–105; Francisco Luis Díaz Torrejón, *Guerrilla, contraguerrilla y delincuencia en la Andalucía napoleónica (1810–1812)*, 3 vols (Lucena, 2004–2005); Ronald Fraser, *La maldita guerra de España* (Barcelona, 2006), chap. 'Orígenes de la guerrilla', 541–556; Charles Esdaile, *España contra Napoleón: Guerrillas, bandoleros y el mito del pueblo en armas (1808–1814)* (Barcelona, 2006); Antonio Moliner Prada, *La guerrilla en la Guerra de la Independencia* (Madrid, 2004) and 'El fenómeno guerrillero', in Antonio Moliner Prada (ed.), *La Guerra de la Independencia en España (1808–1814)* (Abella, 2007), 123–151; Jean-Marc Lafon, *L'Andalousie et Napoléon: Contre-insurrection, collaboration et résistances dans le midi de l'Espagne (1808–1812)* (Paris, 2007).
5. Fraser, *La maldita guerra*, 281–301.

6. Emilio La Parra, 'El clero durante la Guerra de la Independencia', in *catalogue España 1808–1814: La nación en armas* (Madrid, 12 February–11 May 2008), 273–284; Enrique Martínez Ruiz and Margarita Gil, *La Iglesia española contra Napoleón: La guerra ideológica* (Madrid, 2010); Alfonso Botti (ed.), *Clero e guerra spagnole in età contemporanea (1808–1939)* (Torino, 2011).
7. Jean-René Aymes, *La Guerra de la Independencia: héroes, villanos y víctimas* (Lleida, 2008) chap. 'Las mujeres', 351–371; Irene Castells et al., *Heroínas y patriotas mujeres de 1808* (Madrid, 2009); Elena Fernández García, 'Mujer y guerra: Un breve balance historiográfico', in Rebeca Viguera Ruiz (ed.), *Dos siglos de historia: Actualidad y debate histórico en torno a la Guerra de la Independencia (1808–1814)* (Logroño, 2010), chap. 'Las mujeres de 1808. Nuevas investigaciones', 197–204; Leopoldo Stampa Piñeiro, 'Las mujeres en la Guerra de la Independencia', F.E.H.M.E., *Cuadernos del Bicentenario*, 17, April 2013, 5–56.
8. In Spain, particular mention can be made of the action of the FEHME (Forum pour l'Étude de l'Histoire Militaire de l'Espagne) whose publication *Cuadernos para el Bicentenario (Cahiers pour le Bicentenaire)* contains numerous articles about armies, battles, city sieges, weaponry, biographical studies etc. Also, the excellent Madrid-based journal *Trienio: Ilustración y Liberalismo (Triennat: Lumières et Libéralisme)*, founded by Alberto Gil Novales, presents a variety of topics, not limited to the conflict's military aspects.
9. Jean-René Aymes, *La déportation sous le Premier Empire: Les Espagnols en France (1808–1814)* (Paris, 1983), Spanish edition: *Los españoles en Francia, 1808–1814: La deportación bajo el Primer Imperio* (Madrid, 1987).
10. Aymes, *La Guerra*, 381–408.
11. Jean-René Aymes, 'La resistencia popular en la Guerra de la Independencia', in Michael Broers et al. (eds), *El imperio napoleónico y la nueva cultura política europea* (Madrid, 2001), *Cuadernos y Debates*, 205, 282 and 284.
12. Marieta Cantos Casenave et al. (eds), *La guerra de pluma. Estudios sobre la prensa de Cádiz en el tiempo de las Cortes (1810–1814)*, vol. I, *Imprenta, Literatura y Periodismo* (Cádiz, 2006), 167–385; Alberto Gil Novales, *Prensa, guerra y revolución: Los periódicos españoles durante la Guerra de la Independencia* (Madrid, 2008).
13. Miguel Artola, *Los afrancesados* (Madrid, 1953).
14. A full list of the many studies of the *afrancesados* cannot be given here. Among the most important are: Georges Demerson, *Don Juan Meléndez Valdés et son temps (1754–1817)* (Paris, 1962); Gérard Dufour, *Juan Antonio Llorente en France (1813–1822)* (Geneva, 1982); Juan López Tabar, *Los famosos traidores: Los afrancesados durante la crisis del Antiguo Régimen (1808–1833)* (Madrid, 2001); Rafael Fernández Sirvent, *Francisco Amorós y los inicios de la educación física moderna: Biografía de un funcionario al servicio de España y Francia* (Alicante, 2005). Among recent studies of King Joseph, we may mention a biography and a description of an important episode from his reign: Manuel Moreno Alonso, *Napoléon: La aventura de España* (Madrid, 2004) and Francisco Luis Díaz Torrejón, *José Napoleón I en el sur de España: Un viaje regio por Andalucía (enero-mayo 1810)* (Córdoba, 2008).
15. This was the case, in particular, of two of King Joseph's former ministers, Miguel José de Azanza and Gonzalo O'Farrill, who published their memoirs in Paris in 1815.
16. Juan Mercader Riba, *José Bonaparte, rey de España, 1808–1813: Historia externa del reinado* (Madrid, 1971) and *José Bonaparte, rey de España, 1808–1813: Estructura del estado español bonapartista* (Madrid, 1983).

17. See, in chronological order: Antonio Moliner Prada, 'Estructura, funcionamiento y terminología de las Juntas Supremas Provinciales en la guerra contra Napoleón: Los casos de Mallorca, Cataluña, Asturias y León', doctoral thesis (Barcelona, 1981); Richard Hocquellet, *Résistance et révolution durant l'occupation napoléonienne en Espagne, 1808–1812* (Paris, 2001), 140–170; Fraser, *La maldita guerra*, vol. V, 'El nuevo autogobierno: las Juntas', 191–239.
18. Recent decades have seen a multiplication of lexicological studies. In addition to the many entries in the work by Javier Fernández Sebastián and Juan Francisco Fuentes, *Diccionario político y social del siglo XIX español* (Madrid, 2002), examples include, in chronological order: Alberto Gil Novales, 'Pueblo y Nación en España durante la Guerra de la Independencia', *Spagna contemporanea*, (Alessandria, 2001), 20, 169–187; Alberto Ramos Santana (ed.), *La ilusión constitucional: Pueblo, patria, nación (...)* (Cádiz, 2004), 13–41; and Jean-René Aymes, 'La literatura liberal en la Guerra de la Independencia: fluctuaciones y divergencias ideológico-semánticas en el empleo de los vocablos Pueblo, Patria y Nación', in *La Guerra (...): calas y ensayos*, 307–338.
19. It is not possible to list here the countless works on the Cortes of Cádiz and the constitution it produced. As a sample of the diversity of approaches, the following studies cover a period of more than twenty years: Miguel Artola (ed.), *Las Cortes de Cádiz* (Madrid, 1991); Jean-René Aymes, 'Le débat idéologico-historiographique autour des origines françaises du libéralisme espagnol: Cortès de Cadix et Constitution de 1812' in *Historia Constitucional (Revista Electrónica)* (Oviedo, 4, June 2003); Joaquín Varela Suanzes-Carpegna, *Política y Constitución en España (1808–1978)* (Madrid, 2007); Jean Baptiste Busaall, 'Les deux faces de la constitution historique de la monarchie espagnole pendant la révolution libérale', in *Des lumières au libéralisme: Hommage à Gérard Dufour* (Paris and Aix-en-Provence, *Bulletin d'Histoire Contemporaine d'Espagne*, 37–42, June 2004–December 2006), 139–160; Ignacio Fernández Sarasola, 'La portée des droits individuels dans la constitution espagnole de 1812', in Jean-Philippe Luis (ed.), *La Guerre d'Indépendance espagnole et le libéralisme au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Madrid, 2011), 91–109; Pedro Rújula and Jordi Canal (eds), *Guerra de ideas: Política y cultura en la España de la Independencia* (Madrid, 2011).
20. Charles Esdaile, *La Guerra de la Independencia: Una nueva historia* (Barcelona, 2004), 561.
21. Fraser, *La maldita guerra*, 758. See also: Esteban Canales, '1808–1814: démographie et guerre en Espagne', *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française*, April-June 2004, 37–52; and the articles, in chapter III, by V. Pérez Moreda, E. Llopis Agelán, A. García Sanz and A. Sánchez, in Emilio La Parra López (ed.), *La guerra de Napoleón en España: Reacciones, imágenes, consecuencias* (Alicante-Madrid, 2010), 303–423.
22. Aymes, *L'Espagne contre Napoléon*, 126.
23. In order of publication, see the two articles by Rafael Sánchez Mantero and Juan Francisco Fuentes in the journal *Ayer*, 47 (Madrid, 2002), in 'Los exilios en la España contemporánea', 17–33 and 35–56; Juan López Tabar, *Los famosos traidores* (2001); Juan Luis Simal, *Emigrados: España y el exilio internacional, 1808–1848* (Madrid, 2012). For exile of Spaniards in France: Jean-René Aymes, *Españoles en Paris en la época romántica, 1808–1848* (Madrid, 2008); Fernando Martínez, Jordi Canal and Encarnación Lemus (eds), *Paris, ciudad de acogida: El exilio durante los siglos XIX y XX* (Madrid, 2010). For the exile of the Spanish liberals in England in 1823, the basic work remains Vicente Llorens, *Liberales y románticos: Una emigración española en Inglaterra, 1823–1834* (1st edn, Madrid, 1954; new edn

- Valencia, 2006). On the post-1813 exile of the *josefinos* in France, the main work is that mentioned earlier, by Francisco Luis Díaz Torrejón.
24. Christian Demange, *El Dos de Mayo, Mito y fiesta nacional (1808–1958)* (Madrid, 2004).
  25. See the article published during the Franco period, with a clear orientation for propaganda purposes, by Miguel Allué Salvador, 'Los sitios de Zaragoza como laboratorio social de virtudes heroicas', in *Estudios de la Guerra de la Independencia* (Zaragoza, 1967), vol.III, 9–25. Ricardo García Cárcel, *El sueño de la nación indomable: Los mitos de la Guerra de la Independencia* (Madrid, 2007).
  26. Ricardo García Cárcel, 'El mito de Bailén', in *Baylen 1808–2008 – Actas del Congreso Internacional 'Baylen 1808–2008'. Bailén: un impacto en la nueva Europa del siglo XIX y su proyección futura* (Bailén-Jaén, 2009), 301–321.
  27. Francisco Javier Maestrojuán Catalán, *Ciudad de vasallos, Nación de héroes: Zaragoza: 1809–1814* (Saragossa, 2003); Gonzalo Butrón and Pedro Rújula (eds), *Los sitios en la Guerra de la Independencia: la lucha en las ciudades* (Cádiz, 2012).
  28. See Francisco Acosta Ramirez and Marta Ruiz Jimenez (eds), *Baylen 1808–2008* (Jaén, 2008). For the literary representation of the conflict, see Ana María Freire, *Entre la Ilustración y el Romanticismo: La huella de la Guerra de la Independencia en la literatura española* (Alicante, 2008); Raquel Sánchez-García, *La historia imaginada: La Guerra de la Independencia en la literatura española* (Madrid, 2008); Joaquín Álvarez Barrientos (ed.), *La Guerra de la Independencia en la cultura española* (Madrid, 2008); Marta Giné, *La guerre d'Indépendance espagnole dans la littérature française du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 2008); Charles Esdaile, *Peninsular Eyewitnesses: the experience of war in Spain and Portugal 1808–1813* (Barnsley, 2008); Fernando Durán López and Diego Caro Cancela (eds), *Experiencia y memoria de la revolución española (1808–1814)* (Cádiz, 2011). For iconography (paintings and engravings) relating to topics like nation, fatherland, constitution, national sovereignty, and liberty, the principal study is Carlos Reyero, *Alegoría, nación y libertad: El olimpo constitucional de 1812* (Madrid, 2010). On Goya's conduct during the war and his depictions of the conflict, see in particular: Hugh Thomas, *Goya, The Third of May 1808* (London, 1972); Gérard Dufour, *Goya durante la guerra de la Independencia* (Madrid, 2008); Jacques Soubeyroux, *Goya político* (Madrid, 2013).
  29. Marbot, *Mémoires du général baron de Marbot* (Paris, 1891), 484.
  30. Las Cases, *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène: Journal of the Private Life and Conversation of the Emperor Napoleon on Saint Helena, by the Count de Las Cases* (Boston, 1823), vol. 2, part 4, 88.
  31. Albert Rocca, *Mémoires sur la guerre des Français en Espagne: 1808–1810* (Paris, 2008), 130–131.
  32. Jean-René Aymes, 'Tres médicos franceses en las guerras de España (1793–1795 y 1808–1814): Percy, Larrey y Broussais', in Alberto Gil Novales (ed.), *Ciencia e independencia española*, (Madrid, 1996), 269–297.
  33. Special mention must be made of the Fondation Napoléon, and its director Thierry Lentz, which has published a number of academic studies on the Spanish War.
  34. Las Cases, *Mémorial*, 87. Editorial constraints have forced the omission from this volume of certain sections that appeared in the original communication to the conference at the German Historical Institute. These were the sections examining the repercussions of the war in Spain on England and on the Spanish colonies in America.

# 9

## ‘Perfidies, Robberies and Cruelties’: Latin America and Napoleon in the Age of Revolutions

*Stefan Rinke*

In 1809, a pamphlet circulated in the viceroyalty of Peru, a major center of the old, tired Spanish empire in America. As its title promised, it described in detail the ‘perfidies, robberies and cruelties’ that the French Emperor Napoleon had committed since becoming a general of the French Revolution in the 1790s. In the final paragraph of his text the anonymous author prayed that the knowledge of these misdeeds would incense his readers and instil them with the patriotic fervor necessary to take revenge on the infamous Frenchman.<sup>1</sup> Reading this example of the many anti-Napoleonic diatribes produced at this time in Latin America, one gets the impression that there had never been a more mortal enemy for the people of Spain and Portugal than the great Corsican, and that the antagonism had been deeply ingrained in the colonial elite from the very beginning of Napoleon’s rise to power.

In fact, this kind of negative propaganda was still new in 1809 and represented an about turn in the coverage Napoleon had received up until his troops invaded the Iberian Peninsula in 1808. Latin America was one of the many world regions to be strongly influenced by the French Revolution and by the Napoleonic expansionism that followed. The invasion of Portugal and Spain precipitated a continent-wide extension of the revolutionary process that had begun almost two decades earlier in the French colony of Hispaniola. Before 1808, Napoleon had already become a powerful point of reference for politically active Creole elites – Creole here referring to the colonial-born oligarchy of European ancestry.<sup>2</sup> The Corsican, clearly, was a powerful symbol of change. It was impossible not to relate to him when evoking the many disruptive processes to have rocked the Americas since the Seven Years’ War.

What difference did Napoleon’s rise make for a continent that seemed so remote from European entanglements? To what extent did Napoleon’s invasion destroy the underpinnings of Iberian colonial rule in the Americas?

What were the long-term effects of the French influence in the newly developing Latin American republics of the nineteenth century?

## **Research on Latin American independence**

When the unrest that culminated in the liberation wars first began some 200 years ago, many of the principal actors, such as the Peruvian Juan Pablo Viscardo y Guzmán or the Venezuelan Simón Bolívar, referred to the veil of ignorance to which Latin America had been subjected during the 300 years or so of Iberian colonial rule. They also contended that only independence could break its power. With the idea that liberation was not only desirable but possible, the understanding also grew that this new world for contemporary Europeans did not have to remain outside of world affairs. In a pamphlet published in 1799 the ex-Jesuit Viscardo made the following appeal to his readers: 'Let us discover America anew for all of our brothers around the world!'<sup>3</sup>

It is this effort to re-situate one's own territory in a world perceived to be closely interconnected that in part makes it possible today to speak of revolutions with reference to independence movements. Revolutionary forces took hold in America between 1760 and 1830 and led to the dissolution of the old colonial empires. This remark does not apply only to the American Revolution of the United States. Additional shockwaves included: the slave uprising in the French Caribbean colony of Saint Domingue, which ended in the abolition of slavery in 1793 and the independence of the state of Haiti in 1804; the independence revolutions in the Spanish colonial empire, which began in 1808 and had culminated by 1830 in the formation of numerous republics; and, finally, Brazil's relatively bloodless transformation into an independent empire beginning in 1822. While all these developments were distinct in themselves they were nonetheless linked by a common thread.

Historical interpretations of the independence movement have changed considerably since the 1960s. A revisionist historiography questions the old certainties about the birth of the nation.<sup>4</sup> Among other things, revisionist historians have identified the, often counter-productive, tensions between regions. The idea of a unified national path towards independence has become untenable and the myth of the inevitability of independence has been demolished. Besides focusing on the Creole elites, the new historiography concerns itself with other social and ethnic groups – the indigenous populations and the slaves.<sup>5</sup> This structuralist historiography has, in turn, been criticized by revisionist historians since the 1990s. The primary focus of historiographical study turned to negotiations that occurred on a small scale. Political history – the question of the importance of elections, representation and citizenship – was thus brought to the forefront. This made it possible to clarify the range of political action during the independence



phase.<sup>6</sup> In addition, greater emphasis was placed on examining the overarching relationships between the newly developed 'nations'.<sup>7</sup>

The period's actors and early romantic historiographers were in no doubt that they were participating in a global process of revolutionary change that was to be viewed positively.<sup>8</sup> In 1820, at the height of the wars of independence, the radical politician Bernardo de Monteagudo from Buenos Aires spoke of an irreversible 'general law' that was forcing the world's countries to undergo revolution in his lifetime. This emphasis on a new beginning was a hallmark of the early interpretations of events.<sup>9</sup> For this generation, the caesura observed by the independence fighters had global implications. It was viewed as an almost providential process of nation building whose success would continue unabated.<sup>10</sup>

The revisionist historians, however, challenged this once prevalent idea of a revolutionary new beginning. They pointed instead to the unmistakable social and economic continuities between the colonies and the republics. This gave rise to the image of a development from colonialism to neo-colonialism. In this view, except for Haiti, Latin America experienced no revolution at all until 1830. Indeed, depending on one's political persuasion, it could be inferred that this revolution had not yet started. There were, it is true, compelling reasons for abandoning the overtly optimistic revolutionary images. But, while the reactionary forces of the old elites had certainly prevented most social change from occurring, the criticism went too far in denying Latin American independence any revolutionary dimension.

The most recent historiography, on the other hand, has raised the question of what exactly constitutes a 'real social revolution' or 'complete revolution', and what criteria must be met for a movement to earn this distinction. At an early stage, for example, it was argued that the reference to the French Revolution as an idealized model is questionable, since departures from it are liable to be misunderstood as failings.<sup>11</sup> In Europe, too, the movements were, in fact, incomplete in many ways, yet we still speak of revolutions.<sup>12</sup>

Undoubtedly, Latin American independence implied a new dawn that raised novel questions about the locality and rationale of sovereignty. Of fundamental concern was the apparent discontinuity in the change of political system under the new elites, new arguments concerning legitimacy and failed attempts to restore the previous status quo. The freedom fighters' political ideas of liberty, equality, human and civil rights, along with the practices they used to achieve broad political participation, were revolutionary. These characteristics are what make it possible to speak of revolutions for Latin America during this period – revolutions in the plural, because of the obvious heterogeneity of the developments. The main strands of anti-colonial resistance grew into revolutions because of the aspiration to create a new order in the sense of a nation state. This was not determined

from the outset, but was the result of dynamic processes of varying duration and uneven progression.<sup>13</sup>

In the wake of recent historiographical debate on global-historical approaches, the issue of the linkages between Latin American events and the revolutions in other parts of the world has once again become a primary focus.<sup>14</sup> The point of departure here is from observations like the remark by Thomas Jefferson that the events in Saint Domingue reflected a 'revolutionary storm' that was sweeping the globe.<sup>15</sup> Only in the more recent historiography, however, has the perspective been broadened to include the South Atlantic.<sup>16</sup> In this context, the period in America from 1774 to 1826 has been described as a 50-year 'trans-continental process of liberation'.<sup>17</sup> The similarities between these developments become evident when one notes the linkages with Europe. Many recent studies, for example, have focused on the interplay between revolutions in the Americas and revolutionary upheavals in the mother countries. In particular, the role of liberal constitutions and parliaments – the *cortes* – in Spain and Portugal has been the subject of much recent scholarship.

A chain of revolutionary upheavals proceeded from the secession of the Anglo-American colonies and the French Revolution, to the uprising in Saint Domingue, the Napoleonic expansion in the Iberian Peninsula and the revolutions for independence in Latin America and Brazil.<sup>18</sup> The independence of the United States put into question both the monarchy and the seemingly natural order of the ties between Europe and America. The French Revolution brought the ideals of freedom and equality even more to the forefront. The economic and social system of slavery as a whole came under fire as a result of Haiti's successful slave revolt. Finally, the independence revolutions in the Iberian empires removed the last pillars of colonial rule in the Americas. Of once proud empires only the Spanish colonies of Cuba and Puerto Rico remained, and France had lost its richest colonial possession.

In his pioneering study of the history of the nineteenth century, Jürgen Osterhammel succinctly describes the levels of Atlantic integration in this period. He identifies: firstly, imperial administrative integration; secondly, migration; thirdly, trade, which resulted in a common consumer culture; fourthly, cultural transfers; and, fifthly, an emerging transatlantic public.<sup>19</sup> In fact, the Atlantic region consisted of large territories connected by a web of interrelationships. Communication intensified and accelerated in this period, with the Caribbean serving as a primary hub. Networks of enlightened thinkers developed, extending between American and European neighbors across the Atlantic. Masonic lodges gave these linkages institutional support. The biographies of freedom fighters such as Francisco de Miranda and Simón Bolívar offer important examples of these processes at work. But involvement in these communication networks was not limited to

the revolutionary elites, it also included ordinary people, especially sailors and even slaves.

The American and French revolutions were important reference points for developments in Latin America.<sup>20</sup> They showed that revolutionary upheaval was possible. Their ideas contributed to the emergence of an (albeit limited) Atlantic realm of experience, which fueled expectations of further revolutions. This was true for the radical path of Haitian slave society and for the moderate Brazilian variant. Despite the latter's apparently unique course, with its relatively stable and centralized monarchy, it is nevertheless to be understood as an integral part of a more general process.<sup>21</sup>

### **Napoleon's impact**

When looking at these Atlantic entanglements, Europe, of course, remains the primary point of reference. Within Europe, the mother countries of Spain and Portugal continued to be central counterpoints and were thus increasingly seen as stepmothers that had to be rejected. England, the leading sea power of the day, played a significant role in the realization of this goal, as a supplier of weapons and military advice, to further its own policy of replacing the Iberian countries as a dominant power in the Americas. Yet, the actual idea – or rather ideas – that the bond to the mother country, which in 300 years had endured numerous crises, could be dissolved came from France. Or so it seemed, at least from the point of view of contemporary revolutionaries.<sup>22</sup>

Meaningful personal contacts during this period were infrequent but not entirely unknown. Thus, when serving as a general in the French Revolution, the Venezuelan Francisco de Miranda – the famous revolutionary pioneer – met a young Napoleon in Paris in 1795. Neither was particularly impressed with the other. Nine years later, the Corsican had achieved fame. A young Simón Bolívar attended Napoleon's imperial coronation and saw in him a model of patriotism and heroism. Though Bolívar admired Napoleon's military genius, he also criticized his betrayal of republican beliefs.<sup>23</sup>

Bolívar's very presence at that time in Paris indicates the importance of the French capital as an epicenter for transatlantic contacts between young and progressive-minded members of the Creole elite. Indeed, in the decade around the turn of the century, many young Latin American Creoles perceived Napoleon as a great hero. Enlightened thinkers in Latin America looked for an Iberian counterpart. In 1806, they thought they had found one in a French officer in Spanish service, Jacques (or Santiago) Liniers. He gained fame by managing to defend Buenos Aires with his militia against superior English naval troops in 1806, which tried to take advantage of Spanish weakness by invading the River Plate. But Liniers' glory was to be short-lived.<sup>24</sup>

Even in this early period, however, Napoleon and the French Revolution were not universally admired. Indeed, Miranda himself warned against imitating the radical aspects of the revolutionary forces, which had led to a bloodbath during the Terror in France. Obviously, the majority of Latin American observers, who were much more conservative than Miranda, had even greater reason to take issue with events in France. The execution of the king, the persecution of Catholics, the fight against religion and the threat to the social order were elements that the Creole elites in Ibero America abhorred. News of these shocking events was disseminated among the leading circles through pamphlets.<sup>25</sup> Combined with the news from Saint Domingue, which was much closer to home, and the consecutive slave rebellions in the circum-Caribbean, French revolutionary violence contributed to the conservative backlash in Latin America that characterized the region at the beginning of the nineteenth century.<sup>26</sup>

As a result, the coup of *18 Brumaire* and Napoleon's rule was welcomed as a stabilizing force. This was especially true of the many military officers from Spain who had poured into the West Indies in the last quarter of the eighteenth century in the course of the Bourbon reform policies. These officers could easily identify with General Napoleon, who seemed to represent the best of the new professional ideal that they strove to emulate. Civilians, too, set their hopes on Napoleon and his will to restore peace in Europe after so many years of fighting.<sup>27</sup>

By this time, stability and security were conspicuously absent from the Spanish empire. During the eighteenth century, Spain's international standing fell ever lower. The numerous wars were costly and led to a deepening of the national debt. The Bourbon reforms only partially managed to counteract this trend. Despite the crown's desire to stay on the sidelines, Spain and its colonies were soon drawn into the vortex of the international conflicts that took place between 1792 and 1815.<sup>28</sup> In the course of these events Spain was unmistakably relegated to serving as a plaything for Napoleon's power politics in Europe. The attempted English invasion of the River Plate in 1806 demonstrated this in a very visible way. The success of the urban militia under Liniers against the British invaders sparked tremendous patriotic enthusiasm among America's Creoles and boosted their self-confidence. They were no longer willing to pay the high costs of defense without being effectively protected. They also refused to support the monopolistic trading system that was, at least theoretically, controlled by Spain, even if the routes had been completely closed since the beginning of the English naval blockade in 1797. The Spanish crisis reached its climax in 1808 when Napoleon's brother Joseph seized the throne.<sup>29</sup>

The emperor summoned delegates from the Spanish empire, including six representatives from America who did not attend, to draw up a liberal constitution for the kingdom and thus give his usurpation the appearance of legality. Among other things, the constitution guaranteed basic rights,

abolished feudal privileges and provided for more equitable taxation. The colonies were given representational rights and commercial and economic freedom. The modern constitution of Bayonne accordingly set standards for a future that the Spanish authorities would not be able to escape. Napoleon hoped this would allow him to extend his rule to the colonies.<sup>30</sup>

But he had reckoned without the Spanish people, who, from the beginning, had rejected the anti-clerical excesses of the French Revolution and its explosions of violence. The start of guerrilla warfare in 1809 in Spain was accompanied by a propaganda war.<sup>31</sup> Pamphlets and broadsides denigrating the Corsican and the French also flourished in America.<sup>32</sup> The numerous autonomous *juntas* in Spain joined together in September 1808 to form a central *junta* (*Junta Suprema Central*).<sup>33</sup> They claimed the right to exercise government authority on behalf of Ferdinand VII until his return.<sup>34</sup>

In any event, the threat posed by the French invasion drove the central *junta* in Spain to develop closer ties with the American Creoles. It was hoped to secure the Creoles' loyalty to the empire and their financial support for the war effort.<sup>35</sup> In January 1809 envoys were sent to America to inform the colonists of their right to nominate their own representatives to the central *junta*. They further assured them that the American provinces would have equal rights under the monarchy.<sup>36</sup> This message, in itself, was not new. What was unprecedented was the language used to transmit it. It was expressly communicated that the era of bad government would come to an end and that there would be a fundamentally new order based on the principle of representation.<sup>37</sup> Such confidence-building measures were urgently needed as the mother country had squandered much goodwill in America in the wake of the crisis.<sup>38</sup>

The criticism of the prevailing conditions and of the obvious political shortcomings in the colonial public sphere became noticeably louder. The news of the events of 1808 that circulated America from May onward encouraged uncertainty. The envoys' announcement regarding the colonies' equal rights gave rise to intense public discussion and aroused high expectations.<sup>39</sup> First, though, it needed to be decided to which Spanish king allegiance would be sworn, Joseph Bonaparte, whom many colonial officials preferred, or Ferdinand, the would-be pretender to the throne. As in Spain, a large majority of Creoles and European Spaniards quickly emerged who publicly expressed their loyalty to the Bourbons.<sup>40</sup>

The key question about King Ferdinand VII gave rise to the no less urgent question about the form of local interim government in America. On this point, however, opinion was far less uniform. While the incumbent representatives of the colonial government saw themselves as rightfully employed officials and clung to their power, the leading Creoles were already of a different mind. For some time they had been particularly critical of the practice of appointing European Spaniards to high office. From the Creole perspective, these officials lacked the necessary legitimacy. The Creole upper

classes based their argument on the long-standing idea that, in the absence of the monarch, sovereignty was to be devolved upon the people.<sup>41</sup>

Following the Spanish example, locally and regionally influential Creoles now moved to form *juntas* that, in the name of Ferdinand VII, would determine their political fate in America.<sup>42</sup> From this point on, a radicalization took hold that would lead, some 20 years later and after a series of long and bloody wars, to the establishment of independent republics. The fact that processes were set in motion that were contrary to the original intentions of many participants in the early *junta* movement can only be mentioned here in passing.

A conflict over the contingent nature of American loyalty to the king generated much heat. Creoles tied their allegiance to their bid to liberalize trade and attain equal rights in the procurement of offices. The Spaniards of the Peninsula thought these demands excessive. In many respects, the year 1808 would become a major turning point. Napoleon's invasion was important in that it sparked events in Latin America; in addition, Creoles viewed this as a betrayal. Only the so-called *Afrancesados* remained loyal to the Corsican. The viceroys and other imperial authorities immediately called upon their subordinates to give whatever they could to save the mother country. Others feared a French invasion of Latin America and were suspicious of French influences. Even the revered hero of 1806, Liniers, would eventually become a victim of this fear in Buenos Aires.<sup>43</sup>

In the sermons and pamphlets that were now being rapidly distributed in the main cities of the colonies, the French were portrayed as godless beasts willing to destroy all that was sacred. Napoleon, their emperor, was nothing but a 'cunning and ambitious serpent' and, as a Corsican, a foreigner who had corrupted all that was once good in France.<sup>44</sup> The anti-Napoleonic rhetoric found in Latin America did not differ substantially from that which existed in Europe. The most frequently used epithets for the Corsican were monster, devil and tyrant.<sup>45</sup>

Some positions, however, were specific to Latin America. As to be expected in a staunchly Catholic country where the political influence of the church was traditionally strong, the language used in Spain was filled with metaphors from the Holy Scripture. Frequent references were made to the apocalypse and Napoleon himself was equated with the Anti-Christ. In this discourse, France represented hell and original sin. Its people were ignorant barbarians. Its leader was the devil, a Goliath or a King Saul inspired by other ungodly creatures like Rousseau and Voltaire. Spain, on the other hand, was the benevolent mother country that stood firm in its Christian beliefs and was close to Jesus and the church. Its true king, Ferdinand VII, was a Christian martyr. Although the proclamations delivered unambiguous opinions on the Corsican, Latin Americans received and acted upon these messages in a highly ambivalent way. Thus, the perceived French threat to religion not only motivated the staunchly royalist defenders of the status

quo but also inspired the rebellious priest Miguel Hidalgo. In 1810, he led a popular movement under the banner of the Virgin of Guadeloupe, which threatened the established social order.<sup>46</sup>

In addition, to reach the unprivileged classes in Latin America, the proclamations had to be translated into indigenous languages. This process, in turn, caused indigenous religious concepts to find their way into the texts. Napoleon, accordingly, became the 'horned serpent' in a proclamation from 1812 that was translated by a Christian friar into the Mayan language Tzotzil. The symbolism, however, had rather ambivalent connotations in Mayan beliefs.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, even though the rhetoric in the Spanish original asserts that Napoleon was already doomed to failure, the translated version reads:

An evil man came from another land, an unknown murderer named Napoleon... He entered our country like a horned serpent wearing a false mask on his face. At first his mouth showed him to be a good arbiter; he let only his good deeds be known. He showed his face to be like the faces of our brothers... But the goodness of his words was just a lie... He only wants to put an end to our lives, all who believe in God, Our Lord. And he wants to become the Lord of the Universe.<sup>48</sup>

For the Mayans who heard this message, though, its content was not as clear as it may have seemed to the translating priest. For, in their belief system, while the horned serpent possessed great destructive powers it was also a giver of life. Despite this ambivalence, the Creoles were at least in agreement that resistance was not only desirable but also constituted a God-given obligation to fight the heathen-monster, Napoleon.

Napoleon's attitude towards America, on the other hand, changed in response to the turn of events and the fierce propaganda in Spain and Latin America. Immediately after Bayonne Napoleon informed the colonies that his aim was to bring them prosperity, especially by opening trade with America. This argument hit its target, because it seemed to fulfill one of the Latin American Creoles' long-standing demands. The strategy, however, did not work, even though Napoleon sent out agents to the United States from where they were to exert influence on public opinion in the Spanish colonies.<sup>49</sup> While he had initially hoped to convince the colonies to remain under the rule of his brother, he later changed his mind and advocated independence for the American colonies. This, of course, was not an altruistic move but the result of a rational assessment of the sheer practical impossibility of conquering that vast territory. If it could not be conquered, the vision of an independent but friendly America with markets open to French trade was the most promising.

In the end, neither objective was realized. As an extension of events in Spain, America now was a region of failure for Napoleon, who nevertheless,

after Waterloo, considered crossing the Atlantic in search of exile. But even that would turn out to be a chimera. The specter of Napoleon, however, would haunt Latin America for some time. In the course of the long and bloody wars for independence, which were as much civil wars as they were wars against an external enemy, the threat of a new Napoleon emerging from within had to be taken seriously. Bolívar himself was accused at one point of harboring Napoleonic ambitions.<sup>50</sup>

Indeed, the emergence of Napoleon-like leaders in the former Spanish colonies was arguably Napoleon's most important legacy. Leaders of armed bands, commonly labeled *caudillos* or "heroes on horseback" (Chasteen), who made their stronghold in particular provinces or cities were soon grabbing for power in a larger territorial context due to the absence of central authority after the destruction of the wars for independence. Mónica Ricketts has recently argued that the rise of Napoleon did not simply initiate but was also paralleled in the rise of the many Spanish American *caudillos* who strove to emulate him: 'Despite the apparent ambiguity showed by Spanish American *caudillos* towards Napoleon, and their fears of experiencing a similar downfall, Napoleon was the model these *caudillos* often consciously followed when trying to rebuild a new order after independence.'<sup>51</sup>

## Conclusion

In sum, it was not the immediate impact of Napoleon that was most important for developments in Latin America. Of course, his invasion of the Iberian Peninsula from 1808 was the decisive catalyst for many developments, including the rise of nationalist guerrilla warfare, the growth of liberalism and constitutionalism that brought with it the theoretical inclusion of Creoles as equal members of a parliamentary system, the increase of defense strategies and the militarization of politics in America. In addition, the ordering effect of the *Code Napoléon* proved to be a lasting legacy in the Americas. The monarchic cult of the emperor lingered as merely a passing glimpse, as the short-lived Mexican empire of Agustín de Iturbide showed.

Thus, even though the causes of the Latin American independence movements were ultimately of internal origin, the developments can only be explained from an Atlantic perspective. In the course of the Enlightenment, books and pamphlets entered Latin America from Europe and the United States that encouraged both the Creole elite and the non-privileged classes, to cast a critical eye over their situation. The Iberian colonial powers tried unsuccessfully to control this flow of information, which was important for the dissemination not only of political theories and the idea of human rights, but also of knowledge of revolutions in the United States and France. In addition, the reforms from the mother countries and, finally, in the case of Spain, the power vacuum during the Napoleonic occupation, were decisive for the independence movement.



## Notes

1. *Perfidias, robos y crueldades de Napoleon I* (Lima, 1809).
2. The term Creole (*criollo/créole*) is used to describe the American-born descendants of the Spaniards and the French from the colonial period and denotes a distinction from the Europeans. In Brazil, by contrast, the term *crioulo* referred only to the black slaves who were born in America.
3. Juan Pablo Viscardo y Guzmán, *Carta dirigida a los españoles americanos*, ed. David Brading (Mexico City, 2005), 91.
4. Luis Navarro García, 'La independencia de Hispanoamérica', in *Balance de la historiografía sobre Iberoamérica*, ed. Valentín Vázquez de Prada et al. (Pamplona, 1989), 395–440. For more on this point see the excellent overview from Manuel Chust Calero and José Antonio Serrano Ortega, 'Un debate actual', in *Debates sobre las independencias iberoamericanas*, ed. Manuel Chust Calero and José Antonio Serrano Ortega (Frankfurt a.M., 2007), 10–25. This book also provides historiographical summaries of individual countries. For Mexico, see Antonio Annino, *La independencia: los libros de la patria* (Mexico City, 2008), as well as the essays in *Interpretaciones sobre la independencia de México*, ed. Josefina Z. Vázquez (Mexico City, 1997); Nikita Harwich Vallenilla, 'La historia patria', in *Inventando la nación, Iberoamérica, siglo XIX*, ed. Antonio Annino and François-Xavier Guerra (Mexico City, 2003), 533–549; Rafael Valls, *Los procesos independentistas iberoamericanos en los manuales de historia* (Madrid, 2005). For Brazil, see the essays by Peres Costa, Kraay and Osório de Castro in *Independência: História e historiografia*, ed. István Jancsó (São Paulo, 2005), 53–206. See also Jurandir Malerba, 'Introdução: esboço crítico da recente historiografia sobre a independência do Brasil (c. 1980–2002)', in *A independência brasileira: Novas dimensões*, ed. Jurandir Malerba (Rio de Janeiro, 2006), 19–52.
5. George Reid Andrews, 'Spanish American Independence: A Structural Analysis', *Latin American Perspectives* 12/1 (1985): 105–132.
6. For an overview of the innovations until the mid-1990s, see Victor M. Uribe-Uran, 'The Enigma of Latin American Independence: Analyses of the Last Ten Years', *Latin American Research Review* 32/1 (1997): 236–255.
7. On this point, see Roberto Breña, 'Relevancia y del contexto bienio 1808–1810', in *En el umbral de las revoluciones hispánicas: el bienio 1808–1810*, ed. Roberto Breña (Mexico City, 2010), 9–28. Nonetheless, in anthologies, such as that from Breñas, the national perspective predominates.
8. Graciela Soriano, 'Tiempos y destiempos de la revolución', in *Las revoluciones en el mundo Atlántico*, ed. Teresa Calderón and Clément Thibaud (Bogotá, 2006), 145–153.
9. François-Xavier Guerra, *Modernidad e Independencias: ensayos sobre las revoluciones hispánicas* (Mexico City, 1993), 12; Annick Lempérière, 'Revolución y estado en América hispánica', in Calderón and Thibaud, *Las revoluciones*, 55.
10. Fabio Wasserman, 'Revolución', in *Lenguaje y revolución: conceptos políticos clave en el Río de la Plata, 1780–1850*, ed. Noemí Goldman (Buenos Aires, 2008), 159–174, especially 164.
11. Manfred Kossok, 'Alternativen gesellschaftlicher Transformationen in Lateinamerika: Die Unabhängigkeitsrevolutionen von 1790 bis 1830', *Jahrbuch für Geschichte von Staat, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Lateinamerikas* 28 (1991): 223–249, especially 226.
12. François-Xavier Guerra, 'De lo uno a lo múltiple: Dimensiones y lógicas de la Independencia', in *Independence and Revolution in Spanish America: Perspectives*

- and Problems, ed. Anthony McFarlane and Eduardo Posada-Carbó (London, 1998), 49.
13. For an excellent discussion of the revolutionary concept from a global historical perspective, see Jürgen Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt: Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 2009), 736–747.
  14. For more on the global historical discussions, see Sebastian Conrad and Andreas Eckert, 'Globalgeschichte, Globalisierung, multiple Modernen: Zur Geschichtsschreibung der modernen Welt', in *Globalgeschichte: Theorien, Ansätze, Themen*, ed. Sebastian Conrad et al. (Frankfurt a.M., 2007), 7–52.
  15. Jefferson to St. George Tucker (27 August 1797). Cited by Simon P. Newman, 'American Political Culture and the French and Haitian Revolutions', in *The Impact of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World*, ed. David P. Geggus (Charleston, 2001), 79.
  16. Horst Pietschmann, 'Introduction: Atlantic History – History between European History and Global History', in *Atlantic History: History of the Atlantic System, 1580–1830*, ed. Horst Pietschmann (Göttingen, 2002), 11–54. Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours* (Cambridge, 2005). The Atlantic perspective proposed by Pietschmann and Bailyn is receiving growing attention in independence research. The anthologies by Calderón and Thibaud (eds), *Las revoluciones* are evidence of this; David S. Shields and Mariselle Meléndez (eds), *Liberty! Egalité! ¡Independencia!: Print Culture, Enlightenment, and Revolution in the Americas, 1776–1838* (Worcester, 2007); Michael A. Morrison and Melinda Zook (eds), *Revolutionary Currents: Nation Building in the Transatlantic World* (Lanham, 2004). The attempt at a synthesis for the United States, Haiti and Latin America, though not including Brasil, has been made by Lester D. Langley, *The Americas in the Age of Revolution, 1750–1850* (New Haven, 1997). For a comparative study on the end of the English and Spanish empires, see John H. Elliott, *Empires of the New World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492–1830* (New Haven, 2007), 255–402. See also Jaime E. Rodríguez, 'The Emancipation of America', *American Historical Review* 105/1 (2000): 131–152. Klaus Stüwe and Stefan Rinke (eds), *Die politischen Systeme in Nord- und Lateinamerika: Eine Einführung* (Wiesbaden, 2008).
  17. Anthony McFarlane, 'Issues in the History of Spanish American Independence', in *Independence and Revolution in Spanish America: Perspectives and Problems*, ed. Anthony McFarlane and Eduardo Posada-Carbó (London, 1998), 1. See also: Anthony McFarlane, 'Independências americanas na era das revoluções, contextos, comparações', in *A independência*, ed. Malerba, 387–418.
  18. Stefan Rinke and Klaus Stüwe, 'Politische Systeme Amerikas: Ein Vergleich', in Rinke and Stüwe, *Die politischen Systeme*, 6.
  19. Osterhammel, *Verwandlung*, 770–771.
  20. Eric Van Young, '"To Throw Off a Tyrannical Government": Atlantic Revolutionary Traditions and Popular Insurgency in Mexico, 1800–1821', in Morrison and Zook, *Revolutionary Currents*, 131.
  21. This relationship is also found in the now 30-year-old and, so far only, general study in German by Inge Buisson and Herbert Schottelius, *Die Unabhängigkeitsbewegungen in Lateinamerika, 1788–1826* (Stuttgart, 1980), even if Haiti here is only a peripheral concern. For more on the overall context in Brazil, see João Paulo G. Pimental, *Brasil y las independencias de Hispanoamérica* (Castelló de la Plana, 2007), 29; Jacques Godechot, 'Independência do Brasil e a Revolução do Ocidente', in *1822: dimensões*, ed. Carlos Guilherme Mota (São Paulo, 1972), 27–37.

22. Stéphane Michaud and Hugo Neira, 'Los "libertadores" entre la herencia de la Revolución y la sombra de Napoleón', *Cuadernos americanos – México* 1/1 (1987): 74–88.
23. Caracciolo Parra-Pérez, 'Bolívar y Napoleón', *Cuadernos del Congreso por la Libertad de la Cultura*, Paris 71 (1963): 23–31.
24. Mónica Ricketts, 'Spanish American Napoleons: The Transformation of Military Officers into Political Leaders, Peru, 1790–1830', in *Napoleon's Atlantic: The Impact of Napoleonic Empire in the Atlantic World*, ed. Christophe Belaubre et al. (Leiden, 2010), 209–231.
25. Enrique de Gandía, *Napoleón y la Independencia de América* (Buenos Aires, 1955), 9.
26. Stefan Rinke, *Revolutionen in Lateinamerika: Wege in die Unabhängigkeit, 1760–1830* (Munich, 2010), 110–114.
27. Gandía, *Napoleón*, 131.
28. Stig Förster, 'Der Weltkrieg 1792–1815: Bewaffnete Konflikte und Revolutionen in der Weltgesellschaft', in *Kriegsbereitschaft und Friedensordnung in Deutschland*, ed. Jost Düllfer (Münster, 1995), 17–38. For the details, see Jean-Joël Brégeon, *Napoléon et la guerre d'Espagne, 1808–1814* (Paris, 2006), 55–67.
29. Brégeon, *Napoléon*, 82–94. Timothy E. Anna, *Spain and the Loss of America* (Lincoln, 1983), 9–28. If one wants to speak in this context of a 'shock', as Guerra, *Modernidad*, 118–122, does, the way for it had been prepared for some time.
30. Jeremy Adelman, *Sovereignty and Revolution in the Iberian Atlantic* (Princeton, 2006), 185–186.
31. José Manuel Cuenca Toribio, *La Guerra de la Independencia: un conflicto decisivo 1808–1814* (Madrid, 2006). José Gregorio Cayuela Fernández, *La Guerra de la Independencia: historia bélica, pueblo y nación en España, 1808–1814* (Salamanca, 2008). A Creole officer from the La Plata area, Tomás de Iriarte, who participated in the fighting in Spain as a teenager, gives the following vivid depiction: Tomás de Iriarte, *Napoleón y la libertad de Hispano-América* (Buenos Aires, 1944), 105–143. Peer Schmidt, 'Der Guerrillero: Die Entstehung des Partisanen in der Sattelzeit der Moderne – eine atlantische Perspektive, 1776–1848', *Geschichte & Gesellschaft* 29 (2003): 161–190.
32. Just how much the war in Spain concerned the European public is indicated by the caricatures of the period. Hans P. Mathis (ed.), *Napoleon I. im Spiegel der Karikatur* (Zurich, 1998), 28–40. See also the famous fictional account written by an alleged Numidian Abennumeya Rasis: Proclama a los españoles, y á la Europa entera, del africano numida Abennumeya Rasis, de la familia de los antiguos Abencerrages, y doctor de la ley, sobre el verdadero carácter de la revolucion francesa, y de su xefe Napoleon, y sobre la conducta que deben guardar todos los gobiernos en hacer causa comun con los españoles, para destruir el de una gente enemiga por sistema y necesidad de todas las instituciones sociales. Obra traducida del árabe vulgar al castellano por D.M.S.G.S. (Madrid, 1808 [?]).
33. For more on the competition between the *juntas*, see: José María Portillo Valdés, *Crisis atlántica: Autonomía e independencia en la crisis de la monarquía hispana* (Madrid, 2006), 53–59.
34. Víctor Mínguez, 'Fernando VII. Un rey imaginado para una nación inventada', in *Revolución, independencia y las nuevas naciones de América*, ed. Jaime E. Rodríguez (Madrid, 2005), 193–214.
35. This action was indeed successful, as the large sums of money donated, for example from New Spain, show. On this topic, see: Marco Antonio Landavazo,

- 'La fidelidad al rey: Donativos y préstamos novohispanos para la guerra contra Napoleón', *Historia Mexicana*, 48/3 (January–March 1999): 493–521.
36. Richard Hocquelllet, 'La publicidad de la Junta Central Española, 1808–1810', in Guerra and Lempérière, *Los espacios*, 140–167.
  37. On this topic see especially: Adelman, *Sovereignty*, 186–187. By contrast: Jaime E. Rodríguez, *The Independence of Spanish America* (Cambridge, 1998), 75, and Guerra, *Modernidad*, 141–142, among others, emphasize the traditional character of the argument.
  38. Hans-Joachim König, *Kleine Geschichte Lateinamerikas* (Stuttgart, 2006), 210.
  39. Eduardo Martiré, *1808: ensayo histórico-jurídico sobre la clave de la emancipación hispanoamericana* (Buenos Aires, 2001), 57–62.
  40. In New Spain, large public rallies were held. See Hira de Gortari Rabiela, 'Julio-agosto de 1808: 'La lealtad mexicana'', *Historia Mexicana* 39/1 (1989): 181–203.
  41. Guerra, *Modernidad*, 125–176. José Carlos Chiaramonte, 'The Principle of Consent in Latin and Anglo-American Independence', *Journal of Latin American Studies* 36 (2004): 581–582.
  42. Martiré, *1808*, 242–249.
  43. Gandía, *Napoleón*, 60–61.
  44. *Ibid.*, 165.
  45. See for example the proclamation of Viceroy Pedro Garibay (México, 20 April 1809). For an analysis of this language, see Emmanuel Larraz, 'La satire de Napoleon Bonaparte et de Joseph dans le théâtre espagnol, 1808–1814', in *Hommage à André Joucla-Ruau* (Aix-en-Provence, 1974), 126–137.
  46. Marta Terán, 'La virgen de Guadalupe contra Napoleón: La defensa de la religión en el obispado de Michoacán, 1793 y 1814', *Estudios de historia novohispana*, México, D.F. 19 (1999): 91–129.
  47. Robert M. Laughlin, *Beware the Great Horned Serpent! Chiapas under the Threat of Napoleon* (New York, 2003).
  48. *Ibid.*, 160.
  49. *Ibid.*, 50–51.
  50. B. B.: *Carta dirigida a las manciones eternas en contestacion a la de Napoleon* (Lima, 1826 [?]).
  51. Ricketts, 'Spanish American', 211–212.

# 10

## The Empire Overseas: The Illusion of Restoration

*Bernard Gainot*

The internal regime and evolution of the French colonies are not the most researched topics in Napoleonic historiography. Depending on the angle from which it is approached, the Empire is associated in colonial memory either with military disaster (independence for Haiti, the collapse of 1809–1811), or with episodes that can at best be labeled tragic mistakes, at worst crimes against humanity, as in the re-establishment of slavery in 1802.

After 1803 France's colonial domain was limited to Guadeloupe, Martinique, Guyane, Saint-Louis de Sénégal, Ile de France (Mauritius) and Ile Bonaparte (Réunion), together with Saint Domingue, the part of the island retained after Haiti's independence. The final stage of the revolution in Saint Domingue, with the war and the defeat of the French expeditionary force, were traumatic experiences for the consular authorities.<sup>1</sup> Avoiding a repeat of the great slave revolt of 1791 and Haiti's independence now became an obsession. My concern here, however, is not with the French reaction to the trauma of Haiti, but with the form taken by imperial reconstruction after this Pearl of the Antilles was lost.

The evolution of *outré-mer*<sup>2</sup> France between 1803 and 1810 is not a marginal question yet, excluding general works,<sup>3</sup> only three books have treated it specifically.<sup>4</sup> In line with the 'new' Napoleonic history, I shall argue that reorganization of the colonial territories was not some remote, incidental interlude, but was in fact central to the imperial project; and that by revealing the meanings given to the Civil Code legislation, public order policies, and the representation of citizenship and the political culture on which that citizenship was based, it challenges us to 'rethink France from the standpoint of its colonies'.<sup>5</sup>

Article 91 of the Constitution of Year VIII states that the 'regime of the French colonies is ruled by special laws', thereby ending the regime of 'republican isonomy' of the Directory period.<sup>6</sup> But what replaced it to define the legal relationship between metropolitan France and its overseas territories? That question, after being subject to discussions and pamphlet campaigns,<sup>7</sup> was settled by the consuls with the decree of 7 *Floréal* Year X (27 April

1802), in which all the colonies had to revert to the 'regime in place in 1789', which appears to justify the term colonial restoration. But how adequate is this notion to characterize the order that regulated French-held territories in the period 1803 to 1810, given that the colonial regime in 1789 was itself the product of a contradictory historical evolution in public law?

The alternative for French colonization may be presented in schematic form. On one side is a narrowly commercial conception of the overseas settlements, in which the *raison d'être* is short-term profit. The public authority delegates its prerogatives to the plantation owners through assemblies, sovereign councils or trading companies. The colonists exercise police power, control the courts and prevent taxation from obstructing commercial interests. A public interest in the true sense of the term does not exist; this is the *domanial* conception of the colonies.

On the other side, historical developments, and specifically the globalized conflicts of the eighteenth century, meant the overseas settlement was no mere trading post or outlet for manufactured goods; it was also a strategic position to be fortified, defended and controlled in every aspect. Here there is a public interest which may conflict with the domanial conception, and a public order to be defined and upheld by the metropolitan power. Its representatives (governor, intendant and commissioners during the revolution) would extend sovereignty over the territories and their populations, using the police and gendarmerie and positive taxation – public expenditure viewed not as an assault on landowners' capital but as a contribution to the general interest. This is the *imperial* conception of the colonies.

An unstable compromise between the domanial and imperial conceptions was attempted at the end of the Old Regime. The notion of colonial restoration thus appears inadequate when seen against the Consulate's stated aim of returning to the pre-1789 situation. Was this to be a pure and simple restoration of the domanial conception, the absolute power of the great proprietors, to recover the former prosperity? If, on the other hand, the imperial conception prevailed, what would be its resources? The tension between these two conceptions was intrinsic to the Napoleonic period in the French colonies and forms the subject of this chapter.

## Public order

In formal terms, the new institutional framework of the French colonies resembled the organization during the Old Regime. Defense was the responsibility of a captain general (the former governor); a colonial prefect was the heir to the intendant, notably for public finance and the economy; and judicial authority resided with a grand judge. Colonial administration was more personalized than under the Old Regime in that the representative bodies of the colonies were abolished. These provisions were applied primarily in the Lesser Antilles; in other colonies, areas of responsibility were

less sharply delimited. The Napoleonic colonial personnel included many energetic individuals with skills acquired from long experience in overseas territories. We lack monographs, however, for such major figures as Victor Hugues, Daniel Lescalier (colonial prefect for Guadeloupe), Clément de Laussat (colonial prefect for Martinique) and Charles Decaen.<sup>8</sup>

In the area of public order there were obvious overlaps between the imperial and domanial conceptions. Numerous regulations issued during the eighteenth century, with titles like *police des noirs* and *gouvernement des esclaves*,<sup>9</sup> derived essentially from Colbert's Edict of March 1685 that was diffused from the 1730s and 1740s as the *Code Noir*.<sup>10</sup> By defining a public interest this document sought to counterbalance the life-and-death authority of the master over his slaves, an absolute domanial power that was the norm prior to this intrusion by the state into productive relations. The humanitarian measures were, in fact, intended to protect the system from the destructive practices of its direct beneficiaries, the planters, by affirming the higher interest of the state, inseparable in practice from commercial profit but expressed in terms of the public wealth of mercantilist principles.

The *Code Noir* was thus intended to ensure the long-term survival of the slave system. The state intervened to protect masters from the consequences of their own violence; slaves were to be fed and clothed correctly, rested on Sundays and converted to Christianity. The object of religious instruction was moral policing – less for control over the slave's body, the prerogative of the master, than as a reminder of the ultimate purpose claimed for colonization, converting pagans in an eschatological vision.

Public order in the colonies was troubled by two main causes: *marronage*, slave flight from the plantation, and dissolute conduct by sailors during port stays. *Marronage* cut into a master's capital, and he would be keen to make an example. But hunting down runaway slaves with local militia took time and money, and it was tempting to pay a tax and have specialist groups take on the task. Freeman, both mulattos and free blacks, quickly acquired a reputation for excelling at man hunting, a practice characteristic of, but certainly not specific to, the colonies. Indeed, the hunting of vagrants was among the normal duties of the *maréchaussée* constabulary at this time. The state had no objection to an activity that removed a threat to economic stability and security in the settlement.

Where a difference arose with the plantation owners was over the treatment of recaptured slaves. The primitive economy of vengeance that regulated much of human relations in colonial societies led masters to favor putting fugitives to death after torture of a supposedly deterrent value. In so doing the masters were exercising their domanial prerogatives, a crude justice that conferred life and death power over the slave's body. This diverged from the state norm, expressed in the Edict of March 1685, on the administration of justice and the punishment of runaway slaves. With graduated punishments the state sought to introduce calculation into the running of the domain,

and thus a policing of behavior – a severed hamstring or a severe whipping did not stop a slave from working yet set an example to his fellows.

The sovereign councils, responsible for justice and police in the colonies, reflected this compromise between imperial prerogative and domanial powers. Initially concerned with the threat to public order from rowdy white sailors, their remit came to include the control and policing of all urban spaces. The colonial towns, because of their relations with different territories, and their close – if not always docile – relations with the metropole, source of acculturation, were the main vectors for diffusion of the imperial conception.<sup>11</sup>

As the sugar-based economy prospered in the early eighteenth century a series of police regulations were issued that applied primarily to towns, the plantations remaining subject to domanial policing. These regulations had the effect of delineating a common space that gradually acquired autonomy in its own right. Thus there emerged a clear definition of public order, associated with an equally clear delimitation of public space.

In terms of objectives, priorities and structures, policing differed little from that in metropolitan France.<sup>12</sup> The mechanisms for exercising control over territory and population were thus generalized, partially undermining the idea of a special regime for the colonies. In its essentials this system, based on police stations, remained in place in the Napoleonic era.<sup>13</sup> Special units, often on military lines, were set up to apply the policing regulations. In the towns these were companies of archers, but policing the highways fell to the local constabulary, the *maréchaussée*. This institution illustrates the extension of the imperial conception, through an increase in the responsibilities of the governor. Military in organization, the *maréchaussée* took its orders from the governor, as stipulated by article 30 of the ordinance of 1 February 1766 reorganizing the Saint Domingue *maréchaussée*:

The governor, lieutenant-general and intendant shall attend to security on royal and other highways, and on the streets, squares and crossroads in the towns, and to this end shall issue the *maréchaussée* with the necessary orders.

The definition of its mission devotes little space to the specifically colonial task of hunting runaway slaves,<sup>14</sup> that being chiefly the work of the local militias and a prerogative of the slave owners. For the latter, policing the main roads (envisaged as a simple prolongation of the plantation) was the sole responsibility of the majors commanding the local militias. Paradoxically, however, the more the slave owners stressed the importance of the militias, the less they performed militia service themselves, a task increasingly undertaken by coloreds, for whom it offered access to enfranchisement.<sup>15</sup>

The gendarmerie was re-established in 1803 in all territories under French sovereignty. From the outset it was stated that, ‘the captain-general has



under his direct orders the land and sea forces, the national guards, and the gendarmerie.<sup>16</sup> Given the basically military character of the gendarmerie its responsibilities might have been expected to include high policing (*haute police*). But this was attributed to the colonial prefect, who had sole responsibility for the civil administration and high policing of the colony, whereas the captain-general had responsibility exclusively for internal and external defense.

What exactly did high policing refer to? The list of responsibilities identifies a number of population categories linked to the vagaries of the political situation, 'cases concerning émigrés...religious expression, press usage'. An uncertain category is that of the *régime des noirs*. This might denote the policing of slaves, a vast sphere at the intersection of the domanial and imperial, but the word *noirs* suggests that the category was broader and included colored freemen.<sup>17</sup> Supporting this view is the fact that the groups traditionally policed by the gendarmerie – vagabonds, wanderers, vagrants and disturbers of the public peace – are the responsibility of the third colonial authority, the grand judge (or justice commissioner).<sup>18</sup> There is clearly a concern for the separation of powers (responsibility for defense, political police and public order are split to avoid concentrating power and policing resources with one authority and thus reduce the risk of military government), but the fact remains that the prefect and grand judge are subordinate to the captain-general since, to keep order, they have to call out the gendarmerie.<sup>19</sup>

The early decrees were vague, reflecting a wish to respect existing spheres of competence and avoid confusion over deployment of the forces of order, but subsequent measures rectified this and clearly identified the gendarmerie as the main law enforcement body. The police was subordinate to it, and in parishes without a resident brigade, 'good order will be maintained by a gendarme employed for policing' (article XIV of the ordinance of 16 November 1802) and 'all matters of policing are the province of the gendarmerie' (article XX). Lastly, the gendarmes had authority to intervene in the policing of the blacks. If they deemed it necessary, the gendarmes could inspect the plantation slave huts. After arriving on the plantation, and before entering any huts, they had to inform the master or overseer who, if he wished, was entitled to be present during the visit. No town or notable house could be searched at night without a specific order from the captain-general or, in an emergency, from the local military commander in chief and at the request of the colonial prefect or grand judge.

The gendarmerie was thus the instrument through which the sovereign prerogatives of the authorities were reinforced. While the decrees sought to respect the competences of the three established authorities, in practice the role of captain-general became preponderant, and no counterweight could prevent this strengthening of imperial power. The only representative body left for the plantation owners was the Chamber of Agriculture. For the sake

of the colony's higher interest, which made potential criminals not just of slaves but of all coloreds, the master's authority over his estate was seriously eroded.

On the eve of the revolution – disregarding the more problematic case of the revolutionary period itself – an imperial conception of public order was emerging, albeit not absolutely dominant. Given the nature and premises of the regime installed after *Brumaire*,<sup>20</sup> it seems logical that the post-1802 colonial restoration represented the continuation, even the final realization, of the imperial conception.

## Segregation by color

At the legal level, however, major innovations were made that divided the population into rigid color-based castes while also organizing it hierarchically by function. Colonial territories were subject to special laws, since the colonies were excluded from the provisions of the constitution in 1799 and then put under a state of siege for almost all that period.

Under the law of 30 *Floréal* Year X (20 May 1802), slavery was not restored but upheld. For the Napoleonic authorities, the abolition of slavery in 1794–1799 was an illegality. But the emergency regime was more than one of simple heteronomy. Whites alone had (at least civil) citizen status and they alone were subject to the Civil Code. The decree of 2 July 1802 withdrew citizenship from people of color and excluded them from France. And although the Civil Code was enacted in France's colonies in 1805, it was stipulated that its provisions applied only to French citizens, and that only whites qualified as French citizens. For the justice commissioner for Guadeloupe, Bertolio, the class of whites was 'the only one composing the colony in the political and civil sense'.<sup>21</sup> The practical provisions for public order may have tended towards territorial continuity, and thus been a form of isonomy, but it was an isonomy that only applied to whites, contrary to citizenship as defined by the law of 1798, which encompassed the entire male population. The colonies were integral parts of the Empire, but the majority of their population was not.

In an intermediary position were the free coloreds, at once an object and challenge for the system of segregation. They were a legal monstrosity both literally and figuratively. Rather than colonial restoration, we should follow the jurist Jean-François Niort and speak of 'colonial reaction'.<sup>22</sup> Reflecting fears of *métissage*, or miscegenation, Napoleonic colonial legislation was modeled on the racial classifications for which scientific credentials were gradually being supplied. In 1801, in his *Histoire naturelle du genre humain*, the naturalist Virey defined the Negro as an intermediate species between man and orang-utang. The mulatto, therefore, was defined as a freak, and colored people were accorded a totally different relationship to perfectibility. Indeed, the whole concept of human perfectibility would be called into

question, as was the theory of evolution.<sup>23</sup> The move towards a strict racial hierarchy of colonial populations was not specific to the French Empire it was observed, over a longer time scale, in the construction of the British imperial project, as David Armitage has shown.<sup>24</sup>

The free coloreds were stripped not only of political rights but also of all civil rights. They were demoted to a position of permanent inferiority, contrary to the provisions of the Colbert Edict of March 1685. For the slaves referred to in the Edict the determining factor was not racial; indentured whites and black slaves shared the same condition and suffered the same inhuman treatment. Colonial society was divided between masters and slaves; once enfranchised, a slave was a free man.

Fifty years later the position was no longer the same. Social relations in the colonies increasingly ran on racial lines. The question of enfranchisement quickly became central to the debate, as is clear from the 1723 Letters Patent for Ile de France (Mauritius).<sup>25</sup> Napoleonic legislation continued this racial reorientation of legal frameworks inherited from Roman law, but made them more restrictive. The category of free coloreds was subject to increasingly discriminatory police regulations. On 8 July 1803, mixed-race marriage was outlawed. The two-tier system of civil registration of the Old Regime was re-established, but with the difference that, whereas in the past freemen and slaves were registered apart, there was now separate registration for whites and coloreds, so that free coloreds fell on the same side as slaves. The procedure for slave enfranchisement was tightened up. All the colonial authorities adopted a policy of large-scale restrictive revision of the enfranchisements granted in the revolutionary period, including in colonies like the Mascarene Islands and Martinique, where slavery had not been abolished. In the most extreme situations, like Martinique and Guadeloupe, the only manumissions deemed valid were those prior to 1792, that is, prior to the extension of full citizenship to men of color.

The earlier laws on slave enfranchisement had been infringed; the colonial assemblies of both islands, seeing the future disadvantages that would arise from the ease with which freedom was granted to slaves, suspended, until further orders, confirmation of the enfranchisements. But they did not remedy the evil itself, and slave enfranchisements continued to be declared, through notaries or by private agreement; the recipient of this favor remained in manumission, with the result that these human beings who could not yet enjoy the rights of free people were nonetheless no longer subject to the regime imposed by slavery. The order and prosperity of the colonies required provisions which, while authorizing the granting of enfranchisement, a necessary step in some respects, also demanded a guarantee that enfranchisement would be given only to individuals judged capable of receiving and using it, and as a reward for services that they have really rendered.<sup>26</sup>

Responsibility for vital registration henceforth lay with the civil authorities, but in the Old Regime the registers were kept by the clergy. There is almost no research on religious history in this transitional period between the crisis of religion at the end of the Old Regime and the colonial clergy of the restoration. Cécilia Elimort has studied the clergy of Martinique on the eve of the Revolution, half auxiliaries to the colonial authorities, half racial intermediaries.<sup>27</sup>

The uncertainty surrounding enfranchisement created chronic instability over the condition of the free coloreds and raised a permanent question mark over their identity. Moving on the fringes of the public space, the free colored became a prime target for repressive policing, since the uncertainty he embodied threatened to subvert construction of the Napoleonic colonial system. The representation of the free colored for the stability of colonial society underwent a total reversal relative to the views of the Old Regime's colonial authorities, from being a factor of order, the free colored became a suspect.

In the Mascarene Islands the provisions for adapting the laws from metropolitan France to the colonial context, known as the Code Decaen, were even more restrictive than the Letters Patent of 1723 that served as a *Code Noir*.<sup>28</sup> In Decaen's imperial conception, the logic of defending the colony made it necessary to relax the rigid color barriers that he himself had formerly done much to create. With the colony under threat from the British, he organized the recruitment of a battalion on 1 October 1809 composed of 650 slaves.<sup>29</sup> The measure aroused immediate hostility from the colonists, backed by the justice commissioner, forcing Decaen to abandon his plan. In fact, he was proposing merely to resurrect a provision from the revolutionary period, and indeed from the Old Regime, whereby blacks from the plantations were requisitioned for gun battery service. But this time the measure prompted a flood of petitions. The inhabitants of Rivière Noire, for example, were categorical:

One cannot defend a country by calling upon those who have no state to uphold, who have only shackles to break; every soldier must be free, and every slave who becomes a soldier must be either enfranchised or exterminated.<sup>30</sup>

Faced with the storm of protests, Decaen abandoned the project. That outcome was a key factor in the loss of the colony in 1810.<sup>31</sup>

When the consular authorities spoke of reintroducing the *Code Noir*, eclipsed during the revolution it is important to know what exactly they were referring to. Evangelization was no longer the priority it had been in the *siècle des dévôts*. Were police regulations going to be re-established? Or rigid racial barriers established to mark a strict segregation by color? The conception of public order now shifted from the strictly regulatory domain

to the social domain (racial hierarchies being basically a particular modality of the social order). At the risk of anachronism, I venture a comparison with the system of apartheid elaborated by Malan for South Africa in the twentieth century.<sup>32</sup>

### Strategic failure

After 1802, and in some instances before, the slave trade resumed strongly everywhere.<sup>33</sup> But it suffered when war resumed with Great Britain in 1803, and especially when the British Parliament abolished the trade unilaterally in June 1806, followed by the American Congress in March 1807. Thereafter slaves could only be imported clandestinely, thus increasing their cost. Unlike prior to the revolution natural increase now tended to overtake importation as the source of growth in the slave population. The demography of the French colonies increasingly resembled that of the southern states of the United States.

The slaves themselves were back in the traditional domanial framework of the plantation. But white colonial society now feared a repetition of the events on Saint Domingue, a fear fueled by the reactions of the slave masses that recalled Old Regime conditions, with numerous cases of poisoning,<sup>34</sup> flight and frequent slave revolts in Guadeloupe. Lionel Trani has studied how order was maintained in Martinique from this angle.<sup>35</sup>

Theoretically, as official documents did not fail to point out, policing the Negroes on the plantations was the sole responsibility of the domain owner.

[He] decides the policing and surveillance best for his slaves, depending on how many he owns, the locality, and the type of work... There are hunters specialized in stalking runaway slaves. Their efforts, like those of the masters, and indeed of the plantation's blacks, ... does much to prevent there ever being many on the two islands. Injustice or ill treatment may lead a few slaves to flee..., but usually it is fear of punishment when they have misbehaved that makes them run away. The principal cause of *maronnage* is in fact laziness... In general slaves are well treated by the masters. Masters who behaved violently towards their slaves could lose the right to own them... the slaves are far happier here than in their country of origin, or than many peasants in Europe. All they have to do is work, mostly not hard, and they have no worries about their food, their clothes, their women and children. The master provides everything, and in return for his care and attention often draws only a modest income.<sup>36</sup>

When organizing the practical provisions, however, the imperatives of public order led the authorities to limit this domanial conception, as was seen with the gendarmerie. The colonial scouts were paid companies of free *hommes de couleur* specialized in putting down slave flight.<sup>37</sup> Significantly, recaptured

fugitives were considered to belong to the public domain – runaway blacks not reported by their master were confiscated and allocated to the district of residence of the capturers to join the common work gang (article XI) and be employed in public works, such as building roads and fortifications.

Freed from the task of maintaining order by the introduction of a special regime under which the gendarmerie had the main role,<sup>38</sup> the companies of free coloreds were henceforth used for defending the colony, as the auxiliary artillery.<sup>39</sup> The officers were exclusively white, as stipulated by General Naverre, commander of gendarmerie on Saint Domingue in 1803, in complete contradiction to the evolution at the end of the Old Regime.

One must avoid including coloreds who, because they usually frequent the plantations, would often harm the interest of the service, either by divulging the precautions or measures that the circumstances require, or by using too harshly the power and authority invested in them, to satisfy personal hatreds. The result will be unseemly and damaging disorders to public tranquillity. Moreover, it is difficult to find in this caste men with the qualities indispensable for profitable employment in the gendarmerie. The work in that service, while certainly onerous and hard in France, is, I believe, even more difficult in Saint Domingue, where the coloreds, whatever they do, will never inspire enough confidence or fear to obtain satisfactory results.<sup>40</sup>

Skin color was the crucial issue all through this period, but the Napoleonic colonial authorities approached it very differently.

Great Britain was the dominant maritime power and, following Trafalgar (October 1805), had absolute command of the sea. From 1806 the conflict continued as a blockade that developed into a no-holds barred maritime war. The colonies were now expected to fend for themselves. Napoleon could not have been clearer: 'We cannot send money to the colonies. They will have to meet their needs out of their own revenue. They must pay for the garrisons we supply for their defense.'<sup>41</sup> The two main ways of raising revenue were smuggling and privateering. The old colonial trading monopoly, the *Exclusif*, was finished, whatever administrators might say in official circulars. In its place, new patterns of exchange were emerging. After the British captured the Cape of Good Hope in 1806, the trade relations of the Mascarene Islands shifted towards Asia, notably Java,<sup>42</sup> India and the Far East. In the Antilles, meanwhile, Saint Domingue's role was filled by Cuba. Smuggling with the United States and the Spanish colonies developed greatly, facilitated until 1809 by the networks of refugees from Saint Domingue based in Cuba, as documented in Agnès Renault's thesis,<sup>43</sup> or by identical networks established in Venezuela as identified in the thesis of Alejandro Gomez.<sup>44</sup> Manuel Covo, for his part, has studied the close commercial ties between the Antilles and the United States.<sup>45</sup> At the center of this activity, Guadeloupe was the agency that channeled the ship owners' profits from privateering. An expedition organized by Victor Hugues from Cayenne to Senegal in 1804, studied by

Stéphane Mandelbaum,<sup>46</sup> was part of the same movement to replace the former Europe-centered networks by more diversified cross-continental circuits, in which strategic objectives were inseparable from commercial motives.

By and large, however, the colonial societies were on the brink of famine, a situation with consequences for the loyalty of white colonial society. As Prefect Laussat observed, 'dedication and courage cannot defeat hunger'.<sup>47</sup> The institutional framework was not a pure product of white Creole society. That society clung to the vision of a colony as a commercial settlement, the definition of colonization in the modern period. The Napoleonic administrators, however, were developing an imperial perspective, the exercise of sovereignty and a representation of the territory not confined to producing and trading. This vision was a source of tension within local colonial society. In the Old Regime, the white population had often opposed a military regime it qualified as despotic. Charles Decaen in the Mascarenes and Victor Hugues between Senegal and Guyana, each took personal initiatives, clashed with the colonels and operated their own agents. But they were desperately short of the resources required to implement the imperial program.

Among many examples is the dissension between the authorities in Guadeloupe. Captain-General Ernouf favored recruiting a clientele among the big proprietors or *rentants* (the émigrés who had left the colony during the revolutionary period), and had little time for the *restants* who had stayed behind. Prefect Daniel Lescalier, however, considered Ernouf's political calculation mistaken, since it is in the second class, the *restants*, that lies the true Guadeloupe spirit, the honor of the colony, the bravura in combat by which it has always been distinguished, and that supplies the Antilles with Frenchmen who are as attached to the Empire and its leader as are the Frenchmen of Europe.<sup>48</sup> But the captain-general had antagonized and lost the confidence of these true supporters, whereas the ungrateful traitors who pretended to support him were already switching sides, seeking to persuade the British that there were no more Frenchmen on Guadeloupe and that if they invaded they would be welcomed as heaven-sent saviors.

The final assault on the French overseas empire came not in the aftermath of Trafalgar but when Napoleon had to face the Spanish war of national liberation, which had direct implications for Spain's colonial territories. The latter, that played a vital role in the trade of the French colonies, went over to the side of the insurrectional *juntas*. The governor of Saint Domingue, Barquier, noted that 'the torches of the Spanish insurrection, after setting its West Indies ablaze, have now inflamed this most valuable colony',<sup>49</sup> when facing the insurrection led by Don Sanchez Ramirez, who arrived from Puerto Rico and proclaimed himself general in chief of the Spanish army in the name of Ferdinand VII.

The decision to arm the colored populations explains both the abolition of slavery and the recovery of French positions in the Antilles during the

Jacobin Republic – positions no less desperate in 1793–1794 than they were in 1808–1809. But there was to be no repeat of the historic initiative by which the balance of power had been reversed, the combined use of European and colored forces. By an irony of history, at Cayenne, Victor Hugues insisted on protesting in the preamble to the surrender against the very methods that he himself had used in 1794 and that he now judged to be beyond the bounds of civilization, ‘he must state openly that he is surrendering, less to force than to the destructive system of freeing any slaves that join the enemy and of burning down all the plantations or stations where there may be resistance.’<sup>50</sup>

## Conclusion

The Napoleonic overseas empire, though short-lived, did not lack historical significance. It was no fruitless episode in a restoration of the colonial Old Order, but rather a construction whose deep inner contradictions were those of its age – at once a reaction against the legislation introduced in the revolutionary decade and a precursor of the institutionalized racial criteria that were to characterize the major European empires in the period 1880–1960.

By the end of the Old Regime it was increasingly clear that effective control of the colonies was no longer possible unless the colored elite was included in the administrative apparatus. This became a reality in the revolution. The Napoleonic authorities reacted against this development by placing the future of the overseas Empire in the hands of a narrow section of the population and by raising rigid barriers between the socio-ethnic categories. As before, the *affranchis*, the free colored, were central to the system, but with the difference that it now confined them to an inferior status. Here in outline was an imperial construction organized on racial lines. So the period 1809–1811, with its successive surrenders, cannot be considered separately from the period 1802–1804 and the conflicts over the preservation of slavery. The reasons for the collapse of the colonial order were not external to the Napoleonic Empire, namely British sea power, but were to be found in France’s abandonment of what had conferred her moral authority. It was Britain that abolished the slave trade in 1807, and from 1808 it was the Iberian Atlantic that took up the ideals of the nation and liberty.

## Notes

1. Alejandro E. Gomez, *Le spectre de la révolution noire: L’impact de la révolution haïtienne dans le monde atlantique, 1790–1886* (Rennes, 2013); Laurent Dubois, *Haïti: The Aftershocks of History* (London, 2012).
2. The notion of ‘outre-mer’ might be thought anachronistic but in fact dates from this period. See Bernard Gainot, ‘La naissance des départements d’outre-mer: la loi du 1er janvier 1798’, *Revue historique des Mascareignes*, 1 (1998): 51–74.



3. For example Pierre Pluchon, *Histoire de la colonisation française* (Paris, 1991), vol. 1; and Jean Tarrade, in *Histoire de la France coloniale* (Paris, 1991), vol. 1.
4. Jules Saintoyant, *La colonisation française pendant la période napoléonienne* (Paris, 1931).
5. Frederick Cooper, *Le colonialisme en question: théorie, connaissance, histoire* (Paris, 2010).
6. By 'isonomia' or 'isonomic regime' I mean the same laws applied to an entire territory or population, without regard to the location of the territory or origin of the population.
7. See Yves Benot, *La démenche coloniale sous Napoléon* (Paris, 1991), that can be completed and qualified with Claude Wanquet, *La France et la première abolition de l'esclavage (1794–1802): Le cas des colonies orientales* (Paris, 1998), and Branda and Lentz, *Napoléon, l'esclavage et les colonies*.
8. Henri Prentout, *L'île de France sous Decaen, 1803–1810* (Paris, 1901).
9. Hillard d'Auberteuil, *Considérations sur l'état présent de la colonie française de Saint-Domingue (1776–1777)*. In fact a collection of memoirs by colonists, including Emilien Petit, *Le patriotisme américain, ou Mémoire sur l'établissement de la partie française de Saint-Dominique (1750)*. Petit's most important text for our purpose is his *Traité sur le gouvernement des esclaves (1777)*, vol. 2.
10. Antoine Gisler, *L'esclavage aux Antilles françaises, XVIIe–XVIIIe siècles* (Paris, 1981); Yvan Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté, le jeu du critère ethnique dans un ordre juridique esclavagiste* (Paris, 1967); Louis Sala-Molins, *Le Code noir ou le calvaire de Canaan* (1st edn 1987, new edn Paris, 2002); Frédéric Regent, *La France et ses esclaves, de la colonisation aux abolitions (1620–1848)* (Paris, 2007).
11. I fundamentally disagree with the commentators who see Atlantic acculturation and mobility as expressions of multiple identities or even cosmopolitanism. On the contrary, I believe it was in the open towns that the sense of imperial belonging developed during the eighteenth century and indeed up to the twentieth century. In addition, as this chapter shows, we should speak of an overseas, or *oultre-mer* history, rather than a history limited to the Atlantic.
12. Bernard Gainot, 'Diversité des pratiques policières dans les métropoles européennes', in *Réformer la police: Les mémoires policiers en Europe au XVIIIe siècle*, ed. Catherine Denys, Brigitte Marin, Vincent Milliot (Rennes, 2009), 219–222.
13. See in particular Code Decaen, *Archives nationales Paris C/4/121, Arrêtés du capitaine général et du préfet colonial, 1804*, 14–17, 'Etablissement d'un bureau central de police à Port-Nord-Ouest (Port-Louis), arrêté du capitaine général du 4 brumaire an XII (27 octobre 1804)'.
14. A task assigned on 16 May 1780 to six companies of Chasseurs Royaux made up of free coloreds.
15. Bernard Gainot, *Les officiers de couleur dans les armées de la République et de l'Empire* (Paris, 2007). See also Boris Lesueur, 'Les troupes coloniales sous l'Ancien Régime', doctoral thesis (University of Tours, 2007).
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  48. Service Historique de la Défense, Vincennes, 1M/324, mémoire no. 52.
  49. Service Historique de la Défense, Vincennes, M 1672 (*Mémoires sur saint-Domingue*).
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## **Part III**

# **Restructuring the Baltic Sea: Scandinavia and Eastern Europe**

# 11

## *L'Empire d'Occident* Faces the Russian Empire: Inter-Imperial Exchanges and Their Reflections in Historiography

Denis Sdvizkov

### Introduction

'We'll borrow from your system all which can be adapted to ours.'<sup>1</sup> Relations between the Russian and Napoleonic Empires have given rise to so many interpretations over the past two centuries that uncovering their essence has become impossible without examining the many layers of meaning. Without aiming to explore the subject exhaustively, this chapter explores the relevant historiography before examining the exchanges, transfers and transformations that emerged from the interactions between the two empires.

The first and most noticeable characteristic of the historiography of Franco-Russian relations is its tendency to adopt a teleological view. Extrapolating backwards, historical consciousness reconstructs a chain of cause and effect that leads to specific events. The subject under consideration was determined in particular by the war of 1812–1814, when Russia not only remained outside Napoleon's Empire, but also became the main cause of its downfall. It has become commonplace to think of the relationship between the two empires exclusively in terms of a predetermined military conflict that was symbolic of the confrontation between the larger forces of *ancien régime* and modernity, or East and West. Yet there was nothing predetermined in this relationship. After all, periods of neutrality and alliance between Russia and France – 1800–1804 and 1807–1812 – accounted for most of Napoleon's tenure as first consul and emperor. After the campaign of 1812 Moscow became as powerful a symbol of anti-Bonapartism as Spain, yet only a decade earlier one Moscow journal had stated, 'No one has more respect for Napoleon's great virtues than we have'.<sup>2</sup>

Wars notwithstanding, contemporary historiography recognizes that the first quarter of the nineteenth century witnessed the apogee of Francophilia and the popularity of the French language in Russia. The problem is that

these works emphasize cultural ties without exploring their principal political and administrative component, empire. The shift of emphasis from empire to nation and society represents the historiography's second important characteristic. A national emphasis has led scholars to treat the Napoleonic campaigns as modern wars, which they certainly were not, as the latest research has shown.<sup>3</sup> Even the military standoff during this period can be interpreted as an exchange 'not only of bullets, but also of meanings'.<sup>4</sup>

It is no accident that the peak of inter-imperial exchange was reached in 1805, while the war between Russia and France was still in progress.<sup>5</sup> It was after the shock of Austerlitz that the Russian authorities understood that they could defeat the Napoleonic Empire only by mimicking it – in other words, by practicing the uneasy art of a manageable mobilization of masses. As if to challenge the Napoleonic Empire, official nationalism emerged in Russia for the first time.<sup>6</sup> The inconsistent attempts to re-bottle this dangerous genie after the victory over Napoleon predetermined the conflicting interpretations of victory – the legitimist-imperial and the national-popular versions. While the legitimist-imperial narrative discussed the battle for Europe, the national-popular interpretation took as its cornerstone the summer-winter 1812 campaign known as the Patriotic War of 1812.<sup>7</sup> A similar reinterpretation would later extract the Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945 from the Second World War, suggesting transparent parallels between the Napoleonic Empire and Hitler's Third Reich.<sup>8</sup>

New approaches to the subject began to emerge during the 1990s when grand narratives and social structures gave way to cultural studies of individuals and everyday history.<sup>9</sup> Personalities re-emerged as subjects, as did histories of elites, especially those within the military.<sup>10</sup> The new approach through inter-imperial biographies allows us to treat individuals, including Russians, not as representatives of different nations, but as members of the same historical era – the so-called *génération Bonaparte*.<sup>11</sup>

The decisive historiographical shift occurred when empire re-emerged as the main actor of nineteenth century history. British historians, who had never lost sight of this point, were pioneers here. The challenge was to transfer this knowledge to continental history. Stuart Woolf and Michael Broers achieved this when they liberated the Napoleonic Empire from the national-exceptionalist niche.<sup>12</sup> The focus shifted from a personalized center of the Napoleonic Empire to the role of the imperial peripheries and vassals, including the eastern territories of the continent. As a result, Napoleon's Empire evolved from a military dictatorship into a system of interactions between Europeans. Instead of focusing on the ephemeral decade of its existence, historians began to explore its long-lasting impacts on European history. Napoleon's Empire therefore emerged as a global player that inevitably interacted with the other members of the imperial club.<sup>13</sup>

Historians specializing in the Russian Empire followed a similar path by emphasizing its role as a crucial participant in the imperial game – John LeDonne, Dominic Lieven and Geoffrey Hosking from the Western perspective, Alexei Miller from the Russian side. With the appearance of comparative imperiology and a focus on typological similarities between imperial rules, one can now appreciate the impact the short-lived First Empire left on Russia in the nineteenth century.<sup>14</sup>

### **Bonapartism versus 'Peterianism': military empires**

Let us start with structural parallels, which demonstrate that the Napoleonic Empire was closer to the Russian Empire than it appears at first glance. Both were parvenus to European history and did not fit into the traditional balance of power. Although the Napoleonic Empire was the young offspring of revolution, the Russian Empire also considered itself a young state by European standards in the early nineteenth century and took its root in the Petrine revolution that had created the new Russia. Both, moreover, were continental empires, a similarity that France played upon on several occasions by bringing Russia into an alliance against Britain. Napoleon's envoy Armand de Caulaincourt insisted in a conversation with Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs N. P. Rumiantsev: 'The coup that the Emperor [Napoleon] wants to deal to the English in India will liberate you as well as us from their tyranny: your empire also has coasts, you have a fleet too.'<sup>15</sup>

Both empires were born of military confrontation with short-term military goals driving both empires' initial territorial expansion and structural modernization. Both empires made their primary goal the effective administration of multiethnic territories and a qualitatively new mobilization of elites and masses. In the end, both cases represented attempts at synthesizing tradition and modernity in search of a more effective imperial model for a new century. The end of female rule and the Enlightenment of Catherine the Great in Russia closed the eighteenth century and ushered in the epoch of the Pavlovichi – a half century of the combined rule of the sons of Emperor Paul I, Alexander I and Nicholas I. During this time, the figure of the *roi connétable* found its representation in the new national-romantic context, while the army 'became the preferred metaphor for a society that was orderly, disciplined and committed to the regime's vision of carefully controlled societal progress'.<sup>16</sup>

### **Imperium as military power**

Imitation in the military sphere was always the first path towards modernization, especially on the European periphery, where it often became a question of life or death.<sup>17</sup> It is therefore not surprising that, despite their differences, between 1805 and 1815 the Russian army began to resemble the

Napoleonic in significant ways. Changes in uniform traditionally marked the first step in this process and, as contemporaries noted, 'we all overdid Frenchification'.<sup>18</sup> But changes were not limited to appearances. The Russians went on to borrow organizational know-how from the French by imitating both their operational tactics, with flexible structures of brigades, divisions and corps, and their battle tactics.<sup>19</sup>

The military reorganization demanded talented and forward-looking commanders who could lead these units and match Napoleon's generals and marshals. As a result, professionalism emerged as the ideal principle of promotion within the officer corps, replacing the traditional criteria of seniority and client networks. In 1808, Tsar Alexander I noted the advantage for Napoleon's army of not having 'a table of seniority to follow for advancement and the power to promote on the basis of merit only'.<sup>20</sup> The next year, Alexander implemented this rule in his own army: 'In times of military actions, when all men have the opportunity to behave exceptionally, I have made it a rule to promote according to military achievements unfettered by considerations of seniority. This rule...facilitated the discovery of special talents and strengthened military morale.'<sup>21</sup> Even if this principle was not always followed in practice, an analysis of the military careers of the highest ranking officers during Alexander's reign confirms its immediate impact.<sup>22</sup>

The reorganization of the Russian army was, first and foremost, the work of General P. M. Volkonskii, the Russian Berthier, who studied the reforms of his French counterpart while in Paris in 1808–1810 and reorganized the Russian general staff to function along the same lines.<sup>23</sup> The other influential conduit of exchange was Mikhail Bogdanovich (Michael Andreas) Barclay de Tolly, especially while he served as minister of war in 1810–1812. He introduced the Napoleonic column tactics, in place of the more traditional and outdated Prussian line-formation, and he also reduced the pervasive obsession with drill and encouraged individual initiative. In 1810, army units received a Russian translation of 'An Instruction for the Day of Battle of His Imperial Highness Napoleon I'. On the eve of the war of 1812, Barclay de Tolly signed a law that imitated Napoleonic designations and changed the official name of the Russian army in the field to the *Grande Armée active*.<sup>24</sup>

The Tilsit period witnessed not only direct purchases of French weapons, but also exchanges of military technology.<sup>25</sup> Because of French defensive experience against British cruisers and marine landings, Napoleon's officers helped the Russian army position its coastal artillery on the Baltic to defend against possible British attacks – and most likely spied on the Russians while doing so.<sup>26</sup> But it was Russian military ideology that felt the most noticeable French influence, as morale emerged as the decisive factor of military success. The Russian army also began to position itself as a defender of universal values: 'The struggle against Napoleon was not just a Russian struggle, but pan-European, common, human.'<sup>27</sup> Although the status of the French soldier differed significantly from that of the Russian soldier, the



motives that guided army morale began to converge. The army was now conceived as an outgrowth of a national community.

The emotional rhetoric and arguments aimed at Russian warriors became carbon copies of Napoleon's *appels* to his troops. Soldiers who had been seen as tools of war, became recognized as 'men endowed with feelings and patriotism'.<sup>28</sup> The Russian 'Instruction to Infantry Officers' issued in July 1812 stated that the 'most respectable title for a member of the military' that an officer could earn was 'friend of a soldier'.<sup>29</sup> Both during and after the war, Russian officers in charge of the Russian occupation corps in France refused to implement corporal punishment as a method of maintaining discipline. Emperor Alexander I himself supported making the Russian military more humane, based on the French example: 'Our officers and even our generals take men for granted too much... Your Emperor [Napoleon] values men greatly, he has told me as much often.'<sup>30</sup> Faced with a deadly threat, the *ancien régime* in Russia proved even more flexible with strategy when, as early as 1812, it began to force Napoleon to adopt a state of total war – if not as a revolutionary *levée en masse*, then as a war of attrition (*guerre à l'outrance*).<sup>31</sup>

### From Finland to California: *idée impériale* and grand strategy

It is impossible to explore the Napoleonic Empire divorced from its broader geopolitical context since all empires worthy of the name are essentially global phenomena in constant interaction with their neighbors. The border policies pursued by both the Russian and Napoleonic Empires made the outer circles of those empires overlap, creating buffer areas from Finland to the Mediterranean.<sup>32</sup> The interaction of the two empires continued to determine the historical fate of these territories long after the fall of Napoleon – as seen in the case of Finland. In Polish territories annexed to the Russian Empire after 1815, a slightly amended constitution of the Duchy of Warsaw remained in force. And when Tsar Alexander I was drafting his address to the Polish *Sejm* in 1818, he recommended to his foreign minister that he use the speeches of his predecessor, the king of Saxony from the Napoleonic Duchy of Warsaw.<sup>33</sup>

The Russian foreign minister at the time, Ioann Kapodistria (Kapodistrias/Capo d'Istria), was himself a native of one such buffer zone, former head of a Russian protectorate and author of its constitution, the Septinsular Republic (1800–1807), which the Tilsit agreement turned into the French *République des Sept-Îles* (1807–1814) with its centre at Corfu.<sup>34</sup> The islands became a base for the Russian fleet in the Mediterranean – a new version of Catherine the Great's Archipelago Duchy and an extension of her ambitious Greek Plan.<sup>35</sup> For Napoleon, Corfu became the French springboard in the eastern Mediterranean from which they could control the region and organize an eastward campaign into India.<sup>36</sup>

The differences, parallels and exchanges become conspicuous on the local level; while the Russians supported the local Orthodox Churches first and foremost, the French established an Ionic Academy, introduced vaccination and street lighting, attempted to implement locally tailored versions of the *Code Civil* and modernized agriculture. Simultaneously, both empires retained their predecessors' traditions – the Russians left the *Code Napoléon* in force in the Kingdom of Poland, while the French did the same with the constitution introduced by the Russians on Corfu.<sup>37</sup>

While the history of the Napoleonic Empire is a history of rapid territorial expansion, the Russian Empire also prepared itself to re-evaluate the global balance of power. The isolation of Great Britain and the creation of a unified empire in western Europe – the *Empire d'Occident* – re-actualized Russia's grand strategy of taking control of the Dardanelles and establishing a pro-Russian Eastern empire. The Napoleonic Empire offered the possibility of a great partitioning (*grand partage*) of the continent to which Tsar Alexander I referred directly: 'If France and Russia come to an agreement, the rest of the world will be what we want it to be.'<sup>38</sup>

This great game also included Russian plans for transoceanic expeditions.<sup>39</sup> One of the stories on which the Russian press dwelled at the beginning of the nineteenth century was the monopoly of foreigners – and especially the English – over Russia's international trade. The quest to throw off the foreign yoke and secure trade routes to the Far East and to Russia's American colonies thus became the justification for the first circumnavigation by a Russian crew. The expedition's charter was overtly Anglophobic and declared its final goal to be establishing a 'Russian sea trade with China and India' and maritime ties between St. Petersburg and its North American colonies via India and China (Canton/Guangzhou where Russian trade vessels were forbidden to enter), and to establish a Russian presence in California (in 1812 Fort Ross and Port Rumiantsev were founded) and on the Sandwich (Hawaiian) Islands.<sup>40</sup>

The Russian imperial strategy also changed under the influence of Napoleonic practice. The incorporation of Finland in 1809 was not accompanied by the traditional arguments for Russian expansion – the gathering of Russian lands – as had been the case for the Polish partitions, or the voluntary giving of selves to the Russian tsar, as happened in the east and south of the Russian Empire. 'Raising the right of conquest to a supreme law, he [Tsar Alexander I] declared the reunification of the province to the empire by a simple decree, in the Roman and Napoleonic fashion.'<sup>41</sup> And even in the south, the narrative changed from emphasizing the liberation of fellow Christians to the spreading of Enlightenment and civilization by the Russian Empire, a legitimizing discourse that was similar to that of Napoleonic France. 'Humanity desires that these barbarians [the Turks] no longer remain in Europe during this century of Enlightenment and civilization.'<sup>42</sup>

## Imperial rule

The Russian Empire already looked to Bonaparte's role in the Consulate for examples of how to modernize its own model of the well-ordered eighteenth-century police state.<sup>43</sup> Napoleonic laws were not, of course, the only source of the Russian reforms, but they were definitely the most important. Along with the *Code Civil* the main source for Russian borrowings was the Constitution of Year X.<sup>44</sup>

The influence of Napoleonic France's administrative structure on Russia came primarily through the extensive reform program developed by the emperor's close advisor Mikhail Mikhailovich Speranskii (1772–1839) who was called 'the principal representative of Napoleonic ideas' in Russia.<sup>45</sup> The reforms were implemented from the very beginning of Alexander's reign, but culminated between 1809 and 1812, when Speranskii became state secretary of the Russian Empire. Speranskii also became a symbol of a new era, as living proof that social mobility was possible in the 'Old Regime' empire; born the same year as Napoleon (1772), the son of a deacon, he came from a much more humble background. He then rose to the rank of state secretary – second only to the emperor himself – thanks to his personal abilities. After the Erfurt meeting, Speranskii's enemies came to see him as the French emperor's personal agent in Russia, and they finally convinced the tsar to dismiss and then temporarily exile Speranskii in early 1812. The accusations of treason were fabricated of course, but Speranskii did not hide his sympathies for Napoleon, even during the Russian campaign of 1812.<sup>46</sup>

French influence also guided the reform of the ministries (1810–1811), of the tax and financial system and the reorganization of education with the establishment of the lyceum (1810), which was based on Napoleonic institutions. But the greatest influence came through the Commission on the Codification of Laws and the State Council of the Russian Empire, both under Speranskii's control.

French jurist P. Péchard-Deschamps initially served the Commission on the Codification of Laws in St. Petersburg as a foreign consultant.<sup>47</sup> But once Speranskii took it over after the Erfurt meeting, Napoleon personally ordered two jurists from his state council to become corresponding members – Secretary J. G. Locré de Roissy and Ph. Legras – as well as the Vice-president of the Chamber of Commerce and political economist P. S. Dupont (de Némours) and State Secretary of Napoleon's Empire H.-B. Maret, duc de Bassano.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, Speranskii's Commission also received unofficial information about the domestic structure of the Napoleonic Empire thanks to Talleyrand's (remunerated) efforts – he was referred to as *mon cousin Henri* in secret Russian reports – and also, it appears, to Fouché (*le Président* of the Russian spy ring) before he fell from power in 1810.<sup>49</sup>

The Commission's work resulted in Speranskii's project for the Civil Code of the Russian Empire, described by contemporaries as a 'corrupted translation of the Napoleonic Code'.<sup>50</sup> While it had been customary since Muscovite Russia to speak of the different countries of the Russian Empire and their traditions, after the Erfurt meeting there first appeared the concept of a uniform code of civil laws for the entire empire.<sup>51</sup> The Code was never adopted, but Tsar Alexander's successor Nicholas I ordered Speranskii to incorporate civil rights into the Code of Laws of the Russian Empire whose completion he presided over.<sup>52</sup>

The most obvious transfer of a Napoleonic model to Russia was the creation of the State Council (*Conseil d'Etat*, 1810), by which Speranskii intended to limit the arbitrariness of power and turn Russia into a law-abiding monarchy. The Council would also become a copy of the French institution, down to the French wording, *le conseil d'Etat entendu*, that was included in Russian imperial decrees.<sup>53</sup> Had Speranskii implemented all of his reforms, Russia would have had a system close to the French *régime censitaire*, with the meritocratic elites in charge, as well as a unified code of laws and a centralized administration.

It is important to understand that the Napoleonic model was seen in Russia not so much an alternative to the old regime, but rather as an antidote to the sympathies for English democracy popular among young aristocratic liberals. Napoleon's political strategy therefore became particularly important in this instance: 'We are made to direct public opinion, not to discuss it'.<sup>54</sup> In 1807, the Ministry of Internal Affairs established a Committee of General Security, whose title mimicked the revolutionary *Comité de sécurité générale* and whose spirit borrowed from Fouché's and Savari's Ministry of Police in France, that also compiled reports on the state of public opinion and included special offices in charge of propaganda.<sup>55</sup>

Mikhail Speranskii also organized domestic surveillance and, like Napoleon, penned articles for the *Novaia Sankt-Peterburgskaia gazeta* (New Saint-Petersburg Gazette), which he had founded through the Ministry of Internal Affairs.<sup>56</sup> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs had its secret department under the directorship of the author of *The Manuscript Found in Saragossa*, Jan Potocki, who published the Russian version of *Moniteur* – the *Journal du Nord*. Russia even had its own staff of subsidized writers, *plumes vendues*, in Paris who published complimentary articles about Russia in the Napoleonic *Journal de l'Empire*.<sup>57</sup>

Napoleonic surveillance was implemented to an even greater degree under Tsar Nicholas I who wanted to imitate the *petit caporal* in everything. A system similar to his for directing mass media – known as intellectual dams – not only severely restricted the number of printed sources, but also determined which of these few could cover political news. In the final analysis, blending the cult of Peter the Great with the cult of the Corsican would engender multiple variants of Russian Bonapartism and guided democracy, from Kerensky to Putin.<sup>58</sup>

## Bees and eagles: organizing imperial space

Although Russia never unified its empire with anything resembling the Napoleonic prefectures, Napoleon's emphasis on making communication efficient via imperial channels, such as roads, canals and the telegraph, supplied a valuable model. The Corps of Engineers of Means of Communication (1809) became the driving force of communication modernization in Russia. Established in 1809 in St. Petersburg as a result of an agreement between the emperors at Erfurt in 1808, it was modeled on the French School of Bridges and Roads (*École des Ponts et Chaussées*). While the Russians sent their young engineers to France for practical training,<sup>59</sup> Napoleon allowed four graduates of the *Ecole polytechnique* to go to St. Petersburg in 1810. Even during the war of 1812–1814, captured French military engineers who had served in the *Grande Armée* were teaching in Russia.<sup>60</sup>

In 1834, on the twentieth anniversary of the taking of Paris, Russia opened its first highway between Moscow and Petersburg, modeled on the Napoleonic *routes impériales* and built with the participation of these same French engineers. Although, in terms of utility, the highways would soon be overshadowed by the railways, Ralph Waldo Emerson reflected in 1850 on the Napoleonic Empire's principal legacy in the following terms: 'The main creation that outlived [Napoleon] were his spectacular roads.'<sup>61</sup> In Russia, after the Napoleonic wars, roads became the chief measure of comparison with foreign countries – Russian officers in occupied France found the quality of the roads most surprising, while the construction of highways in Russia was also considered a 'monument to [Alexander I's] reign'.<sup>62</sup>

The first half of the nineteenth century witnessed the end of an ambitious program in the Romanov Empire's core provinces to remodel the urban centers in the neoclassical style. Although Napoleon did not have the time to do the same in France, neoclassicism was imported into Russia as the empire style to regulate imperial space.<sup>63</sup> Thanks to architects taking inspiration from Napoleonic France, the dominant style of the imperial forum in the center of St. Petersburg was neoclassical. Adrian Zakharov, the creator of the admiralty building in the center of this forum, studied under J.-F. Chalgrin, who designed the monumental triumphal arch of the Place d'Etoile. Carlo Rossi, who designed the general staff headquarters opposite the imperial Winter Palace, went through practical training in Napoleonic France in 1802–1805. Auguste Montferrand who created the principal cathedral of the Russian Empire, the Isaac Cathedral, as well as a replica of the Vendôme Column – the Alexander Column – was a pupil of Napoleon's architects Ch. Percier and P. Fontaine. He took part in constructing the former Madeleine church as a temple to the glory of the *Grande Armée* and received the *Légion d'honneur* from Napoleon. The most important engineering

and urban construction decisions in St. Petersburg were also the work of a Frenchman, Antoine-François Mauduit, who came to Russia after the Erfurt meeting with the help of Napoleon's envoy Armand de Caulaincourt, and applied in St. Petersburg the know-how he had acquired during the revolutionary and imperial rebuilding of Paris.<sup>64</sup> One of the most famous Russian memorial projects related to the war of 1812–1814, the medallions of Fyodor Petrovich Tolstoy, borrowed the concept from Vivant Denon's commission that created medals to commemorate Napoleon's victories in Egypt,<sup>65</sup> while their composition often imitated the famous paintings of Jacques-Louis David.

## Conclusion

The Russian and the Napoleonic Empires were more than simple polar opposites. The negative exchanges were important, of course, and it was these that dominated the period 1812–1815. The many visual and structural examples of this include the Easter celebration on the Place de la Concorde in the place of Emperor Napoleon's statue inside the Kremlin; the Vertus parade as a mirror image of the Boulogne camp; the Cathedral of Christ the Savior versus the Madeleine Temple of the *Grande Armée*; the Holy Alliance instead of a new version of the Carolingian Europe. But there were also many examples of positive exchanges. Russia adapted to the new balance of power that Napoleon's Empire established in order to achieve its own strategic goals, especially where the two continental empires' interests reinforced each other against the maritime empire of Great Britain. The other potential for borrowing between the Napoleonic and Russian Empires emerged from the projects to modernize the imperial model initiated by M. M. Speranskii. The Muscovite empire, composed of lands and legitimized by submission, was evolving into a modern empire with a unified legal, economic and symbolic space. Yet, by the end of the 1830s, Russia abandoned the imperial nation project and decided to follow the way of a national-state empire, which eventually became one of the prime causes of its collapse after the next great conflict fought on its territory.

## Notes

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48. [Agathon Jean François Fain], *Manuscrit de mil huit cent douze, contenant le précis des événemens de cette année, pour servir à l'histoire de l'empereur Napoléon*, 2 vols (Paris, 1827), vol. 1, 232. These contacts would have shed light on the character and extent of real contacts and intended borrowings, had the State Council's archives not been destroyed by fire during the Paris Commune. The voluminous correspondence from Napoleonic France was confiscated from Speranskii after his fall from favor. Nikolai Golitsyn (ed.), *Opis bumag M. M. Speranskogo 1812 goda* (St. Petersburg, 1916), 24, 34, 50.
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61. Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Representative Men* (New York, 1995), 161.
62. Adjutant Prince Pavel Kiselyov to Emperor Alexander I, in *Graf P. D. Kiselev i ego vremia*, ed. Andrei Zabolotskii-Desiatovskii, 4 vols (St. Petersburg, 1882), vol. 1, 31.
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# 12

## What Lies behind the Glory? A Balance Sheet of the Napoleonic Era in Poland

*Jarosław Czuby*

In the collective memory of most European nations, the Napoleonic epoch is perceived as a period of ruinous wars, economic stagnation or humiliating foreign domination. The memory that has prevailed in Polish historical consciousness is a different one. This chapter explains the reasons for this specificity, which are deeply rooted in Poland's political experience and cultural attitudes, and in the mentality of the Polish people throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Although a positive memory of the Napoleonic era in Polish history prevailed in the long term, the emperor's impact on Polish politics, the economy and on social and cultural matters did, at times, provoke discordant opinions. Reacting to the news of the death of Polish commander-in-chief and French marshal Joseph Poniatowski at the Battle of Leipzig, Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski, former Russian minister of foreign affairs and leading advocate of the project to proclaim Tsar Alexander I the king of Poland, wrote in his private diary in 1813: 'Napoleon – madman and villain, has covered Poland with black mourning crepe.' That comment reflected the sorrow almost all Poles felt at the death of Prince Joseph, a brave and popular commander who personified hopes for rebuilding Poland under Napoleon's protection. But it also referred to the tens of thousands of Polish soldiers who perished on the battlefields between 1797 and 1813. In Czartoryski's opinion, they were the victims of Napoleon's ambition to dominate Europe.

Fifty years later Walerian Łukasiński, former officer in the army of the Duchy of Warsaw, leader of the anti-Russian conspiracy in the 1820s and Russian prisoner of state from 1822 until his death in 1868, wrote in his memoirs: 'Napoleon cheated the Poles permanently for his own profit – these words have been repeated to us millions of times in many languages. But the Poles, who are the most concerned in this matter, would never believe such a statement.' In his daily prayers in prison, Łukasiński thanked

God for 'sending our country such a great hero who resurrected a part of our homeland'.<sup>1</sup> Time has proven that Łukasiński's opinion was closer to what was felt by the majority of Poles. To explain this view of Napoleon's historical role, so divergent from that in other European nations, an initial assessment of the Napoleonic epoch in Poland is needed.

The immediate background to this era were the partitions of Poland in the last decades of the eighteenth century. Since the fourteenth century, the Kingdom of Poland had been united to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania through the Jagiellonian dynasty. After the parliamentary union of both states in 1569, Poland (known also as the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth) became one of the leading powers in east-central Europe, competing for dominance with Austria, Turkey, Sweden and the Grand Duchy of Moscovia. The state system established in the sixteenth century was a noble democracy in which the elective kings occupied a weak position and parliament (*Sejm*) played the dominant role, representing the interests of the Polonized nobility of both nations. The nobles considered themselves citizens (*obywatele*), consciously modeling themselves on the citizens of ancient Rome. Over time the terms nobility and citizenry became almost synonymous, and this terminology continued in use long into the nineteenth century.

In the eighteenth century, Poland was still one of the largest countries in Europe but its defective public administration restricted its ability to play an active role in the geopolitics of the region. The wars of the seventeenth century and fluctuations in the economy reduced the nobility's role in state matters. The parliament, an institution of crucial importance for statecraft, became a forum for rivalries between the magnates – powerful aristocratic landowners who used their influence to strengthen their families' position. For years the disputes and quarrels between their factions paralyzed attempts to reform the army, treasury and government. The crisis of noble democracy in Poland opened the way for the aggressive politics of Austria, Prussia and Russia. The attempt to strengthen the state during the, so-called, Great *Sejm* (1788–1792), inspired by Enlightenment ideology, came too late. The state ceased to exist after three partitions of its territory between neighboring powers in 1772, 1793 and 1795. The last and unsuccessful attempt to recover the Polish state's independence and former boundaries was the insurrection led by Tadeusz Kościuszko in 1794.<sup>2</sup>

The origins of Napoleonic involvement in Poland can be traced to the creation of Polish Legions to fight on behalf of the Republic of Lombardy, an initiative approved by General Bonaparte in 1797. Organizing the units was a result of the activity of Polish *émigrés* in Paris – politicians and officers who left the country after the failure of Kościuszko's uprising, to seek support for the idea of rebuilding Poland. Their main hope lay with revolutionary France waging war on Austria and proclaiming the principle of the sovereignty of nations. In emigré plans the forces commanded by General Jan Henryk Dąbrowski, composed of Polish soldiers and officers wearing

the national uniform, were to be the representatives of Polish national aspirations on European battlefields and in European politics. Many Poles believed that a brotherhood of arms between Polish and French soldiers, combatting together the enemies of the republic, would lead France to raise the question of restoring Poland in the peace negotiations with Austria. The Polish legions could also form the nucleus of a national military force in the event of a new uprising.

Contrary to those expectations, the peace treaty with Austria in 1801 contained no mention of a Polish cause. In 1802, the majority of the Polish Legion units were transferred to French service and sent to Saint Domingue to put down the slave uprising. The breakup of these units for the needs of a tropical war was a blow to the hopes of supporters of France in Poland. For their opponents, the deaths of several thousand Polish soldiers in the Saint Domingue war provided the key argument and the decisive proof of Bonaparte's treachery and ingratitude. It marked the beginning of a short period when many Poles were ready to give credence to the black legend of Napoleon.<sup>3</sup>

Within a few years, however, the position had completely changed. In November 1806, when Napoleon's *Grande Armée* entered the Polish lands under Prussian rule the great majority of Poles welcomed it enthusiastically. The level of this enthusiasm surprised even the French emperor, although it was he who inspired General Dąbrowski and former political *émigré* Józef Wybicki to issue the proclamation to the Polish people. In it they called upon their compatriots to support Napoleon as 'an avenger and creator' of Poland. The success of the pro-French action had to be a condition of regaining their own state: 'I will see, he told us, if Poles are worthy to be a nation.'<sup>4</sup>

Although these words offended some with Polish national aspirations, noblemen and townsmen responded to the call with large-scale efforts to organize the provisional Polish authorities and military units and deliver food supplies to the *Grande Armée*. This response not only helped Napoleon in his conduct of the war, but it also forced him to use all his political skill to keep the activity of the Poles within reasonable limits, in the interests of his *raison d'état*. For while he was ready for the struggle against Russia and Prussia, he did not intend to openly declare the restoration of Poland, as that might push Austria to come into the war on the side of the other two partitioning powers.<sup>5</sup>

By June 1807 the country had been ravaged by war and stripped of resources through requisitions and extraordinary taxes. But all the territory from the former Prussian partition was managed by a Polish civil administration and about 20,000 Polish soldiers were fighting as allies of Napoleon's army.<sup>6</sup> The rewards for all these efforts appeared rather disappointing at first glance. The negotiations at Tilsit between Napoleon and Alexander I produced a compromise solution to the, so-called, Polish question. Contrary

to the expectations of many Poles, the Kingdom of Poland was not restored. The lands from the former Prussian partition became the Duchy of Warsaw with Frederick Augustus, King of Saxony, as its ruler. The territory of the new state encompassed only about one-seventh of the former Poland, which provoked discontent among Poles. But the sense of disappointment was soon overcome. Not only was the state no smaller than many others in Europe but, after the war of 1809 against Austria, the Duchy expanded its borders to cover a territory of 155,000 square kilometers with a population of 4.3 million. This territorial enlargement was a result of the successful campaign of Prince Joseph Poniatowski, who, after first allowing Austrian corps to take part of the Duchy, suddenly cut its lines of communication and entered Galicia (the Polish lands annexed by Austria in 1772 and 1795), taking nearly all of that territory. After 1809 there was a widely held conviction that the Duchy was only the first stage towards recreating Poland.<sup>7</sup>

The first months of Napoleon's war with Russia in 1812 seemed to confirm this belief. On 28 June, a few days after the first units of the *Grande Armée* had crossed the Niemen, an extraordinary session of the Diet (*Sejm*) of the Duchy of Warsaw established the General Confederacy of the Kingdom of Poland and declared that, 'the Kingdom of Poland is re-established and the Polish nation is again united in one body'.<sup>8</sup> The total number of soldiers raised by the Poles, including the new regiments organized in Lithuania, exceeded 100,000. After the French, Polish soldiers constituted the second largest national contingent in Napoleon's army.<sup>9</sup>

The apogee of Polish hopes of regaining a state under Napoleon's protectorate ended with the retreat of the emperor's army from Moscow. In January 1813 the Duchy was occupied by Russian forces. In the same year the remnants of the Polish forces left the country to join Napoleon on the battlefields of Saxony. After the Battle of Leipzig and the death of Poniatowski, the Polish regiments retreated to France. In the opinion of many in 1814 they fought more for national honor' than for political opportunity.<sup>10</sup> After Napoleon's first abdication, and on his advice, Polish generals made a request to Alexander I in the name of the army for permission to return to the country: 'We dare to flatter ourselves that our proceeding on the way of honor would be the guarantee of our gratitude for Your Majesty.'<sup>11</sup> The request met with a favorable response from the tsar. 'Gentlemen, we are used to valuing each other in the battlefields. It is time for us to end this malevolence that has divided our two nations too long already. You have the right to gain an appropriate position among the nations of Europe. I shall use all my power to ensure it for you' declared the Russian ruler during the ceremonial parade of the Polish regiments in Saint-Denis on 24 April 1814.<sup>12</sup> Fourteen months later, the final act of the Congress of Vienna established the Kingdom of Poland with Alexander I as its ruler. In this way, the tsar realized his plan to secure Russian borders with a small buffer state and to enlarge Russia's sphere of influence in this part of Europe.

The new state was smaller than the Duchy of Warsaw, but its creation gave Poles reason to hope. The Kingdom was united with Russia only through the person of the ruler and had its own parliament, laws, institutions and army. The liberal constitution granted by Alexander I guaranteed civic rights (including freedom of the press) and ensured voting rights to about 100,000 citizens of the kingdom (at that time, the number of electors in France did not exceed 80,000).<sup>13</sup> However, events over the next few years proved that Alexander I's liberalism towards the Poles was merely a short-term experiment. During the nineteenth century the Polish national laws and privileges guaranteed in Vienna were constantly violated. One consequence was that the Poles came to look back on the Napoleonic era as a moment of great political opportunity for regaining their own state. It was a source of national pride founded on the glory won on the battlefields.

What was the reality behind that glory? To answer that question in full it is necessary to compare the situation of Poland before and after the Napoleonic era. The obvious starting observation must be that after the treaties concluded by Austria, Prussia and Russia in 1795, the Polish state, whose traditions went back to the tenth century, ceased to exist. Its demise had manifold implications in the political, economic, social and moral domains.

The lands of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth that had formed a single economic entity were divided into three parts, with new frontiers and customs duties that seriously limited commercial contacts and inhibited economic growth. Its own state was succeeded by one that was alien, whose laws, institutions and official languages were unfamiliar to a majority of inhabitants. The visible signs of political change were new taxes, higher than in Polish times, and, in the case of peasants and townsmen, large scale conscription that forced tens of thousands of recruits into the ranks of the Austrian, Prussian and Russian armies. The wealthy and educated urban elites lost the opportunity for political emancipation offered by the reforms of the Great *Sejm*, which had opened up careers for them in the army and civil administration, given them the possibility to buy land, and allowed their representatives to participate in the parliament. Whereas the constitution adopted by the *Sejm* on 3 May 1791 had gone some way towards reducing the divisions between the social estates, the legal systems of the Austrian, Prussian and Russian monarchies reinforced the barriers dividing them. The new rulers recognized the Polish nobility (*szlachta*) as privileged landowners and as the group that monopolized officer ranks in the army and higher posts in the civil service. But any potential for achieving individual careers by this route was limited in practice by the new rulers' distrust of the *szlachta*, treating the group as disloyal and strongly attached to Polish traditions.<sup>14</sup>

Such an opinion was not unfounded. The nobility was left particularly aggrieved by the extinction of the Polish state. Patriotic sentiment among

the *szlachta* and its attachment to the traditions of the Polish state made the process of gaining a new identity and loyalty within the Prussian monarchy difficult, if not impossible. Dislike of Prussian, as well as Austrian and Russian, rule also resulted from the new status of the *szlachta* within the state. Former citizens of the Commonwealth (*Rzeczpospolita*) became subjects of the absolute rulers of the partitioning powers. In the Russian, Prussian or Austrian states the nobility could serve these rulers but there was no political sphere for civic activity. There were, for example, no institutions comparable to the former *Sejm* or the *sejmik*, provincial assemblies of the nobility from which deputies to the *Sejm* or local government authorities were elected. The specter of an absolutism that would destroy civic rights had haunted generations of Polish nobility between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries and now it had become a reality. The attitudes of the nobility and many townsmen were also shaped by the frustrating reality of political defeat, the necessity of paying obeisance to the new ruler, Prussian repression of the leading participants in the 1794 insurrection and the highhandedness of the Prussians in dealings with their new subjects.<sup>15</sup> These factors combined to create a widespread hostility to Prussian rule. The full extent of that hostility was revealed in 1806–1807 and explains why Poles welcomed the *Grande Armée's* invasion of the territory of the Prussian partition as an immense political opportunity to re-establish their own state.

As noted earlier, many judged that the tangible benefits of supporting Napoleon would be meagre to begin with. Besides the small territorial extent of the Duchy of Warsaw, there were other reasons why Napoleon's protectorate raised doubts or objections. The constitution imposed by the French emperor introduced a political system in the Duchy that was far removed from the Polish tradition of noble democracy. Most of the nobility was attached to the constitution of 3 May 1791. The political system it found acceptable was based on a balance between the ruler and parliament. While strengthening the position of the king in state matters, the constitution of 1791 also guaranteed political activity by the citizenry at the local and central levels. By contrast, Napoleon's constitution for the Duchy installed a highly centralized system with the ruler in the dominant position. Concentrating in his hands all executive power ('The government is in the person of the king'<sup>16</sup>) including supreme command of the army, a monopoly of legislative initiative and control over the judiciary, he became the *spiritus movens* of political life. The importance of institutions used by the nobility to express civic freedom was reduced. Under the constitution, the *Sejm* was transformed into a smoothly functioning voting machine with limited scope to oppose the king's government. The *sejmiki* became assemblies in which the deputies to *Sejm* and members of advisory councils for local administration were elected. 'Resilient government has replaced anarchy', announced Napoleon, commenting on the Duchy's constitution.<sup>17</sup> Many



Poles who nurtured ideas of political freedom and citizenship derived from the pre-partition era were of a different opinion, seeing in the Napoleonic system mainly the primacy of an executive power with the potential to oppress the citizens. In the opinion of many noblemen the same threat was also present in the administration's wide sphere of competence and the growing number of officials.<sup>18</sup>

According to the constitution, the *Code Napoléon* was introduced in the Duchy of Warsaw as the source of civil law. This decision caused anxiety in many quarters. The most controversial provision of the new law was the establishment of civil marriages and divorces, which was criticized for depriving the act of marriage of its sacramental character. There were also more pragmatic objections to the new law. According to its critics (who even came from within the Duchy's ruling elite), the legal system introduced by the Code was not adapted to the Polish judiciary, especially since there was no official translation and a number of the French notions and terms were unknown in Polish legal terminology. The critics of the Code, or rather of its hasty introduction, were correct in so far as the sheer scale of the obligatory changes in the judiciary disrupted the working of the courts for a considerable time.<sup>19</sup>

The economic impact on the Duchy from Napoleonic policies was another cause of discontent. The imposition of the Continental Blockade cut trade with Great Britain, the main customer for Polish grain, thus undermining the country's exports and its economy based on agriculture. The income of landowners, and with it the value of their estates, plummeted.<sup>20</sup> Together these changes led many to believe that the new system threatened to destroy the nobility, which was seen as the mainstay of patriotism and citizenship. The mood in the Duchy steadily worsened, in line with the increasingly catastrophic situation of the state treasury, brought close to bankruptcy by an inefficient tax system and rising expenditure on administration and the military. The cost of maintaining the army absorbed three quarters of the state budget in 1811.<sup>21</sup> The total number serving in the army of the Duchy and the Polish regiments in French service is estimated to have reached 160,000–180,000 in the years 1806–1814, representing 4.2 per cent of the population.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, from 1808 several thousand Polish soldiers served in far away Spain. The negative verdict on Napoleon's protectorate was completed by the losses suffered by the army. Accurate casualty numbers for 1806–1814 are hard to establish, but there is no doubt that fighting alongside Napoleon for the political chance to rebuild Poland cost tens of thousands of lives. Officers and soldiers died in battle or from disease, went missing in action or were taken prisoner of war. In 1812–1813 alone, several thousand were exiled to the Caucasus or Siberia.<sup>23</sup>

Yet the sacrifices involved in marching for a golden eagle did not produce attempts to throw off Napoleon's yoke. Anti-Napoleonic opposition never spread beyond small groups of malcontents. The Duchy's ruling elite ignored

Alexander I's attempt to gain the support of the Poles in 1811. The majority of Poles in the Duchy, and their compatriots under Russian rule, accepted that the disadvantages of remaining in Napoleon's sphere of influence were temporary, and they remained convinced that his protectorate brought them undeniable benefits. They were confident that supporting the French emperor was a way of restoring their own state. As the events of 1812 were to prove, such an opinion was not unfounded although the outcome of the war put an end to the political plan for rebuilding the Polish state.

The prospect of political opportunity stimulated Poles to military efforts and enabled them to participate in state matters. The final assessment of Napoleon's protection over the Duchy of Warsaw must also include the organization of the Polish administration, judiciary and education system – for example, between 1807 and 1814, 911 new elementary schools were founded. It can be assumed that the scale of these efforts to rebuild the state, at odds with the stereotype of Polish anarchy, did not go unnoticed by the European ruling elite. Whereas the Third Partition in 1795 had finally liquidated the Polish state, the Congress of Vienna in 1815 established a Kingdom of Poland united with Russia by its constitution. The main factor behind this decision was Alexander I's attempt to enlarge the Russian sphere of influence. But the will to regain their own state, which the Poles demonstrated between 1806 and 1814, supported his diplomacy during the negotiations in Vienna, by supplying arguments based on the rights of nations. In accordance with this principle, the Congress decided that: 'The Poles, who are respective subjects of Russia, Austria and Prussia, shall obtain a representation and national institutions, regulated according to the degree of political consideration that each of the governments to which they belong shall judge expedient and proper to grant them.'<sup>24</sup> Such guarantees, accepted and proclaimed by the European great powers, had lasting consequences and played an important role in Polish diplomacy in 1831, 1864 and 1914–1918. The embedding of the Polish question in European politics was one consequence of the Napoleonic era.<sup>25</sup>

Its impact could also be observed in other areas. For the nobility, with its tradition of civic activity in political matters, Napoleon's protection brought a return to familiar and valued practices in the public sphere. When the situation demanded an immediate response, as over the Prussian partition in 1806–1807, Galicia in 1809 or Lithuania in 1812, meetings of the nobility were convened. Their participants proclaimed confederacies under Napoleon the Great, determined the size of public sacrifices, in terms of money or recruits, and elected local leaders of provisional authorities. In more settled times, the *sejmiki* and the *Sejm* did duty for the former noble democracy, despite their limited competences and the restrictions on political freedom imposed by the constitution. The latter were often circumvented using parliamentary subterfuge, like informal sessions held after a debate had officially closed and in which there was unrestricted freedom

of discussion. It was by this means that the *Sejm* petitioned the king in 1811 concerning ways of improving the state's finances and administration. In the same year, the deputies rejected the government's project for a new penal code. Such methods and opposition activities were accepted by Frederick Augustus.<sup>26</sup> Napoleon himself was not alarmed when he heard about them. As a pragmatic politician he understood the political situation specific to the country and recognized that the Poles had an interest in remaining under his protection.<sup>27</sup> Besides, it would have been difficult to maintain the Duchy in his sphere of influence – a state on the periphery of the Grand Empire – by force alone. But this political freedom, although limited, survived for only the first years of the Kingdom of Poland's existence. Alexander I and Nicolas I were more despotic and less pragmatic rulers than Napoleon, and the constitutional and parliamentary period of Polish history in the nineteenth century ended with the defeat of the November 1831 uprising. The years spent under foreign rule, when the rights of citizens and national groups (apart from Galicia's autonomy after 1867) were curtailed, shaped the Polish historical memory. Contrary to the experience of many European nations, the memory of the Duchy of Warsaw and the Napoleonic epoch provided subsequent generations of Poles with examples that showed the significance of civic activity and its recovery was essential.

The changes in the political sphere during Napoleon's protection, though important for the aspirations of the nobility, were not limited to this social group. The constitution of the Duchy of Warsaw abolished the serfdom of peasants and proclaimed the fundamental principle of equality before the law. The right to vote in parliamentary elections was granted according to property, education or merit in military or public service, arts and crafts. The representatives of townsmen and peasants appeared among the deputies in the Diet as well as among army officers and administrators. Initially, only a few were able to compete with the better-educated or well-connected nobility but the way was opened for the political and social emancipation of the lower classes. The *Code Napoléon*, despite the confusion that surrounded its introduction, had a similar effect by modernizing the Polish legal system and judiciary. As all these principles and rules were retained in the Kingdom of Poland, they exerted a lasting influence, expanding the sphere of participation in public life for new classes, and creating favorable conditions for the formation of the modern Polish national consciousness in the nineteenth century.<sup>28</sup>

The effects of modernization are especially visible in the economic sphere. For a long while, historians based their interpretation of the era on the complaints about the catastrophic state of the Duchy's agriculture and commerce that abound in memoirs and correspondence from the period. More recent studies, however, show that the difficulties many landowners experienced as a result of the Continental Blockade were only one facet of economic reality. Traditional production on landed estates incurred financial

losses, but the difficulties of selling grain abroad due to the blockade also forced some changes in agriculture. The overabundance of cereals led many landowners to diversify into breweries and distilleries or raising sheep. The latter favored the growth of weaving or drapery manufacture. Moreover, while members of the influential class of landowners were writing memoirs, men of a new class were doing business in industry, commerce and finance. The state, and in particular the army, created a vast market for supplies of food, uniforms, equipment, wagons, horses, medicines and the like. For individual suppliers (mainly of Jewish or German descent) who were prepared to risk their capital in government contracts this represented a lucrative opportunity, especially as the chronic shortage of money in the state treasury put them in a strong bargaining position.

The changes in the economy and to the law during the Duchy of Warsaw prepared the way for a new era, one that gradually became a reality in the nineteenth century, and in which social prestige was based on property and money rather than on landownership and birth. The profits from military supplies in the Duchy of Warsaw launched the careers of many families of financiers and bankers in nineteenth-century Poland, like the Kronenbergs, Bergsohns, Epsteins and others.<sup>29</sup> Later on, many of these families sought to consolidate their new social position by buying landed estates, thereby changing the character of the landowning group based on the former nobility. The abolition of serfdom allowed the peasants to leave their villages in search of a better life. From a longer-term perspective, this was to be an important factor in the development of towns and industry. The growth in the bureaucracy that accompanied the establishment of the Napoleonic state model and the development of the Polish education system, accelerated the process of forming a group of *inteligencja* composed of educated men employed in offices, schools, universities or the press. Over the early decades of the nineteenth century, they played an important role in Polish social and political life, assuming the role of guides and educators of the nation. The fundamental changes in the political, social and economic spheres appeared gradually, but there is no doubt that it was the Napoleonic epoch that opened the way to modernity in a large part of the Polish lands.

The impressive Polish military effort in the years 1797–1814 was also at the origin of a number of lasting changes, despite its human and material costs and the moral dilemmas raised by the Polish contingent's participation in the war in Spain. The Napoleonic campaigns were an excellent school of warcraft. The army of the Kingdom of Poland organized after 1814 was based on a large cadre of Napoleonic generals, officers and non-commissioned officers. Their experience and ability to arouse enthusiasm among soldiers enabled them to face the Russian army with success on the battlefields of 1831. Despite the preponderance of the enemy, the first months of the war brought significant victories that many interpreted as a revival of the Napoleonic spirit in the Polish army.

In the political strategy of the patriotic conspirators and freedom fighters of nineteenth-century Polish *irredenta* and their supporters, the memory of the years 1797–1814 forged the idea of France as a natural ally of the Poles. An idea also fostered by strong pro-Polish sympathies in the 1820s and 1840s among French liberals and republicans, reflected in popular iconography, poetry and songs, like those by Casimir Delavigne or Pierre-Jean de Béranger, referring to the comradeship between the two nations in Napoleon's day.<sup>30</sup> The belief in the possibility of French support strongly influenced Polish diplomacy during the uprising of November 1830–1831 and again during that of January 1863–1864, especially as Napoleon III promoted his political image as the protector of the rights of oppressed nationalities. The concept of the Franco-Polish alliance played an important role in the diplomacy and defense strategy of the Republic of Poland from 1918 until 1939. Such a choice was partly an effect of the political isolation of a state surrounded by hostile neighbors (except Romania and Hungary). But there were also more profound reasons for this approach towards past and present Franco-Polish relations. The interpretation of the Napoleonic era principally as a period of heroic efforts to restore the Polish state was among the most popular topics in state propaganda and the historical education of young people. Prince Joseph Poniatowski, General Jan Henryk Dąbrowski, *chevau-légers* from Somosierra, and many other figures of the Napoleonic era, provided models of courage, patriotism and honor. Napoleon himself was portrayed almost as a Polish national hero and as a kind of guarantor of a Franco-Polish alliance. In this way, the Napoleonic legend was to some extent 'nationalized'.<sup>31</sup>

It is worth noting that this form of official propaganda between 1918 and 1939 is not comparable with communist attempts post-1945 to force upon Poles the very opposite sentiment to the collective memory, expressed in the slogan, 'eternal brotherhood of the Polish and Russian nations'. The presence of the Napoleonic legend in the public sphere of the Second Republic (*Druga Rzeczpospolita*) was not an effect of crude social engineering. On the contrary, it reflected the historical consciousness of the ruling elite and large numbers of Poles. It resulted from the perception of an era that had dominated literature and painting, created by the collective *imaginarium* of Poles for decades. Popular painters like Juliusz, Wojciech, Jerzy Kossak and many others filled the imagination of their compatriots with visions of battles and charges, not forgetting beautiful girls and handsome uhlans. At the popular level, the Napoleonic era forged the romantic legend of Polish cavalryman, horse and sabre. Even writers more critical of Napoleon, like Stefan Żeromski or Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer, who stressed in their novels the moral cost of Polish soldiers fighting for the French emperor in Saint Domingue or in Spain, did not differ from others in seeing Napoleon's policies as a chance to rebuild Poland and in emphasizing the heroism of Polish soldiers.<sup>32</sup> A positive assessment of the era also prevailed in discussions

among historians concerning the political, social and economic gains and losses associated with Napoleon's protection. The most noticeable proof of the era's influence on Polish historical imagination was the resolution of the Polish *Sejm* in 1927. An assembly composed of different political groups established *Dąbrowski's Mazurka* as the national anthem; this popular song from the Napoleonic era contains the significant words: 'Bonaparte has shown us the way to victory'.<sup>33</sup>

The memory of the Napoleonic era in Polish history remained strong even after the Second World War, despite efforts by communist party propaganda to represent Napoleon's attitudes towards Poles as another historical example of the western powers' cynical politics towards Poland. This attempt to modify historical consciousness was largely unsuccessful, although in the 1960s the public discourse concerning the Napoleonic era became more critical and stressed the moral and human costs of Napoleon's protection. The discussion in the press provoked by Andrzej Wajda's film *Popioły i diamenty* (*Ashes and Diamonds*), referring to the tragic experience of Poles during the Second World War, proved that the events of 1797–1815 still had a significant resonance in the historical consciousness.<sup>34</sup> Historians debated the importance of the changes in the spheres of law and social structure initiated in Poland by Napoleon. The majority of Poles concentrated on the heroic vision of the epoch.

The era's impact on the historical memory and national consciousness of Poles in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries created a specific kind of social and cultural phenomenon of the Napoleonic legend. Its origins are not difficult to explain. Whatever Napoleon's motives over the Polish question were, he unquestionably offered Poles the political opportunity to rebuild their state. No one in the nineteenth century offered them more – indeed, that was the tragedy of Polish history in this period. Moreover, during the difficult periods under Austrian, Prussian and Russian rule, the Napoleonic legend (and more specifically the legend of Napoleon and the Poles) offered them the memories of glory and raised hopes for the future. These factors in combination ensured that the positive assessment of the Napoleonic era in Polish history would persist for many generations of Poles.

## Notes

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# 13

## The Danish State and the Napoleonic Wars

*Rasmus Glenthøj*

### **The Danish state**

At the turn of the nineteenth century, the territory of the Danish state stretched more than 1,700 kilometers from North Cape in Norway to the banks of the Elbe in Germany. In addition to the kingdoms of Denmark and Norway, the state comprised the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, the dependencies of Iceland, the Faroe Islands and Greenland, and overseas colonies in the West and East Indies and on the Gold Coast. In total, 2.5 million people lived within its borders, bound together by loyalty towards the same king and a patriotic ideology. This overextended coastal state with its many islands and overseas provinces was difficult to defend. The navy was therefore vital to the Danish-Norwegian union.

Since the end of the Northern War in 1721 the Danish-Norwegian state had maintained neutrality in all European conflicts. The state was regarded as an island of peace in the European sea of unrest, setting an example that its inhabitants considered worthy of imitation by the rest of the world. Neutrality, in the words of Foreign Minister Andreas Peter Bernstorff, ensured the security and prosperity of the state. The traditional interpretation in Danish-Norwegian historiography was that Denmark-Norway had given up all hope of territorial expansion or revenge against Sweden, which had annexed several Norwegian and Danish provinces in the course of the seventeenth century. The central policy objective was to defend the state in its existing form against any external threat, which to all intents and purposes meant Sweden, which still had its eyes on Norway. A new study, however, has called this view into question, focusing on a fairly aggressive Danish alliance policy in the eighteenth century and the attempt to win the Swedish throne in 1743. On that occasion, as was to happen again in 1809 and 1810, the Swedish king was without an heir, so it fell to the estates to elect the next crown prince of Sweden. Despite bribes and threats of war, the estates did not select the Danish nominee.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century the twin kingdoms of Denmark and Norway, together with Sweden and Prussia, had been the most militarized states in Europe. This was no longer the case. Growing prosperity masked the fact that the Danish state had become weaker militarily in relation to the rest of Europe during its long period of peace. The integrity of the Danish state depended upon the interests of the great powers. Therefore, Russia played a decisive role and since entering into the eternal alliance in 1773 it had been the protector of a Denmark-Norway, which had, in effect, become a Russian client state. The alliance was directed against Sweden, which wanted to regain the areas of Finland lost to Russia and conquer Norway. The Danish and Norwegian armies, which were separated for administrative reasons, each consisted of approximately 40,000 men. This was not large by the standards of the Napoleonic era, but the Danish navy was still a force to be reckoned with in the Baltic, where it had more than twenty ships of the line and a larger number of frigates and smaller ships.

### The First Battle of Copenhagen

The Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars mobilized resources on an unprecedented scale for the gigantic duel between Britain and France. Although this conflict initially benefitted enterprising Danish merchants, it also had the effect of pulling Denmark briefly onto the center stage of international politics. Officially, the absolutist Danish state was ruled by Christian VII, but the king's schizophrenia had led the crown prince to assume power in a *coup d'état* in 1784. After the death of the long-serving foreign minister, Andreas Peter Bernstorff, the heir to the throne ruled increasingly autocratically, including pursuing a more aggressive policy of neutrality. Backed by the merchant elite and the finance minister, Count Schimmelmann, Crown Prince Frederick provided escorts for trade convoys and refused Great Britain the right to inspect Danish merchant vessels, considered an infringement of Danish neutrality. After a skirmish in the English Channel, Denmark took the initiative in forming the Russian-led Second League of Armed Neutrality.

The new Danish policy and the involvement with the League were based on an unrealistic assessment of the state's military power. The British seized all Danish and Norwegian ships in their ports, occupied the state's colonies in the West Indies and sent a fleet to Copenhagen in March 1801 to persuade Crown Prince Frederick to leave the League. Leaving the League, however, would mean running the risk of reprisals from Russia, Sweden and Prussia, and Frederick and the government could see no alternative to fighting Great Britain.

The result was the First Battle of Copenhagen. After five hours of fighting and with 1,000 dead on each side, a ceasefire was agreed. Although the Danes later claimed it as a moral victory, the Battle of

Copenhagen was a decisive British military victory. The Danish line of defense was virtually broken, leaving the capital open to a British bombardment. Nonetheless, the fear of Russia and the League still prevented the Danish government from acceding to British demands. Negotiations were at a deadlock and hostilities on the brink of being resumed. The Danish state was saved from disaster only by the murder of Tsar Paul, which allowed the Danes to suspend their membership of the League of Armed Neutrality. After this near fatal experience with an offensive policy of armed neutrality, Denmark returned to a more cautious strategy that took account of British maritime supremacy and French dominance on the continent. However, the course of political and military events between 1805 and 1807 frustrated the Danish desire to avoid dangerous confrontations. France now controlled Northern Germany, and in December 1806 Napoleon decreed the Continental System. Britain responded in kind with the Order in Council of January 1807.

## **The Second Battle of Copenhagen**

The Peace of Tilsit was a death sentence for Danish neutrality. Under the terms of this secret alliance between Russia and France it was decided that the neutral state would be forced to join the Continental System. This meant Denmark would soon be confronted with a choice between Britain on one side, and France and Russia on the other, with both sides having the power to threaten the very existence of the Danish State. France could overrun Jutland and the duchies that supplied Norway with grain. Britain on the other hand was in a position to cut the link between Denmark and Norway and occupy the Danish colonies and dependencies.

The governments in Copenhagen and London did not know of the secret protocols, but the British accurately guessed what the peace agreement would entail and prepared an expedition against Denmark to secure control of its navy. From a superficial examination of the situation it might seem surprising that the British ministers saw the expedition as crucial, since the Royal Navy far outgunned its Danish counterpart. In fact, the British fleet was stretched almost to the limit by its activities at sea and by the blockade of hostile ports. In 1807 the Danish fleet was the fifth largest in the world, with high quality ships manned by skilled crews and officers. Furthermore, there was a danger the Danish navy might join forces with the state's traditional protector – and Napoleon's new ally – Russia, whose Baltic fleet was the fourth largest in the world. It would then be able to threaten Britain's access to the Baltic, which was vital for the British economy, for British grain imports and for the Royal Navy's supplies of naval stores. In addition, if the Danish navy fell into Napoleon's hands, the French could use it to challenge British naval dominance or to mount a landing in the British Isles.

A British envoy was promptly dispatched to Holstein where the Danish crown prince was stationed, together with the bulk of the Danish army, protecting the border against a French invasion. Frederick was presented with three options. The first was for Denmark to join the British; in that case, however, the Danish navy would be entirely under British command. The second was for Denmark to remain neutral; but in that case the navy would have to be handed over to the British for the remainder of the war. The third option was war with Britain. Neither of the first two options was acceptable to Denmark, since the navy was central to the defense of the Danish state. However, the Danish government did not want war, and if the British terms had been better or if the French ultimatum had reached the crown prince before the British demands, the Danish government might well have sided with Great Britain. As it was, the Danes refused to take sides, with the result that a decision was taken for them. A British expeditionary force of 30,000 troops landed outside Copenhagen, while the Royal Navy prevented the Danish army stationed in the duchies from coming to the aid of the capital. After a short siege the British decided upon a bombardment of Copenhagen to secure control of the Danish navy. This bombardment was one of the most intense prior to World War I and cost the lives of some 200 civilians and 200 military. After three days, Copenhagen surrendered and the British seized the Danish fleet.

The bombardment and fall of Copenhagen and the loss of the navy shocked the inhabitants of the Danish state and created an intense anti-British feeling amongst Danes in general and in the crown prince in particular. However, while Frederick was not the most astute of politicians or greatest of generals, neither was he quite as irrational or as intent on an alliance with Napoleon as many historians have claimed. Frederick admired the emperor as a military commander, but he detested his policies and considered him an untrustworthy usurper. The Danish foreign minister, for his part, described France as a tyrannical power.

Neutrality had never been a viable alternative for Denmark after Tilsit, but after the bombardment of Copenhagen it became impossible. Not only was the Danish state, following the loss of the navy, unable to defend its neutrality, but Denmark could also expect an ultimatum from Napoleon to either join the Continental System or have Schleswig, Holstein and Jutland occupied. In that case, it was very likely that the British would simply occupy Zealand again. In other words, in the autumn of 1807, the French emperor seemed to be the only one who could or would guarantee the integrity of the Danish state. The result was the Franco-Danish alliance of Fontainebleau and Denmark's accession to the Continental System. Napoleon promised Denmark subsidies, favorable trade conditions and French assistance to regain its navy from the British – promises that were never honored.

## **War, blockade and bankruptcy**

Initially, the state's Norwegian and German populations both supported the policies of the government, but as time went on and as the hardships of war intensified, discontent grew. It was of vital importance that the loss of the navy and the British blockade of Norway reduced corn imports for the starving Norwegian population to a trickle. Furthermore, the breakdown of communication resulted in the creation of a Norwegian government commission and increased autonomy. In time, growing numbers of Norwegians came to see the war as a Danish war waged against the interests of the Norwegian people. This encouraged the emergence of separatist tendencies, especially within the merchant elite, whose members suffered greatly from the war against Great Britain.

With the loss of the navy, Danes and Norwegians had to turn to guerrilla-style tactics at sea, building some 300 gun boats, hundreds of coastal batteries and equipping vast numbers of privateers. But while this strategy had some success in harrying British trade to and from the Baltic, British control over Danish and Norwegian waters was never seriously threatened. During the war 7,000 Norwegian and Danish sailors were taken prisoner and close to 1,400 ships were seized.

The accession to the Continental System made all commerce with Britain illegal. Some Danes and Norwegians embraced economic warfare and started patriotic societies in an effort to turn Denmark and Norway into self-sufficient units. These societies, recruiting from among civil servants and the merchant class, enjoyed some success, but so too did smuggling, even though the Danish authorities – for the most part – enforced the Continental Blockade diligently out of fear of Napoleon.

Throughout the war there were constant rumors and thinly veiled threats from the emperor that France would annex the duchies and occupy Jutland if the Danes did not comply with the dictates from Paris. An occupation of the Jutland peninsula would have been a devastating blow in its own right, but in addition it would have cut Norway off from all grain supplies, causing an even greater civilian disaster. As it was, however, the Continental System itself had a crippling effect on trade and caused discontent within the state.

As early as April 1808 British intelligence reported that, to all intents and purposes, commerce in the Danish state was non-existent. Norway was hardest hit since Great Britain was traditionally the main market for Norwegian products. Timber exports, which with fish made up the bulk of Norwegian exports, fell by 99 per cent between 1806 and 1808. The result was an economic and social disaster. The extent of popular dissatisfaction forced Frederick VI (king from 1808) to allow a, so-called, licensed trade in 1809. Danes and Norwegians were issued with British licenses and

Danish letters of passage that allowed them to slip through the Continental Blockade. This improved conditions in Norway in particular and started a period of wild speculation. Furthermore, it greatly facilitated Denmark in supplying grain to Norway, since Danish ships did not have to brave the British blockade. This system continued until 1812 when Frederick VI caved in to new French threats of annexing the duchies.

The end of the licensed trade strained the economy even further. Since 1807 tax and customs revenues had plummeted, while military expenses and the public debt soared to unprecedented levels. The government tried to solve the problem not only by raising taxes but also by printing ever-larger quantities of bills, which in a few years caused hyperinflation of close to 400 per cent. Especially badly hit by this inflation were people on fixed incomes, including government officials, thereby creating the conditions for rampant corruption. The crisis came to a head in January 1813 when the state went bankrupt, whereupon both the economy and the people's confidence in the king collapsed.

## **War with Sweden**

The alliance with France committed the Danish state to supporting the efforts of the emperor and the tsar to force Sweden to join the Continental System. Since Gustav IV did not yield, Denmark was unwillingly dragged into war with Sweden, thereby supporting Russia's attempt to conquer Finland contrary to its own interests. The Danish Foreign Ministry was well aware that a Russian conquest of Finland would make Denmark less important as an ally and could result in Russia accepting Swedish claims on Norway in an effort to avoid Swedish revanchism.

The strategy in 1808 was to support the Russian invasion by landing a combined Franco-Danish army under Marshal Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte in southern Sweden and invading western Sweden from Norway. But bad communications, poor intelligence, logistical problems and unresolved questions of command between Napoleon, Bernadotte and Frederick VI delayed the invasion until the end of March 1808. By that time the Royal Navy had returned to Danish waters, effectively putting a stop to the plan. Matters were made worse when the Spanish corps of the French invasion army rebelled on learning that Napoleon had seized power in Spain.

The cancellation of the Franco-Danish offensive in the south was used by Gustav IV to launch an invasion of Norway. However, it was poorly planned and did not receive the expected British support. The assault quickly lost momentum in the face of Norwegian resistance and the Swedish expeditionary corps had to retreat across the border. The war against Sweden was deeply unpopular in Norway, but it did spark national patriotic sentiments among the Norwegian elite while also encouraging ideas of greater autonomy or even full separation from Denmark.

By the end of 1808 all of Finland was occupied by Russia and an invasion of Sweden proper was imminent. There was widespread pressure on King Gustav from the army, the social elites and the general public to acquiesce to French demands – for example, to cede Finland, join the Continental System and declare war on Britain – and when he refused he was overthrown in a *coup d'état* in March 1809. This paved the way for a peace settlement between Russia and Sweden, in which the former hinted that the latter might, in time, receive Norway as compensation for the loss of Finland.

In Sweden the deposed king's aged and childless uncle was elected the new king as Charles XIII. This opened up new possibilities. Since Sweden was without a crown prince, the idea emerged within ruling circles in Stockholm, Copenhagen and Christiania (Oslo) that if the Swedish estates were to elect Frederick VI as the heir presumptive it could put an end to the war and the age-old rivalry within Scandinavia. However, the Danish monarch severely damaged his own prospects by offending the envoys of the new Swedish government, remarking that he did not negotiate with 'insurgents'. The Danish king's candidature for the Swedish throne was further weakened by his authoritarian image, by the age-old animosity between the Danes and Swedes and, most of all, by the lack of strong French support.

In Norway, the majority of the government commission under the leadership of Prince Christian August supported Frederick's candidature. But others within the elite wished to create a Swedish-Norwegian union with substantial Norwegian autonomy by electing Christian August as Swedish crown prince, counting on his popularity to win the Norwegians over to the plan. The scheme had support from many within the Swedish aristocracy, but the prince refused to lead an uprising. On the other hand, he did accept to be chosen as Swedish crown prince conditional on there being peace between Denmark and Sweden and on it being accepted by Frederick. Both conditions were met in December 1809, when all other options had eluded the Danish monarch.

### The last years of war

With Christian August as the *de facto* ruler of Sweden peace in Scandinavia seemed secure. But in May 1810 the Prince died suddenly of a stroke aged 41, thus starting a new contest for the Swedish throne. Frederick VI tried his luck once again, but he still lacked the French support that was vital if the Swedes were to elect him. The favorite was instead the dead crown prince's brother, Duke Frederick Christian of Augustenburg, with the Danish heir presumptive Christian Frederick as a close second. But to everyone's surprise, it was an outsider, the French Marshal Bernadotte, who triumphed, by claiming to have Napoleon's support, offering bribes and promising loans to Sweden, and on the strength of his impressive military reputation. The election of Charles John, as he was dubbed in Sweden, marks a turning point

in Scandinavian history. A Sweden ruled by a Danish prince would have had a completely different policy from that implemented by Charles John. Although elected to reconquer Finland, Charles John chose instead to align Sweden with Russia against France in 1812 in return for Russian support for the conquest of Norway.

Frederick VI, on the other hand, backed France in 1812, something for which he has been criticized by Danish historians ever since, though his choice can hardly be deemed irrational considering Napoleon's military record and resources. Once it became clear that the emperor's army had perished on the Russian steppes, Frederick tried to change sides. However, the price for changing sides was the relinquishing of Norway. The tsar offered the Danish king large parts of Northern Germany and Holland in exchange. Frederick flatly refused. He saw his state as a Scandinavian one and considered that a German–Dutch–Danish state would not be viable.

Since only Napoleon was still willing to secure the integrity of the Danish state, Denmark renewed its alliance with France on 10 July 1813. The decision was influenced by the king's expectation that the negotiations in Prague during the summer would lead to a general European peace conference (as was held in Vienna in 1814–1815). He believed that the renewed alliance would secure his state in the future settlement. As we know, that is not what happened. Napoleon had no real interest in a peace settlement and, after the Battle of Leipzig, Charles John occupied Schleswig and Holstein with a Swedish–Russian army. Frederick finally caved in. On 14 January 1814 the Peace of Kiel was signed, ceding Norway to Sweden.

### **The loss of Norway**

Contrary to what happened in the wake of defeat in the Second Schleswig War, the nation did not tear itself apart in 1814 over the question of who was to blame, since censorship prevented the elite from expressing its fury in print. However, recent research has shown that the loss of Norway led the Danish elite to begin to question absolutism. Educated Danes had ties of language, culture, family, education and economic activity with their Norwegian counterparts, and the separation from Norway created feelings of sorrow, shame and bitterness towards the absolutist monarch and his advisors, who were held responsible for the state's great misfortune.

According to one observer the state was shaken to its foundations and, among liberals, expressions of constitutionalism began to be heard. These ideas were encouraged by events in Norway. The Danish viceroy, the heir presumptive Prince Christian Frederick, refused to accept the Peace of Kiel, assumed power and called for a Norwegian constitutional assembly. This led Sweden to demand that King Frederick remove the prince from the Danish line of succession. But, despite the menace to the existence of the Danish state, the monarch refused. He feared a revolution in Copenhagen, where



there was already talk of deposing the king in favor of the new Norwegian king, Christian Frederick, and establishing a constitution along the lines of that adopted for Norway at Eidsvoll on 17 May 1814. Christian Frederick's rule, however, was short-lived. After a brief war with Norway he was forced to abdicate and, while Norway was bound to Sweden in a personal union, the Norwegians retained their new constitution.

### **'Never has Denmark been more Danish than now'**

The empire's new Lilliputian status brought a metamorphosis in the Danish collective self-image. There was a turning inwards, with an attempt to reconquer Norway from inside the borders of Denmark by building a new self-respect and assertiveness. The state may have been shrinking, but national feeling was growing. In the wake of the humiliation of 1814 men such as Count Holstein-Holsteinborg wanted to revitalize the nation through political reforms, but these efforts were effectively blocked by King Frederick who had the support of the great powers. Instead, the spirit of 1814 manifested itself through cultural nationalism, by which artists, intellectuals and scholars set out to reinvigorate the nation. This was the generation formed by the defeat. For these men the task in hand was to ensure both the survival of the Danish nation and its independence. In keeping with the romanticism of the era, these revivalists tried to regenerate the nation by seeking its true essence in the past and taking inspiration from a medieval golden age.

Most of these cultural reformers were conservatives, but their ideas about the nation paved the way for a new understanding among the people. They challenged, changed and ultimately defeated the cosmopolitan ideals of the Enlightenment in favor of ideas of a Danish-Nordic national upbringing. This, in turn, had far-reaching consequences for the liberal generation of the 1830s. These sons of the defeated founded their political ideas of popular sovereignty on the cultural nationalism of their fathers. The national liberalism that emerged in both Denmark and the duchies in the 1830s undermined the Danish conglomerate state and ultimately resulted in an unresolved conflict over the nationally ambiguous Duchy of Schleswig that culminated in the two wars over Schleswig in 1848–1851 and in 1864.

### **The Lilliputian empire**

For the minuscule Danish Empire the contrast in the state before and after the Napoleonic Wars could hardly have been sharper. Prior to the war the economy had been expanding rapidly and the state had been among those of the second rank, which meant it could – within limits – conduct an independent foreign policy. The Peace of Kiel and the Congress of Vienna turned Denmark into a fourth-rank state that existed solely by the grace of the great powers. This was due not only to the massive loss of territory,

population and resources, but also to the fact that Denmark had lost its navy. Before 1807 the Danish state had been a relatively attractive ally, but after the British seizure of the fleet this was no longer the case. Matters deteriorated further when Denmark's neighbor states increased in size and power. The seasoned diplomat Georg Rist quipped that Denmark's foreign policy was that Denmark did not have a foreign policy. There was a degree of truth in that remark. Danish foreign policy was to keep a permanently low profile, since everyone recognized that the state was basically powerless and had to dance to the tune of Europe in general and of Russia in particular.

Since nothing could be achieved beyond the national frontiers, all resources were directed inwards. The idea of reclaiming the moors of Jutland was relaunched as compensation for what had been lost in 1814. Hopes of reunification with Norway survived for a couple of years, but only people with a weak grasp of reality dreamed of rearmament, military conquest and new wars with Sweden. The days of inter-Scandinavian wars had gone, to be replaced by pan-Scandinavianism. The Danish state had become a small state with a small-state mentality to match and a population of 1.5 million, of which around one million lived in the Kingdom of Denmark itself. The conservative statesmen of the absolutist state did not plan according to nationality or regionalism, but in accordance with what they and the king thought best for the Danish conglomerate state as a whole. Prior to 1814 Danes and Norwegians had made up 75 per cent of a population that was Danish in language and Nordic in culture and nationality, while 25 per cent were cultural Germans. The proportions became 60 per cent Danish speakers and 40 per cent German speakers. The state had become bottom-heavy since the economically developed duchies and the influence of Hamburg pulled the center of gravity away from Copenhagen.

### **German Confederation**

One of the aims of the Congress of Vienna was to create a new and stronger German Confederation. Holstein had been part of the Holy Roman Empire until the latter succumbed to the onslaught of Napoleon and his armies in 1806. Frederick VI saw the dismantling of the Holy Roman Empire as an opportunity not to be missed. He envisioned a Greater Denmark with Danish as the common state language, on the lines of what Joseph II had attempted in the Habsburg lands. This Danicisation policy was not forgotten in the duchies and was to play a role in the Danish–German conflict from the 1830s onwards.

The policy itself, however, was officially abandoned in 1814 as it was deemed unrealistic to keep Holstein out of the German reorganization. From the chaos that was the former Holy Roman Empire, the Congress of Vienna formed a confederation of 39 states. The aim was to create peace and stability in central Europe. Nonetheless, just like its forbear, the

Confederation was severely weakened by special interests and the never-ending rivalry between Austria and Prussia. Still, in the short run, Holstein's and Lauenburg's membership did give the Danish state a certain amount of security as the confederation also served as a defense league. However, in the long run their membership had two unforeseen, yet crucial, consequences. All the princes of the Confederation had committed themselves to give their peoples Estate Constitutions. It was precisely this commitment that forced Frederick VI in 1831 to grant estate assemblies to the whole of his tiny empire. In this way the German Confederation played a pivotal role in the democratization of Denmark. On the other hand, Holstein's membership in the Confederation gave the latter the right, and indeed the duty, to intervene in internal Danish affairs in order to protect its German citizens. This restricted the empire's sovereignty and ability to act. In this way, the inclusion of Holstein and Lauenburg in the Confederation in 1815 was one of the causes of the events of 1848 and 1864.

### **1814, 1864 and Danish historiography**

Denmark today is Lilliput; a minor, peaceful and democratic nation state within the European Union, characterized by its high degree of national cohesion. As this chapter has argued, this has not always been the case, although it is the impression that one may get from the, so-called, radical tradition that has dominated Danish historiography. According to this interpretation, the watershed event in Danish history was the catastrophic defeat in the Second Schleswig War in 1864 that, to all intents and purposes, turned Denmark into a nation state. Then and only then did the Danes realize that Denmark was a small state that could only survive by following a foreign policy based on realism, by discarding any idealism and adapting to the wishes of the great powers in general and, after 1870, of Germany in particular. As a survival policy, this made sense. The Danes turned inwards and came to view imperialism, expansionism and aggression as intrinsically un-Danish.

Traditional historiography has left the Napoleonic Wars very much in the shadow of the Second Schleswig War. This is somewhat paradoxical, since 1814 marked the greatest loss of territory, economic activity and resources in the history of the Danish state. The main reason for this illogical treatment of the two great defeats of modern Danish history is that while 1864 was a national defeat, which left 200,000 Danish-minded Schleswigers south of the border, 1814 was more a defeat for the state and its dynastic rulers than for the nation itself – even though it had a huge (but overlooked) impact upon Danish national identity and nationalism. The crux of the matter was that 1814 simply did not fit into the national narrative. The study of history in Denmark was not professionalized until after the defeat of 1864. One result was a tendency amongst historians to project a past upon the small

and defeated post-1864 nation state in which the Danish state was neither small nor national.

In recent years there has been a growing interest in transnational history and a desire to interpret the past from the perspective of the Danish conglomerate state, or empire, rather than of a Danish nation. This new approach includes a renewed interest in the Napoleonic Wars sparked by the bicentenaries of the bombardment of Copenhagen in 2007, the separation of Denmark and Norway, and the Norwegian constitution in 2014, and has already resulted in several publications and in the creation of new research networks and projects.

## **Conclusion**

For the Danish state, the Napoleonic Wars were a disaster. They led to the largest territorial loss in the history of the state, the loss of the navy, economic turmoil and state bankruptcy. The very existence of the Danish state was called into question. Furthermore, the conflicts created widespread dissatisfaction with absolutist rule and generated national tension within the multinational state. The changes brought about had a lasting effect on the role of Denmark in Europe, with its transformation from a medium-sized to a diminutive state. Moreover, the Danish and German nationalism that blossomed in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars undermined the Danish state, even more so when the German Confederation that was created at the Conference of Vienna gave the German prince the right and the duty to interfere in the Danish state to protect the interests of its German subjects. In this way, the events of 1814–1815 paved the way for the two wars over Schleswig. Against this, however, must be set the possibility that the separation of Denmark and Norway in 1814 saved the two countries from an altogether more traumatic divorce later in the century as a result of growing Norwegian nationalism and Danish centralism.

# 14

## The Case of Norway: Domestic Developments and External Influences on the Periphery of Napoleonic Europe

*Bård Frydenlund*

The Napoleonic Wars redrew the political map of Europe. Whether directly through forced annexation or as a result of peace treaty negotiations, geographical territories entered into unions or federations, were renamed and acquired new capitals. For a geographically outlying maritime kingdom like Norway, the sea was the obvious route to the rest of the world – the North Sea and the Skagerrak provided pathways for migration, trade and cultural exchange. During the Napoleonic Wars the sea was made a new boundary within the composite state of Denmark-Norway, as Norway became isolated from the continent after the alliance with France and acceptance of Napoleon's Continental System. This outcome created national patriotism at the same time as it fueled discontent. After seven difficult years Norway was cut off from its capital, Copenhagen, and the Treaty of Kiel stimulated an independence movement backed by royalty and civil servants of the former Dano-Norwegian regime. At the end of 1814 – the epic year in Norwegian history – the political situation altered dramatically when Norway abolished Danish autocracy and introduced a radical form of constitutional monarchy in a union with Sweden.

This chapter explores the way the Napoleonic Wars catalyzed separatist forces within the autocratic state of Denmark-Norway, and how Norway ended its political relationship with Denmark in 1814. Parts of Norway had more contact with other areas of northern Europe than with the Danish mainlands (Jutland and Zealand) and were closely integrated into British trading networks. The spokesmen of the trading interests in eastern Norway lobbied strongly against the policies of the central government in Copenhagen and organized a significant opposition in the northern part of the absolutist state. On the other hand, a strong network of civil servants

acted as resistance to counter separatist aspirations throughout Norway. After the Treaty of Kiel on 14 January 1814, however, this network was transformed, functioning as the organizational nucleus and political power base of an independence movement. From a comparative perspective Norway's situation and her relationship to Denmark had similarities to that between Brazil and Portugal during the Napoleonic Wars, while the events and political mechanisms, despite obvious differences, shared certain traits with domestic tensions the United States experienced during the same period.

### **Norway in the late eighteenth century**

Norway was on the periphery in the fullest sense of the word. As part of a state (Denmark-Norway) squeezed between the great European powers and bordered by its archenemy Sweden, and with a territory that stretched over long distances and was cut by waterways, the potential for conflict, either from domestic revolts or foreign interventions, was evident. Added to the geographically outlying position, the head of state – Crown Prince Frederick (king from 1808) – practiced a highly centralized version of absolutism from the turn of the nineteenth century that underscored Norway's explicitly outsider position. The country was treated not as a single entity but as four bishoprics (Akershus, Christianssand, Bergenhus and Trondheim) each ruled by a regional governor (*stiftamtman*).<sup>1</sup> As such, the absolutism of Denmark-Norway was judged one of the most ideologically consistent in Europe, and Norway – with only fragments of a higher nobility – was valued as the most autocratically consistent part of Denmark-Norway.

Good diplomacy by Dano-German ministers created the conditions for trade to prosper. The largely peaceful foreign relations Denmark-Norway had enjoyed since the end of the Great Northern War in 1720 allowed merchants to earn substantial profits and develop stable and trust-based trade relations throughout Europe.<sup>2</sup> Nor did Norway experience as many revolts as other comparable areas of Europe. Before the Napoleonic Wars, only two were of any real significance, both of which began as regional protest movements against the alleged mismanagement of tax policies by local officials.<sup>3</sup> The political situation and level of stability changed once Denmark-Norway entered the Napoleonic theater of war.

### **Entering the war on Napoleon's side: patriotism, unrest and instability**

As a result of the British bombardment of Copenhagen and the capture of the Dano-Norwegian fleet, Denmark-Norway made an alliance with France and joined Napoleon's Continental System in the autumn of 1807. The resulting blockade isolated Norway from its state capital, cut trading relations and destroyed the foundations of international trade. Eastern Norway

was heavily dependent on exports of timber and iron to Great Britain and the blockade wiped out this trade for at least a year and a half.

Initially the Continental System caused no serious disruption in Norway. On the contrary, the bombardment of Copenhagen in September 1807 and then the war between Denmark-Norway and Sweden inspired a wave of patriotism among the elite in Norway. Conceived as a loyal satellite of Copenhagen, an interim government ruled Norway led by the head of the armed forces in southern Norway, Prince Christian August. He was a prominent member of society in Christiania (contemporary Oslo) and won considerable popularity when he led the Norwegian forces to victory against Sweden in the spring of 1808. The patriotic movement also initiated the many subscriptions set up to help those made homeless in Copenhagen and to equip armed forces in Norway for military operations along the Swedish-Norwegian border.<sup>4</sup> Crown Prince Frederick issued a privateer decree on 14 September 1807, giving permission for civilians to board 'enemy' vessels and for the prizes to be set in provisional courts.<sup>5</sup> Officials in Copenhagen expected Norwegian merchants and ships' captains to rally their forces and equip their fleets for the privateer business. Many ship owners did respond accordingly, though the movement was not overwhelming. In general, however, the war situation of 1808 created an optimistic patriotism in Norway in support of war operations.

The formerly stable situation had created a common cultural community in Norway among officials and civil servants, even though they were of both Danish and Norwegian origin.<sup>6</sup> These state administrators cooperated closely with wealthy urban interests and established a hegemonic rule. The crisis of 1807 changed all this and created a new tension between officials and merchants, even though the head of the new government was a Danish prince, an officer and a close friend of Norwegian merchants. The other members of the new government for Norway included both state officials and private businessmen, with a preponderance of high-ranking civil servants.<sup>7</sup>

Although the war against Sweden came to an end in late autumn 1808, the state of war with Great Britain persisted. With trade and commercial activities virtually non-existent due to the blockade of the North Sea and the Skagerrak, tension mounted in Norway. Norwegian businessmen complained about their loss of income, but a more general discontent raised fears of a total breakdown in the structure of society. The commercial link to Great Britain began to wither. When shipments from Norway failed to arrive in British harbors in 1808, the importers started to look elsewhere for their supplies and questioned the ability of the Norwegians to satisfy British demand for timber. This was a devastating blow that threatened the very basis of long-term trade relations, namely the dimension of trust and mercantile security. That commodities should be delivered on time and in the right quantity was a basic requirement for business while, at the other

end, it was no less essential that payment be made on time and for the right amount. Trust was crucial and, while it took a long time to establish, it took very little time to destroy.<sup>8</sup>

Another destructive effect of the blockade was the shortage of liquidity. The absence of money transfers from London, Copenhagen and Hamburg caused the cash flow to diminish and created a shortage of specie in general. This posed a real threat to magnates in southern Norway as the lack of payments put their whole power base in jeopardy. The social order of estates, mines, mills and iron works in Norway was strongly influenced by the autocratic system of government. Although the absolutist state was supposed to be governed by the king alone, small work communities were, in fact, managed as states within the state. The patron was the head and the workers accepted the patron's law for a set payment and social security. Although the social contract situation appears unbalanced and unjust by modern standards, many Norwegians preferred it to the status of *free* peasant or independent worker, without the resources and security a local magnate could provide. The deferential attitudes created by this patrimonial system influenced the magnates in their political activity – as political patrons of rank and as protectors of hundreds or thousands of workers. When, for instance, a man like Peder Anker (1749–1824), industrialist, wealthy financier, timber merchant, royal Danish chamberlain, governor of southern Norway and Norwegian prime minister in Stockholm from 1814 to 1822, was unable to pay the 2,500 contractors, business associates and workers at his mines, iron works, estates, saw mills and offices, the very order of society was threatened. The blockade changed things by forcing workers to look elsewhere if the local magnate could not pay them. The argument of potential social collapse was exploited to the full against the regional and central authorities in Christiania and Copenhagen.<sup>9</sup>

As a result of these developments, merchants and landed aristocrats began to question the central government's ability to safeguard their economic interests. Norwegian officials and businessmen accepted invitations to speak with Swedish representatives and the contacts were channeled through old trade relations. On the agenda at these meetings were the deteriorating situation of Norway within the state of Denmark-Norway and the possibility of Norwegian independence under Swedish rule.<sup>10</sup> The meetings were not initiated uniquely by dissatisfied Norwegian merchants in key positions; there was also strong encouragement from Swedish politicians due to the very unstable situation in Sweden after defeat by the Russians, the loss of Finland and the, so-called, Palace Revolution in Stockholm in March 1809.<sup>11</sup>

Tensions peaked during proceedings for the succession of the Swedish crown, in which the head of the Norwegian interim government, the Danish Prince Christian August, accepted an invitation to become Swedish Crown Prince and head of the Swedish government. However, the situation stabilized in the autumn of 1809, with the resolution of the most acute problems



in international trade. Large loans were given to private businessmen in Norway and the authorities introduced the, so-called, licensed trade system. Under this system limited trade across the sea was permitted with paid licenses issued by Danish and British authorities, thus undermining the principle of the Continental System. But this arrangement was only temporary. When a new blockade was implemented in 1810–1811, new troubles occurred and, with another bad harvest and severe grain shortage, famine developed in southern Norway in 1812–1813. The difficulties of getting grain from abroad remained a severe challenge.

Nevertheless, there was optimism and growth in some sectors. During the period of the license system from August 1809, commerce recovered rapidly and exceeded the pre-blockade levels of trade. Inspired by a new business confidence, the magnates of eastern Norway contributed, via substantial investments, to the establishment of a Norwegian patriotic association. The Royal Patriotic Society for Norway, as it was called, not only promoted industrial, agricultural and economic progress, but also had a hidden separatist agenda for Norway.<sup>12</sup> Peder Anker and his son-in-law, Count Wedel-Jarlsberg, were among the directors and financial backers of the society, which was run by a board consisting of leading merchants, state officials, Latin-school professors and clerics in Norway. It was divided into committees by profession and it had links with local patriotic societies. After Norway was severed from its political centre, and the king moved to limit the role of the interim government after 1810, the Royal Patriotic Society assumed the role of a proto-government with local administrations in districts and local communities. The most significant result of the Society's work was the establishment of a university – a political decision that the elites of Norway had been pushing for since the 1760s. In 1811, King Frederick VI finally gave his support to establishing a university in Norway, which it was later decided to locate in Christiania.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to the new political institutions – like the provisional government for Norway (1807–1810), a national patriotic society (1809) and a university (1811) – Norway experienced considerable structural change in this period. The wars, blockade and famine caused a demographic decline over the whole period between 1807 and 1814. Only the few coastal towns that did well out of privateering escaped a decline in their population.<sup>14</sup> Because the blockade prevented the regular import of goods from the state's overseas colonies and even day-to-day communication with Copenhagen, new domestic markets were created to replace overseas imports. The movement of workers into new occupations not only caused instability but also increased social mobility. One problematic consequence, at least as regards the peasants, was the tendency for these new occupations to draw able farmers away from the fields, causing a fall in domestic grain production. The shipping industry also underwent radical change, as a more effective shipbuilding industry was needed to replace sunken ships and to supply

a dynamic privateering sector. Overall, however, the blockade caused a general economic decline in Norway.

Because the unstable situation persisted for years, the lower classes in Norway also reacted to the critical conditions. In 1813 Norway experienced a series of local uprisings and smaller revolts. Nine different insurrections took place across southern Norway, due to bad harvests and failed grain storage policies.<sup>15</sup> Did this reflect a general rise of violence in society, like that documented by Gordon Wood and others for the United States in the same period? Or did the cause lie in the blockade and the Continental System?<sup>16</sup> The situation in 1813 was certainly bad, but not significantly worse than in other times of economic difficulty. An explanation can be found in the sheer length of the period of instability in which years of war and commercial disruption overlapped with years of famine.

Other events in 1813 served as a catalyst for increasing Norwegian dissatisfaction with rule from Copenhagen. In January the government introduced a new financial reform that caused a dramatic economic devaluation across the composite state of Denmark-Norway.<sup>17</sup> This produced widespread unrest among the general population and the elite and, once again, brought the political competence of the Copenhagen government into question.<sup>18</sup>

As an external factor the Swedish authorities put further pressure on Norway through popular propaganda and by maintaining contact with significant individuals among the opposition to the Copenhagen government.<sup>19</sup> This political process was overseen by the new Swedish crown prince and head of state, Charles John, the former French Marshal Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte. Having secured the agreement of Russia and Britain for his annexing of Norway as compensation for the loss of Finland and for help in the war effort against Napoleon on the continent, Charles John activated old Swedish-Norwegian relations to sway Norwegian opinion. But the process was reciprocal; men like Peder Anker and Count Herman Wedel-Jarlsberg made use of Swedish, British and other foreign relations to gather vital information about the trade situation and the advancing Napoleonic theatre of war between 1809 and 1814. These practices amounted to a private communication system that rivaled the autocratic Danish autocracy's information and surveillance system.<sup>20</sup> The former facilitated domestic opposition in Norway and was to prove invaluable in the revolutionary year of 1814.

### **1814: from the Treaty of Kiel to the November constitution**

The destiny of Napoleonic Denmark was sealed early in 1814. Surrounded by its enemies and with the Swedish claims pressed even more aggressively by Charles John, supported by the allied great powers, Denmark could achieve nothing further through diplomacy. At the coastal town of Kiel, the great powers and representatives of Denmark and Sweden met on

14 January to sign a treaty that would decide the future of Norway. The king of Denmark accepted the conditions and ceded the rule of Norway to the king of Sweden.<sup>21</sup>

Inside Norway, however, the situation was not settled. An independence movement led by the Danish *Statholder* in Norway, Prince Christian Frederick of Denmark, defied the Treaty of Kiel and with it the great powers and the governments in Stockholm and Copenhagen. The movement was sanctioned by a group comprising 21 members of the Norwegian elite – state officials, bishops, officers and estate owners – who convened on 14 February in what is commonly known as the Meeting of Notables. This aristocratic gathering was a key turning point, since the enlightened representatives convinced Christian Frederick to seek support from the people, thus relinquishing his hereditary rights to the throne under the autocratic laws of Denmark-Norway. This change was set in motion by the announcement that elections would be held for a national constitutional assembly on 10 April 1814. Although the elections were monitored and manipulated by the supporters, subordinates and clients of Christian Frederick, who was also hereditary prince of Denmark, the process gave at least proto-democratic power to the independence movement. The followers of Christian Frederick's policies were called the Independence Party at the ensuing constitutional assembly at Eidsvoll, north of Christiania, in April and May 1814.

Not all Norway's elites supported the revolution. The same group of merchants, businessmen and officials who had elaborated a possible independence plan in 1809 disagreed with Christian Frederick. They wanted peaceful relations with Europe's victorious great powers, so as to secure trade relations, and were ready to negotiate a union with Sweden based on the promise made by Swedish authorities of a constitution and a certain degree of independence under the rule of the Swedish king. These commercially minded individuals, with their clienteles, would constitute a significant opposition, once again led by Count Wedel-Jarlsberg, his father-in-law Peder Anker and other magnates from eastern Norway.<sup>22</sup> These men and their followers established the, so-called, Union Party at the constitutional assembly at Eidsvoll in April and May 1814.

The constitutional process was a gigantic step towards the democratization of Norway. One hundred and twelve elected members from all over southern Norway and from nearly every social group, including a significant number of soldiers and farmers, met at Eidsvoll to establish a constitution and elect a king. Although there was no party system, two factions dominated the assembly's debates. In short, the Independence Party won with a substantial majority of votes, establishing one of the most radical constitutions of its day (and the second oldest constitution still in operation). A total of 112 articles outlined the division of power and described the branches of government, the prerogatives of the king and royal family, the Protestant state religion, the rights of citizens, elections and the court system.

On 17 May the written constitution was signed and Prince Christian Frederick of Denmark was elected king of Norway.<sup>23</sup>

Full independence did not last for long, however. Only a fortnight after the closing of the constitutional assembly, the first great power diplomat arrived in Christiania to demand that the newly elected king resign. New blockades were imposed, stopping international trade and creating new grain shortages. At the end of July, after weeks of negotiation and diplomacy, war broke out between Sweden and Norway. The Norwegian army, demoralized and poorly equipped, was forced to surrender to the superior Swedish forces. On 6 August a ceasefire was agreed and negotiations produced a temporary treaty eight days later, known as the Convention of Moss. Christian Frederick resigned as king and head of state of Norway and new negotiations began on the future union between Sweden and Norway. Elections were called for a new national assembly. This assembly, now called *Stortinget*, voted to accept a personal union between Sweden and Norway on 20 October. On 4 November, the constitutional amendments required for a union were adopted and Charles XIII of Sweden was elected king of Norway. This secured Norwegian domestic and financial independence and a government was set up in Christiania, the new capital of Norway.<sup>24</sup>

### **The *annus mirabilis*: what constituted the marvel of Norway in 1814?**

1814 stands out as the zenith year in Norwegian history and historiography.<sup>25</sup> From being part of an autocratic state ruled from Copenhagen, Norway became part of a royal personal union with Sweden under a radical and independent constitution, via the period of full independence and sovereignty lasting from May to August – it was a major transformation that set the future conditions for a peaceful Scandinavia after 1815. The contemporary clergy in Norway called the whole process a marvel: 1814 became the *annus mirabilis*. But this term does not do justice to the political achievements of the Norwegian elite; a more accurate label would be *annus politicus*, the decisive political year in Norwegian history.

That the Eidsvoll constitution of 17 May was as complex and refined as it was, and drawn up in such a short period of time, had not been anticipated by all. Norway was on the periphery, not only geographically, but also academically, financially and culturally. Although influenced by several European constitutions, and by the American constitution of 1787, the written Norwegian constitution had unique features of its own, especially as regards the separation of powers. Contrary to earlier assumptions, the significant influence on the constitution was not Montesquieu and his *De l'esprit des lois*. The Norwegian constitution developed a form of its own, in which Montesquieu's aristocratic notion of the separation of powers is rejected in favor of the more radical idea of the sovereignty of the people.<sup>26</sup>

While Americans spent the years from 1776 to 1787 advancing from a declaration of independence to a constitution, a mere three months separated the Meeting of the Notables that sanctioned the Norwegian independence movement in February from the signing of the constitution on 17 May. The American, Polish, French, Spanish and Swedish constitutions between 1787 and 1812 provided a role model and influenced deliberations on and elaboration of a new constitution. But geographical, cultural and commercial concerns, and specific judicial arrangements and adjustments, indicate that some length of time should have been needed to produce a framework of laws suitable for a politically underdeveloped area like Norway. One explanation for the speed of the constitutional process is that philosophical discussion was eschewed in favour of proceeding directly to drafting paragraphs for practical use.

The new Kingdom of Norway lost decisively on the battlefield during the summer of 1814, giving Charles John and the Swedes a solid upper hand, so it came as a significant surprise to many that the outcome of the negotiations between Swedish and Norwegian representatives was so advantageous for Norwegian independence. Even the Convention of Moss on 14 August accepted the principles of the radical May constitution. Tough Swedish negotiators tried to amend the peace conditions, but the result remained in Norway's favour and, apart from the adoption of royal Swedish supremacy in foreign affairs, the union constitution of November closely resembled the constitution of May. Charles John never made known his reasons for accepting conditions favorable to the Norwegians, for which he was criticized by several members of the Swedish political elite, but some reasons are more salient than others. First, he had promised a constitution for Norway. Second, he did not want Norway to be what Spain had become for Napoleon. Mountainous Norway offered an excellent terrain for guerilla warfare and a new protracted campaign westward could prove costly for Sweden in terms of both material expense and military morale. A war would also further destabilize the relationship between Sweden and Norway, and risk damaging public confidence in the former French marshal. Some argue that his earlier political convictions as a revolutionary officer influenced his conduct. Others note that the Congress of Vienna started in October 1814 and that Charles John was impatient to reach a settlement in Norway. A peaceful resolution in Scandinavia would strengthen his public image in Vienna.

Another dramatic change in Norway in 1814 was the transformation of political practices. In place of the potentially unpredictable special interest politics associated with an absolutist state, new political institutions and a completely new framework for political action and expression emerged. During the Old Regime there had been a limited acceptance of different opinions in political matters, though as an exception and not the rule. But as the extraordinary situation in Norway continued under the bellicose

Continental System, and as more unrest manifested itself and opposition voices made themselves heard, the existence of alternative political viewpoints became more generally accepted. This inhibited Christian Frederick from using or supporting violent measures to put down the opposition during the revolution he initiated in the spring of 1814. It also kept deliberations at the constitutional assembly at Eidsvoll reasonably civilized. The establishment and acceptance of two-party struggles during 1814 also influenced Charles John and his group of diplomats in Norway; the existence of at least two sets of political views and even political factions made it difficult to put forward and sanction extreme claims on Sweden's behalf. This could have the effect of agitating the public sphere in Norway, making it more difficult to negotiate peaceful conditions for the union between Sweden and Norway.<sup>27</sup>

### Comparative perspectives

The history of Norway illustrates how one part of a composite state came to be split off through a combination of external forces and domestic developments and how national elites could set standards for a new political culture. But this story is far from unique. On the continent, many smaller states pursued their independence during and immediately after the Napoleonic Wars, often unsuccessfully. In the case of states divided by oceans, like Portugal, several interesting comparisons can be made. It is also relevant that as British interests dominated the seas, Britain played a significant role in all three historical scenarios.

In 1807 the Lisbon government was under much the same pressure from the British and French authorities as the Copenhagen government had been. But Dom João – the Portuguese head of state – and his court and government chose a totally different solution to that of Frederick of Denmark. Resisting French pressure, they escaped from Portugal and moved the entire court to Brazil under British protection. Brazil represented a greater land of opportunity than Norway in the British sphere of economic interest, and Britain valued Portugal as a more reliable ally than Denmark-Norway.<sup>28</sup> Commercial ties between Great Britain and Portugal were strengthened, but Britain did not support the later Brazilian independence movement. Despite this, the case invites historians to create interesting counterfactual scenarios. An interesting parallel between the Portuguese-Brazilian and Danish-Norwegian cases concerns the nature of those individuals who led the respective independence movements. The Danish hereditary prince to the throne, Christian Frederick, made alliances with the local elites in Christiania and its surroundings before becoming king of Norway in 1814. The crown prince of Portugal, Dom Pedro Primeiro, interacted heavily with the urban elite of Rio before becoming the first emperor of Brazil.<sup>29</sup> Both men became rulers of the substantial parts of their kingdoms separated by sea

from their former home territories; both were under the influence of liberal ideas of contemporary urban elites in Christiania and Rio; and both adopted much more progressive political positions than the previous sovereigns – the autocrats Frederick VI and Maria I/Dom João VI, respectively.

Another potential comparison is between the position of the New England Federalists during the war of 1812 in the United States and the men who formed the Union Party in Norway in 1814. Although the Federalists had a longer history and, as such, had consolidated their political activities, both groups backed a peace policy to protect international trade relations. Both groups were viewed as traitors by many contemporaries and both were closely connected with the business elites of their respective states. The New England Federalists opposed the war policies of the Madison administration in Washington. They were hostile to expenditure on warfare and argued that the war was destroying their trading relationship with Great Britain and causing them a significant loss of income.

The political conflict peaked in the autumn of 1814 as a group of New England Federalists summoned a general convention to meet at Hartford, Connecticut, to deliberate controversial issues, including breaking from the rest of the United States, establishing separate custom houses and a banking system in the New England states and declaring neutrality in the war with Great Britain. Although no secession of the New England states was actually declared, the convention formulated demands on at least four issues: removing unequal voting rules favorable to the Southern states; limiting the presidency to a single term; prohibiting trade embargoes longer than 60 days; and requiring a two-thirds congressional support for declarations of war. Old friendships and business relations were mobilized to bolster the political processes in a situation where the Federalists were a political minority. The convention met in December 1814 to deliberate and draft a petition for the federal government, but the victory of the United States at New Orleans and the subsequent Treaty of Ghent ended the war, and the propositions were irrelevant in this new political setting.<sup>30</sup>

These events present clear similarities with the meetings of the members of the Union Party held at Peder Anker's Bogstad estate, northwest of Christiania, before and during 1814. They gathered at Bogstad to coordinate political efforts intended to influence the outcome of debates and for subsequent debriefings. Both political factions, in New England and Norway, were concerned about the possible destruction of trade and industry, and tried explicitly to stop war with England, thereby opposing the official policies pursued by the governments in Washington and Christiania respectively.

Dependency on the policies of Great Britain was a common feature for Norway, Brazil and the New England Federalists. But dependency did not mean that Great Britain acted as a civilized benefactor, creating peace and freedom for smaller nations. Great Britain acted in her own interests,

just as France did under Napoleon. When Brazil wanted to expand its trade to other European states in the 1820s, Great Britain opposed it. The New England merchants opposing the war of 1812 did not expect – and certainly did not get – any rewards from London. The same was the case for Norway. In 1812 British authorities imposed a food blockade that compelled Norwegians to rely even more heavily on uncertain shipments from Danish Jutland and through Sweden. Britain's timber needs were met increasingly by the Canadian and Baltic forests, which reduced the political resistance to enforcing a blockade on Norway. A new tariff introduced by the British government put heavy customs duties on all Norwegian commodities, provoking an avalanche of bankruptcies in Norway and substantially weakening the merchant class in the east of the country. Both Napoleon and his British adversaries acted according to the principles of war. Great Britain may have been pursuing trade hegemony rather than territorial conquest, but it did not act from philanthropic motives. For the smaller states and political factions affected by British policies the consequences varied; as Norway established interior independence within a union with Sweden, so New England stayed within the political system of the USA, while Brazil went on to achieve independence in the 1820s.

### Concluding remarks

The Norwegian experience shows that the Napoleonic theater of war had substantial implications even on Europe's outer periphery. The geopolitical situation between 1807 and 1814 was such that a medium-sized composite state like Denmark-Norway could be torn apart when the pressure from war and the diplomatic machinery of the great powers intensified. But the externally driven disintegration process created an internal political momentum that allowed the political elites of Norway to design the country's own constitution and to prepare its claims for ongoing political processes. The Napoleonic Wars catalyzed many forms of political change across Europe; for Norway this signified a huge step towards democratization, while for Scandinavia as a whole the result was stabilization and an end to several centuries of tension between the Nordic states.

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21. For a brief introduction on the year 1814 in Norwegian history, see (in Norwegian): Bård Frydenlund, *Spillet om Norge: Det politiske året 1814* (Oslo, 2014).
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24. Ibid., 185–306.
25. '1814' is a topic on which every Norwegian professor of history has been expected to have an opinion. The split within the profession has distinguished those who see the political revolution of 1814 as a result of an age-long, protracted struggle by the Norwegian people (a position held by professors J.E. Sars, Halvdan Koht and Kåre Lunden), from those who view the constitution and new geopolitical situation as created and transformed by leading individuals and the great powers (a position represented by professors Yngvar Nielsen, Sverre Steen and J.A. Seip). See: O.A. Storsveen, '1814 – en historiografi', in *Litteraturen om 1814: Nasjonalbibliotekets base, Norge i 1814*, (Oslo, 2000). This chapter is based on my own teaching on the subject, '1814 – A Norwegian Revolution?' and Frydenlund, *Spillet om Norge*.
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# 15

## Decline and Consolidation: Sweden, the Napoleonic Wars and Geopolitical Restructuring in Northern Europe

*Martin Hårdstedt*

The Napoleonic Wars brought great political changes to Scandinavia. To understand the consequences of the Napoleonic era for Sweden and to analyze the actions of the Swedish government, a geopolitical perspective is useful. The geographical position of a state is often decisive for its domestic and foreign policy. But geopolitics is not only a question of geography, it is also a matter of resources: population size, economic activity, natural resources and so on.<sup>1</sup> The main purpose of this chapter is to describe from a Swedish point of view the geopolitical changes in northern Europe during the second half of the eighteenth century and in the Napoleonic era. We chart the decline in Swedish power from the early seventeenth century and the consolidation of the Swedish state by 1814. I argue that the decision in 1805 to go to war against Napoleonic France, the dramatic loss of Finland in the war with Russia in 1808–1809, the overthrow of Gustav IV (Gustavus IV Adolf) in 1809, together with the new foreign policy of 1812 and the annexing of Norway in 1814, were all direct or indirect consequences of geopolitical factors and Sweden's location in northern Europe.

### **A kingdom with limited resources**

At the advent of the nineteenth century the Kingdom of Sweden included the Finnish counties and the German province of Pomerania. The territory that today constitutes the independent state of Finland was then a fully integrated part of the Swedish kingdom and had been so for six hundred years. The German province of Pomerania, part of the Holy Roman Empire, had a more complicated relationship with Sweden. In the German province laws and administrative practices differed from those in the rest of the kingdom. While the Swedish kingdom covered a relatively large area, its resources were limited.<sup>2</sup>

The Swedish kingdom had a population of almost 3.4 million in 1805 but was sparsely populated and had large unexploitable areas, especially in the north, consisting of woods, lakes and swamps.<sup>3</sup> Large parts of the country were covered in snow for six months of the year and the freezing of the Baltic Sea reduced the navigation season. Sweden was an agrarian society in which the majority of the peasants were freeholders. Communications were mediocre and agricultural productivity was quite low. Conversely, tar and timber output was relatively high and, together with the traditional production of iron, gave Sweden valuable commodities on the European market. The kingdom's cities were small by European standards but trade and shipping were immensely important to the Swedish economy. In terms of military resources Sweden had a standing army of 50,000 men, a fleet of almost twenty ships of the line, a strong archipelago fleet and several fortresses – the strongest being the coastal fortress of Sveaborg outside Helsinki.

At the end of the eighteenth century Sweden did not have the resources needed to play a leading role in European politics. The days were gone when Sweden could use its military skills and strength to challenge the European powers, as it had during the Thirty Years' War.<sup>4</sup> In the seventeenth century the struggle between Denmark and Sweden had dominated foreign policy in the Baltic region. Russia and Prussia were then still major powers and Poland weakened as the century proceeded. Sweden had got the upper hand in the struggle with Denmark and for half a century the Baltic Sea was virtually a Swedish *Mare Nostrum*. From the early eighteenth century, however, the balance of power in the Baltic region started to shift. Sweden's dominant regional position came to an end as a result of the Great Northern War (1700–1721) in which Sweden was defeated. The Baltic provinces were lost to Russia in the peace treaty of Nystad in 1721 while territories in northern Germany were lost to Hanover and Prussia in 1720. The result was not only an obvious Russian threat but also reduced income for the Swedish state and a general loss of resources in terms of tax revenues, control over trade routes and cereal supplies, and men for the fleet and army.<sup>5</sup>

### **A changing geopolitical situation**

The European state system was transformed in the second half of the eighteenth century by the rise of Russia and Prussia as military powers. The founding of St. Petersburg on conquered Swedish territory in 1703 at the base of the Gulf of Finland was an event of vital importance. Russian interest in conquering Finland as a means to protect the new Russian capital grew throughout the eighteenth century. The conquest of the former Swedish Baltic provinces and the annexation of Polish lands in the second half of the eighteenth century gave Russia control over a long coastline and important Baltic ports. Russian sea power grew and the Russian state had resources against which Sweden could not compete in the long run. Prussia developed

as a military land power and expanded throughout the eighteenth century at the expense of Austrian, Polish and – to some extent – Swedish lands. Prussia never had the naval strength to attack Sweden but the rise of the Prussian military state was an implicit threat to Swedish interests in Germany.<sup>6</sup>

Despite these developments the geographical position of the Swedish kingdom was not wholly unfavorable. The sea protected it from attack in the south, as did the border regions to the west, which an attacker had to cross – along the border with Danish-held Norway and along eastern parts of Finland. But in spite of these advantages its geographical position caused political problems. Two peripheral parts threatened to drag Sweden into conflicts that it lacked the resources to resolve; Finland was threatened by an expanding Russia, the province of Pomerania by the growing Prussian state. As the ruler of a German state (the province of Pomerania was within the Holy Roman Empire), the Swedish king became involved in complicated and fast-changing European politics, which were difficult to control or predict.

The eighteenth century was a period of Swedish weakness. Absolutism was abolished in 1718 after the death of Charles XII. In the Instrument of Government (1719–1720) the Swedish monarch was reduced to acting as chairman of the council of the realm, the *Riksrådet*. The council was responsible to the Swedish Diet, the *Riksdag*. During the period 1719–1772 the so-called Swedish Age of Liberty, the monarchy was weak and the political initiative lay with different groups, or parties, among the nobility and aristocracy,<sup>7</sup> two of which dominated the period. The more powerful of the two, named the Hats (*Hattarna*), had a clear political agenda. Its leanings were to political and cultural solidarity with France and it wanted to retake the lost Baltic provinces from Russia, supported in this by an alliance with France. The Hats saw Russia as the main threat and therefore believed that the defense of Finland should be given priority. Opposed to the Hats was the weaker party, the Caps (*Mössorna*), who were more interested in an alliance with Britain. If it saw any threat at all, it was from Denmark.<sup>8</sup>

Sweden was targeted by British, French and Russian diplomacy. Interference in Swedish domestic affairs was frequent. The Hats received economic support from France and the Caps from Russia, Denmark and Britain. Except for a short period, the Hats had the upper hand in the political struggle and Sweden sought French support against Russia. Britain and France were engaged in a long and fierce struggle for power in Europe and the colonies during the second half of the eighteenth century. In this struggle every ally was of value. But the Baltic region was of particular strategic importance to Britain, whose power was based on naval strength. Materials such as high quality timber, hemp and tar for the Royal Navy came from the states around the Baltic. Sweden was a major exporter of these commodities together with high quality steel. Britain had the naval power to send fleets into the Baltic Sea to secure vital British interests, namely control over trade in these important naval goods. It was important for Britain that a balance

of power was maintained in the Baltic Sea region. British foreign policy goals thus included supporting the weak against the strong. Britain's relationship with Russia changed, but the tension and rivalry was most obvious over control of the Baltic trade.<sup>9</sup>

### **Swedish reaction to the new situation – two wars with Russia, one with Prussia**

In the late 1730s the Hats pressed for a war of revenge against Russia. The main goal was to retake the lost Baltic Provinces and improve Sweden's strategic position. The decision to go to war was backed by France and by agreements with the Ottoman Empire. The Finnish War of 1741–1743 against Russia turned into a military catastrophe. Popular uprisings within Sweden and a Russian manifesto offering the Finns independence threatened to destroy the Swedish state. But the Hats rode out the crisis. The Swedish *Riksdag* elected the Russian-backed candidate Adolf Fredrik of Holstein-Gottorp as crown prince in 1743 and Russia was satisfied with gaining the southeastern part of Finland.

Russian influence increased in Sweden in the years following the war of 1741–1743, but in 1747 Sweden, under the Hats, had recovered enough strength to act independently again and signed new treaties with France. As a consequence of French influence over Swedish foreign policy, Sweden became involved in the Seven Years' War between 1756 and 1762 (traditionally referred to in Sweden as the Pomeranian War) against Prussia. Military setbacks for the Swedish army were repeated and they were left with nothing to show for the loss of thousands of soldiers except a heavy burden of war debt. Sweden thus paid a high price for its sovereignty over Pomerania and the alliance with France.

The negative outcome of the two wars, 1741–1743 and 1757–1762, weakened Sweden's strategic position and political prestige. Most serious were the territorial losses in Finland of the southeastern border regions. The new border lay open to a Russian attack and there were no fortifications to defend Swedish territory. Sweden responded to the Russian threat by constructing the sea fortress of Sveaborg outside Helsinki and by building up a strong and technically advanced archipelago fleet. The war had shown the importance of having a fleet specially built and trained to operate in the archipelago stretching from Stockholm to the inner reaches of the Gulf of Finland.

Gustav III ascended to the throne in 1771 and, in the following year, he strengthened his power by a *coup d'état* that ended the influence of the *Riksdag* and returned power to the monarchy. The *Riksrådet* became dominated by the king and his loyal supporters. The *Riksdag* still had the power to decide new taxation and declare war, but the king could act independently. Gustav successfully exploited the dissatisfaction among the lower classes and the military to his advantage. He had French support and neither

Denmark nor Russia was in a position to intervene. The new regime under Gustav was a prime example of enlightened despotism.<sup>10</sup>

The armed forces on land and at sea were strengthened during the 1780s. Sweden under Gustav III became more independent and active in European foreign politics. France was still important to Sweden and the alliance with France was the cornerstone of Gustav's foreign policy. He occupied himself notably with plans to attack Denmark, conquer Norway and wage a war against Russia to retake the lost provinces around the Gulf of Finland. In 1788 a war against Russia seemed opportune because Russia was involved in a conflict with the Ottoman Empire. The Swedish army performed much better on this occasion but the war did not result in the victory that Gustav had hoped for. Opposition to the king and the war grew. A mutiny among officers in Finland weakened Swedish military capacity, but Gustav was able to restore order, assemble the *Riksdag* and crush the opposition. He forced the *Riksdag* to accept new additions to the constitution in 1789, *Förenings-och säkerhetsakten*, that gave more power to the king. Sweden became, in practice, an absolute monarchy.<sup>11</sup> The peace treaty with Russia in 1790 established a *status quo* and, although the outcome of the war was disappointing, Sweden gained respect and Russia had to agree not to intervene in Sweden's domestic affairs.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, the strategic vulnerability of Finland was unchanged.

### **The outbreak of the revolutionary wars and the policy of armed neutrality**

The revolution in France initiated important changes in the political landscape of Europe. Gustav III yearned to form a coalition under his leadership to restore the power of the sovereign in France and crush the revolution, but he was never taken seriously by the great powers. That project came to an end when Gustav III was assassinated in March 1792, less than a month before the outbreak of the revolutionary wars. The regency that took over after his death decided to keep Sweden out of the conflicts and instead foster good relations with Russia. Foreign and domestic policy was dominated by Gustav III's brother, Duke Charles and his confidant Gustaf Adolf Reuterholm. The regent, and particularly Reuterholm, abused their position for personal gain. In 1796 Reuterholm was excluded and the son of Gustav III, King Gustav IV, came to power. From then on the new king determined foreign policy.

Swedish foreign policy between 1797 and 1803 was characterized by formal and informal diplomatic relations in many directions. Diplomatic channels were opened to the French Republic, as well as to Russia, Prussia and Britain. The overall goal in the early stage of Gustav's reign was to keep Sweden out of war. The most significant threats to Sweden were the French and British policies of blockade against neutral states. Trade and shipping

suffered heavy losses. Sweden cooperated with Denmark in escorting trade convoys and refusing British visits. To defend the right of neutral states to freedom of trade, Sweden even moved closer to Russia. Sweden formed the League of Armed Neutrality with Prussia, Russia and Denmark, but as a result of the British attack on Denmark in April 1801 – the First Battle of Copenhagen – the League collapsed.<sup>13</sup>

In the year after the British attack on Copenhagen the dangers of Sweden's diplomatic isolation became apparent. Sweden hesitated to join an Anglo-Russian trade convention in June 1801 but finally signed up in March 1802, ending the isolation. A clash on the Swedish-Russian border in southeast Finland in summer 1802 (the Abborrfors incident) showed that Russia was looking for a pretext to conquer the eastern part of Sweden, present-day Finland. Sweden and its military resources were seen as a threat to the Russian capital.<sup>14</sup> The outbreak of war between Britain and France in 1803, the start of the Napoleonic Wars, changed the situation; Sweden had to contend with a new threat, the aggressive French policy in Germany.

### **Sweden, the province of Pomerania and the path to war in 1805**

The decision by Gustav IV in 1805 to go to war was one of the most important events in the history of Sweden during the Napoleonic Wars. In October 1805 Gustav IV finally joined the Third Coalition and declared war on France. The king had been planning a more active Swedish foreign policy for several years. The goal of conquering Norway and forming a large Nordic state strong enough to withstand the pressure from Britain and Russia had been in his mind since 1798. An opportunity to realize this goal suddenly presented itself. Russian and British diplomacy was seeking to draw Sweden into the conflict with Napoleonic France. The coalition against Napoleon needed control over the Baltic Sea and the Swedish province of Pomerania could serve as a bridgehead for military operations in northern Germany. Russia and Britain invited Sweden to join the war against France, tempting her with subsidies and vague promises of support for a Swedish conquest of Norway and territories in northern Germany. At the same time good relations with Britain were increasingly important to Sweden. Trade with Britain was hugely valuable to the Swedish economy. The British attack on Copenhagen in 1801 showed what could happen if Sweden defended its neutrality too stubbornly against British interests.<sup>15</sup>

Another strong influence on the actions of Gustav IV was French policy towards Germany. Gustav was married to a German princess of Baden and the couple actually stayed in Germany between 1803 and 1805. During those years he measured the threat that Napoleon represented to small German states and to peace in Europe. Since the Thirty Years' War and the peace agreement of 1648, Sweden was one of the guarantor powers of Westphalia in Germany. Gustav wanted to defend the status quo in Europe,



which meant stopping Napoleonic aggression. He feared that radical changes would have a negative effect on Swedish foreign policy. The balance of power was of vital interest to the king and his foreign policy. The Swedish king's hostile attitude toward Napoleon was also shaped by the kidnap and execution of the French Duc d'Enghien in March 1804. In the following years, Gustav developed a deep hatred of Napoleon. It is possible that this personal animosity to the French emperor influenced the final decision to go to war against France and join the Third Coalition in October 1805.<sup>16</sup> Swedish military operations in Pomerania (the Pomeranian War, 1805–1807), led by the Swedish king, turned into a fiasco.<sup>17</sup> The French occupied the province of Pomerania when the *Grande Armée* swept away the Austrian, Prussian and Russian armies and the Swedish army was evacuated by the Swedish navy in September 1807.<sup>18</sup>

### **A war on two fronts and the overthrow of Gustav IV: the Finnish War, 1808–1809**

French military victories forced Alexander I of Russia to negotiate with Napoleon. The Treaty of Tilsit in July 1807 between the two emperors gave Alexander a free hand in the Baltic region. The intention was to force Sweden into the anti-British coalition and to join the Continental Blockade against Britain. The British pre-emptive attack on Copenhagen in the autumn of 1807 finally forced Denmark into an alliance with France.<sup>19</sup> In the autumn of 1807 Sweden was surrounded by hostile states allied to France and was only supported by Britain, but the Swedish king refused to give up the struggle against Napoleon. As a consequence Russia was given the opportunity to conquer Finland. The war that followed, the Finnish (or Russo-Swedish) War of 1808–1809, was one of the most important events in Swedish and Finnish history.

Shortly after the outbreak of hostilities in February 1808, Sweden was faced with a two-front situation when Denmark declared war in March. Russian forces invaded Finland, at the same time a Franco-Danish force with a Spanish contingent (ironically under the command of Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte) made preparations to land in southern Sweden.<sup>20</sup> That operation came to nothing, but in Finland a Russian military victory was a reality by the autumn of 1808. Sweden had to fight with only the British navy for support.

The Finnish War of 1808–1809 was, on several levels, a question of geopolitical factors and their impact on warfare. Geography and resources played decisive roles. Because of the two-front situation, military resources had to be divided and used to meet simultaneous threats from east and south. It was impossible to support the troops in Finland with reinforcements and supplies as long as the sea lanes were blocked by ice. In the summer of 1808 a logistical breakdown stopped the Swedish counteroffensive.<sup>21</sup> The

Royal Navy could prevent a Franco-Danish landing in the south of Sweden, but could do little to help the Swedes stop the Russian land offensive in Finland.<sup>22</sup> Also, cooperation with the British forces was broken off by the Swedish king who had difficult relations with the British commander.<sup>23</sup> Warfare also involved a peoples war in the summer of 1808 when Finnish peasants fought against the Russian army, but the Finnish resistance could not prevent the Russian military victory.<sup>24</sup>

A truce between the Russian and Swedish forces was observed between the end of November and March 1809, when Russian forces resumed their operations, which led to the occupation of the northern parts of Sweden and the Åland Islands. At this point both war and foreign policy had direct domestic political consequences. Criticism of the king and his foreign policy had been growing since 1805 among officers and members of the administration. But what finally led to revolt was the conviction that Sweden's survival as an independent state was at stake. One of the revolt's key leaders, Georg Adlersparre, believed that the great powers planned to partition and ultimately wipe Sweden from the map.<sup>25</sup> On 7 March 1809 a division of the Swedish army under Adlersparre's command at the Norwegian border mutinied and began to march on the capital.<sup>26</sup> The king, meanwhile, was overthrown in a *coup d'état* in Stockholm on 13 March 1809 by a group of officers who decided to act before the army in revolt reached the capital.<sup>27</sup>

During the spring of 1809 a new constitution was drawn up, based on the notion of a balance of power between the monarch, the *Riksdag* and the High Court. Executive power lay with the monarch but legislative power was divided between the monarch and the *Riksdag*. The *Riksdag* alone exercised the right to tax the Swedish people. Montesquieu's ideas on the separation of power were an obvious influence. The negative experiences of absolute monarchy in the reigns of Gustav III and Gustav IV and of a powerful *Riksdag* during the eighteenth century, all argued in favor of the principle of the separation and balance of power.<sup>28</sup> Duke Charles was elected king of Sweden on 6 June 1809 and the new constitution was finally accepted by all the estates. On 17 September 1809 a peace treaty was signed with Russia in Fredrikshamn; Sweden lost one third of its territory and one quarter of its population. In the following months Sweden also signed peace treaties with Denmark and France and undertook to join the Continental System.<sup>29</sup>

## **Radical change: policy of 1812 and annexation of Norway in 1814**

The loss of Finland may have reduced Swedish territory, but it did lessen the threat from Russia. Russia had gained geographical security for St. Petersburg and from now on Alexander was preoccupied with the looming war with Napoleonic France. The period between 1809 and 1812 was one of reconstruction in Swedish history. Sweden was forced to declare war on

Britain and, although trade with Britain was banned, widespread smuggling limited the economic consequences for Sweden, which continued to supply the British navy with naval materials.<sup>30</sup>

The new constitution of 1809 provided political stability and the country and its people began to recover. The old king, Charles XIII, was senile and when a Danish prince, Charles August, was elected crown prince hopes rose among the upper classes. The new king had a wide military experience and would give Sweden stability and strength. But he died suddenly of a stroke during a military inspection in May 1810, so Sweden once again needed to find a crown prince. Mindful of his influence over European politics, the members of *Riksrådet* decided to consult Napoleon. He favoured his ally, the Danish King Frederick VI, but seemed prepared to accept the Danish Prince Frederick Christian. Events, however, took an altogether different direction. Influential groups, especially among the military, wanted a French marshal as crown prince, not least for his military competence. Contacts were made with Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte who enjoyed a high reputation among Swedish officers.<sup>31</sup> The estates were assembled in Örebro in 1810 to elect a new crown prince. Initially Frederick Christian's candidature had most support but, after intense lobbying by Bernadotte's supporters, the *Riksdag* elected the former French marshal as crown prince of Sweden under the name of Charles John.<sup>32</sup>

One of the main reasons for Bernadotte's election to crown prince was the belief among his supporters that he could recapture Finland. They were deeply dismayed by the loss of Finland and by the new Russian border that ran so close to the Swedish capital. But, instead of preparing for war against Russia, Bernadotte sought the support of Tsar Alexander. Central to Charles John's understanding of the geopolitical context was the idea of Sweden's natural borders. In his view the old maritime-oriented Swedish kingdom including Finland did not offer the best prospects. On the contrary, he believed the sea separated Finland from the rest of the kingdom and instead saw Norway as a more natural alternative. This vision was formulated in a secret agreement signed between Russia and Sweden in April 1812: 'Norway's geographical position seems to intimate that nature itself has decided that it should be part of the Kingdom of Sweden.'<sup>33</sup> Charles John also believed that going to war with Russia was too risky and that having Finland as part of Sweden would lead to war every ten years. The Swedish crown prince embraced the longstanding Swedish goal of conquering Norway. With Norway and its resources Sweden would be able to stand up to Russia. In 1811 Charles John sought (unsuccessfully) Napoleon's support for an attempted conquest of Norway. In 1812 European politics changed direction again. The time had come to change the direction of Swedish foreign policy.

The outbreak of war between France and Russia in June 1812 provided the opportunity for an agreement between Sweden and Russia and also for a new deal in Swedish foreign policy. The *Riksdag* was assembled in the

Swedish town of Örebro in the spring and summer of 1812. It now became clear that Charles John was indeed the leader of Sweden. The four estates gave the crown prince the economic resources to strengthen the army, enabling him to act militarily in the new political situation. Britain signed a peace treaty with Sweden and Russia in Örebro in July 1812, which was the formal starting point for a new alliance against Napoleon. Alexander and Charles John met in Finnish Turku in August 1812 and confirmed the agreement from April that year. The meeting put a stop to speculations about a Swedish recapture of Finland. Thus was the fate of Finland finally decided, dashing hopes among some groups of Finns that Finland would become part of Sweden again. Many Finns and Swedes were disappointed at Bernadotte's change of the direction for Swedish foreign policy.<sup>34</sup> He broke with a tradition more than 300 years old. Sweden was no longer the natural enemy of Russia. In Swedish tradition this is called the policy of 1812. It was a pivotal point in the history of Swedish foreign policy and marked the start of a new era, characterized by some 200 years of realistic understanding of the possibilities of competing for regional power with the much stronger Russia.<sup>35</sup>

At the same time, Charles John won support for the annexation of Norway. Swedish propaganda announced that Norway would gain their own parliament and constitution within a union with Sweden.<sup>36</sup> The province of Pomerania played its last role in Swedish history as a bridgehead for the landing of the Swedish army on German land in 1813. As one of the commanders in the Allied army, which defeated Napoleon at Leipzig in October 1813, Charles John played an important part. But his dreams of becoming king of France evaporated when the Bourbon monarchy was re-established. Charles John turned his attention to Denmark; Swedish troops in northern Germany were used in an operation against Denmark to gain Norway, leading to the Treaty of Kiel in January 1814.<sup>37</sup> Denmark's position was hopeless. Without a strong army and with no navy it could use, it had no option but to accept the Swedish demands. The Danish policy of standing by France until the bitter end had proved disastrous.<sup>38</sup> Norway was ceded to Sweden but Bernadotte was forced to use the Swedish army against the Norwegians and to accept the Norwegian constitution of May 1814. The military operations against Norway in the summer of 1814 were to be Sweden's last war to this day. As a consequence of the annexation of Norway the province of Pomerania was eventually, after some political manoeuvres, placed under Prussian rule.<sup>39</sup>

### **'Little Sweden': decline and consolidation**

After the military operations against Denmark, Sweden and Charles John ceased to have any real influence on events in Europe. Sweden was merely an observer at the Congress of Vienna 1814–1815 at which the union between

Norway and Sweden was accepted. The great powers supported the idea of a buffer zone, a *cordon sanitaire*, in northern Europe, separating reactionary Russian and liberal British interests in the region.

The Napoleonic Wars meant great changes to Scandinavia in general and to the Swedish kingdom in particular. In 1805 the two kingdoms of Sweden and Denmark still existed. Nine years later four national entities had been created, Denmark and Sweden were reduced in size and Finland had become part of the Russian Empire as a Grand Duchy. Norway had acquired a constitution of its own, but had to wait until 1905, when the union with Sweden was dissolved, for full independence. For Sweden, the most important events were the loss of Finland in 1809, the exchange of the province of Pomerania and the annexation of Norway in 1814. On a domestic level, however, Sweden became a more modern state as a result of the overthrow of Gustav IV in March 1809 and the adoption of the new constitution of 1809. This constitution lasted until the 1970s, ensuring more than 150 years of political stability.

The Napoleonic Wars marked the end of the active European policy Sweden had followed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Swedish link to the European continent and her involvement in German politics were no more. Sweden became Little Sweden. In the seventeenth century, the Swedish Queen Kristina said that she reigned over a square-shaped kingdom; in 1814, Charles John was crown prince of a kingdom more rectangular in shape and with its capital awkwardly located on the far right side. Russia had gained security for its capital by the conquest of Finland. Sweden now had to face a new sort of threat: the Russian islands of Åland were only 100 kilometres from the Swedish capital. A new border with Russian-dominated Finland followed the River Torneå in the north. These geopolitical provisions would determine Swedish defense measures over the next 200 years.

Most of the political decisions made by Swedish leaders between 1805 and 1814 were dictated by geopolitical factors. The two peripheral parts of the kingdom – the province of Pomerania and eastern Finland – dragged Sweden into war. Russia wished to conquer Finland and the province of Pomerania served to tie Sweden to European continental politics. Sweden lacked the resources to defend its extensive territory or to fight enemies on two fronts, as was the case during the catastrophic war against Russia, Denmark and France in 1808–1809. Bernadotte, Charles John as he became, recognized the problem of Sweden's geopolitical position; the solution he proposed was the new direction given to Swedish foreign policy in 1812 and the annexation of Norway. Prepared to abandon Finland, he accepted the breakup of the old Kingdom of Sweden and the end of the Swedish-Finnish union in a single state. In its place he consolidated a new Swedish-Norwegian state based on peace with Russia, the regional power he recognized Sweden was unable to fight.

## Notes

1. See, for example, Geoffrey Parker, *Western Geopolitical Thought in the Twentieth Century* (London, 1985); and idem, *Geopolitics: Past, Present and Future* (London, 1998).
2. These questions are discussed in Torbjörn Eng, *Det svenska väldet: Ett konglomerat av uttrycksformer och begrepp från Vasa till Bernadotte* (Uppsala, 2001), 437–453 (summary in English).
3. This includes the Finnish counties (0.9 million inhabitants) and the province of Pomerania (100,000 inhabitants).
4. Lars Ericson Wolke, 'The Swedish army and navy during the Thirty Years' War', in *1648: War and Peace in Europe*, ed. Klaus Bussmann and Heinz Shilling (Münster, 1998), 301–307; Geoffrey Parker, *The Thirty Years' War* (London, 1984).
5. See, for example, Robert Frost, *The Northern Wars: War, State and Society in Northeastern Europe, 1558–1721* (Harlow, 2000).
6. Jan Glete, *Navies and Nations: Warships, Navies and State Building in Europe and America, 1550–1860*, 2 vols (Stockholm, 1993).
7. Michael Roberts, *The Age of Liberty: Sweden 1719–1772* (Cambridge, 1986).
8. Jonas Nordin, 'The Monarchy in the Swedish Age of Liberty (1719–1772)', in *Scandinavia in the Age of Revolution: Nordic Political Cultures 1740–1820*, ed. Pasi Ihalainen and Karin Sennerfelt (Farnham, 2001), 29–40.
9. James Davey, *The Transformation of British Naval Strategy: Seapower and Supply in Northern Europe 1808–1812* (Woodbridge, 2012); Johan D Grainger, *The British Navy in the Baltic*, forthcoming in 2014; Ole Feldbæk, 'Denmark and the Baltic, 1720–1864' and Stewart P Oakley, 'Trade, Peace and the Balance of Power: Britain and the Baltic, 1603–1802', in *In Quest of Trade and Security: The Baltic in Power Politics, 1500–1990*, 2 vols, ed. Göran Rystad, Klaus-R Böhme and Wilhelm Carlgren (Lund, 1994), vol. 2, 260; Christer Jorgensen, *The Anglo-Swedish Alliance against Napoleonic France* (London, 2004).
10. Henrika Tandefelt, 'The Image of Kingship in Sweden, 1772–1809', in *Scandinavia in the Age of Revolution: Nordic Political Cultures, 1740–1820*, ed. Pasi Ihalainen and Karin Sennerfelt (Farnham, 2001), 42–53.
11. Arnold H. Barton, *Scandinavia in the Revolutionary Era, 1760–1815* (Minneapolis, 1986), 142–174.
12. The Swedish army was stopped and the Swedish high fleet failed to crush the Russian high fleet in 1788, which halted the Swedish offensive. In 1790 the Russian army and fleet counterattacked and Sweden was saved from total disaster and defeat only by a miraculous victory in the sea battle at Svensksund in July 1790, in which the Russian archipelago fleet was totally routed. Lars Ericson, 'Kriget till lands 1788–1790', in *Gustav III:s ryska krig*, ed. Gunnar Artéus (Stockholm, 1992), 80–83; and Jan Glete, 'Kriget till sjöss 1788–1790', in *ibid.*, 141–148.
13. Ole Felsbæk, *Denmark and the Armed Neutrality, 1800–1801* (Copenhagen, 1980).
14. Martin Hårdstedt, *Omvälvningarnas tid* (Stockholm, 2010), 108–111; Seved Johnson, *Sveige och stormakterna 1800–1804* (Gothenburg, 1957), 148–169; Herbert Lundh, *Gustav IV Adolf och Sveriges utrikespolitik 1801–1804* (Uppsala, 1926), 154–180.
15. Sten Carlsson, *Den svenska utrikespolitikens historia III:1 1792–1810* (Stockholm, 1954), 92–95.

16. Charles Esdaile, *The Wars of Napoleon* (London, 1995), 232; Sten Carlsson and Jerker Rosén, *Svensk historia II* (Stockholm, 1961), 277–281; Barton, *Scandinavia*, 266–268.
17. Gustaf Björnin, *Sveriges krig i Tyskland åren 1805–1807* (Stockholm, 1882).
18. Barton, *Scandinavia*, 268–271.
19. Thomas Munch-Petersen, *Defying Napoleon: How Britain Bombarded Copenhagen and Seized the Danish Fleet in 1807* (Stroud, 2007).
20. Magnus Mörner, 'En spansk-fransk armé hotar Skåne 1808', *Militärhistorisk Tidskrift (Journal of Military History)* (2002): 31–33.
21. Martin Hårdstedt, 'Om krigets förutsättningar: Den militära underhållsproblematisken och det civila samhället i norra Sverige och Finland under Finska kriget 1808–09', doctoral thesis (Umeå, 2002), 21–45; Martin Hårdstedt, 'Preconditions of war-logistics, civilian society and consequences of war during the period of the Napoleonic Wars', in *ACTA 34th Congress of the International Commission of Military History* (Trieste, 2008, Rome, 2009); Martin Hårdstedt, 'Finska kriget 1808–1809: Förhistoria, förlopp och konsekvenser ur ett geopolitiskt perspektiv', in *Krig på sjö och land: Norden i Napoleonskrigene*, ed. Knut Arstad (Oslo, 2014), 185–200.
22. James Davey, 'The Royal Navy and the War with Denmark, 1808–1814', in *Krig på sjö och land*, 123.
23. Davey, *The Transformation*.
24. Magnus Mörner, 'Can the "little war" in Finland 1808 be fruitfully compared with the Spanish guerilla?', in *Militärhistorisk Tidskrift (Journal of Military History)* (2008): 9–29.
25. Rumors from the Erfurt meeting in October 1808 between Napoleon and Alexander about plans to divide Sweden played an important role. We now know that there were no such plans, but in the autumn and spring 1807–08 it had an important effect on the leaders of the revolt against Gustav IV.
26. Mats Hemström, *Marschen mot makten* (Uppsala, 2005), 59–64.
27. Barton, *Scandinavia*, 282–284.
28. *Ibid.*, 285–289; Franklin D. Scott, *Sweden: The Nation's History* (Carbondale, 1988), 296–299.
29. Martin Hårdstedt, *Finska kriget 1808–1809* (Stockholm, 2006) and Generalstaben (Swedish general staff), *Sveriges krig åren 1808–1809* (Stockholm, 1890–1920).
30. Tim Voelcker, *Admiral Saumarez versus Napoleon: The Baltic, 1807–1812* (Woodbridge, 2008).
31. Bernadotte, as commander of the First French Army Corps, had met Swedish officers during the war in northern Germany in 1807. See Jorgensen, *Anglo-Swedish Alliance*, 82–83.
32. Barton, *Scandinavia*, 311–319; Scott, *Sweden*, 301–306.
33. Nils Erik Villstrand, *Riksdelen: Stormakt och rikssprängning 1560–1812* (Helsinki, 2009), 320; Roald Berg, 'Denmark, Norway and Sweden in 1814: a geopolitical and contemporary perspective' *Scandinavian Journal of History*, vol. 3, 39 (2014), 265–286.
34. *Ibid.*, 326–339.
35. Barton, *Scandinavia*, 320–322; Carlsson and Rosén, *Svensk historia II*, 319–331; Torvald Höjer, *Den svenska utrikespolitikens historia III:2, 1810–1844* (Stockholm, 1954), 161–179.
36. Ruth Hemstad, *Propagandakrig. Kampen om Norge I Norden og Europa 1812–1814*, (Oslo, 2014).

37. Dominic Lieven, *Russia against Napoleon: The Battle for Europe, 1807 to 1814* (London, 2009), 370–371.
38. Michael Bregnsbo, 'Frederik VI, det danske imperium, Norge og krigen 1807–1814: Motiver bag beslutningerne', in Arstad, *Krig på sjø och land*, 125–143.
39. Barton, *Scandinavia*, 336–353. Höjer, *Den svenska utrikespolitikens historia*, 202–218.



# 16

## Finland and the Napoleonic Empire

*Max Engman*

Finland's relationship to the Napoleonic Empire is in some respects paradoxical. As a part of the Swedish kingdom under Gustav III and Gustav IV Finland was never part of the Napoleonic Empire; on the contrary, it counted among its most determined opponents. Sweden's stubborn resistance to Napoleon led to the partition of the kingdom into Sweden (corresponding to the present-day Swedish borders) and the Grand Duchy of Finland. By directing the ambitions of Alexander I to the north, instead of towards the Danubian Principalities and the Balkans, Napoleon played a central role in the history of Finland. He set in motion the chain of events that led to the birth of Finland, or the Rockade [Castling] of the North, in which Sweden lost Finland but acquired Norway, while Denmark lost Norway (but kept its Atlantic dependencies). In retrospect the years 1808–1809 appear decisive but the new state of affairs, in fact, remained unstable until 1812–1813 and became definitive only with the defeat of Napoleon.<sup>1</sup>

### **From Sweden to Russia**

Norway had belonged to Denmark since 1536. Finland had been an integral part of Sweden for some five or six hundred years, and the integration of Finland and the formation of the Swedish state were two aspects of the same process. Unlike the Baltic provinces and Ingria, Finland was not a province but rather, since the Middle Ages, an integral part of the country with its own representation in the four-estate parliament, the *Riksdag*. Finland had the same law, administration, taxes and social structure. Indeed, in some respects, Finland *was* Sweden, even more so than Sweden itself. The free peasantry represented at the four-estate parliament was a significant feature of Swedish society; in Finland there was less noble land, which meant more free, taxpaying peasants owning their land. Finland was not a separate entity in the Swedish realm; there was no regional administration comprising Finland except a district for the pilot service and surveyor service. There was a university at Åbo and, at various times, a Governor

General in Finland, but otherwise what was called Finland was a number of Swedish provinces, in which the majority spoke Finnish. There has been a long-running debate over the question of whether Finnish patriotism or identity existed before 1809 but, by and large, the Finns were loyal to the Swedish Crown.

Tilsit was the decisive moment for Finland. Finland became part of the Russian Empire when occupied by the Russian army during the spring and summer of 1808. At Tilsit Alexander's first priority had been not Finland but Constantinople and the Danubian Principalities. Napoleon, however, directed the discussions towards plans to occupy India and the like. We do not know if Finland was even explicitly mentioned in the discussions between the emperors – there is nothing on Finland in the official documents, but Napoleon and Alexander met without interpreters and aides and it is not known what was said or agreed during those meetings. What is clear is that Alexander had to give up his more ambitious plans and agree to occupy Finland with the idea of forcing Sweden to join the Continental Blockade.

### **A consolation prize**

In many ways Finland could be considered a consolation prize for Alexander, but one that he had to secure for himself. Alexander's troops were very successful at the start of the war. The Swedish war plan was based on a strategic retreat to the interior and the north, with the aim of stretching the Russian army's supply lines, but the Russians simply entered Finland and overran the Swedish army, which consisted mainly of Finnish troops. The retreat demoralized the troops and, with the capitulation of the Sveaborg fortress outside Helsingfors (modern-day Helsinki) in May 1808, an important asset for the planned Swedish counterattack was lost. From the autumn of 1808 Russia effectively controlled all of Finland. By the end of the war the Russians had advanced into northern Sweden and were threatening Stockholm from the Åland Islands. Alexander would have liked to impose a victor's peace in conquered Stockholm but had to be content with a negotiated (though more or less dictated) peace at Fredrikshamn/Hamina in Russian Finland.

Finland may have been a consolation prize, but Russia had good reasons for wanting to annex it. St. Petersburg was founded in 1703 during the Great Northern War and soon became the capital of Russia. During the wars of 1741–1743 and 1788–1790, both started by Sweden, the Swedes launched operations against St. Petersburg, operations they tried to coordinate with the Ottomans. The war of 1741–1743 was a fiasco for Sweden and led to the loss of a small part of Finland. The war of 1788–1790 ended in a status quo, but the Swedish aggression was considered so serious that Russia built a line of forts along the Kymi River.<sup>2</sup> Alexander thus had good reason

for seeking to annex Finland once Napoleon offered an opportunity. After 1809 the strategic Kymi fortress line was no longer needed. In its place the Russians started building the Bomarsund fortress on the Åland Islands in the 1830s. This fortress was destroyed by a Franco-British force during the Crimean War.

## Diet and peace

Alexander I tried to secure his conquest in a number of ways. Efforts in the spring of 1808 to have the Finns swear allegiance directly (that is, not through representatives) to the Russian crown were not very successful. For obvious reasons the population was unwilling to swear allegiance while the war was still going on. Threats and sanctions against those who declined had little effect. In Åbo/Turku the oath was sworn in two groups. The upper classes were overseen by the Russian commander-in-chief General F.W. Buxhoevden himself and Russian soldiers, and when the common people swore the oath, guns were conspicuously present. Even under these conditions many simply did not show up. In some rural parishes hundreds of peasants stayed away. Members of the elite invented all manner of excuses in order to avoid attending, such as claims that the keys to churches had disappeared.

The Russians also tried another method to secure the allegiance of the Finnish population by inviting a deputation of representatives of the Finnish estates from the occupied part of Finland to St. Petersburg. The deputation made clear, however, that it had no right to take decisions or make agreements in matters that were part of the prerogatives of the *Riksdag*, or a corresponding parliament for Finland. Indeed, the delegation introduced Alexander to two characteristics of his new subjects: the legalism of its elite; and the political role of the free peasants. Count Mannerheim did not even try to hide his pride when the Finnish peasants were invited to the Winter Palace:

Among all the guests at the ball the Finnish peasants must have been a phenomenon never seen before in this Palace. They aroused general astonishment but were themselves not at all shy or timid and handled themselves well and prudently – on the whole maybe also more respectfully than many of the ornamented and showy slaves.<sup>3</sup>

The whole deputation, including the peasants, had dinner with the tsar. For Prince Gagarin it was a sensation that all estates from emperor to peasant sat at the same dinner table in Borgå. A general in the emperor's suite talked to the peasant representative Pietari Wäänänen from Kuopio and was astonished by his well-reasoned and candid points of view, and exclaimed: 'This peasant is truly a genius.' (*Ce paysan a vraiment du genie.*)<sup>4</sup>

In a third initiative Alexander convened the Diet of Borgå/Porvoo, which had the legitimacy that the two other methods lacked. The oath of allegiance was sworn by the Finnish estates. Finland had no separate diet before 1809, but at the meeting of the estates the rules for the Swedish *Riksdag* were followed. The situation was, however, still far from stable. A telling indication was that more Finnish noble families were represented at the opening of the ongoing Swedish *Riksdag* in Stockholm than in the Borgå Diet.<sup>5</sup> Alexander started a campaign to win over the inhabitants of Finland. Finnish troops were demobilized, but officers kept their salaries without having to serve, funding for the university was increased, taxes were reduced and Finland was equipped with a central administration.

The transfer of Finland to the Russian Empire can be described from two competing perspectives: the Diet of Borgå, where Alexander I met the Finnish estates; and the peace treaty of Fredrikshamn between Russia and Sweden. In Borgå, which Alexander visited twice for the opening and closing sessions, he made a deal with his new subjects in Finland (who in international law were still Swedish subjects). He promised that they would be allowed to keep their laws, administration, social organization and religion unchanged.

The Peace Treaty of Fredrikshamn finalized the change at the level of international relations. Sweden ceded five provinces to Russia. The Russian negotiators demanded a border in the north along the Kalix River, further west than the final border. The Swedish negotiators argued for the status quo in the north and, when forced to concede, a border from Björneborg/Pori on the west coast following the inland waterways to the eastern border of Finland. The effort was a somewhat desperate last try, but it illustrates two interesting facts. Firstly, the Grand Duchy of Finland, as a notion or a physical reality, was not clearly defined; hence proposing a partition of its territory was politically possible. Secondly, the Swedish proposal shows the element of chance involved in the process of the creation of the Grand Duchy. An acceptance of the Swedish proposal, or something like it, would have had momentous consequences for the peoples living in the area. The Finns might then have evolved into the Kurds of the North, divided between three states. The Finland-Swedes would never have evolved as a minority. The Swedish-speakers south of the border would probably have evolved not as one integrated group but as two, one resembling the Baltic Germans, the other the Swedes in Estonia. The Swedish-speakers north of the border would have assimilated with the Swedes in northern Sweden.

The Swedish proposal made sense in that the Russians were interested in the southern coast of Finland as a security zone for St. Petersburg but were not interested in the wilderness of the interior and might have been prepared to give way. Timber had as yet little value and the extent of the iron ore fields in northern Sweden was not known. Russia, however, demanded the whole of Finland and settled for the Torne River as the border, which can

be seen as Finland's first western border. On one point the Russians were adamant. The Swedes tried right up to the end to keep the Åland Islands, seen as a gun pointed at the heart of Sweden. But the Russians argued that to take Finland and relinquish the Åland Islands was like taking a chest and throwing away the key. The Swedish negotiators were obliged to accept the Russian position.

## **Empire and autonomy**

The Diet of Borgå and the Peace Treaty of Fredrikshamn thus ended centuries of common Swedish-Finnish history. A piece of Sweden was torn from Stockholm and transferred to Russia. Alexander I was eager to acquire a security zone between Sweden and St. Petersburg, but the change made in 1809 was ultimately a result of Napoleon's economic warfare against Great Britain and of the rivalry between Napoleon and Alexander.

The Russo-Swedish War of 1808–1809 brought one of the most far-reaching changes in Finnish history, but from the perspective of the Napoleonic Empire it was a sideshow, and Finland's changed position was a by-product of maneuvering in the European grand strategy. For Finland and the region around the Gulf of Finland, the decisive change was that the Grand Duchy was attached to but not integrated with Russia. Why should this have been so? The fundamental reason is that Russia was not a unitary state, like the core area of Sweden, but an empire, a conglomerate of autonomous regions. Finland entered the Russian Empire as the result of a window of opportunity during Alexander's, so-called, liberal years between two phases of centralization under Catherine II and Nicholas I. Alexander experimented with administrative reforms in Russia and was reluctant to change an administrative system that, in some respects, functioned better than Russia's. Russia was 'under-administered' and did not have the civil servants needed to take over the Swedish administration in Finland.<sup>6</sup> Alexander was also unwilling to let serfdom expand into areas where it did not exist. This was the case in Old Finland, the County of Vyborg, conquered by Russia in 1721 and 1743 and joined to the Grand Duchy from the beginning of 1812. As Alexander could foresee that a confrontation with Napoleon was likely, he wanted Finland peaceful and pacified. The best, or at least the easiest, course was to leave the Finns alone and let them keep their own laws and languages.

Alexander thus followed the traditional model, as described by Andreas Kappeler,<sup>7</sup> used by the Russian Empire to incorporate but not necessarily unify new territories. After a period of stern military pacification a deal was made with the elites of newly conquered areas. They were allowed to keep their laws, privileges and leading position. In exchange they were expected to uphold law and order and good government, and to supply qualified personnel to meet the enormous demand in Russia. During that process they were brought closer to Russia. The sons of the elite groups received

their education in Russia and married there. This was the model, though the results varied. In Bessarabia, one of the areas annexed by Russia during the Napoleonic era, the boyars showed no interest in autonomy and it was abolished after two decades. The Poles rebelled to win back what they lost in the partitions and thereby lost their autonomy. In Finland, autonomy worked, not least because through it the Finns had gained something. The expected large-scale assimilation, however, never materialized, or at least not to the extent needed for it to play a significant role.

## Opinions

Investigating the state of opinion in the past is notoriously difficult. People in the higher strata of society certainly wrote letters, some of them expressing very clear views. The problem is deciding what they represent; a majority opinion or the idiosyncrasies of one individual? An opinion prevalent in the upper strata of society but one perhaps absent from the lower strata? It is clear that Alexander did not have to worry about Napoleonic sympathies among the elite in Finland. There were two important groups of Finns in Russian policy: some of the participants in the officers' rebellion in Finland against Gustav III during the war of 1788–1790 had since lived in exile in Russia; the other group, the Gustavians, loyal to the memory of Gustav, hated both the renegades and Napoleon. They saw Alexander as the protector of Europe against the Corsican highwayman. Their program was founded on loyalty towards Russia, so that the emperor should hear nothing but good from Finland.

More disturbing was the simmering opposition in the lower reaches of society. During the war some of the peasants and the common people fought guerilla campaigns against the Russian army and its supply lines. They were fighting for their king and perhaps also against the threat of serfdom. The Russians tried to neutralize these fears by repeatedly stressing that Russia would not introduce changes in landownership or religion.

Among the upper social strata defeatism was widespread, as seen in the capitulation of the Sveaborg fortress. 1808 saw the third occupation of Finland within a century. Small wonder then that some Finns doubted the ability, or even the willingness, of the Swedes to defend Finland. Further bloodshed seemed futile. Bishop Tengström did all he could to make the transition as smooth as possible, arguing after the peace of 1809 that Finns should accept the unavoidable and make the best of it: 'It would be unreasonable to believe that any Finnish man, high or low, last year would have hoped for what now has happened; but that one as a sensible person should and must foresee it, is quite another matter.'<sup>8</sup>

There seems, however, to have been considerable tension and suspicion between the elite and the lower strata. The parishioners of Pargas in south-western Finland were prepared to take the future bishop of Åbo prisoner

and deliver him up as a traitor to the Swedish fleet. The old Gustavian J.F. Aminoff declared that one could trust all the better people but not the common people or the crowd, especially not in Åbo where people were strongly attached to Sweden. It was a good thing to have 'greencoats' (Russian soldiers) to keep them quiet.<sup>9</sup>

Pro-Swedish sentiments also came to the surface when Alexander and Bernadotte met in Åbo in 1812. To avoid any kind of demonstration, Bernadotte showed himself as little as possible. It was clear that the common people were more interested in the crown prince than in the emperor. Alexander was popular in Finland but at that moment the crown prince's popularity really sealed the fate of Finland. The Swedish crown prince, even though he was a French marshal, appealed more to those who had grown up in the era that was about to end.<sup>10</sup> During the deliberations in Borgå, a Finnish army was judged unnecessary or useless. No one would dare attack Finland if it was part of Russia and if, at some later date, the Swedes were to attack Finland, Finnish troops would be unreliable as it was to be expected that they continued to harbor warm feelings for their former brothers and would be unwilling to take up arms against them. Not until the situation had stabilized was Alexander's pacification policy successful.

### **Sweden's choice: revanchism or cooperation with Russia**

The Peace of Fredrikshamn was the harshest peace treaty and the worst defeat in Swedish history. No wonder Swedish public opinion expected to see a reconquest of Finland. The Swedes had reason to believe that this was what was going to happen when Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte was elected heir to the Swedish crown. He seemed perfect for the role; as a marshal of Napoleon's France he was one of the professional commanders who had changed the map of Europe. If anyone could restore Swedish greatness, it was the Prince of Ponte Corvo. He was a professional soldier and was believed to have good relations with Napoleon. But Sweden had been isolated for too long and the realization was lacking that Bernadotte, precisely because he was a professional soldier, would look at the maps and conclude that while Sweden might be able to reconquer Finland it would never be able to keep it. Thus Finland would be the object of a bloody war every tenth year. It was a conflict that Sweden could only prolong but never win. In these conditions it was better to go after Norway, which Sweden could take and then keep. Bernadotte was unsentimentally prepared to give Finland away, but he needed something to offer Swedish public opinion in exchange, and while Napoleon would offer him no compensation Alexander might. At a meeting in Åbo at the end of August 1812 and later in a treaty signed in St. Petersburg, Alexander and Bernadotte reached an agreement. It attests to Alexander's urgent need to secure his right flank against Napoleon, that

he left his capital and headquarters between the Battles of Smolensk and Borodino in order to meet Bernadotte.

Finland was not party to the treaty and at first glance had nothing to do with the deal struck between Russia and Sweden. In retrospect the significance of the year of 1812 for Finland is that Helsingfors was made a capital and Old Finland was united with the Grand Duchy. On the other hand, it could be argued that the whole treaty was about Finland and nothing else. In the new situation of 1809 Sweden had to choose between revanchism, or acceptance of the outcome. The first option, rejected by Bernadotte, would have created a *Suecia irredenta*, comparable in some ways to Hungary after the Peace of Trianon after World War I. Such a neighbor would have left the Finns little room for maneuver and kept the Russians permanently suspicious. On the other hand, if the second option was chosen, Russia would not have to worry about Swedish aggression for a long time to come.

### **A soft separation**

In 1809 Sweden lost one third of its territory, one quarter of its population and about 14 per cent of its national wealth. This result was a catastrophe, not least because Sweden and Finland had formed an integrated economy. Since the Middle Ages Finland had provisioned Stockholm with fish and firewood; the iron foundries in Finland were totally dependent on Swedish iron ore. From the seventeenth century, ore had been transported to foundries in southern Finland, where they could use the abundant reserves of timber. The peace treaty recognized the difficulties that would appear when the former internal trade was suddenly transformed into foreign trade. The treaty had the declared aim of not cutting 'trade relations formed by old custom, that neighborhood and bilateral needs had made almost inseparable.' In the event Sweden became a foreign country for Finland only in 1844; until then preferential custom tariffs and other special arrangements favored Swedish-Finnish trade.

Swedish currency circulated in Finland for several decades after 1809. In the Russian Grand Duchy it was thus even possible to pay taxes in Swedish money. These special arrangements maintained the dominant position of Sweden in Finnish trade. The same was true of the customs border established between Finland and Russia; its aim was not to limit Finno-Russian trade but to stop the import of foreign goods through Finland to Russia. Russia had much higher import duties and there was a danger of Finland becoming a channel for both legal and illegal imports to Russia.

The effect of these arrangements, however, was that trade continued to follow earlier patterns and that Russia's share of Finnish trade grew only slowly. In the 1830s leaders of Russian economic policy set about changing this state of affairs. The special customs duties were abolished; the rouble became the only legal currency in Finland (though the exchange of



Swedish money ended in northern Finland only around 1850). The efforts to steer Finnish trade towards Russia included: a new trade law (1835); the appointment of Finnish trade agents in St. Petersburg, Reval and Riga, later agents for shipping in Kronstadt and Odessa; and Finnish trade stations in St. Petersburg for agricultural and maritime trade. A series of measures were taken to improve communication and transport with St. Petersburg, which included the Saima Canal (1856), connecting the interior water-system to the Gulf of Finland; and the Finnish railroad to St. Petersburg (1870).<sup>11</sup>

All these measures were intended to strengthen Finland's orientation towards Russia. They were successful in that Sweden's share of Finnish trade fell to about 10 per cent while Russia's share grew to about half. A large part of Finnish trade to Russia was, so-called, peasant trade to St. Petersburg, that is, peasants selling their own or their neighbors' products in the metropolis. This resulted in some professionalization of trade, but the provisioning of St. Petersburg still brought many Finns to the imperial capital. St. Petersburg's zone of influence expanded to the west, and the economic face of eastern and interior Finland turned eastwards.

Finland's orientation to the East was strengthened regionally by a number of strategic safeguards introduced by the Russians. The Finns proved their loyalty during the Crimean War, and Russian defense plans for Finland only mention the risk of disloyalty from the population of the Grand Duchy late in the nineteenth century.<sup>12</sup> They trusted the Finns but were always somewhat uneasy over close contacts between Sweden and Finland. Thus, in 1812 the Russian authorities arranged the transfer of the Finnish capital from Åbo to Helsingfors (completed in 1819). Official motives included the peace and quiet needed at the university and the fact that Åbo had become a border city far from the imperial capital. Internal papers, however, emphasize the lack of civic opinion in Åbo – the inhabitants were too loyal to their Swedish traditions. Helsingfors, of course, was protected by the guns of Sveaborg and the Baltic fleet.

After the great fire of 1827, the university was also moved from Åbo to Helsingfors and was renamed the Imperial Alexander-University in Finland. In addition to the fire, one of the motives for moving the university to Helsingfors was that the authorities were better able to keep an eye on the students. The transfer of capital and university, as well as the growth of Helsingfors as a capital for the Grand Duchy, also increased the centralization of Finland. This transition took time, however, and as late as 1840 the Grand Duchy still lacked a clear center of population. Roughly the same number of Finns (over 10,000 people) lived in the old capital Åbo, the new capital Helsingfors and the imperial capital St. Petersburg. Around this time the population of Helsingfors began to outnumber that of Åbo. The old capital, however, retained its preeminence in finance, shipping (including Finnish participation in Russian activities in the Far East) and marine

assurance. It was not until the building of the railway network that Åbo lost out. The Ostrobothnian region in northwestern Finland also lost its economic advantages and became an economic backwater.<sup>13</sup>

## **Institution building**

One of the most important questions discussed at the Diet of Borgå concerned the creation of a central administration for Finland. The Governing Council, from 1816 known as the Imperial Senate for Finland, was established in Åbo in 1809. It consisted of an economic and a justice department. The Senate was a small office; even fairly minor cases and matters were decided by the emperor. They were presented to him by a Committee on Finnish Affairs (until 1826, and in a different form between 1857 and 1891) and a State Secretary for Finland (from 1834 called the 'Minister State Secretary'). But while the Senate may have been small, it was the embryo from which the Finnish state grew.

Over the next few years Finland acquired an intendant's office (public buildings) in 1810, a postal office and medical college in 1811, a general customs office, surveyor's office and pilot service in 1812. By 1826, 18 departments had been set up, employing a total of 212 new civil servants. By the end of the nineteenth century, Finland had its own authorities in almost all the sectors administered by a modern state, including offices for ideologically important sectors like antiquities and statistics, a separate state bank, currency and state railways. What Finland lacked was a foreign affairs service, a telegraph service and, for most of the period, a pilot service in Vyborg county (at times administered by the Russian navy). The organization of Finnish military affairs changed fairly often, but for most of the nineteenth century Finland had some enlisted troops and from 1879 to 1902 a separate conscript army.

## **Multiculturalism**

The opinion held by some Finns that Sweden was provincial was partly based on fact; between the loss of Finland, the beginning of transatlantic emigration and the growth of new export industries, Sweden was probably more inward-oriented, even provincial, than in any period before or since. At the same time all the possibilities of Russia were opened up to the Finns, who thus had the impression of being subjects of a multinational world power.

Finland was a fairly uniformly Lutheran country. In a few decades after 1809 the Swedish-speaking capital of the Grand Duchy acquired two Orthodox churches (and a third on Sveaborg), a Russian theater, a Catholic church (for Polish soldiers), a synagogue and a Muslim prayer house with an imam. When the Russian government banned foreign travel, Helsingfors

experienced a short golden age as a spa town. From about 1830 up to the Crimean War members of the Russian aristocracy, and especially the middle ranks, came to the city for the summer to take the waters and enjoy the popular sea baths.

The relationship between Sweden and Finland has been likened to that between two brothers, with all the tensions and conflicts such a relationship can involve. Traditionally, of course, Sweden was the older brother but, because of the Russian connection, the relationship was turned on its head and in the middle of the nineteenth century the Finns felt like the big brother. Finnish travelers to Stockholm described the Swedes as an unimportant, inward-looking people. L.G. von Hartman visited Stockholm for the first time in 1827 after spending several years in St. Petersburg. His first impression was 'for someone from St. Petersburg, everything – streets, squares, houses – looks so small here.' When shown the crown prince's quarters he reflected that they lacked all elegance and grandeur; many merchants in St. Petersburg had more splendid dwellings. The Finns felt that they belonged to a world power; they were proud though also slightly apprehensive. The Orientalist Wilhelm Lagus wrote in Odessa about 'world powers like Russia or Rome'. Emil von Quanten, on the other hand, saw Finland as 'a small swallow's nest attached to an enormous building.' The Finnish nationalist leader Yrjö-Koskinen did not have a high opinion of the Finnish officers in Russian service but proudly announced that Finland had more generals in active service than the total number of generals in the United Kingdoms of Sweden and Norway.

### An interface periphery

The Napoleonic Era was decisive for Finland. It created the conditions for Finland to come into being as an administrative and political entity and a nation. The Finnish sociologist Risto Alapuro has defined Finland as an 'interface periphery'. This term, from the field of sociology, means that Finland was dominated politically from the East, and economically and culturally from the West. The Napoleonic Era and the Napoleonic Empire indirectly created the conditions under which this balancing act became possible.<sup>14</sup>

### Notes

1. In general: Päiviö Tommila, *La Finlande dans la politique européenne en 1809–1815*. Studia Historica (Helsinki, 1962); Osmo Jussila, *Suomen suuriruhtinaskunta* (Helsinki, 2004); Matti Klinge, *Napoleonin varjo: Euroopan ja Suomen murros 1795–1815* (Helsinki, 1809); Max Engman, *Ett långt farväl: Finland mellan Sverige och Ryssland efter 1809* (Stockholm, 2009); Frank Nesemann, *Ein Staat, kein Gouvernement: Die Entstehung und Entwicklung der Autonomie Finnlands im russischen Zarenreich, 1808–1826* (Frankfurt, 2003).

2. In the beginning Russian opinion of the war in Finland was critical. Osmo Jussila, 'Från ärolöst till ärorikt: 1808–1809 års krig med ryska ögon', in *Fänrikens marknadssminne: Finska kriget 1808–1809 och dess följder i eftervärldens ögon*, Skrifter utgivna av Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland 719, ed. Max Engman (Helsingfors, 2009), 97–149.
3. Bruno Lesch (ed.), 'Geheimerådet Greve C.E. Mannerheims Egenhändiga anteckningar', *Förhandlingar och Uppsatser* 35, Skrifter utgivna av Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland 163 (Helsingfors, 1921), 76–77; Robert Castrén, *Finska Deputationen 1808–1809* (Helsingfors, 1879).
4. E. Nervander, *Kejsar Alexander I:s samtliga resor i Finland enligt äldre och nyare källor samt insamlade traditioner* (Helsingfors, 1906), 90.
5. Henrika Tandefelt, *Borgå 1809: Ceremoni och fest* (Helsingfors, 1809).
6. Heikki Ylikangas, 'Finlands administrativa ställning inom det ryska riket', *Historisk Tidskrift för Finland* (1993): 289–303.
7. Andreas Kappeler, *Russland als Vielvölkereich: Entstehung, Geschichte, Zerfall* (Munich, 1993).
8. Quoted in Carl v. Bonsdorff, *Opinioner och stämningar i Finland 1808–1814*, (Helsingfors, 1918), 38.
9. J.F. Aminoff to G.M. Armfelt, draft July 1812, as quoted in v. Bonsdorff, *Opinioner och stämningar*, 154.
10. Nils Erik Villstrand, *Furstar och folk i Åbo 1812* (Helsingfors, 1812).
11. Erkki Pihkala, *Suomalaiset maailmantaloudessa keskiajalta EU-Suomeen*, Tietolipas 141, (Helsinki, 2001), 84–107; Engman, *Ett långt farväl*, 146–173.
12. Pertti Luntinen, 'Suomi Pietarin suojana ja uhkana venäläisten sotasuunnitelmissa 1854–1914', *Historiallinen Arkisto* 79 (1983), 7–130.
13. Engman, *Ett långt farväl*, 49–67, 176–196. Matti Klinge, *Hufvudstaden: Helsingfors och finska staten 1808–1863* (Helsingfors, 2012).
14. Risto Alapuro, *State and Revolution in Finland* (Berkeley, 1988). As a consequence of its political significance, the 'Constitutional' – or 'the Russian' (in Russia 'the Finnish') – question and the language Struggle/issue were the two dominating/principal political conflicts in Finland during the nineteenth century. Osmo Jussila, *Maakunnasta valtioksi: Suomen valtion synty* (Helsinki, 1987). Robert Schweitzer, *Autonomie und Autokratie: Die Stellung des Grossfürstenthums Finnland im Russischen Reich in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts (1863–1899)*, *Marburger Abhandlungen zur Geschichte und Kultur Osteuropas* 19 (Giessen, 1978).

## **Part IV**

# **The Eastern Mediterranean Encounters Napoleon**

# 17

## ‘We Are Constituted as a Nation’: Austria in the Era of Napoleon

*Martin P. Schennach*

### **Introduction and outline of historical events**

The *monarchia austriaca* was certainly one of Napoleon’s main adversaries, from both a military and diplomatic point of view, even if Helmut Rumpler’s opinion of Austria as the ‘centre of anti-Napoleonic resistance’<sup>1</sup> seems to slightly exaggerate the role and importance of the Habsburg monarchy. At the domestic level the Napoleonic era was crucial for the formation of an Austrian nation and for the internal unification and centralization of the Austrian monarchy.

With the exception of the Franco-Prussian War of 1806 Austria was aligned against Revolutionary and Napoleonic France in all the wars of coalition between 1792 and 1809. From the Treaty of Campo-Formido in 1797 and of Lunéville in 1801, down to the Peace of Pressburg in 1805 and the Peace of Schönbrunn in 1809, Austria suffered a string of serious defeats and large territorial losses as a result of Napoleon’s military genius. In the period up to 1809 Austria lost the Austrian Netherlands, her possessions in Italy, in the southwest of the former Holy Roman Empire and in the Tyrol and Vorarlberg, and was left without access to the sea. Under the Treaty of Lunéville and the Recess of the Imperial Diet of 1803, which provided for the secularization of ecclesiastical principalities and the mediatization of small temporal territories, Austria lost its influence in the German Empire. Given the Holy Roman Empire’s character as an elective monarchy, it looked unlikely that the House of Austria would retain the crown in the next elections.<sup>2</sup> The creation in 1804 of the title of Emperor of Austria by Francis II, who became Emperor Francis I of Austria, was therefore a reaction to this uncertainty over the future and to Napoleon’s assumption of the title emperor of the French in the same year. With the abolition of the Holy Roman Empire in August 1806 following the founding of the Confederation of the Rhine, the exclusion of Austria from German policy was complete.

A turning point in Franco-Austrian relations was reached in 1809.<sup>3</sup> As on previous occasions the pro-war faction at the Vienna court – grouped around

the Minister of Foreign Affairs Johann Philipp Graf Stadion, Archduke John, Empress Maria Ludovica and Anton de Baldacci – was eager for military revenge. Austria declared war on Napoleon in April 1809, when he was occupied with the Spanish insurrection. But, although the campaign of 1809 produced the first military defeat for Napoleon in ten years at the Battle of Aspern-Essling, in the end he was victorious and the Treaty of Schönbrunn brought radical upheaval to existing alliances. Required to pay a war indemnity of 85 million francs and make further territorial concessions, Austria lost her place among the great European powers and was forced to ally with Napoleonic France, an alliance consolidated by Napoleon's marriage to Marie-Louise, the daughter of Emperor Francis I, which had been largely engineered by Clemens Wenzel, Count Metternich. Metternich, a former Austrian ambassador to Paris who became foreign minister in October 1809, believed in the necessity of a *modus vivendi* between France and Austria. It was for this reason that he spent the whole of 1810 in Paris. Convinced that Napoleon's ambition must eventually lead him to defeat, Metternich considered Austrian interests to be endangered as much by Russia as by Napoleon. For Metternich, the Peace of Schönbrunn was intended to buy time in which to consolidate the Austrian monarchy internally in political, financial and military terms, enabling it to pursue a more active foreign policy in the future.

As Napoleon's ally Austria took part in the campaign of 1812 against Russia with an expeditionary corps. Even after Napoleon's defeat in Russia, Austria did not immediately change sides, despite the Russo-Prussian Proclamation of Kalisch in March 1813 that called for the liberation of 'Germany' under the joint banners of Russia and Prussia. It was primarily to neutralize their ambitions that Napoleon seemed indispensable from the Austrian point of view, all the more so since the Prussian side in particular was invoking a German national spirit to mobilize the population against French predominance. Metternich saw all too clearly how a German patriotism could be fatal for an Austrian monarchy ruling a multicultural, multiethnic and multinational population that included speakers of Hungarian, Polish, German, Russian, Ruthenian and Italian. Only after fruitless discussions between Napoleon and Metternich at Dresden in June 1813 – he 'didn't want to let himself be saved', as Metternich put it – did Austria join, and take a leading role in the anti-Napoleonic alliance. Austrian policy during the negotiations at the Congress of Vienna in 1814–1815 was not primarily aimed at securing the largest territorial gains, but at establishing a stable order of European peace. For the Austrian monarchy, its own long-term survival seemed to require a system of security whose permanency was assured by a balance of the great European powers. This also meant containing the hegemonic ambitions of Russia and Prussia, which in turn implied not overly weakening France. Set against this goal, the territorial gains were modest. Austria recovered Salzburg, the Voralberg and Tyrol and the Illyrian provinces, while

the definitive loss of the Austrian Netherlands and the Habsburg possessions in southwest Germany was compensated for with territory acquired in northern Italy, chiefly Lombardy and Venetia.

## Reforms

Under the pressure of political events and incessant war, major reforms in the military, administrative, legal, financial and political spheres were introduced – or at least attempted – in the 20 years preceding the Congress of Vienna. In the case of the military reforms inaugurated by Archduke Charles (who presided over the military council from 1801), the link with the wars against Napoleon is obvious. In particular the creation of the militia, the *Landwehr*, in 1808, inspired by the French *levée en masse*, was in reaction to the pressure of French expansion. Mention can also be made of the reforms set in train following military defeats in 1801 and again in 1806, with the aim of mobilizing the resources of the monarchy for the struggle against Napoleon. In general, during these two decades the structures of central government and administration underwent continuous experimental reforms. When these reforms failed it was partly because of the emperor's aversion and suspicion and his wish to keep the final decision for himself in any matters judged important. Reforms also failed because of the more or less passive resistance of bureaucratic elites, who feared a loss of influence. The plan for a fundamental reform of the state and administration launched in 1806 was, in any case, doomed to failure by the start of war three years later, and the state bankruptcy of 1811, together with the wars of 1813–1814, prevented any revival of the plan.<sup>4</sup> Although these projects and measures to make the monarchy's bureaucracy and administration more efficient were an indirect response to the military confrontation with France, there is no suggestion of any direct influence of a French example. Nevertheless, in general terms the centralized model exemplified by France was considered to be superior to the largely federal structure still in place in the Austrian hereditary lands. Recent research has given more attention to the reforms and legal-administrative systems in the Illyrian Provinces,<sup>5</sup> and in former Austrian territories like the Tyrol,<sup>6</sup> which were annexed by French allies after the Treaties of Pressburg and Schönbrunn. These measures, some effects of which – on the courts and local government, for example – continued to be felt after the Congress of Vienna, are no longer seen as forming a total break with the past. Instead, the emphasis is placed on continuity with the reforms carried out under Austrian enlightened despotism, notably in the reign of Joseph II.

As regards the history of private and civil law, mention must be made of the Austrian Civil Code (*Allgemeines Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch für die gesamten deutschen Erbländer der österreichischen Monarchie*, or ABGB) that came into force in 1812.<sup>7</sup> The drafters of the Austrian code of laws were of course



familiar with its French counterpart, and Franz von Zeiller in particular wrote a detailed critique of the Civil Code. Despite this, the minutes of the proceedings for Austrian codification contain very few references to the French Civil Code during the preliminary work.<sup>8</sup> The background to both codifications, the influence of natural law, was very similar, as it was one of the main aims of codification to bring about unity in the area of private law and replace the former pluralism of civil law. However, it is important to recognize that the goal of legal unity had greater importance in Austria than in France. For the Austrian monarchy, legal unity represented a major step in internal unification and in the process of transforming the Habsburgs' hereditary lands into a unified state. By contrast, a long tradition of centralization meant that the goal of legal unity was of less importance in France.<sup>9</sup> In addition, despite its roots in the natural law tradition, the Austrian Civil Code was not conceived as an alternative to a constitution for the monarchy (something totally excluded by the emperor who believed in and insisted upon the absolute and sacred nature of his rule). Although the ABGB implemented an egalitarian conception, legal differences between the classes remained, unlike in France, though they were defined and set down not in the Civil Code but in the, so-called, political or administrative laws.

### **Formation of an Austrian state: the 'Austrian' nation**

Even more important than military and administrative reforms were the repercussions of the Napoleonic era for the fundamental process in the formation of an Austrian state, a topic that has received considerable attention from historical scholarship in recent years. This state formation does not concern the territorial development of the Habsburg lands during the wars of coalition, which eventually led to Austria's physical consolidation. Despite the many reforms carried out in the second half of the eighteenth century, in 1800 the territorial conglomerate ruled over by the House of Austria could still be described as a composite state or, to use the expression of Otto Brunner, as 'a monarchical union of aristocratic states' bound together, first and foremost, by the person of the sovereign and by the shared order of dynastic succession.<sup>10</sup> The component parts of this monarchical union, some of which (the Austrian hereditary lands) remained in the Holy Roman Empire until 1806, had their own provincial states (*Landstände*), their own laws and their own regional patriotism centered on a particular land. What was still lacking at this time was a collective outlook or mentality, a specifically Austrian mentality independent of the Habsburg dynasty. These federal structures stood in sharp contrast to the highly centralized entities of Revolutionary and Imperial France and, moreover, seem to have been a significant handicap during the military confrontation with France, in that they made it harder to mobilize financial and military resources than was the case for a centralized state.

## **The title 'Emperor of Austria' and the end of the Holy Roman Empire**

The creation of the title of Emperor of Austria in 1804 was merely one stage in the formation of the Austrian state in the Napoleonic era. The new imperial title did not lead to the creation of a state or an Austrian empire. It was a purely dynastic title, one that also signaled an emphatic rejection of any idea of popular sovereignty, and the proclamation of 11 August stresses that the constitutions and attributes of the 'independent lands' united by the Habsburg house would remain unchanged. However, the significance of creating the Emperor of Austria title should not be underestimated. In symbolic terms it directed attention to the cohesion of the Austrian lands and their special status within the Holy Roman Empire. In addition, by adopting the heraldic animal (eagle) and colors (black and gold) of the Holy Roman Empire, the Austrian monarchy placed the emphasis on continuity and the supranational dimension.

However, except for legal unification in the area of private law (and that did not extend to the Kingdom Hungary), the Napoleonic era actually brought a significant slowdown in the process of Austrian integration. The ever-present military threat made it unthinkable to take the risk of creating internal divisions, which would inevitably result (as during the reign of Joseph II) if any unilateral attempt were made to deprive the Austrian lands of their rights.<sup>11</sup> In place of clashes with the provincial estates of the various Austrian lands came the call for loyalty to the House of Habsburg.

## **Unification of collective mentalities and the problem of the Austrian nation**

As regards the unification of Austrian lands in terms of a collective mentality or shared outlook, the Napoleonic era did represent a definite break with the past, as was expressed by the Minister Johan Philipp Count Stadion when he stated, on the eve of the 1809 war and in the presence of a Russian diplomat: 'we are constituted as a nation'.<sup>12</sup> Given the high degree of ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity, however, this Austrian notion of nation bore no relation to that associated with nineteenth-century nationalism. The former developed in reaction to the challenge posed by Napoleon. The Austrian nation was inextricably linked to the Habsburg dynasty, just as the Austrian patriotism and Austrian fatherland referred to in countless contemporary proclamations were linked exclusively to the monarch's person.<sup>13</sup> The same sentiment is reflected in the Austrian anthem ('God save, God protect our good Emperor Francis') composed by Joseph Haydn in 1797. A precise definition of the geographical outline of this fatherland, in particular the hotly debated question as to whether or not it included Hungary, was of secondary importance. This supra-territorial, Austrian

patriotism, formed primarily during the struggle against Napoleon with the aim of creating a single community of all the Habsburg subject populations, was an addition to the patriotism centered on the historic lands that existed already and would continue to exist. The notion of nation itself carried a double meaning: on the one hand, it referred to the Austrian nation that comprised all the peoples ruled by the house of Habsburg; on the other, terms like Tyrolean nation, Styrean nation and Bohemian nation remained in use.<sup>14</sup> So the problem the Austrian state and the Austrian empire had, that of achieving not only unification and an integration of legal systems but also of collective mentalities across an assortment of disparate and complex territories, was already present in the Napoleonic era. Literature and propaganda played a decisive role in promoting and supporting the formation of Austrian patriotism, which in this sense can be described as a top-down process. It is important to recognize that Vienna in the first decade of the nineteenth century became a center for those opposed to Napoleon. They included many political writers and intellectuals – figures like the Schlegel brothers, Friedrich von Gentz and Adam Müller – some of whom were hired by the house of Austria.<sup>15</sup>

Between this Austrian patriotism and the putative war of German liberation the relationship was predictably delicate. The idea of an Austrian nation carried no specific ethnic, cultural or linguistic connotations; it was multicultural and, at base, multinational, remarkably similar in this respect to the Holy Roman Empire. As a result, propaganda that presented Austria as spearheading German liberation from the Napoleonic yoke was highly problematic. The inclusion of Germany – to use that somewhat imprecise term – meant the exclusion of the non-German speaking Austrian lands. There was an understandable reluctance to use this double-edged theme in Austrian propaganda. The only time the Austrians invoked the struggle for Germany and called for a German patriotism to oppose French oppression was in the preparatory and opening stages of the campaign of 1809, as in Archduke Charles' famous call 'To Germany' in April 1809, for example. At that time there were still hopes of setting off mass risings against Napoleon and his allies.<sup>16</sup> But, except for the rebellions in the Tyrol and Vorarlberg, this strategy was unsuccessful. When Austria joined the Russo-Prussian coalition against Napoleon in 1813, the emperor personally replaced the ambiguous term fatherland with that of emperor in the call to arms that proclaimed a war 'for God and for the fatherland', thereby highlighting once again the role of the dynasty as central reference point.<sup>17</sup> In 1813–1814 calls to a German patriotism played no role in the Austrian lands and were not used for mobilizing public opinion.

The perception of Austria among foreign observers was slightly different. In 1809 in particular, Austria was viewed and idealized as contributing to the struggle for German liberty, especially by young romantics like Ludwig Uhland, Ernst Moritz Arndt or Friedrich von Schlegel. Metternich for his

part, however, firmly opposed aspirations to German (or Italian) unity and was hostile towards the 'teutomaniacs' as they were (pejoratively) dubbed by Friedrich von Gentz.<sup>18</sup>

As with the notion of Austrian nationalism, the keyword insurrection leads us to another area of historical research where a change of paradigm has been observed in recent years. The bicentenary in 2009 was an occasion for historians to revisit the uprisings in the Tyrol and Vorarlberg.<sup>19</sup> Whereas previously these risings were viewed as patriotic movements and precursors of the war of German liberation, they are now interpreted from a European perspective and related to the contemporary context. The emphasis is placed on continuity; rather than patriotic movements directed against foreign domination, the rebels fought to preserve local autonomy against an encroaching modern state, with its growing monetary demands and moves to regulate the lives of its population.

## Research trends

The obvious importance of Austria's role during the wars of coalition against Imperial France has not been matched by the attention accorded to this period in Austrian (and also international) historical scholarship.<sup>20</sup> With a few exceptions historical research in Austria gives the impression of lacking in vitality, and only in some sectors has it kept abreast of recent trends in German research.

Traditional military history, as practiced since the nineteenth century, has long given pride of place to the wars of coalition against Revolutionary and Imperial France.<sup>21</sup> But since 1945 this historiographical tradition has been progressively sidelined by mainstream scholarship, and research based on the description of military events is currently undertaken mainly by historians of non-Austrian origin.<sup>22</sup> As for the *new* military history, it devotes little attention to the course of military action itself and focuses instead on war's impact on social and economic structures, on people's daily lives and in the domain of communication. Presented as a vast social history of war, it analyzes the relations between the military and other spheres of life.<sup>23</sup> The new military history has recently discovered the Napoleonic era as a rich subject for research,<sup>24</sup> though has yet to find many Austrian disciples.<sup>25</sup> The situation is more promising as regards political history, notably of foreign policy. An event-centered approach in this field goes back to the nineteenth century. It is part of a rich historiographical tradition in which the conflictual Franco-Austrian relations of the modern period have always held a special interest for Austrian (and indeed also French) historiography. Among several key topics are the creation of the title Emperor of Austria in response to the coronation of Napoleon I, and the Habsburg reaction to the setting up of the Confederation of the Rhine and to the abolition of the Holy Roman Empire, with all that implied for Habsburg German policy.

The events of 1809 and the Congress of Vienna were also analyzed closely from the nineteenth century onwards. Until 1945 Austrian policy was in part approached and judged from a pan-German (*großdeutsch*) perspective and in the context of the wars of German liberation against Napoleon.<sup>26</sup> In addition, there was – and still is – a tendency for scholarship to focus on the Congress of Vienna, due to the exceptional role of Austrian diplomacy, and of Metternich in particular, in remodeling the European order.<sup>27</sup>

The research mentioned above in the domains of military and diplomatic history has close links to another branch of historical writing, the biographies of leading protagonists. But in this sector too, as compared with France, a large number of gaps have to be noted. Historiographical desiderata still to be satisfied include a scholarly biography of Emperor Francis II,<sup>28</sup> a lacuna that is all the more conspicuous given the numerous works on Metternich.<sup>29</sup> Even Archdukes Charles<sup>30</sup> and John<sup>31</sup> have found biographers, as has Johan Philipp Count Stadion.<sup>32</sup>

## Conclusion

Despite its central and exposed role among the opponents of Napoleon, Austria was not included among the victors in 1814. That, of course, had not been Metternich's main aim. At the Congress of Vienna he succeeded in implementing his scheme for a balance between the European powers, which alone seemed to guarantee the survival of the Habsburg monarchy in the long-term. This brief survey of Austria's development during the Napoleonic era has shown that there remain many gaps in research. But allowance must also be made for the fact that the Napoleonic era has never attracted the same attention in Austria as it has in France or Germany. By comparison, enlightened despotism and the reforms of Maria Theresa and Joseph II have always been much more thoroughly researched. The archival holdings of the *Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv* thus contain ample material to occupy future generations of historians.

## Notes

1. Helmut Rumpler, *Eine Chance für Mitteleuropa: Bürgerliche Emanzipation und Staatsverfall in der Habsburgermonarchie*, *Österreichische Geschichte* (Vienna, 1997), 80.
2. Brigitte Mazohl-Wallnig and Karin Schneider, "'Translatio imperii'?" Reichsidee und Kaisermythos in der Habsburgermonarchie', in *Was vom Alten Reich blieb...: Deutungen, Institutionen und Bilder des frühneuzeitlichen Heiligen Römischen Reiches Deutscher Nation im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Matthias Asche, Thomas Nicklas and Matthias Stickler (Munich, 2011), 101–128; Karl Brauneder, 'Kaiserwürde und Verwaltungsakt: Der österreichische Kaisertitel von 1804', in *Wahl und Krönung in Zeiten des Umbruch*, ed. Ludolf Pelizaeus (Frankfurt a. M., 2008), 207–220; Gottfried Mraz, *Österreich und das Reich 1804–1806: Ende*

- und Vollendung*, 2 vols (Vienna, 1993); Wolfgang Häusler, 'Das österreichische Kaisertum von 1804 und seine Bedeutung für das Staats- und Reichsproblem der Habsburgermonarchie', in *1804–2010: Zwischen Kaiserkrönung und Reformvertrag*, ed. Michael Salewski and Heiner Timmermann (Münster, 2008), 40–74.
3. The unfolding of events is described, for example, in Rumpler, *Chance*, 88–153; James R. Arnold, *Napoleon Conquers Austria: The 1809 Campaign for Vienna* (Westport Conn., 1995). For other bibliographical references see later section on research trends.
  4. For bibliographical indications, see Rumpler, *Chance*, 73–75.
  5. See Reinhard Stauber, 'Politische und soziale Integration in "Illyrien" in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts', in *Eliten in Tirol zwischen Ancien Régime und Vormärz*, ed. Marco Bellabarba et al. (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen, 2010), 61–82, 67–68 (with further bibliographical notes).
  6. See Reinhard Stauber, *Der Zentralstaat an seinen Grenzen: Administrative Integration, Herrschaftswchsel und politische Kultur im südlichen Alpenraum 1750–1820* (Göttingen, 2001); Martin P. Schennach, *Revolte in der Region: Zur Tiroler Erhebung von 1809* (Innsbruck, 2009), 187–235.
  7. Still essential is Wilhelm Brauner, 'Das Allgemeine Bürgerliche Gesetzbuch für die gesamten Deutschen Erbländer der österreichischen Monarchie von 1811', *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* 62 (1987): 205–254; see also the works published for the 200th anniversary of the Austrian Civil Code, for example Wilhelm Brauner, Barbara Dölemeyer and Heinz Mohnhaupt (eds), '200 Jahre ABGB (1811–2011): Die österreichische Kodifikation im internationalen Kontext', *Studien zur europäischen Rechtsgeschichte* 267 (Frankfurt am Main, 2012) and Wilhelm Brauner (ed.), *Österreichs Allgemeines Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch (ABGB): Eine europäische Privatrechtskodifikation*. vol. 1: *Entstehung und Entwicklung des ABGB bis 1910* (Berlin, 2014).
  8. Among others see Johannes Michael Rainer, 'Franz von Zeiller und der Code civil', in *Festschrift 200 Jahre ABGB*, ed. Constanze Fischer-Czermak et al., vol. 1 (Vienna, 2011), 45–57.
  9. Martin P. Schennach, 'Generalisierung und Differenzierung des Rechts und durch das Recht? Zu einem Vergleich von ALR, Code civil und ABGB', in *Kontinuität im Wandel: 200 Jahre ABGB 1811–2011*, ed. Heinz Barta et al. (Innsbruck, 2012), 49–84.
  10. See also Arthur Schlegelmilch, 'Österreich', in *Handbuch der europäischen Verfassungsgeschichte im 19. Jahrhundert: Institutionen und Rechtspraxis im gesellschaftlichen Wandel, Bd. 1: Um 1800*, ed. Peter Brandt et al. (Bonn, 2006), 851–943; Wilhelm Brauner, 'Die Habsburgermonarchie als zusammengesetzter Staat', in *Zusammengesetzte Staatlichkeit in der europäischen Verfassungsgeschichte (Der Staat, Beiheft 16)*, ed. Hans-Jürgen Becker (Berlin, 1996), 197–223.
  11. Karl Vocelka, *Österreichische Geschichte 1699–1815: Glanz und Untergang der höfischen Welt: Repräsentation, Reform und Reaktion im Habsburgischen Vielvölkerstaat* (Vienna, 2001), 90–92, 94–96, 388–389.
  12. Rumpler, *Chance*, 90 ('*nous nous sommes constitués nation*' in the original French).
  13. Grete Klingenstein, 'Was bedeuten "Österreich" und "österreichisch" im 18. Jahrhundert? Eine begriffsgeschichtliche Studie', in *Was heißt Österreich? Inhalt und Umfang des Österreichbegriffs vom 10. Jahrhundert bis heute*, ed. Richard G. Plaschka et al. (Vienna, 1995), 149–220.

14. Cf. Brigitte Mazohl and Thomas Wallnig, '(Kaiser)haus – Staat – Vaterland? Zur "österreichischen" Historiographie vor der "Nationalgeschichte"', in *Nationalgeschichte als Artefakt: Zum Paradigma "Nationalstaat" in den Historiographien Deutschlands, Italiens und Österreichs*, ed. Hans Peter Hye, Brigitte Mazohl and Jan Paul Niederkorn (Vienna, 2009), 45–71; Hellmuth Rössler, *Graf Johann Philipp Stadion: Napoleons deutscher Gegenspieler*, 2 vols. (Vienna, 1966), vol. 1, 296–300; Richard Stauber, 'Vaterland – Provinz – Nation: Gesamtstaat, Länder und nationale Gruppen in der Österreichischen Monarchie 1750–1850', in *Nationalismus vor dem Nationalismus?*, ed. Eckhardt Hellmuth and Reinhard Stauber (Hamburg, 1998), 55–72.
15. See the summary in the work by Rumpler, *Chance*, 91–97.
16. Karen Hagemann, "'Be Proud and Firm, Citizens of Austria!'" Patriotism and Masculinity in Texts of "Political Romantics": Written During Austria's Anti-Napoleonic Wars', *German Studies Review* 29 (2006): 41–62, 51–52; Rumpler, *Chance*, 99–100; Rössler, *Stadion*, vol. 2, 20.
17. Manfred Rauchensteiner, 'Österreichbewußtsein und österreichische Staatsidee im Zeitalter des aufgeklärten Absolutismus', in *Volk, Land und Staat: Landesbewußtsein, Staatsidee und nationale Fragen in der Geschichte Österreichs*, ed. Erich Zöllner (Vienna, 1984), 42–53; Häusler, *Kaisertum*, 62–63; see also Heinrich von Srbik, *Metternich: Der Staatsmann und der Mensch*, 3 vols (Munich, 1954) 2, 163–164.
18. Rumpler, *Chance*, 106, 128.
19. See Schennach, *Revolte in der Region*.
20. Katherine Aaslestad and Karen Hagemann, '1806 and its Aftermath: Revisiting the Period of the Napoleonic Wars in German Central European Historiography', *Central European History* 39 (2006): 547–579.
21. See, for example, Johann Christoph Allmayer-Beck, *Die Militärgeschichtsschreibung in Österreich von ihren Anfängen bis zum Jahre 1918: Militärgeschichte in Deutschland und Österreich vom 18. Jahrhundert bis in die Gegenwart* (Herford/Bonn, 1985), 70–86; Peter Broucek and Kurt Peball, *Geschichte der österreichischen Militärgeschichtsschreibung* (Cologne/Vienna/Weimar, 2000).
22. We would refer simply to the recent book by John H. Gill, a former US officer, on the campaign of 1809, John H. Gill, *With Eagles to Glory: Napoleon and his German Allies in the 1809 campaign* (London, 1992).
23. See Schennach, *Revolte in der Region*, 47, n183 and n184.
24. See, with additional bibliographical references, Ralf Pröve, *Militär, Staat und Gesellschaft im 19. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 2006), 58–62; Ute Planert, *Mythos vom Befreiungskrieg: Frankreichs Kriege und der deutsche Süden. Alltag – Wahrnehmung – Deutung 1792–1841* (Paderborn, 2007); Ute Planert, 'From Collaboration to Resistance: Politics, Experience, and Memory of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars in Southern Germany', *Central European History* 39 (2006): 676–705; Karen Hagemann, 'Occupation, Mobilization, and Politics: The Anti-Napoleonic Wars in Prussian Experience, Memory, and Historiography', *Central European History* 39 (2006): 580–610.
25. Michael Hochedlinger, 'Bürokratisierung, Zentralisierung, Sozialdisziplinierung, Konfessionalisierung, Militarisierung: Politische Geschichte der Frühen Neuzeit als "Machtstaatsgeschichte"', in *Geschichte der Politik: Alte und neue Wege*, ed. Hans-Christof Kraus and Thomas Nickla, *Historische Zeitschrift, Beiheft* 44 (Munich, 2007), 239–269, resp. 268–269. For the historiographical background, see also the summary in Michael Hochedlinger, 'The Early Modern Cinderella', *Austrian History Yearbook* 32 (2001): 207–213.

26. Heinrich von Srbik, *Deutsche Einheit: Idee und Wirklichkeit vom heiligen Reich bis Königgrätz*, 4 vols (Munich, 1934–1942); Srbik, *Metternich*, vol. 3; Hellmuth Rössler, *Österreichs Kampf um Deutschlands Befreiung: Die deutsche Politik der nationalen Führer Österreichs 1805–1815*, 2 vols (Hamburg, 1945).
27. Recently Karin Schneider, 'Der Wiener Kongress – Wende zwischen Tradition und Moderne', *Revue d'Allemagne et des pays de langue allemande* 43 (2011): 177–194; Reinhard Stauber, '1815 – Wiener Kongress: Revolutionskriege, Ende des Alten Reiches und Deutscher Bund', in *Von Lier nach Brüssel: Schlüsseljahre österreichischer Geschichte (1496–1995)*, ed. Martin Scheutz and Arno Stromeyer (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen, 2010), 167–188.
28. Currently limited to Victor Bibl, *Kaiser Franz: Der letzte römisch-deutsche Kaiser* (Leipzig, 1938); Heinrich Drimmel, *Kaiser Franz: Ein Wiener übersteht Napoleon* (Vienna-Munich, 1981).
29. For example Charles Zorgbibe, *Metternich: Le séducteur diplomate* (Paris, 2009); Alan Sked, *Metternich and Austria: An Evaluation* (Basingstoke, 2008); Wolfram Siemann, *Metternich: Staatsmann zwischen Restauration und Moderne* (Munich, 2010).
30. For example Winfried Romberg, 'Erzherzog Carl von Österreich: Geistigkeit und Religiosität zwischen Aufklärung und Revolution', *Archiv für österreichische Geschichte* 139 (Vienna, 2006).
31. See for example, Hans Magenschab, *Erzherzog Johann: Bauer, Bürger, Visionär* (Vienna/Graz/Klagenfurt, 2008).
32. See Rössler, *Stadion*.



# 18

## Illyrian Provinces from a Slovene Perspective: Myth and Reality

*Peter Vodopivec*

In 1909, on the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Illyrian Provinces, the French–Illyrian Club was founded in Ljubljana with the aim of encouraging interest in French culture and language. Slovene newspapers looked back to the Illyrian Provinces with recognition and gratitude, since the French – so they claimed – had done more for the Slovenes in the barely four years during which ‘the Slovene regions were part of the French Empire,’ with measures to improve education, administration and the condition of the peasantry, than Austria had in centuries.<sup>1</sup> The legend about Napoleon’s Slavic sympathies and the pro-Slovene attitude of the French government during the period of the Illyrian Provinces was widely embraced, especially by liberal intellectuals, who were influential in introducing it into school textbooks between the First and Second World Wars, where it remains to this day.

The historical reality, however, was more complicated. In 1809, before establishing the Illyrian Provinces, Napoleon reportedly discussed the ethnic characteristics of the population in the newly acquired Illyrian regions with his advisors and with a Ljubljana-born Austrian diplomat, Johann Philipp Count von Cobenzl.<sup>2</sup> But few of the French officials in Paris were interested in the ethnic and linguistic situation in the territory between the Adriatic Sea and the Alps. Napoleon and the French had geopolitical, economic and military motives for establishing the Illyrian Provinces. With the acquisition of the territories in 1809 the French Empire ensured a land link with the Ottoman Empire and established control over a part of the Adriatic coast it had not previously controlled, thus isolating Austria from the sea. For this reason the Illyrian provinces were viewed in Paris as a ‘bridge to south-eastern Europe,’ giving France a presence in this strategically important zone adjacent to the European part of the Ottoman Empire that Russia and France were planning to dismember.<sup>3</sup> The geographic position and proximity of the Austrian border were also the main reasons for the choice of the present-day Slovene capital of Ljubljana as the capital of the Illyrian Provinces. In his memoirs the first governor general of the Provinces, Maréchal Marmont,

regretted that Trieste had not been chosen instead, maintaining that 'Ljubljana is much inferior to Trieste in population, wealth, and importance. But Ljubljana was chosen for the governor's residence because of the proximity of the border with Austria and the advantage of this position as an observation post'.<sup>4</sup>

One of the topics that Slovene historians have explored since the First World War is the administrative regime of the Illyrian Provinces and the politico-administrative status of the Provinces in relation to the French Empire.<sup>5</sup> The Slovene expert on the Illyrian Provinces, Janez Šumrada, maintains that the position of French Illyria closely resembled that of French Catalonia.<sup>6</sup> The Illyrian Provinces were directly subordinated to Paris and were independent of the neighboring Kingdom of Illyria, both legally and in terms of governance; in international law they belonged to the French Empire, although constitutionally they were not one of its integral parts. The inhabitants held Illyrian citizenship, but the territory flew the French flag and used the imperial coat of arms. Some, but not all, French laws were applied in the Illyrian Provinces. Some institutions used an imperial name, while others only had an Illyrian name. The administrative organization of the Illyrian Provinces was not modeled on the French administration in every aspect, since its basic units were not departments but intendancies or provinces. The administrative ties with Paris, quite loose at the time of the first governor general, Marmont (1809–1811), were strengthened following Napoleon's decree on the organization of the Illyrian Provinces in spring 1811. After that, French legislation was introduced more systematically, and the trend to legal and administrative integration of the Provinces into the French Empire accentuated.

Nevertheless, French officials in Illyria continued to encounter great difficulties at all levels.<sup>7</sup> They had a poor understanding of the situation in the Provinces under their administration, and they were changed frequently. Thus, in four years no fewer than four governor generals led the French government in Ljubljana, only two of whom occupied the position for more than a year. In the part of the present-day Slovene territory included in the Illyrian Provinces, the French authorities also faced severe difficulties over organizing the administration at the lower municipal level, since much of the population was not qualified for the new administrative tasks or refused to cooperate with the French officials.

Although imperial France had already distanced itself from the original principles of the French Revolution, the new administration and legislation represented important progress and a first contact with a modern bourgeois society – particularly for the population of the regions brought under French rule in 1809.<sup>8</sup> The French introduced equality before the law and general military service for all citizens of the Illyrian Provinces. They unified the tax system and abolished fiscal privileges, modernized the judiciary and abolished the patrimonial courts. At the same time, landlords lost their

public legal functions, modern administrative practices were introduced and the school system was modernized. The administrative offices formerly held by landlords were taken over by newly established municipalities, with the mayors and communal administration of larger cities being appointed by the emperor at the suggestion of the Illyrian governor, while in smaller municipalities the mayor and communal administration were appointed by competent heads of intendancies. Lower civil judicial administration was the responsibility of local magistrates (*juges de paix*), and state courts were established for all other judicial matters. The Illyrian Provinces also had their own school administration, which was led by Raffaele Zelli, former headmaster of the Zadar *lyceum*, in the role of general inspector of public education. In June 1810 a decree of Governor General Marmont deprived the Church of its control over schools, while at the same time introducing uniform four-class primary schools, expanding the network of lower secondary schools (Gymnasiums) and establishing new higher secondary schools or *lyceums*. The Ljubljana *lyceum* was organized as an *école centrale*; in 1811 it was named an academy. By the end of the short period of French rule, however, many of the French measures and institutions had not yet shown positive results, while their negative effects had become apparent more quickly.

The establishment of the Illyrian Provinces brought economic activity in the territory between the Alps and the Adriatic Sea to a standstill, since the new Franco-Austrian border interrupted the traditional transport and trade routes in the north–south direction. This border split inner Austria into two states, with detrimental effects for the population on both sides of the border. The Continental Blockade, which paralyzed the ports in Trieste and Istria, worsened the crisis. Because of the economic standstill, the rural population lost a large share of the additional income it had previously earned from coastal shipping, haulage and rural crafts. The crisis was also strongly felt in most of the towns. The French planned to build new roads in an east–west direction, but construction was slow and the burden was borne by the population of the communities and provinces the roads crossed. This was because French financial policy adhered to the principle that, like other occupied regions, the Illyrian Provinces should incur no costs for the state budget, and that the burden of the French administration and military should be borne wholly by the local population. The Illyrian authorities had to collect the necessary resources themselves through taxes. Inevitably, heavy tax burdens fostered anti-French feeling, traces of which persisted into the twentieth century in certain parts of Carniola in the expression *fronki*, derived from the French *franks*.

The peasants in the central part of the Slovene territory (Carniola province) were especially dissatisfied with the French authorities. Carniola had to bear the entire burden of supplying the military and the peasant population had little fondness for the French. Nevertheless, some peasant

subjects, wrongly convinced that feudal obligations were abolished without compensation during the French Revolution, saw the French officials and soldiers as heirs to the Revolution. As a result, they expected the French authorities to abolish the obligations and make the position of the peasants the same as that of peasants in France. Senior French officials in Ljubljana and Governor General Marmont were aware of this expectation. The second imperial decree on Illyria in December 1809 summoned the Illyrian administration to prepare a proposal for rules on the abolition of feudal relationships. However, Paris hesitated and in the spring of 1811 abolished only the peasants' personal servitude without compensation, while their other obligations were declared redeemable. Serf labor services, the heaviest burden of serfdom in the Slovene parts of the Illyrian Provinces, were not abolished. The introduction of French legislation in 1811–1812 changed the legal character of material and redeemable feudal tributes in Illyria. Land rents and other tributes of this nature that were redeemable under the laws of the empire were converted into mortgages which had to be recorded in mortgage registers. Material feudal tributes thus became a matter of private law between the land owner and the serf, with the latter required to pay them or be forced to do so by the state through any legal means. By entering land rents in mortgage registers, the state became the guarantor that the serfs would pay the tribute until the state formulated conditions for its redemption. The procedure of converting feudal rights into mortgages, however, took place much more slowly than the French authorities had foreseen and, in the autumn of 1813, when the Illyrian Provinces collapsed, it was far from complete.

Concerning the abolition of serfdom, the half-hearted French policy disappointed the peasants, even though their situation did improve. In 1810 Governor General Marmont reduced the subjects' urbarial dues by 20 per cent, but at the same time the French introduced new land and personal taxes. Already, in late 1811, high Illyrian officials proposed that Napoleon should declare French law on the abolition of serfdom applicable in the territory of Illyrian Provinces, but the emperor postponed his decision on this issue. In the second half of 1812 an imperial decree 'on the manner and effects of the abolition of feudalism' was drafted in Ljubljana by the chief Illyrian commissioner of justice, Coffinhal Dunoyer, but was not confirmed in Paris until the French left the area in the autumn of 1813.<sup>9</sup> In response the Carniolan peasants rebelled several times. The first major peasant revolt took place as early as 1811, but large-scale uprisings occurred in 1813, the last year of French rule. The French authorities were resolute in their opposition to the peasants and used the military to put down the revolts. From the viewpoint of the authorities it seemed that the sympathies of the nobility were more important. However, it soon became clear that the French authorities had not gained the sympathy of the nobles either.

The French counted few supporters in the Slovene-speaking areas. In the eyes of the peasant population, and for the majority of the clergy, they were foreigners in every respect: they spoke a foreign language, behaved differently, saw things differently and introduced strange measures. The French policy of religious equality, separation of church and state, and especially their legislation introducing civil marriage, civil registers and the revolutionary calendar, fueled anti-French sentiment not only among the peasant population but also among the traditionally Catholic middle classes and nobility. In the cities and among artisans the liberal economic policy and the abolition of guilds was an additional cause of discontent. Moreover, many local officials in the Slovene-speaking regions who cooperated with the French authorities, worked in Illyrian offices and courts or accepted higher administrative and mayoral duties, did the bare minimum necessary to keep their jobs, which they were able to keep after the transition to Austrian rule and administration.

The French authorities tried to win over the respected representatives of the nobility and clergy by bestowing honors upon them, but without noticeable success. Among the opponents of the French government was the richest and most respected Carniolan baron Sigismund Zois, who, influenced by Enlightenment ideas, supported Slovene cultural and literary endeavors. Although Zois did not express publicly his disagreement with the French and communicated politely with high-ranking French officials, he remained loyal to the Habsburgs, his opinion being that 'an honorable man cannot change his religion and his master.' Because of his reputation, French high officials tried to win him over as late as the spring of 1813 by awarding him the Cross of the Legion of Honor— but this had little effect on Zois. He did not change his attitude towards the French authorities and, while accepting the medal, did not sign the accompanying oath of loyalty to the French Empire.<sup>10</sup> Ljubljana's cathedral provost and auxiliary bishop between 1801 and 1807, Johann Anton Ricci, who belonged to the circle of, so-called, reform Catholicism and was a Freemason, was one of the rare clerics sympathetic towards the French authorities. In June 1811 he was a member of the Illyrian delegation that went to pay reverence to Napoleon in Paris, on which occasion he too was appointed to the Order of the Legion of Honor.<sup>11</sup>

The French authorities also awarded the Cross of the Legion of Honor to Ljubljana's bishop Anton Kavčič, though this made little impression on the bishop or clergy, who were dissatisfied with French ecclesiastical policy. Bishop Kavčič tried to cooperate with the French and, through interventions with high French officials, improve the position of Church institutions and clergymen who were left without income; he also pacified rebellious peasants angered by high taxes, food requisitioning and the recruitment of young men for the French army. In the territory of the Illyrian Provinces the French introduced their particular type of compulsory military service

that extended to all social strata (and that only the wealthy could avoid by providing a paid substitute). Napoleon's decree of November 1810 established the Illyrian regiment, consisting of four combat and one reserve battalions. The senior officers were French, while the remaining officers, mostly non-commissioned, and the common soldiers were from the Illyrian Provinces. The introduction of French-type conscription in spring 1811 caused a massive flight of young men into the forests and across the border into Austria. According to estimates by police commissioner Toussaint, 11,000 men eligible for military service were in flight from Carniola alone.<sup>12</sup>

The French imposed high war indemnities on the countries they occupied after the Franco-Austrian war of 1809. The indemnities to be paid by Carniola were so high that the country was unable to meet them, while for some larger merchants and entrepreneurs, already badly affected by the crisis caused by the establishment of the Illyrian Provinces, these additional burdens signified financial collapse. The few sympathizers of the French government in the territory between the Alps and the Adriatic Sea came from the ranks of intellectuals, supporters of the Josephine reforms, occasional Francophile officials and prominent merchants. Relations between French authorities and domestic elites in the Illyrian Provinces were supposed to develop according to Napoleon's views on amalgamation, that is, the fusion of French and partly Italian elites from the Illyrian administration with domestic elites favorable to French rule.<sup>13</sup> Reconciliation among the elites would naturally have been facilitated by a knowledge of the French language among domestic elites. According to Nicolas Auguste Tournal, a police commissioner in Gorizia and head secretary of the Gorizia intendancy and the author of *Recueil de règles de droit et préceptes de morale: à l'usage de la jeunesse des Provinces Illyriennes*, published in 1812, this knowledge was less than rudimentary among the Slovene population. More recent research has revealed that from the end of the seventeenth century booksellers in Ljubljana were selling books in French and thus giving readers contact with French culture. This indicates that familiarity with the French language was not a privilege of a very few (noble) persons, though we do not have more detailed information about the number of noblemen and other educated people who could speak French.<sup>14</sup>

The establishment of the Illyrian Provinces provoked the emigration of former Austrian officials and clergy from the regions gained by the French in 1809; some nobles and clerical staff left too.<sup>15</sup> After the French departed, Austrian police informants drew up a long list of suspected Francophiles. This list did not accurately reflect reality, since it included men who loyally cooperated with the French authorities or supported some of their measures but who could not be considered Francophiles. The Austrian police informants tended to exaggerate when detecting French sympathizers. According to their reports as many as 65 Illyrians were members of the Masonic Lodge of the Friends of the King of Rome and Napoleon (*Les Amis*

*du Roi de Rome et de Napoléon*), founded in Ljubljana in 1811 by French officers and officials. In reality the Lodge only had fifteen Illyrian members, including officials, tradesmen, lawyers, a banker, a notary, a priest and three artists. One of the most respected members of the French Masonic Lodge in Ljubljana was a lawyer and emperor's prosecutor, Maximilian Wurzbach, father of Konstantin Wurzbach who, in the 1850s, began publication of the *Biographical Dictionary of the Austrian Empire (Biographisches Lexicon des Kaiserthums Österreich)*.<sup>16</sup> Despite his distinguished position during French rule, Maximilian Wurzbach continued to be trusted by the Austrian authorities and after the French left he was appointed to the commission to liquidate French debts. For this work he received a special award in 1820.

At the beginning of French rule some adherents of the Slovene cultural movement, initiated in the eighteenth century, were especially attracted by the French school reforms and figured among the most open sympathizers of the French regime. In May 1810, Governor Marmont introduced provincial languages (*langue du pays*) into primary schools and lower *Gymnasiums* as a subject and teaching language. Initially, he and his education advisor, Raffaele Zelli, had the Croatian language in mind, since after their arrival from Dalmatia they believed that the Slavic population in Dalmatia spoke the same language as the population in the present day Slovene territory. They only changed this view when they became familiar with conditions in the lands inhabited by Slovene-speakers, and also with Baron Zois and the circle of educated people around him. The poet Valentin Vodnik and the linguist Bartholomeus Kopitar, who lived in Vienna, were among its most active members. In 1810 in the territory with the Slovene-speaking population, Slovene was introduced as a subject and teaching language into primary schools and lower *Gymnasiums* in addition to German, Italian and French. As Raffaele Zelli observed, with this decision Marmont and his advisors wanted to promote the feeling of attachment to the Provinces and to an Illyrian nation among the inhabitants of the Illyrian Provinces, while at the same time trying to encourage the learning of French, which was the official language of the Provinces.<sup>17</sup>

Marmont's decree according the Slovene language greater importance in primary schools than under previous Austrian legislation and introducing it in the lower *Gymnasiums*, was greeted with open satisfaction among the followers of the Slovene cultural movement. Valentin Vodnik, initially a Franciscan monk and then a secular priest, teacher and poet, supported the decree with particular enthusiasm. In 1810 and 1811 he published no fewer than five Slovene textbooks for the French schools. Vodnik also wrote an ode in honor of Governor General Marmont, but after Marmont's departure from Ljubljana in 1811 his enthusiasm for the French cooled, as the French authorities changed the school policy and began adapting the school system in the Provinces to the French one. Lower *Gymnasiums*, which taught some subjects in the provincial language, were abolished and collegiums were

introduced on the French model, where German and French dominated as teaching languages. Marmont's decree on introducing the provincial language as a subject and teaching language in the primary and lower secondary schools was thus in force only in 1810–1811. Moreover, plans for an Illyrian (Croatian) edition of the Illyrian Provinces official gazette, *Télégraphe Officiel* were left unrealized. In 1811, in his report from a secret mission to the Illyrian Provinces, the French agent Joachim Pellenc pledged the continuation of Marmont's language policy since, in his opinion, the Provinces 'should promote the true Illyric language as it is the only one that can form a common linguistic basis for these disparate provinces'. Pellenc was convinced of the existence of a single Illyric language, divided into numerous dialects. He maintained that while 'administration, institutions, and laws' would unify the Illyric provinces, they could only form a real bond through knowledge of a common language.<sup>18</sup> But Paris was deaf to such suggestions. Furthermore, the school system in the Illyrian Provinces struggled with serious financial difficulties. In Carniola the number of primary schools actually fell between 1810 and 1813. In this context, the French school policy, so uncritically celebrated by Slovene liberal politicians and intellectuals in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, failed to gain wide support among people living in Slovene-speaking territories in the time of the Illyrian Provinces.

The establishment of the Illyrian Provinces gave rise to other hopes among some adherents of the Serbian and Croatian movement in Dalmatia and the Slovene cultural movement in Carniola. One reason for this was the very name Illyrian Provinces. For centuries the Slavs in the Balkans and Austria, convinced that Illyrians were Slavs, had used the term Illyrians for South Slavs or the population of Bosnia and Dalmatia, which spoke Illyrian, meaning the Serbian and Croatian language. After the group of regions between the Adriatic Sea and the Alps was established in 1809 and named the Illyrian Provinces, some ardent followers of the Serbian, Croatian and Slovenian cultural movement were convinced that Napoleon and the French had far-reaching political plans and wanted to unite the South Slavic (Illyrian) population in a durable political entity. The belief that the French Illyrian Provinces implied the restoration of a Slavic Illyria from antiquity, which had lingered on enslaved since the Roman period, was also expressed in 1811 by the poet Valentin Vodnik in his poem 'Illyria Reborn'. In the poem Vodnik celebrated Napoleon as a 'benevolent knight' who revived the Slavic Illyria, and claimed that under Napoleon the Slavs and Slovenes were permeated by a new spirit that would bring Illyria into 'the European orbit'. With its Slavic and South Slavic orientation, Vodnik's ode in honor of Illyria and Napoleon was the first, albeit still very vague, attempt at defining Slovene national ambitions.<sup>19</sup>

Naturally Paris was unreceptive to these aspirations, if it was even aware of them. For Napoleon Illyrian Provinces was a name from antiquity without



ethnic, linguistic or national connotations. Among high-ranking French officials the Illyrian language, the literature of Dubrovnik (Ragusa) and folk poetry attracted the attention of Maréchal Marmont during his stay in Dalmatia, while Marmont's successor, General Bertrand, favored Illyrian (Croatian) cultural aspirations and suggested that an Illyrian academy be founded in Dubrovnik. The designation of Illyrian for the language 'spoken by the inhabitants of Slavonia, Croatia, Serbia and Dalmatia', was also used by secret agent Pellenc in his memorandum of August 1809. In the same year he even claimed that French gains and the unification of Croatian territory south of the Sava River and the military frontier with Dalmatia could become 'an initial nucleus of reunion for the great Illyrian family'.<sup>20</sup> But this made little impression on high officials in Paris. Even French journalists who, at the time of the Illyrian Provinces, periodically reported on the situation in Dalmatia, Istria, Carniola and Carinthia in Paris newspapers, were not interested in linguistic and ethnic conditions in the Provinces. Also Vodnik, with his ideas about Illyria and the French plans, had few supporters among the followers of the Slovene movement, while for the Slovene-speaking peasant population, which judged French officials and soldiers from everyday contacts, such ideas were completely incomprehensible. The peasants saw the French primarily as greedy foreigners with whom it was impossible to communicate. This is evident from folk paintings representing French soldiers, exhausted after too much food and drink, stumbling into a peasant cradle and a peasant rocking them and turning them over in their sleep. In some instances, however, friendly relations between the population and the French were established, since after the French rulers left in 1813, an unknown number of French people stayed on and began a new life in the Slovene-speaking regions.

The great majority of the Slovene-speaking population thus did not have fond memories of French rule in the years 1809–1813. The memory of the Illyrian Provinces, as already noted, only started to change in the final decades of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when national relations within the Habsburg Monarchy became critically strained and Slovene intellectuals and leaders became convinced that Slovenes could realize their national aspirations only by allying themselves with Croats and Serbs. At that time the belief was revived that by forming the Illyrian Provinces, Napoleon and the French wished to establish a union of regions that would bring South Slavs together. The dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy and the establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in 1918 gave additional weight to the legend of the Illyrian Provinces as a kind of precursor of the Yugoslav state. In October 1929 – at celebrations for the 120th anniversary of the establishment of the Illyrian Provinces, held ten months after the declaration of the king's dictatorship in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia – a memorial obelisk carrying verses from Vodnik's 'Illyria

Reborn' and expressing gratitude to an unknown French soldier who had 'fallen for our freedom too', was erected in Ljubljana. 'With the Treaty of Schönbrunn', wrote the Slovene liberal newspaper *Jutro* on this occasion, 'the dictate of a brilliant Corsican created a new state formation which united, in the vast majority of its population, all three tribes of our (Yugoslav) nation and so was in a sense a forerunner of the present Yugoslavia. This new spirit brought liberation from the violence of germanisation'.<sup>21</sup>

Today, the first part of the legend – about Napoleon's aspirations to unite South Slavs – is largely forgotten, while its second part – about the French at the time of the Illyrian Provinces being favorably inclined towards Slovenes and South Slavs – is still very much alive. As the curator of the Ljubljana City Museum, Irena Žmuc, noted at the 2009 exhibition honoring the 200th anniversary of the Illyrian Provinces, the monuments in Ljubljana to Franz Joseph, Peter and Alexander Karađorđević and Josip Broz Tito were removed in the twentieth century, while the monument to Napoleon still stands.<sup>22</sup>

Along with writers, poets and literary historians, Slovene historians helped to shape the legend of French rule during the Illyrian Provinces as being favorably disposed towards the Slavs and Slovenes. Since the early twentieth century, however, some have also challenged and deconstructed that legend. The main issues researched and discussed in Slovene historiography in the twentieth century regarding the Illyrian Provinces were the following: the prehistory of the Provinces and Napoleon's motives for their establishment;<sup>23</sup> the political status, administrative organization and social and economic situation of the Provinces;<sup>24</sup> the condition of the peasants; and French policy in Napoleonic Illyria. Other topics that have received attention include: the influence of French revolutionary ideas on the national movements of the South Slavs; the position of the Slovene language and education in the French period; the issue of the supporters and opponents of French rule; and the national-political expectations of the followers of the Slovene cultural movement, encouraged by the establishment of French Illyria. Recent research has also gone in two directions: on the one hand, literary and cultural historians have analyzed in detail attitudes towards French rule among the Slovene population and intellectuals; on the other hand, the leading Slovenian researcher of the Illyrian Provinces, Janez Šumrada, has carefully explored French sources, French policy and the views and ideas of senior French officials.<sup>25</sup> On the 200th anniversary of the Illyrian Provinces in 2009, two exhibitions were organized in Ljubljana (that of the National Museum was also held in Paris). For both of them, multilingual exhibition catalogues were published with essays summarizing the most recent research in Slovene historiography.<sup>26</sup> Despite this, a historical synthesis and comparative presentation of conditions across the Illyrian Provinces, from Boka Kotorska to the eastern Tyrol, has yet to be attempted.

French historians have hitherto shown little interest in the territory of the Slovene-speaking population at the time of the Illyrian Provinces. In the last few years, however, some interest in this topic has been noted among younger French researchers.<sup>27</sup>

## Notes

1. Slovenski narod XLII, št. 88, 20 April 1909.
2. Ivan Prijatelj, 'Slovenščina pod Napoleonom', in *Veda* (Gorica 1911), 27–30. Cobenzl was Austrian vice-chancellor and minister of foreign affairs from 1792 to 1793, and from 1801 to 1805 Austrian ambassador in Paris.
3. Jacques-Olivier Boudon, 'Napoleonova evropska politika in ustanovitev Ilirskih provinc', in *Pod Napoleonovim orlom, 200 let ustanovitve Ilirskih provinc (Razstavni katalog)* (Ljubljana, 2010), 18–23. See also Fran Zwitter, 'Les Origines de l'Illyrisme politique et la création des Province Illyriennes', in Fran Zwitter, *Provinces Illyriennes, Cinq Études*, ed. Alain Jecic (Paris, 2010), 73–74.
4. A. F. G. Marmont, *Mémoires du Maréchal Marmont, Duc de Raguse de 1792–1841, Tome Troisième, Livre XIII (1809–1810)* (Paris, 1857), 541.
5. The first Slovene monograph dealing with this topic was Bogumil Vošnjak, *Ustava in uprava Ilirskih dežel (1809–1813)* (Ljubljana, 1910).
6. Janez Šumrada, 'Napoleonova Ilirija in Slovenci', in *Pod Napoleonovim orlom, 200 let ustanovitve Ilirskih provinc* (Ljubljana, 2010), 33.
7. *Ibid.*, 30–33.
8. Napoleon established the Illyrian Provinces on the day of signing the Treaty of Schönbrunn on 14 October 1809. The Provinces included the territory surrendered by Austria to France under the Treaty of Schönbrunn. It included: Gorica (Gorizia) County with Monfalcone and its surroundings, the city of Trieste and surrounding administrative area, the Province of Carniola, the Villach district in Carinthia with a part of eastern Tyrol, Croatian banks south of the Sava River, six districts of the military frontier, the port of Rijeka and adjacent coast and the former Austrian Istria. Also annexed to the Illyrian Provinces were the former Venetian Istria, Dalmatia and the Republic of Dubrovnik (Ragusa), which had been part of the Kingdom of Italy since 1805 and were included in the Illyrian Provinces in 1810.
9. Šumrada, 'Napoleonova Ilirija in Slovenci', 36.
10. Janez Šumrada, 'Doslej neznano pismo Žige Zoisa iz leta 1813 in njegov odnos do francoske vladavine v Ilirskih provincah', *Kronika, časopis za slovensko krajevno zgodovino* 35 (1987): 10–11.
11. France Martin Dolinar, 'Janez Anton Ricci', in *Pod Napoleonovim Orlom*, 218–221.
12. Šumrada, 'Napoleonova Ilirija in Slovenci', 30–33.
13. *Ibid.*, 32–34.
14. Anja Dular, 'Francoščina med Kranjci', in *Zgodovinske dimenzije Ilirskih provinc*, ed. Barbara Šterbenc Svetina et al. (Ljubljana, 2012), 87–88, 96–97.
15. Šumrada, 'Napoleonova Ilirija in Slovenci', 34–36.
16. Matevž Košir and Peter Vodopivec, 'Zur Geschichte der Freimaurerei im Gebiet des heutigen Slowenien', *Österreich in Geschichte und Literatur* 55 (2011): 341–344.
17. 'The Illyrian Provinces are made up of people so different in language, practices and culture that, as can't be stressed enough, any education system that

- is adopted must try to unite them in one nation, by encouraging them all to acquire the same ideas and form the same outlook' wrote Zelli. See also: Šumrada, 'Napoleonova Ilirija in Slovenci', 42–44.
18. Zwitter, 'Les origines de l'Illyrisme politique', 97–98; Šumrada, 'Napoleonova Ilirija in Slovenci', 44–46.
  19. Vodnik published his ode 'Illyria Reborn' in 1811 in his textbook *Pismenost in Gramatika za Perve šole* [Reading and Grammar for Primary Schools].
  20. Fran Zwitter, 'Les origines de l'Illyrisme politique', 84–87.
  21. Jutro, X/239, 12 October 1929, 1.
  22. Irena, Žmuc, *Napoleon rezhe Ilirija vstan, Ob 200-letnici ustanovitve Ilirskih provinc* (Ljubljana, 2009), 13.
  23. The leading Slovene expert on the Illyrian Provinces from the 1930s to the 1980s was Fran Zwitter, professor of history at the University of Ljubljana, who, in 1933, published the article: 'Les Origines de l'Illyrisme Politique et la Création des Provinces Illyriennes' (Paris, 1933). In 2010 five of his essays dealing with the Illyrian Provinces were published in French. Alain Ježič (ed.), *Fran Zwitter, Les Provinces Illyriennes, Cinq Etudes* (Paris, 2010).
  24. The first systematic research on this topic, which resulted in a book, was done by Melita Pivec-Stele in the 1920s. Melita Pivec-Stele, *La vie économique des Provinces Illyriennes: suivi d'une bibliographie critique* (Paris, 1930).
  25. Janez Šumrada, *Poskus zemljiške odveze v času Ilirskih provinc* (Ljubljana, 1996), 499–514. Janez Šumrada, 'Prebivalstvo v slovenskih delih francoske Ilirije', *Zgodovinski časopis* 52 (1998): 51–72. Janez Šumrada, *Načrti francoskih oblasti v Iliriji o ustanovitvi ljubljanske univerze*, (Ljubljana, 1999), 517–534. Janez Šumrada, 'Les principaux traits de la politique napoléonienne dans les Provinces Illyriennes', in *Napoleon na Jadranu* (Koper, 2006), 43–58.
  26. *Pod Napoleonovim orlom, 200 let ustanovitve Ilirskih provinc, Razstavni katalog* (Ljubljana, 2010). *Napoleon rezhe: Iliria vstan, Ob 200-letnici ustanovitve Ilirskih provinc* (Ljubljana, 2009).
  27. Anthony Gaudillere, 'Telegraphe Officiel, uradni časnik Ilirskih provinc: načrti in resničnost', *Kronika, časopis za slovensko krajevno zgodovino* 54 (2006): 385–396. Aurelie Fertil, 'Prometne poti v Ilirskih provincah oziroma strategije integracije nepovezanega in strateškega prostora', *Zgodovinski časopis* 64 (2010): 136–152. Pauline Ringoot, 'Župani v času Ilirskih provinc', *Kronika, časopis za slovensko krajevno zgodovino* 59 (2011): 247–256.

# 19

## French Rule in Dalmatia, 1806–1814: Globalizing a Local Geopolitics

*Marko Trogrlić and Josip Vrandečić*

After the signing of the Treaty of Schönbrunn on 14 October 1809, which created the short-lived Illyrian Provinces (1809–1814), a group of Zadar's (Zara) Francophiles, led by city mayor Pietro Vergada, judge Francesco Papafava and lawyer Nikola Jakšić, performed an act of bravado by burning a Habsburg straw effigy mounted on the city walls.<sup>1</sup> During the Austrian Restoration, however, which began five years later, Jakšić denounced his own Jacobin past in a pro-government pamphlet, writing of the 'immature democracy' of the fallen French regime. His colleagues, seeking state employment, praised the restored Habsburg rule for reinstating law, morality and order, and blamed the liberal optimism of the former government for 'arrogant liberty' and for being an 'infamous democracy'.<sup>2</sup>

The purpose of this chapter is two-fold: first, to present the implementation of the new Adriatic geopolitical paradigm imposed by Napoleon's takeover of Dalmatia in 1806; and second, to address the inner dynamics of French rule in the province through both its achievements and its flaws. Napoleon's foreign policies and the military build-up changed the early modern political environment in the Adriatic, traditionally dominated by the regional powers of Venice, the Habsburgs and the Turks. The French grand strategy, which included the eastern Mediterranean, consequently brought the other great power contenders to the region, namely the British and Russians, who each had a traditionally weak presence in the southern European periphery, situated far from their capitals and the continental battlefields. The ensuing Anglo-French struggle for power and peace in the new arena was marked not only by the relentless use of force but also by a French political ideology of liberal reformism and narrative. The Dalmatian local bourgeois revolution involved multiple strata of the population: nobles, the middle class, even members of rural, conservative society. The democratic limits of the new regime were combined with war, recruitment, economic blockades and a polarized society. The French administration modernized and improved the judicial system, administration, education

and roads, but the human and material cost it entailed exceeded anything seen since the Turkish wars.<sup>3</sup>

### **Venetian maritime imperialism**

The coming of the French in 1806 represents one of the most dramatic episodes in the history of Dalmatia. The province, a narrow strip of territory with an adjacent archipelago stretching from the island of Pag to the Bay of Kotor on the eastern shores of the Adriatic, became the cradle of the Croatian state and of the overall Slavic presence in the early Middle Ages. From the fifteenth century, with the exception of the independent Republic of Dubrovnik (Ragusa), Dalmatia came under Venetian rule, strengthening the already considerable influence of the Lion of St. Mark in the Adriatic. When the Ottomans occupied the Dalmatian hinterland in the sixteenth century, Venice became the only power to resist their threat by conducting a policy of commercial and political centralization. It separated the towns of Dalmatia from their Balkan hinterland and Croatia and connected them with the ruling state.<sup>4</sup>

The main allies in the anti-Ottoman struggle, Venice, the Habsburgs and the Papal States, sought to prevent Turkish penetration into the Adriatic and further into the Christian West. The Cyprus War (1570–1573) saw the final territorial expansion of the Ottoman possessions deep into Dalmatian districts, which eventually forced local Venetian authorities to start a costly program of reshaping city walls in accordance with revolutionary modern principles of military architecture.<sup>5</sup> Dependent on bastion fortifications and the fleet, the naval state pursued a defensive approach to the Turkish threat in the Adriatic. After initial setbacks against the Turks, during the sixteenth century, trade-oriented Venice became increasingly non-confrontational and dependent on commercial expansion within the Ottoman Empire.<sup>6</sup> Thus the Republic remained neutral during the long Ottoman–Habsburg War in Pannonia (1593–1606), when the Senate refused to enter into a coalition with the pope and the Habsburgs. After the Turkish defeat at Vienna in 1683, Venice reluctantly joined the allied forces of the Habsburgs, the Poles and the pope after lengthy diplomatic negotiations. Under the Peace Treaty of Srijemski Karlovci in 1699, the Lion of St. Mark received additional territory in Dalmatia but made no gains in Dubrovnik's hinterland due to the opposition of both Habsburgs and the Turks, determined to save Dubrovnik from a Venetian grip. In the last Venetian–Ottoman conflict, the Second War of Morea (1714–1718), the republic obtained meagre territorial gains in the hinterland of Dalmatia but lost the entire Peloponnese and its remaining possessions in the Aegean Sea.<sup>7</sup>

Despite the diplomatic inconsistency regarding the Turks, the Senate remained unyielding in its protection of the Adriatic, where the Habsburgs were perceived as a greater threat than the Ottomans. The republic had

successfully asserted its claim to the sea as its *mare clausum* since the beginning of the fourteenth century. Early-modern Adriatic history was thus marked by a profound Habsburg–Venetian rivalry that only ended with the fall of ‘the Queen of the Sea’ in 1797. The competition over the *Dominium maris Adriatici* had many political aspects, including the thorny question of the Uskoks, the Christian runaways from Ottoman lands who turned to the sea and indiscriminately attacked maritime commerce. The Uskok problem was an obstacle to Pope Clement VIII’s (1592–1605) organization of the above-mentioned coalition of Christian powers during the Ottoman–Habsburg War of 1593–1606.<sup>8</sup> Vienna maintained that the sea was free to everybody and belonged to all, like the air that one breathed. Venice increasingly suffered from a tightening Habsburg grip in northern Italy where the old rivalry over Friuli caused no less concern than the Adriatic. It centered on the thorny issue of the town of Marano and four adjacent islands of the Grado lagoon.<sup>9</sup> When the Venetians built Palma fortress in Eastern Friuli in 1593, in contested territory, it added insult to injury. While the Venetians stressed that the building would protect them against the Turks, it was seen by Vienna as an act of anti-Habsburg aggression.

### French liberal interventionism

In the course of the eighteenth century Venice lost its control over the Adriatic. The new and assertive Habsburg rulers, Maria Theresa and Joseph II, disrupted the Venetian military, political and trade monopolies, especially in the northern part of the Adriatic. The final blow, however, came from the opposite side. In his drive to Vienna the young General Bonaparte violated Venetian territory and neutrality. In May 1797 his troops entered Venice and imposed a short-lived pro-French satellite government.

When the Republic finally fell in October 1797, its former eastern-Adriatic provinces of Dalmatia and Istria were given to the Habsburgs in exchange for French gains in Belgium and Germany. Yet, after the fall of Venice, the rule of Vienna, which a majority in Dalmatia hailed as a preferable alternative to the reign of French atheists, turned out to be short-lived and transitional. The Battle of Austerlitz (2 December 1805) led to the Treaty of Pressburg (Bratislava) signed on 26 December, by which the victorious Napoleon took back Dalmatia and Istria from Austria and incorporated them into his recently created Kingdom of Italy (*Regno d’Italia*).

Revolutionary France was a new contender in the Adriatic, since the French presence in that part of the Mediterranean situated between Italy and the Balkans, where the Venetian hegemony was most successful, had been traditionally weak. The French fleet had first entered the Adriatic during the War of Spanish Succession (1701–1714) and then throughout the Seven Years’ War (1757–1763), but only to support land operations in northern Italy. During the Republic of Venice, mastery of the Adriatic had been a local affair with

the regional contenders acting as marginal naval powers. Now, however, the Adriatic became an important piece in the jigsaw of Anglo-French rivalry. By securing Dalmatia, Napoleon sought to provide a reliable springboard from which to realize his Oriental dreams. With Malta, Sicily and southern Italy all under British control the possession of Dalmatia kept these dreams alive. The impact of the new Adriatic geopolitics on the overall European equilibrium drew both the Russians and the British to the contested waters. In the spring of 1806 the Russian fleet – seconded on land by the Christian-Orthodox Montenegrins – expelled the remaining Austrian authorities from the Bay of Kotor (Cattaro) which they were supposed to hand over to Napoleon. The French General Lauriston was eager to occupy Dalmatia but was besieged in Dubrovnik by Russian Admiral Senjavin. In June General Augustus Frederic Marmont came to rescue him by breaking the enemy lines and pushing them all the way back to Kotor. French troops ended the independence of the Republic of Dubrovnik but saved it from Russian occupation. After the signing of the Tilsit peace treaty in 1807 the Russians left the sea, but the British stepped in by seizing the strategic Island of Vis, the Gibraltar of the Adriatic situated 40 miles off the Dalmatian coast. From this island they conducted a British warfare by imposing a maritime blockade, raiding the French coast and, last but not least, providing support for the growing Vienna-directed resistance in Dalmatia.<sup>10</sup>

The British blockade cut Dalmatia off from its central government in Milan and affected the local pro-French regime led by Vincenzo Dandolo, the Italian governor general of Dalmatia. In his 1806 annual report to Napoleon the governor stressed the prime strategic value of the province as a military stepping-stone to the eastern Mediterranean. However, as he had no say in military affairs, which were in the hands of the French generals, he had to win over the local population by introducing liberal reforms and communicating a soft-power liberal narrative. Dandolo pointed to the integrating forces of the French-directed European market as a new reality that created considerable international interdependency and could work in Dalmatia's favor. The sanctity of private property, freedom of trade and equality before the law became normative. In his accounts to Napoleon he not only discussed the judiciary, government, armed forces and political institutions, but also emphasized the value of Dalmatia's rivers and bridges, crafts, farming, marine, fisheries and other imperial and military strategic points. In addition to accomplishing a vast amount of administrative work, during his four years of service Dandolo reorganized the government and conducted modernizing reforms in all sectors of the administration and economy.

In his reports to Napoleon the governor also noted that he 'operates under the Emperor's enlightened principles'.<sup>11</sup> This liberal modernism resembled the mature Enlightenment of Joseph II and Leopold of Tuscany more than the Jacobin revolution. In the eighteenth century Venice had failed to



reform Dalmatian society. During its short rule of the province (1797–1805), Austria had no time to conduct reforms, for it was involved in a conflict with Napoleon during the Second Coalition. Upon entering the province in 1806 the French dissolved centuries-old municipal institutions, such as the corporatist *Consiglio dei nobili* and the *Università dei cittadini e del popolo*. The legal system and administrative network were modernized and an educational system was established. Prison torture was abolished. The judiciary was separated from the government and based on the premise of equality before the law.

In June 1807, Niccolò Ivello, a pro-French poet, claimed that Dalmatians of all walks of life had joined the ‘Dalmatian revolution’.<sup>12</sup> Austerlitz, the battle that had brought the French into the province, came to be viewed as marking a new, rationalist beginning for Dalmatian society. The pro-French sympathizers were recruited mainly from the tiny educated urban middle class; they wore French tricolors, crushed anti-French demonstrations and marked Napoleon’s victories with celebrations in casinos and city squares. Nevertheless, the team of liberal comrades led by Dandolo faced immense difficulties. They defended cities against the Russians in 1806 and 1807, and later against British and Austrian raids, simultaneously fighting a growing band of militia chiefs, peasants and local nobility engaged in a crusade against the ‘infidel’ French. At the same time, the Francophiles carried out sweeping reforms in agriculture, industry and trade to tackle the province’s chronic underdevelopment. Dalmatian liberals expected the French to create a modern, secular state with a centralized, trustworthy bureaucracy and an independent judiciary. For them, *sommo Napoleone* would standardize education, implement the Code and embark on the great task of road building. In 1807 the French opened a central *lycée* in Zadar, which was the center of a comprehensive school system that included seven Gymnasiums, twelve elementary schools and eight craft schools. On 26 May 1807 the state bureaucracy proclaimed religious tolerance for Orthodox Christians and Jews. Dandolo strove for the province to become economically self-sufficient, based on agriculture, primary materials and craft production. He believed that these items, once injected into the commercial bloodstream of the empire, would contribute to the replacement of English merchandise. To this end he founded a Chamber of Commerce, reduced internal tariffs and organized regular trade fairs throughout the province to promote capitalist modernization.

Dandolo believed that Dalmatia and its 270,000 inhabitants could feed two million people. In vain he tried to settle 40,000 Germans in the province from the French satellite Confederation of the Rhine. But the French achieved undeniable results in particular economic sectors. When, in 1805, Austria produced 4.3 million pounds of salt, the French immediately increased the output, so that the government disposed of 5.7 million pounds in 1806 and around ten million in 1808. The Dalmatian state revenues,

which had totaled one million Venetian lire during Venetian rule, grew to four million during the French regime.<sup>13</sup> The civil budget was balanced though it did not include military expenditure, which was met from the central exchequer in Milan.

In conducting his liberal modernization, the governor had to rely on, at most, 20,000 Italian speakers living in the coastal towns. The Francophile middle class represented the core support of the regime. The most prominent members of Dandolo's administrative circle had already participated in the pro-French coup in Venice in 1797 and were labeled the '*speziali, influentissimi giacobini*'.<sup>14</sup> The governor counted on Grgur Kreljanović and his son Ivan, the brothers Domenico and Ivan Luka Garagnin and Angelo Calafati, all of whom played prominent roles in the short-lived Venetian government of 1797.<sup>15</sup> In Dalmatia, Grgur became Dandolo's minister of police, and Ivan a judge of the appellate court of Zadar. The latter also organized the printing of the pro-regime bilingual newspaper, *Il Regio Dalmata/Kraglski Dalmatian*, and participated in developing the school system. In 1809 Ivan also published the first comprehensive history of Dalmatia, in which he praised the French regime for liberating the province from 'the four-century long Venetian darkness'. Domenico Garagnin was appointed governor of the Dubrovnik district and his brother Ivan Luka became a member of the agricultural ministry. Angelo Calafati served as governor of the northern Dalmatian district of Mali Lošinj. Dozens of foreign-educated middle class Dalmatians also joined the regime. After graduating in law at Padua, Jakšić, mentioned earlier, became Procurator General of the appellate court of Zadar in Zadar and a member of the city council. Antonio Angel Frari, physician and epidemiologist, wrote a Health Act (1806), which became the basis for a comprehensive medical reform. Dominico Baltasar Cattani, writer and translator, became a delegate in Split (1810–1811) and then vice-delegate for northern Dalmatia. The local peers met in Masonic lodges, which served as party venues and centers of social power.<sup>16</sup> Hundreds of foreign officers and clerks, the people of the new regime who arrived from afar to protect the province, passed through the military barracks, offices and the influential Masonic Lodge of Zadar, *De Saint Jean de Jérusalem Franco-Dalmate*. The foreign officers and clerks came mainly from France and Italy and contributed to the cosmopolitan liberalism and transnational structure of the administration; they accentuated its urban character and deepened the gap between rural and urban milieux.

The local nobility also played a prominent role in the new regime. The nobles revealed their bourgeois mentality amidst fears of social revolution and economic collapse. In Zadar Pietro Vergada and Andrea Borelli led the municipal council during the French regime, together with their patrician fellows Simeone Begna and Marco Antonio Lantana. Borelli, president of the local Economic and Agricultural Academy, pointed out to his countrymen that it was 'the time of economic and social renewal of the province along

the principles of the French Revolution'.<sup>17</sup> He was awarded the title of Knight of the Legion of Honor. His son Blaise (Biagio) died fighting as a French volunteer in Spain in 1813. In Split the French obtained the support of the leading noble families, Grisogono, Cambi and Cindro. Toma Grisogono served as French vice-delegate of the Island of Hvar. His nephew Doimo was vice-delegate of Šibenik. Stanislav Grisogono led local French companions against the Austrian forces entering Dalmatia in 1809 and died in the battle on the bridge over the River Cetina in the same year. During the incursion Petar Cambi put up a brave resistance, defending the Klis fortress against the Habsburg forces. Sebastian Cambi, a captain of the French Army, fought in the war against Russia in 1812.

The regime found followers even among rural chiefs. In 1807 Colonel Vidović, commander of the Split territorial forces, participated in the suppression of the local uprising in Poljica, aided by Russian troops from the neighboring islands. In 1809 in the Gentleman's Square in Split, Captain Peter Pinelli said that he would put a bullet in the head of the first Austrian soldier who entered the city gates. In February 1814 Colonel Nonković pushed the cannons of his besieged fortress into the River Neretva before escaping to Ottoman territory with the French tricolor in his hands.

Despite such support, however, the majority of the population participated in the fight against the French. The depth and severity of government intervention based on liberal ideology rather than on historical legitimacy provoked resistance. The French encouraged social mobility on the liberal principle that all citizens were equal before the law – but they were not equal in their education and skills. The criterion for social promotion, however, was ideological; 'The French employ only those of their party' (*del partito gallico*), one local pro-Habsburg associate complained.<sup>18</sup> The war and high taxation that marked Napoleon's rule of the province caused several rebellions. In 1807 the peasant elite of Poljica, a small semi-independent county in inner Dalmatia, hoping for the restoration of their former republic, flocked to Russian ships. War became a permanent condition, exacerbated by profiteering and official corruption. Dalmatians secretly traded with the British at Vis, telling the French authorities that English pirates had confiscated their goods. In 1808 alone, Dubrovnik lost 139 ships laden with goods, for an estimated total value of 2.2 million Venetian lire. The brief incursion of Habsburg troops into Dalmatia in 1809 was aided by local irregulars and brought the province to a state of economic collapse. A large number of indebted farmers in the Dalmatian hinterland were forced out of the country, their land abandoned to usurers, while they remained in exile in Ottoman Bosnia.

The church publicly supported the regime despite its propagation of the liberal doctrine of materialism. The bishops pointed to Napoleon's protection of the Catholic Church. In mid-August 1806 they celebrated the emperor's birthday and called on young men to join the Dalmatian legion.

In his sermon of 8 June 1807 Giuseppe Gregory Scotti, the Archbishop of Zadar, praised Napoleon as a guarantor of peace and as a 'defender of the Scriptures'.<sup>19</sup> But the regime tried to make the church a tool of the bureaucratic state. In Dalmatia the French abolished all but one of the religious associations. On 29 July 1806 Dandolo protested to the commander of Zadar over the conversion of 23 Church facilities into ammunition storage and residences for soldiers. The privatization of Church land and the suppression of monasteries fueled local resistance.

The conflict between Dandolo and General Marmont, the military governor of the province, came to symbolize the tensions between the civil and military administrations, between revolutionary idealism and military authoritarianism. There was an increasing gap between the regime's military character and its liberal and democratic program. The main work of the municipal administrations appointed by Governor Dandolo was to implement orders received from the military authorities. On 27 July 1806 the governor published a decree on recruitment that triggered a province-wide rebellion. Dalmatia was required to provide 2,700 volunteers for a military legion called the *Reggimento Reale Dalmata*. Zadar's municipality sought an exemption on the grounds that Dalmatian communes in the past had been freed from giving this tribute in blood.<sup>20</sup> The militarized regime experienced its first crisis and by April 1807 General Milošević had managed to assemble only two battalions of recruits. A decree of 9 December 1807 ordered compulsory recruitment and the recruits were sent to Italy. The army enforced military rule and military culture, which required the submission of the civil authorities and the requisition of men and supplies. Dandolo and Marmont, though both based in the governor's palace, communicated through intermediaries.

## The Illyrian Provinces

By creating the Illyrian Provinces after the Wagram victory on 9 July 1809, Napoleon excised Dalmatia from the Kingdom of Italy and added the province to the large, new French satellite that stretched from the Bay of Kotor to Carniola. The French protectorate, established on the doorstep of Vienna, cut Austria off from the Adriatic and controlled both its shores and the Alps.

The Illyrian Provinces had to juggle too many roles. In geopolitical terms, the French saw them as a stepping-stone to the East. After shutting Austria out of the Adriatic in 1809, Napoleon tried in vain to liberate Vis from the British. The joint Franco-Italian fleet, led by Rear admiral Bernard Dubourdieu, attacked the island on 13 March 1811 but was defeated by British Commodore William Host.<sup>21</sup> Despite this setback the new political unit had a role in supporting the French economy. The government sought to divert as much merchandise as possible from the neighboring Ottoman

Empire, especially cotton bales coming from Egypt through Thessalonica and Sarajevo to the French-controlled European marketplace. The French consulate in Bosnia desperately tried to redirect the cotton trade away from its traditional route to the Habsburg-controlled Sava River and towards the French-held town of Kostajnica on the Una River. According to an estimate by Sarajevo's chamber of commerce, in the single month of September 1811 10,000 bales of cotton were sent to Sava as opposed to 1,200 to Kostajnica.

Last but not least, by annexing the Croatian military frontier, Napoleon obtained legions of battle-tested soldiers whom he had already faced on European battlefields on the Austrian side. The Illyrian troops played an important role in the Napoleonic wars, including the Russian campaign. Ten thousand soldiers from the Croatian provinces were integrated into the *Grande Armée* and fought in the battles of Smolensk, Borodino and at the River Berezina. The Dalmatian troops won 13 Legion of Honor medals, and 900 of their number fell in battle. Dozens had distinguished careers in the French army. One such was Ivan Stjepan Semonić. Born in 1792 in Venetian-ruled Šibenik, Semonić enlisted in the French military service as a cadet. When the Austrians declared war on Napoleon in 1809, he joined General Marmont, with whom he traveled through much of Europe. As a member of the light infantry in Gorizia he participated in the Russian campaign and distinguished himself during the capture of Smolensk.<sup>22</sup> He was captured during the French retreat and entered Russian service with the rank of captain. He rose to become Russia's ambassador in Teheran and vice-marshal and governor of Warsaw.

The new state appealed to South-Slavic nationalism. The name Illyrian was a reference to tribes who had inhabited the area during antiquity and had, in time, become intermingled with the Slavs. Although the French had first integrated Dalmatia into the Kingdom of Italy, the Francophiles emphasized the Slavic character of the Provinces. Under the patronage of Marmont linguists from Dubrovnik continued to elaborate on Dalmatia's leading role within French Illyricum. The polyglot Jakov (Gioachino) Stulli finished his trilingual dictionary *Dizionario Italiano–Illirico–Latino* a year after the proclamation of the Provinces. Francesco Maria Appendini, a prominent representative of French imperial Illyrianism put the finishing touches to the flawed theory of the origins of Balkan Slavs. Appendini claimed that the Slavic language was older than the Greek and Roman tongues. In his opinion, this Slavic proto-language had originated in Asia Minor and was introduced to the Balkans by the migratory tribes of Scythians who resettled in Europe before the fall of Troy. Afterwards the Slav language spread from Dalmatia all the way to Siberia.

At the time of the proclamation of the Provinces, Dandolo's civilian circle disappeared into thin air. Delegate Domenico Garagnin left Split for Dubrovnik. He complained to the governor about Antonio Koludrović, captain of the port of Split, but without effect because Koludrović enjoyed

military protection. Ivan Luka Garagnin returned to his estate in Trogir, Calafati went to Istria and Grgur Kreljanović retired. Dandolo left the province on 29 January 1810. His fellow comrades, led by Mayor Vergada, bade him farewell at the city port. His departure, in fact, represented the end of the civil administration and announced a new level of accountability to the ministries in Paris. Marshal Marmont, the first governor of the Illyrian Provinces, left in February 1811. His successors Bertrand, Junot and Fouché ruled according to instructions from Paris that emphasized imperial paternalism. The old newspaper *Il Regio Dalmata* disappeared in 1810, and the new *Télégraphe officiel des Provinces Illyriennes*, printed in French, appeared in Ljubljana, the capital of the Provinces.

The government did not have the means to integrate society in such a short period. The freedom that was proclaimed remained merely formal and became an unfulfilled dream. Except for building new roads, the French rule in Dalmatia had few long-lasting results. The proclamation of liberty, equality and fraternity was overshadowed by recruitment, requisition and economic warfare that seriously damaged the Adriatic ports. Excessive taxation, conscription and the Continental Blockade imposed by the British destabilized the local economy for decades to come. The defense of the Illyrian Provinces required a new system of recruitment, under which residents had to undergo general conscription. The tax system undermined such freedom as remained; the treasury was empty, despite the inflow of funds. The military required housing, food and wartime loans. In 1809 Marmont requisitioned 2,000 horses and imposed a 700,000 Venetian lire loan on Dalmatian cities. The logic of imperialism proved costly for the bourgeois elite. Despite a cosmopolitan ideology, a revolution in education and the construction of roads, the military dictatorship produced discontent among all strata of society. Still, by the end of 1813 the enlightened French regime had done the groundwork for modernizing the state apparatus and society, work that the Austrian Restoration would continue. Although at the time these reforms had yet to yield their full potential, they were nonetheless of considerable social significance.

In 1813 the Habsburgs once again declared war on France, and in a few months they had regained control over Dalmatia, the Croatian military frontier and Istria. Some Francophiles continued to believe in the power of French arms. During the collapse of the regime in 1813, Vincenzo Dudan, commander of territorial forces in Kaštela near Split, assured local peers gathered at his home that the Germans were coming to Dalmatia to seal their doom. He observed that Napoleon was still fighting and that the small Austrian army that had entered Dalmatia represented a band of robbers. He claimed that the French emperor would be the ultimate winner and that his victorious army would soon attack this rabble. Dudan urged local chiefs not to rush to arms on behalf of the Habsburgs, and to bear in mind what happened in 1809 after the French returned. Frano Zavoreo, the capable

Split engineer who drafted the plan for the construction of roads, argued in the local *Bottega di Caffè*, that, 'all was divine with the French since Napoleon was an incarnate deity'.<sup>23</sup> On 9 December 1813, after a two-month siege, Andria Borelli, mayor of Zadar, yielded to the combined gunfire from Austrian infantry and English warships and surrendered the Dalmatian capital to the Habsburgs.

The former Francophile elite questioned the old regime and, ultimately, solicited jobs from their new masters. During the restoration Andrea Borelli, Antonio Angelo Frari and Ivan Kreljanović adopted nihilism. In 1816 Borelli committed suicide to avoid police questioning. Frari retained his position in the medical service in Split and supervised the city's quarantining, but as a politically suspect person he was placed under police surveillance.<sup>24</sup> Emperor Francis I awarded him an honorary medal for civil merit, but his relations with the local authorities remained tense. In 1821 he left Split and went to Zadar, then to Verona and finally to Venice, where in 1830 he became president of the Naval Health Magistrate. In 1835 he was appointed as an international advisor to help combat the plague in Egypt. On the basis of his rich professional experience he wrote a comprehensive book on the history and epidemiology of the plague, the best history of the epidemic up until the mid-twentieth century. Ivan Kreljanović continued to serve in the local Habsburg administration but without a regular income.<sup>25</sup> In the Austrian regime, symbolized by bureaucracy and military barracks, a state office had become a requirement for survival. He suffered from the competition of foreign German officers and Italian officials and, in 1816, he signed a manifesto calling for promotions for the local Dalmatian elite. The protest mirrored the disappointment and disillusion of a whole generation of former revolutionaries and indicates the problems that characterized the nineteenth century: emerging nationalism, ideological commitment and the scramble for civil service posts. To his former comrades, Napoleon continued to symbolize the *Supremo Liberatore*. Not long afterwards Kreljanović withdrew to Venice and died in August 1838 on the Island of San Servolo in a hospital for the mentally ill.

With the fall of Napoleon the whole of Dalmatia became an Austrian frontier province and remained such until the establishment of Yugoslavia in 1918. In the battle for the Adriatic the Habsburgs had finally prevailed. The Vienna Congress confirmed the simplified geopolitics of the Adriatic with Austria as the only regional naval power. As a continental state focused on the German Question, the monarchy lacked a maritime perspective. Its hegemony in the Adriatic was challenged during the Third War of Italian Unification in 1866, when the fleet of the newly proclaimed Kingdom of Italy was defeated in the Battle of Vis. After the loss of Germany in the same year the Austro-Hungarian monarchy found its new mission in southeastern Europe. In 1878 Vienna occupied Bosnia and Herzegovina. The emerging Italian irredentism, which claimed Dalmatia as a part of the Venetian legacy,

forced the monarchy to accelerate its maritime build-up. At the end of the century the monarchy boasted an intensive naval program by building a modern fleet and seaport facilities in both Istria and Dalmatia. Feeling secure in the Adriatic, in 1908 Vienna annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina – but in confrontational Europe, at the beginning of the twentieth century, there was no longer any such thing as a local affair. That annexation eventually led to the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914 at Sarajevo and to the outbreak of the First World War.

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22. Šime Peričić, 'Neki Dalmatinci–generali stranih vojski', *Radovi Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Zadru* 42 (2000): 195–220.
23. DAZD, *Miscellanea*, vol. 23, 34.
24. Andre Jutronić, 'Šibenčanin dr. Anđel Frari (1780–1865) i njegova pisma', *Radovi Instituta JAZU u Zadru* 10 (1963): 139–169.
25. Vjekoslav Maštrović, 'Zadranin Ivan Kreljanović Albinoni istaknuti hrvatski intelektualac iz početka XIX stoljeća', *Radovi Instituta JAZU u Zadru* 19 (1972): 88.

# 20

## Locating the Ottomans in Napoleon's World

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### **Introduction: the Bonaparte adventure**

Historians writing about the 1798 French invasion of Egypt style Napoleon Bonaparte as the grand sultan (*Sultan Kebir*) and conqueror of Egypt.<sup>1</sup> By contrast, Ottoman Sultan Selim III (1787–1807) has been viewed as weak, indecisive and incapable of implementing his visionary reform agenda, in a general condemnation of Ottoman feebleness that marks most of the well-known narratives. The Bonaparte invasion inaugurated an interventionist school of both British and French imperialism, a fumbling towards imperial methods, driven by their great power rivalries with Russia and later Prussia, but equally committed to a civilizing mission and the preferential markets represented by the sprawling Ottoman Empire.

This chapter re-examines the period from 1798 leading up to May 1807, the date when a massive rebellion in Istanbul brought down Selim III and installed Mahmud II (1808–1839) as his successor. The special focus is the Anglo-British-Russian alliance(s) against Bonaparte 1799–1803. While the collision of imperial powers in the eastern Mediterranean obviously altered the course of Eurasian politics and stimulated local societies to participate in global revolutions then underway, the convulsions can also be characterized as the concatenation of a number of other revolution(s) then happening in the Ottoman world.

On 21 October 1798 the city of Cairo exploded as the native population revolted against the French troops under Bonaparte, stationed there since July following the defeat of the Ottoman Mamluk chieftains Murad and Ibrahim Beys at the Battle of the Pyramids.<sup>2</sup> The riots were instigated by the merchants of the city who were resentful of the oppressive taxes and forced requisitioning imposed on them by the ill-financed French expeditionary force, crippled by the British destruction of its fleet at the Battle of the Nile the previous August. Just as significant was the anger of the locals at the disrespect of French engineers, who, in carrying out their orders to secure the city defenses and modernize neighborhoods, knocked down

local buildings and walls, especially around the mosque and tenth century university complex of al-Azhar. The absence of coherent leadership among the rebels allowed the French to organize their superior artillery and mow down the mutinous population, perhaps as many as 3,000, with at least another 300 executions in the days that followed.<sup>3</sup>

In September, Sultan Selim III had declared war on the French, erstwhile friends of the Ottomans.<sup>4</sup> To understand the influence of the French invasion in the Ottoman context requires a brief description of the events following the arrival of Bonaparte's fleet in the eastern Mediterranean, then a discussion of Sultan Selim III's predicament as regards European diplomacy and an assessment of the political and social impact surrounding the reform eras of Selim III and his successor Sultan Mahmud II (1808–1839). Concluding remarks will return to the impact of Bonaparte's Egyptian adventure on imperial politics as well as on local Ottoman communities.

In 1799, Ottoman, British and Russian fleets converged in the eastern Mediterranean, the latter for the first time via the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. Diplomatic negotiations, first with Russia to prevent Bonaparte's securing of the Ionian Islands and then with Great Britain, led to the signing of both Russian and Anglo-Ottoman alliances in January 1799. A joint Russo-Ottoman fleet succeeded in occupying the Ionian Islands after a four-month siege of Corfu and expelled the French from the territory, an exceptional collaboration that resulted in the formation of the Septinsular, or Ionian, Republic (1800–1807) under Russo-Ottoman protection. The political status of the Ionian Republic was determined as much by the Ottoman policy of establishing buffer states as it was by the new international climate emerging at the end of the eighteenth century. The short-lived republic protected the Ottoman Adriatic frontier until the Franco-Russian rapprochement in the Treaty of Tilsit in 1807 broke Selim III's Francophilia and contributed to the fall of his regime.<sup>5</sup>

Of equal interest is the struggle that went on for the hearts and minds of the Greek, Albanian, Catholic, Orthodox and Muslim populations who were the source of much anxiety among military reformers in Istanbul.<sup>6</sup> Russian–Ottoman negotiations were more often influenced by concerns over local Christian and Muslim populations and events in Serbia and the Principalities (Wallachia and Moldavia) than by Bonaparte's military adventures. In 1805 the Ottomans signed a renewal of the alliance with Russia, but they refused to allow troops in the Principalities. Selim III, encouraged by Bonaparte's victories, then recognized the emperor in early 1806. By the end of the year, with Selim III firmly back in the French camp, the Russians simply occupied the Principalities, an act of aggression which inaugurated almost a century of conflict between the two powers and contributed to the downfall of the sultan.

The British had long been preoccupied with the potential threat of the French invasion to their trade with India. Even after the British had crippled

Bonaparte's fleet and source of provisions at the Battle of the Nile, concerns about Russian southern expansionism and the protection of the routes to India drove much of the debate on the Eastern Question in London. By October 1798 Commodore Sir Sidney Smith was ordered to join his brother Spencer Smith in Istanbul to negotiate an alliance. In November a military mission was organized under General George Koehler, an artillery expert, to support the Ottomans in their confrontation with Bonaparte, while the British squadron also guarded the eastern Mediterranean from further French threats. An Anglo-Ottoman alliance was signed in January 1799.

Bonaparte marched into Syria and captured El-Arish in February 1799. Despite immense difficulties and great suffering from heat, hunger and disease, the French defeated the garrison stationed at Jaffa rather easily, and then executed some 2,500 Turkish prisoners of war, an event which became Bonaparte's black legend in later accounts.<sup>7</sup> He continued his march north to Acre where, after an extended siege defended by the combined Anglo-Ottoman naval and land force, he was compelled to withdraw at the end of May with heavy losses.

By August 1799 Bonaparte had slipped from Egypt to France, leaving General Jean Baptiste Kléber in command to extract the French forces in Cairo from the cul-de-sac they found themselves in. General Kléber was eager to conclude matters and hence Sidney Smith facilitated the signing of the Convention of El-Arish of 1800, but its conditions proved unacceptable to the British government and prolonged the conflict. In early 1800 a more significant British mission collaborated with the Ottoman land forces to remove the remnants of the French army from Egypt. The last of Bonaparte's troops were carried back to France on British warships in September 1801, leaving behind one-third of their original 35,000 fellows who had succumbed to disease, climate and hunger more than to actual wounds.

Thus ended the grand adventure of Bonaparte, who was dubbed 'The Muhammad of the West' by Victor Hugo.<sup>8</sup> These events are invariably described as the beginning of the modern or secular age in the Middle East, a 'litmus test of empire' awakening the somnolent Orient or, inaugurating Middle East colonialism, with the French pioneering 'a form of imperialism that deployed liberal rhetoric and institutions for the extraction of resources and geopolitical advantage'.<sup>9</sup> The confrontation certainly inaugurated the age of ideology, which both the French and Ottomans deployed effectively. Imbued with the zeal of the revolution and championing liberty and tolerance, Bonaparte professed friendship and brotherhood with the Muslims of Egypt and declared his wish to continue his good relationship with the Ottoman Sultan Selim III and his desire to eliminate the tyranny of the Mamluks. While Egyptian chronicler al-Jabarti likened the French invasion to a *jihad*, Selim III actually declared one, noting that the invasion was a violation of international law at the same time as he ordered

subversive activities in a general call to arms against the French. Egyptians were warned that once the Frenchmen were in control, they would 'spread hatred and excite the people to revolt; ultimately to destroy the Holy Places and all the Muslims'.<sup>10</sup> Inflammatory language likely helped to stir up the street in October 1798.

### **State of Ottoman affairs in the 1790s**

The Ottomans were at a particularly vulnerable moment in their history in 1798. They did not participate in the continental wars that permanently altered the international balance of power between Britain and France in the mid-eighteenth century. Nor were they privy to the military reform incubator on the eastern European battlefields of the Seven Years' War (1756–1763), where Russian military leaders learned valuable lessons that they applied to later campaigns on the Ottoman Danube.<sup>11</sup>

As a result of the preoccupations of the major powers in Eastern Europe the period prior to 1768 was largely peaceful in Ottoman territories. With the exception of the Iranian frontier, which erupted in warfare and rebellion after the breakup of the Safavid order in the 1720s, the Ottoman Empire enjoyed peace on its western frontier for close to forty years. Several astute grand viziers, such as Koca Ragıb Pasha (1757–1763), convinced more than one sultan of the virtue of peace and multilateral negotiations, especially in an age of contraction and financial instability. As a result the empire achieved two decades of tranquility and economic recovery.<sup>12</sup>

After 1763, the European powers became obsessed with the future of Poland, which had increasingly been drawn into the Russian sphere of influence. The French repeatedly urged the Ottomans to go to war with Russia, but they steadfastly maintained their neutrality. In early 1768, however, the Bar Confederation of anti-Russian Poles appealed to the sultan for protection. Ottoman ultimatums for the withdrawal of Russian troops from Poland were ignored and in September 1768 the Ottomans declared war.

The period of peace had led to an almost complete collapse of discipline in and recruitment to the Ottoman army. The traditional infantry, the Janissaries, had been badly neglected and were dispersed across the Ottoman territories. Most Janissaries had melted into the countryside as small tradesmen, tax farmers or guildsmen, had joined the regional armies of local governors or other officials, had become an armed militia or a law unto themselves in major cities of the empire. Even the Janissary regiments responsible for manning the border fortresses, who could count on periodic if erratic wages, had to be newly reconstituted for the campaigns that began in 1768.<sup>13</sup>

The financial consequences of the return to war were dire. The tenuous economic recovery was devastated by the two decades of warfare on which the Ottomans now embarked, impeding any effort at serious military and

fiscal reform until the peace of Jassy in 1792. Between 1760 and 1800 prices trebled, deficit budgets became the norm and the state occasionally resorted to forcing loans from its officers and gentry across the country, or confiscating estates in order to finance the warfare.<sup>14</sup> This caused a regionalization of violence and led to the emergence of important provincial families, who demanded a share of the sultan's power in return for defending his borders.<sup>15</sup>

One of the consequences was the explosion in the number of tax farms, as a means of generating revenue, and their conversion into lifetime holdings. Ottoman regional warlords – Muslim and Christian – contributed enormously to the success or failure of the Ottoman war effort. War profiteering became a constant stimulus for temporary, if mistrustful and reluctant, loyalties and generated regional foci of power, manipulated by colorful and controversial figures. Muhammad 'Alî of Egypt (Mehmed Ali in Turkish), who opposed Sultan Mahmud II (1808–1839) from the 1820s onward, emerged from precisely this context in the confusion following the Bonaparte episode.

By the time of invasion, the sultan relied on these local coalitions of officials whose legitimacy was conferred by local Muslim judges, and whose empowerment was facilitated by the decentralization of the state finances and the concentration of both mobilization and supply in their hands.<sup>16</sup> Those who prevailed amassed regional armies when called on to mobilize for large campaigns, and maintained their private forces in between. They assumed responsibility for campaign preparations, such as mobilizing troops, requisitioning grain and biscuit, supplying draught animals and wagons, and provisioning the bivouacs along the army's route.<sup>17</sup>

The fighting forces for late-eighteenth-century Ottoman armies came from the peripheries and semi-autonomous territories of the empire, such as Albania and the Caucasus. Albanians, Kurds and Circassians were certainly part of the traditional Janissary organization, and Circassian slaves were part of the Ottoman court early on – but the new military formations were tribal, itinerant and for hire, mobilized and financed by local commanders, as previously described. By mid-1750 such troops proved to be the most difficult to organize and discipline, the first to demand payment and provisions, and the first to turn and leave when Ottoman commanders were slow to respond to their demands.

The two Turkish wars of Catherine II, as they are known, 1768–1774 and 1787–1792, exposed the Ottoman military weakness to all of Europe. The territorial losses were profound; wholesale slaughter in garrison towns along the Danube by the Russians was the order of the day, and the specter of Russia in Istanbul was very real, especially for those living in Bulgaria, Thrace and in the city itself. Equally important, it was the moment when the population at large, which, in earlier times stood to benefit from an organized, well paid and hungry army on its territories, suffered tremendously from

the lack of order and destructive rapaciousness of undisciplined troops who lacked leadership. The Ottomans made a last ditch effort, fighting on their own territory among unreliable, angry populations. The voices calling for military and fiscal reform grew louder with each loss up until 1792, when peace allowed the sultan to turn to the problems of his empire.

It is hard not to sympathize with Selim III, who, by coming to the throne in the midst of a disastrous war, was prey to the vicissitudes of internal and international politics. In the midst of military collapse, he called together a consultative assembly, inaugurating what is generally called the *Nizam-ı Cedid*, or new order, which refers both to the full range of Selim III's reforms and to the new regiments of troops, which was the first serious introduction of European formations, uniforms, discipline and drill to the Ottoman context.<sup>18</sup> His reign is most often characterized as the period when the first serious attempts at military reform failed, but the condemnation is simply too categorical. The years after 1792 were a prelude to the complete overhaul of the Ottoman system of governance, not just the military. Reforms left nothing untouched, including revoking tax farms, reclaiming alienated properties from charitable status, reorganizing the grain delivery system to a perpetually hungry Istanbul, and rebuilding the gunpowder works, cannon foundries and naval shipyard. Selim III's advisors also recommended the creation of regiments using new, raw recruits from the countryside, organized in small companies of crack infantry. They drilled constantly, using foreign officers as military advisors. In 1798 there were approximately 6,000 such soldiers in *Levend Çiftliği*, one of the new barracks built by the sultan. Some of these troops supported Sir Sidney Smith and Ahmed Cezzar at Acre in 1799.<sup>19</sup>

Desperate for accurate intelligence throughout the period between 1798 and 1807, Selim III appointed resident Ottoman representatives to the capitals of Europe for the first time in the long history of the dynasty. Though inclined to maintain ties with France, unrest in Paris made London a more suitable alternative in 1793 and Selim III appointed Yusuf Agah Efendi, a courtier, to London.<sup>20</sup> Selim III's diplomatic initiative annoyed both Russia and France, the latter evoking their putative status as the oldest 'friends' of the Ottomans. The Ottomans would not send a permanent ambassador to St. Petersburg until 1857.

Selim III had corresponded with the French court, however, before becoming sultan, and stubbornly remained a Francophile. French military missions were a sporadic feature of the Ottoman landscape from the 1770s until the death of French Foreign Minister Vergennes, former ambassador to Istanbul in 1787.<sup>21</sup> With the withdrawal of the French mission in 1788, Great Britain appeared to have an opportunity to step into the void but in the 1790s this was by no means official policy. As suggested above, British officials were more engaged with India and Europe than with the Middle

East, and Britain's Levant Company was close to dissolution. The British ambassador in Istanbul did not hear from his government in London more than ten times a year. In contrast, French Ambassador Choiseul-Gouffier (1784–1792), received special dispatches from İzmir (Smyrna) on a regular basis, and was a particular source of information on international affairs for Selim III.<sup>22</sup> The French dominated eastern Mediterranean trade between Marseilles and the Ottoman ports, particularly İzmir. Selim III consistently maneuvered to re-establish the French connection even after the Revolution forced a breach in relations. Ambassador Raymond Verinac (1795–1797), the first fully accredited French Republican representative in Istanbul, succeeded in persuading Selim III to appoint Seyyid (*Morali*) Ali Efendi as a permanent ambassador to Paris in 1797. Ali Efendi was received in Paris in the style of Molière's *Bourgeois Gentilhomme* by all accounts.<sup>23</sup>

Undeterred by British and Russian opposition to his relations with France, Selim III continued to appoint ambassadors to Paris, Mehmed Said Halet Efendi (1803–1806) and Muhib Efendi (1806–1811). In spite of their presence in Paris, Selim III was compelled, on at least three occasions, to appoint special plenipotentiaries to resolve delicate negotiations, such as that of Mehmed Said Galib Efendi, dispatched to sign the Treaty of Paris on 25 June 1802, which re-established Ottoman relations with Napoleon's government.

Selim III had great ambitions, but worked against almost insurmountable odds, notably entrenched beneficiaries of the old system, conservative resistance to his innovations and an empty treasury. His initiatives raised the ire of critics in his own court, which was deeply divided into pro-French and pro-war camps. Therefore, when he was pressed to respond to French aggression in Egypt, Selim III abandoned his reform project and allies altogether. Bonaparte's public representations of the sultan as permitting the French invasion had inflamed the general population in Istanbul. So too did the alliance with Russia. Pierre Ruffin, the French *Chargé d'Affaires*, was given the unenviable task of convincing the Ottomans that Bonaparte's invasion was not intended as aggression against the sultan. In early August 1798 Grand Vizier İzzet Mehmed Pasha warned Ruffin that French residents in the empire would be subject to house arrest – and so it proved. By the end of that month the grand vizier himself was dismissed and arrested, along with the rest of the pro-French government officials. Pierre Ruffin and his staff followed the former grand vizier into prison along with all French merchants and their property from across the empire. Selim III appointed Yusuf Ziya Pasha (1798–1805), known conservative and head of the pro-war party, as grand vizier. Yusuf Ziya was ordered to cooperate with the British mission, which arrived the same year, commanded by General George Koehler and 76 military engineers and artillery experts.<sup>24</sup>



## Final confrontation in 1801

Assuming that the Ottomans were not going to be able to forcibly remove the French by themselves, the British dispatched a much larger force of ships and two divisions of troops to the eastern Mediterranean by October 1800, under the command of Sir Ralph Abercromby.<sup>25</sup> By March 1801 the British landed the new arrivals in Aboukir, shortly before Ottoman contingents under Grand Admiral Küçük Hüseyin Pasha also arrived by ship. The combined army amassed in Aboukir under the British and Ottomans was estimated at 15,000 British soldiers, commanded by Abercromby and, upon his death, General Hely Hutchinson, and 6,000 Ottomans, under the command of Grand Admiral Küçük Hüseyin. In addition, Grand Vizier Yusuf Ziya's land army of 15,000, which grew to 25,000 by the time of its arrival in Egypt, left Gaza in mid-March to cross the Sinai Desert, arriving on the eastern side of the Nile delta in mid-April.<sup>26</sup>

By early April the combined Ottoman and British force had begun to press their attack on the French from three directions: Aboukir, Rosetta and Rahmaniye. The campaign was effectively over by mid-1801. The Convention for the Evacuation of Egypt was signed on 27 June 1801, with the British agreeing to transport the remainder of the Army of the Orient back to France. The French officially capitulated at the end of August and a triumphant procession, led by Ottoman Commanders Küçük Hüseyin, Yusuf Ziya and British General Hutchinson, entered Cairo on 12 July. The final troops of Bonaparte's army embarked from Alexandria in September.<sup>27</sup>

Franco-Ottoman hostilities officially ceased with the Treaty of Paris in June 1802, which renewed all French capitulations and re-established their diplomatic predominance in Istanbul – much to the chagrin of the British, who soon after resumed their fight against Napoleon Bonaparte. Selim III preferred neutrality to breaking the treaty with France and insisted that the British evacuate Egypt. The last of the British troops left Egypt in March 1803. In 1806 Selim III recognized Napoleon as emperor of the French and closed the Dardanelles to Russian warships. In February 1807 the British sailed into Istanbul with warships in support of Russia, but found the French fortifying and enabling the resistance of the population to the British. The fleet was forced to withdraw in early March. The tumult generated by events in Istanbul and Cairo, however, stimulated an enormous revolt in Istanbul in May 1807, which brought down the government of Selim III.

Selim III's preference for the French connection, and Anglo-Russian vulnerability to Napoleonic ambitions elsewhere, restored Ottoman sovereignty to Egypt, however tenuously. Selim was grateful for the assistance of the British military mission. Yusuf Ziya had the honorific *Gazi* (Conqueror) attached to his name by the sultan who also established a medal, called the Order of the Crescent, which he bestowed on British officers 'to perpetuate the signal services rendered'.<sup>28</sup>

## Some final considerations

The first colonial thrust into the Middle East was over in a few short years, but its consequences set the pattern for the next hundred years. New narratives of the Bonaparte adventure appear in every generation of historians as each new invasion of the Middle East unfolds. The confrontation between the highly disciplined French infantry formations and the largely voluntary and immensely proud Mamluk cavalry is a visual image repeatedly invoked by nineteenth-century romantics. Walsh's observation of the Mamluks is typical in its effusion over their 'grand and splendid' appearance.

Osman Bey Tambourgi [successor to Murad Bey] arrived with his Mamalukes. They appeared to be about 1,200 in number: every individual superbly mounted, richly dressed, and attended by a servant on foot, carrying a long stick in his hand... Indeed, a Mamaluke may be said to carry all his wealth about him; his horse, sword, and pistols, beautifully wrought and inlaid with silver, are worth very great sums, and constitute the chief part of his riches... These Mamalukes were so richly dressed and accoutred, that the French soldiers actually fished up the bodies of those who were drowned in the Nile, by which they obtained very considerable booty.<sup>29</sup>

But the consequence of the French invasion influenced the Mamluks most directly. They were doomed. It took another ten years but, in the end, the age of the Mamluks was over in Egypt, replaced by the dynasty of Muhammad 'Alî and his family until 1952. The struggle for control of Egypt split three ways after the departure of the British: the Mamluks as described above; the Ottoman provincial governor supported by the remaining Janissaries; and the volunteer militia bands of Albanians, who coalesced around Muhammad 'Alî. It was he who, in the end, defeated the last of the Mamluk beys and set Egypt on a rapid and astonishing course of modernization. He had observed the discipline of the *Nizam-i Cedid* under Grand Admiral Küçük Hüseyin and the Anglo-Ottoman cooperation as a young recruit, but his reform model was French and his foreign advisors very largely French.

Muhammad 'Alî reorganized the Egyptian economy and introduced plantation cotton, which thrust Egypt into international markets in the early decades of the nineteenth century. He completely rebuilt and reformed both navy and army. Initially he served as the right hand of Mahmud II (1808–1839) in the southern territories of the Ottoman Empire, particularly in repressing the earliest Wahhabi revolts in Mecca and Medina, and in responding to the early stages of the Greek revolt in 1821. Frenchmen, Albanians, Circassians and Turks from Anatolia made up his officer class. In 1822 he introduced universal conscription of his peasants (*fellahin*) and embarked on a full-scale militarization of his territories.<sup>30</sup>

By contrast, the Ottoman center took longer to rid itself of the Janissaries, who were, after all, the heart and lungs of traditional Ottoman society. Most advisors around the new sultan, Mahmud II, saw that they were useless as a military force, but the sultan had serious financial problems and empire-wide revolts and resistance to contend with, of which Muhammad 'Alî would grow to be the largest and most threatening. Mahmud II could not turn to the problem of the Janissaries until 1826, when he eliminated the last of them in Istanbul. The extent to which Mahmud II modeled his new army on post-Napoleonic European standards is still under debate. What seems clear is that Mahmud II's set of reforms, while influenced by the Egyptian experience, were much more of a hybrid. The pool of officer manpower, represented by the demobilized post-Napoleonic officer class ubiquitous in Egypt, was not to be found in the inner circle of Mahmud II's court. The great reforming sultan was notoriously stingy and very resistant to outside assistance, with the exception of Prussians such as Helmut von Moltke, the elder, who served as an advisor to the sultan in the 1830s and was careful to maintain his status as such.

The main enforcer of the reforms, Husrev Pasha (d. 1855), who served in Egypt in 1801, returned to Istanbul as chief advisor to Mahmud II. He is credited with strong-arming the implementation of the transformation but there is no convincing record of a sustained reform strategy beyond the writings of a very small group of ideologues and advisors. Universal conscription was not imposed until the end of the 1830s, and a functioning military academy came into existence only in 1834. A modern military command structure, based on merit rather than cronyism and seniority, was not really in place until the second half of the nineteenth century. The impact of the academy on the command structure of the Ottoman reformed army remained small until the end of the century, when the officer elite became an important force in the modernization of the empire.<sup>31</sup>

The performance of the allied armies against Bonaparte in Egypt in 1801 needs another look as it represents the mid-point between the old and new military systems; it was one of the last campaigns of the Ottoman *ancien régime*. Warrior cultures persisted, and the kinds of terrain and nature of warfare encouraged mobility and flight among the volunteer militias. The soldier for hire had come to be both a necessity and a menace to Ottoman survival, as the British and French would learn in the Crimea at mid-century and in their own colonies in India and North Africa.<sup>32</sup>

In the Bonaparte invasion we see the genesis of the interventionist school of both British and French imperialism, driven by their great power rivalries with Russia and later Prussia, and equally driven by a sense of purpose in a civilizing mission and the potential global markets of the Ottoman territories. By 1830 France had occupied Algeria and the British controlled Gibraltar and Malta. 'In a sense, the door that opened in 1798 never quite seemed to close.'<sup>33</sup>

The experience in the Nile Delta reinforced British views of the romantic warrior which has influenced Middle Eastern policy, first the Mamluks, then the heroic Greeks, then the Bedouins and the Saudis in the First World War. The establishment of Muhammad 'Alī's family as the hereditary dynasty in Egypt, brokered by the Treaty of London with the Ottomans in 1841, prepared the way for the British occupation of Egypt in 1882, while sultanic resistance and adroit – if desperate – use of the Russian card, sustained Ottoman autonomy in Istanbul. All have their genesis in the 1798 invasion. After rocky beginnings British politicians settled on political support for the court in Istanbul by mid-century, having acquired free trading rights across the empire in the Anglo-Ottoman Treaty of 1838.<sup>34</sup>

There is no question that the massive rebellion in Istanbul in 1807, initially begun as a palace coup, was further stimulated by a combination of overstretched resources, under-equipped army and police, migrant populations and the ideological stimulation of foreigners, especially soldiers sporting revolutionary cockades and singing the *Marseillaise*. Too late to rescue Selim III, provincial armies descended on the city and negotiated a Deed of Alliance with the young sultan Mahmud II, a unique moment of collaboration in Ottoman history.<sup>35</sup>

But what can one say of the impact on local populations and individuals? The devastation and dislocation in the margins and principal cities of the Ottoman world from decades of conflict goes without question. The Anglo-Ottoman Treaty of 1838, privileging the British, allowed for deep penetration into the countryside by merchants and foreign consuls alike, drawing the Ottomans into the global economy. The long arm of British protection had the effect of shifting economic power into the hands of Christian elites who had an easier reach into the colonial projects of the European powers than their fellow Muslim citizens. This led to a division of Ottoman citizens into military elites and merchant classes, the former Turkish and Muslim, the latter Christian minorities, who were imbued with the excitement of the revolutionary age. The 'imagined communities' that began to emerge each had constitutional visions to contribute to the century-long debate about Ottoman citizenship and loyalty, eroding the last few vestiges of the sultan–slave patrimonial relationships that had been foundational to the empire. Liberation also constitutes part of the narrative of the ending of the global slave trade, which stirred up both acquiescence and resistance across the Mediterranean world.<sup>36</sup>

Ottoman Muslim elites were similarly convulsed in the transitional period 1750–1850. It is they, moreover, who suffered the most on the battlefields, as Christians continued to be prohibited from serving in the Ottoman forces. The writings of Ahmed Vasif Efendi, for example, one of the most active and prolific of the advisors/chroniclers around Selim III, reflect the debates about the meaning of the loss and dissolution of Ottoman power so evident in the days leading up to and following Bonaparte's adventure. Wrestling

with the need to preserve, even restore, the best of the ancient traditions, he also argued that Islamic law permitted measured, even novel, responses to handling such crises, and was not simply rigid. Such political conversations about what constituted acceptable approaches to change were at the center of a debate about piety, reform, causality and imperial success, exacerbated by the Napoleonic moment, but ongoing since the mid-eighteenth century.<sup>37</sup>

## Notes

1. At one point Bonaparte dressed in mufti and styled himself the *Mahdi*. A. L. MacFie, *The Eastern Question 1774–1923* (rev. edn, London, 1996), 11; in 'Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti', *Napoleon in Egypt: Al-Jabarti's Chronicle on the French Occupation of Egypt, 1798*, trans. Shmuel Moreh (Princeton, 1993), 9.
2. Joseph Shosenberg, 'The Battle of the Pyramids: Futile Victory', in *Napoleon and the French in Egypt and the Holy Land 1798–1801*, ed. Aryeh Shmuelevich (Istanbul, 2002), 241–243.
3. Juan Cole, *Napoleon's Egypt: Invading the Middle East* (New York, 2007), 198–207; Darrell Dykstra, 'The French Occupation of Egypt, 1798–1801', in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, ed. M.W. Daly, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1998), vol. 2, 113–138.
4. Franco-Ottoman diplomacy dated from the 1530s and 1540s, when French King Francis I (1514–1547) and Süleyman I (1520–1566) proved allies of convenience against the Habsburgs: Virginia Aksan, *Ottoman Wars, 1700–1870* (Hammersmith, 2007), 116.
5. The contribution of the Ottoman navy in this period is not inconsiderable. See Kevin McCranie, 'The Operations and Effectiveness of the Ottoman Navy during Napoleon's Invasion of Egypt, 1798–1801', in *Napoleon and the French*, 156–164; see also Tuncay Zorlu, *Innovation and Empire in Turkey: Sultan Selim III and the Modernization of the Ottoman Navy* (London, 2008).
6. Kahraman Şakul, 'Ottoman Attempts to Control the Adriatic Frontier in the Napoleonic Wars', in *The Frontiers of the Ottoman World*, ed. A. C. S. Peacock (Oxford, 2009), 253–271.
7. The figure varies from 2,500 to 4,000, the higher one in the Muslim/Ottoman accounts. The original garrison at Jaffa was probably 12,000 Albanian and North African (Maghrebians) with a few artillerymen. See M. C. Şehabeddin Tekindağ, 'Yeni kaynak and vesika ışığı altında Bonaparte', in *Akkâ Muhâsarası*, *Istanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi* 15 (1965): 8.
8. Anthony Pagden, *Worlds at War: The 2,500 Year Struggle Between East and West* (Oxford, 2009), 375.
9. Cole, *Napoleon's Egypt*, 247.
10. Norman Daniel, *Islam, Europe and Empire* (Edinburgh, 1966), 91–92; Cole, *Napoleon's Egypt*, 56–58.
11. Michael Hochedlinger, *Austria's Wars of Emergence, 1683–1797* (London, 2003), 205.
12. Mehmet Genç is the acknowledged expert on the financial state of the empire in the late eighteenth century: 'L'économie ottomane et la guerre au XVIIIe siècle', *Turcica* 27 (1995): 177–196.
13. Virginia H. Aksan, 'Mobilization of Warrior Populations in the Ottoman Context 1750–1850', in *Fighting for a Living*, ed. Erik Jan Zürcher (Amsterdam, 2013), 323–343.

14. See Şevket Pamuk, *A Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge, 2000), 150–171.
15. Aksan, *Ottoman Wars*, chapters 5–6.
16. Halil İnalcik and Donald Quataert (eds), *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge, 1994), 659.
17. Genç, 'L'économie ottomane', 185; Evgenii Radushev, 'Les dépenses locales dans l'empire ottoman au xviiiè siècle', *Études balkaniques* 3 (1980): 74–94.
18. See Gábor Ágoston, 'Military Transformation in the Ottoman Empire and Russia, 1500–1800', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 12 (2011): 281–319.
19. By 1806 the army had grown to over 22,000, with close to 1,600 officers. Aksan, *Ottoman Wars*, 192–197.
20. See Mehmet Alaaddin Yalçınkaya, *The First Permanent Ottoman Embassy in Europe: The Embassy of Yusuf Agah Efendi to London* (Istanbul, 2010).
21. Allan Cunningham, 'The Ochakov Debate', in *Anglo-Ottoman Encounters in the Age of Revolution: Collected Essays*, vol. 1, ed. Edward Ingram (London, 1993), 3. See also Pascal W. Firges, 'Gunnery for the Sultan: French Revolutionary Efforts to Modernize the Ottoman Military', in Pascal W. Firges et al. (eds), *Well-Connected Domains: Towards an Entangled Ottoman History* (Leiden, 2014), 171–187.
22. Cunningham, 'The Ochakov Debate', 5–6, note 11; 20.
23. Although Seyyid Ali was ill-equipped to serve as ambassador (his sultan noted on one document: 'what an ass!'), the whole enterprise represents a significant shift in Ottoman diplomatic practices, which had until then relied on the hothouse of Istanbul foreign representatives. Wajda Sendesni, *Regard de l'historiographie ottomane sur la révolution française et l'expédition d'Égypte, Tarih-i Cevdet* (Istanbul, 2003).
24. Cole, *Napoleon's Egypt*, 154–156. 42 officials and 1,800 private individuals were arrested, and their goods confiscated. Ruffin remained in prison in Istanbul until August 1801, the very last foreign representative to be so treated. See Henri Dehérain, *La Vie de Pierre Ruffin: orientaliste et diplomatie 1742–1824*, 2 vols (Paris, 1930), vol. 2, 145–146. For a fascinating look at the dragoman dynasties, see Alexander H. De Groot, 'The Dragomans of the Embassies in Istanbul, 1785–1834', in *Eastward Bound: Dutch Ventures and Adventures in the Middle East*, ed. Geert Jan van Gelder and Ed de Moor (Amsterdam, 1994), 130–158.
25. Thomas Walsh, *Journal of the Late Campaign in Egypt, Including Descriptions of that Country, and of Gibraltar, Minorca, Malta, Marmorice, and Macri: With an Appendix Containing Official Papers and Documents* (London, 1803), 52–54.
26. Walsh, *Journal*, 187–188.
27. At the time of the French surrender, there were 8,223 French troops left in Cairo, and 4,000 British under the command of Hutchinson, numbers which do not include any of the Mamluks or Ottomans who might at that time have numbered over 30,000. Walsh, *Journal*, Appendix no. 31.
28. *Ibid.*, Appendix no. 35. It was the first time that such European-style medals were created and awarded to foreigners.
29. *Ibid.*, 152–154.
30. He first attempted to create an army made entirely of black slaves from Sudan, but they proved vulnerable and unsuitable as the new model army he envisioned. Perhaps he had been influenced by observing the use of the native *sepoys* from India during the Anglo-British campaign. Khalid Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men: Mehmed Ali, His Army and the Making of Modern Egypt* (Cambridge, 1997). See also Aksan, *Ottoman Wars*, chapters 8 and 10.

31. Avigdor Levy, 'The Officer Corps in Sultan Mahmud II's New Ottoman Army, 1826–39', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 2 (1971): 21–39. See also Mesut Uyar and Edward J. Erickson, *A Military History of the Ottomans: From Osman to Atatürk* (Santa Barbara, 2009).
32. Comparison of native armies in Mughal India and the Ottoman Empire are just beginning. Kaushik Roy, 'Military Synthesis in South Asia: Armies, Warfare and Indian Society, c. 1740–1849', *Journal of Military History* 69 (2005): 651–90.
33. Ian Coller, 'Egypt in the French Revolution', in *The French Revolution in Global Perspective*, ed. Lynne Hunt, Suzanne Desan and William Nelson (Ithaca, 2013), 116.
34. Many of the elites of the new British imperialism moved back and forth between British India and the Ottoman Empire, and confronted in the arrogance of Ottoman rule a reflection of their own. 'When Sidney Smith told the Turkish authorities that he was to be superseded by [Lord] Elgin, the Grand Vizier [Yusuf Ziya], reported Smith, asked if it was necessary, as they "went on well together". Smith replied that Elgin was a great landed proprietor of influence in Scotland, such as the government habitually conciliated by appointments to high stations. "Ah," commented the Vizier, "then I understand your government has also got its mountain chiefs to conciliate.'" Quoted in Daniel, *Islam, Europe and Empire*, 141.
35. Ali Yayıoğlu, 'Provincial Power Holders and the Empire in the Late Ottoman World. Conflict or Partnership?', in *The Ottoman World*, ed. Christine Woodhead (London, 2012).
36. Aylin Koçunyan, 'The Transcultural Dimension of the Ottoman Constitution', in Firges, *Well-Connected*, 235–258. On slavery and emancipation see C.A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World 1780–1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Oxford, 2004).
37. Kahraman Şakul, 'Nizâm-ı Cedid Düşüncesinde Batılılaşma ve İslami Modernleşme', *İlmî Araştırmalar* 19 (2005): 117–150; Kemal Beydilli, 'Küçük Kaynarca'dan Tanzimât'a İslâhât Düşünceleri', *İlmî Araştırmalar* 8 (1999): 25–64. Ethan Lewis Menchinger, *An Ottoman Historian in an Age of Reform: Ahmed Vâsîf Efendi (ca. 1730–1806)*, doctoral thesis (University of Michigan, 2014), 231.

# 21

## The Birth of Modern Egypt from Bonaparte's Campaign to Muhammad 'Alî's Seizure of Power: A Historiographical Essay

*Jean-Marcel Humbert*

In October 1991 Egyptian television broadcast a ballet entitled *The Three Nights of the Sphinx* in which Bonaparte and Muhammad 'Alî (Meheemet Ali) are seen dancing together; it is unclear, however, whether they are locked in an embrace or in combat. This anecdote, related by Ramadân al-Khûlî and 'Abd al Râziq 'Îsâ,<sup>1</sup> is revealing of the place the two characters and their action occupy in the collective imagination of Egyptians and others. It is also a reminder that Bonaparte's military and scientific expedition needs to be seen in perspective and related to the policy of modernization initiated during the reign of Muhammad 'Alî. This is what this chapter aims to do.

Historians have long considered the impact of the French presence in Egypt from the angle of a military campaign that ended in failure. Nevertheless, a few non-specialist European writers did reflect on the broader issues involved. One such was Raoul Lacour who, in 1871, likened the arrival of the French in the Orient to 'that of meteorites crossing the sky, brilliant but useless'.<sup>2</sup> In contrast, Gabriel Thomas wrote in 1894 of an 'Egypt upon which France has left so deep an imprint'.<sup>3</sup> Since then there has been a proliferation of schools of historical scholarship and a variety of analyses, reflecting sharp differences of interpretation among historians from all sides.

The repercussions of the Egyptian expedition have been addressed by many historians,<sup>4</sup> three of whom I consider to be the most important for their ability to maintain the necessary critical distance. First, Anouar Louca (1927–2003), former professor at the University of Lyon II, who is credited with having 'trained several generations of historians of nineteenth-century Egypt and renewed the history of the Egyptian expedition and of Franco-Egyptian relations'.<sup>5</sup> Second, André Raymond (1925–2011), formerly professor at the University of Provence-Marseille and a leading specialist on



eighteenth-century Cairo. Third, Henry Laurens (1954–), professor at the Collège de France, author of fundamental works on the expedition, who has given a particularly acute analysis of the legacy of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution (via the notion of revolutionary regeneration) and its introduction into Egypt.<sup>6</sup> Laurens considers that the Orient ‘cannot be reduced, as Edward Saïd reduces it’,<sup>7</sup> to an instrument of Western domination, and that its ‘practicality’ should not make us forget its scientific value. In the eighteenth century the Orient served primarily as a mirror for major debates then taking place in France (on society, monarchical power and religion), before ‘becoming a place that was “behind the times”, a past in the present’.<sup>8</sup>

By way of introduction to the subject, here is what Farouk Mardam-Bey, historian and writer, wrote for the catalogue to the *Bonaparte et l'Égypte* exhibition in 2008:

For a long time it was customary to consider the French expedition to Egypt as the historical turning point separating the *Inhitât* (decadence) from the *Nahda* (renaissance). That view was probably simplistic and is rejected by most contemporary historians, although they diverge in their interpretation of the economic, political, social and cultural changes that affected Egypt in the second half of the eighteenth century. Prior to Bonaparte, what were the signs, if any, of an incipient endogenous change? What was the real significance of the policy of independence pursued by the ‘Great Mamelukes’, Alî Bey al-Kabîr and Muhammad Abû al-Dhahab? To what extent did the popular uprisings, notably that of 1795, reflect changing attitudes towards the Ottomans and Mamelukes? Do the writings of the ulemas at al-Azhar or other contemporary commentators contain the bases of an intellectual revival? Finally, assuming that Egyptian society at this time was experiencing far-reaching change, did three years of French occupation cause this process to speed up, stall, or alter course?<sup>9</sup>

This chapter thus focuses on how historians with widely differing views have answered this key question about the founding of the modern Egyptian state. Does it date from before the French invasion, from the time of Bonaparte’s expedition or from Muhammad ‘Alî’s seizure of power in 1805?

## **Background to the French occupation of Egypt**

The French arrived in Egypt knowing little about the country but with a host of clichés and preconceived ideas about an ancient civilization and its supposed mysteries. There was a remarkable growth of interest in Egypt in the late eighteenth century, well before Bonaparte’s expedition or

Champollion's research. The country became the object of numerous reflections, as in 1785, for example, when the French Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres set a competition on the topic of 'Egyptian architecture with regard to its origins, principles and taste, and compared in these terms with Greek architecture'. The winning dissertation by Quatremère de Quincy was finally published in 1803.

So, what was the country really like at this time? Egypt in the mid-eighteenth century was a province of the Ottoman Empire, prosperous but controlled by the Janissaries and Mamelukes. There was a vigorous trade between Egypt and the West with a large quantity of a wide range of goods. The Egyptian writer al-Jabarti described the country as 'dazzlingly beautiful'. The wealthiest classes inhabited rich palaces with luxuriant gardens, while the laboring classes, though living much more frugally, appeared not to suffer hardship.

The last third of the eighteenth century in Egypt was marked by repercussions from the unrest led by the Mameluke Ali Bey who rebelled against the Ottoman Supreme Porte and took power in 1766. But that takeover failed a few years later, in 1773, when Ali Bey was assassinated on the orders of Mohammed Bey. This first, abortive bid for Egyptian independence is central to our subject. First, because it facilitated certain actions by the French, though without weakening internal resistance to the occupant; second, because it figured in subsequent attempts to date the founding of modern Egypt – a question that has continued to divide Egyptian and Western historians alike. Egypt's recovery was hampered by a downturn in trade, followed by famine in the 1780s and plague in the 1790s; indeed, between 1791 and 1798, under Murâd and Ibrâhim, the country experienced a full political and economic crisis. Although this did not signal the start of an extended and irreversible decline – Egypt was still powerful and rich, and Cairo was a great city worthy of its grand reputation – the country was nonetheless weakened and rendered vulnerable.

When the French arrived in Egypt they were initially overwhelmed by the presence of ancient remains and by the riches and beauty of the palaces of the dignitaries in a setting where the exoticism, climate and mixture of ancient and Arab civilizations gave the soldiers and scientists an experience of total *dépayement*, of being in an utterly foreign place. But the effects of the difficulties facing the country were nonetheless clear to see and may explain the negative and pessimistic impression made on the French. Egypt was no longer the paradise they had been promised, nor was it the idyllic land described in the optimistic account left by the kindly Claude Savary.<sup>10</sup> The only objective document then available was the near contemporaneous (1798) work by the austere Constantin de Volney,<sup>11</sup> who gives a factual report of the serious upheavals the country was experiencing.

## Ideological foundations of Bonaparte's expedition

In 1798 the Directory appointed Bonaparte, then an ambitious twenty-nine-year-old general, to lead a military campaign in Egypt. The project had the dual object of getting Bonaparte out of France, whose popularity made his presence unwelcome, and of driving the British out of the East. The French soldiers in the army of over 35,000 men that landed in Egypt may have had only a vague understanding of why they were there, but they fought well and a series of early battles ended in victory.

On 27 June 1798 Bonaparte famously proclaimed to the Egyptians, 'Glory to the Sultan, glory to his friend the French army! A curse on the Mamelukes and good fortune to the people of Egypt.' There seems little reason to doubt his sincerity. At a time when the arts and sciences were purported to be replacing religion in France, he envisaged his mission as that of giving back to Egypt, land of wisdom and glorified death, all that Egypt had transmitted to the West and had herself forgotten over the centuries. It was an attitude that combined esotericism with dechristianization, utopianism with generosity.

The culture shock caused by the violent confrontation between Bonaparte's troops and Egyptian civilization in its ancient and modern forms, thus affected two countries, both in the grip of cultural, political and economic change. France was emerging from a period of political turmoil closely associated with humanist notions, notably those of the Enlightenment thinkers and the *Encyclopédie* project. That France, like other powers, aspired to colonial control over a number of countries and regions, is obvious. But the French wish to give those countries and regions the benefits of the new ideas that had taken hold was also real. The philosophy of the Enlightenment was, in fact, to be omnipresent in the encounter between two countries that everything – geography and climate, language and religion, customs and culture – set apart.

In his review of the conference organized by Patrice Bret in 1998, Philippe Bourdin notes that 'Bonaparte, fighting Mameluke oppression and establishing new institutions, seemed to combine these ideals; over and above the military operations that filled the pages of the gazettes, the scientific and cultural work was praised endlessly in the columns of *La Décade* (F. Régent). The discourse on the "regeneration" of Egypt, one repeated at both ends of the Mediterranean, owed much to the concept of "civilization" articulated by Condorcet in his *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain*'. On the negative side, however, were 'the limits placed on the powers of the divan (council) composed of nine prominent sheiks, whose role was to advise and to endorse the decisions of the occupants, and the lack of administrative reform, with everyday running of the territory depending chiefly on the military machine'<sup>12</sup>

## Bonaparte's political, technical and scientific activity, and reactions to it

From a French viewpoint the manifold legacy of Bonaparte's invasion can be classified as political (the prompt pacification and attempts to organize or re-organize the country), technical (the work to maintain canals and irrigation networks, projects for a canal linking the Mediterranean and the Red Sea and for two dams in the Nile Delta mentioned by Napoleon in his *Mémoires*, and more general projects for public health, education and a postal service) and scientific (from the group of almost 170 scientists and scholars, young specialists who studied all areas of the arts and sciences, including the country, its architecture and social customs). A large proportion of the scientific notes and drawings went into the vast *Description de l'Égypte*, published between 1809 and 1829. The scientific expedition and the work of its scientists and scholars are increasingly well known thanks in particular to the studies published in the last ten years by Yves Laissus and Patrice Bret.

Is it fair to say, as some commentators have, that the French appropriated Egypt? Anouar Louca has questioned the real role of the savants attached to the military expedition in the following terms: 'Alibi for a conquest? Scientific appropriation of a lost colony?'<sup>13</sup> Or was it not simply the disinterested encounter of young scientific experts with a country that was almost virgin territory for scholarly investigation? Their work, it is relevant to note, was based on the principle of exchange. They were expected to contribute to administering and developing the country, with the aim of improving the condition of the Egyptian population. They demonstrated and taught western techniques, sometimes by means of spectacular experiments. In their turn they gathered information on a wide range of activities and local techniques: medical knowledge; plaster mills; norias; locks; poultry incubators for hatching chicks in large quantities without the need for hens. These were all ideas that found their way into publications.

Other writers, like Shafiq Ghurbâl, have taken the opposite view and denied that the French achieved anything:

Throughout the short period of French rule, in conditions of war and insurrection, this power accomplished nothing beneficial that, in the eyes of Egypt's inhabitants, could in any way excuse the social disruption. It was a military force that relied on violence to exercise its power. Everything the French did, the reforms they planned, the divans (councils) they wanted to set up, and the scientific research for which they laid the foundations, only became attractive for the governed in the long run.<sup>14</sup>

Shafiq Ghurbâl argues that the only figure in Egypt not to consider the French occupation as an unfortunate episode but as the start of a new age for Egypt and the Egyptians – by the severance of ties with Ottoman Turkey and the destruction of Mameluke power – was the *mu'allim* Ya'qûb Hanna, though Ghurbâl presents him as misguided. Hanna, in fact, raised the possibility of independence for Egypt, an idea also supported by some Frenchmen, including Chevalier Lascaris, the orientalist Marcel and the army officer Dupas.

### **The legacy, real or imagined, of the French presence at the turn of the century**

The arrival of the French in Egypt brought an end to the political and economic balance maintained by the Mamelukes, whose possessions were seized and trading networks destroyed. Regarding the new political organization, however, Bonaparte showed the importance of consulting the divan, composed of Egyptian notables, whenever important decisions were to be taken in any field, and there is little doubt that this contributed to developing the idea of a national government, the first step towards national unity. The consolidation of the powers of the divans and the practice of collective decision taking, represent the only elements that can be said to have helped shape the future, though Bonaparte had no great liking for, or confidence in, the system of divans.

Civilization and nation, as Henry Laurens reminds us, were the two key ideas of the French Revolution to be adopted by the peoples of the Orient. But there is no evidence that either had any direct influence on conditions inside the country; the rights of man and the ideals of 1789 that the French believed they could transplant to Egypt, failed to take root. Soon after the French left, the unrest resumed as before.

In his doctoral thesis presented in 1999 at the University of Cairo, Nâsir Sulaymân used archive sources to study and analyze – and do justice to – the French administration in Egypt during the military campaign. He drew attention in particular to the cooperation between French and Egyptians, for which 'the expedition archives contain incontrovertible evidence such as invites a reassessment of the impact of an event that was decisive for the evolution of Egyptian society as a whole'.<sup>15</sup>

### **Analysis and viewpoints of different historiographical currents**

Concerning the various historiographical traditions that have interpreted the expedition to Egypt and its position in relation to the notions of modernity and nation building, Egyptian scholars from different, often opposing, currents have published numerous studies. For the Islamicist current on the one side are Muhammad Tawfiq, Hasan 'Uthmân and Muhammad Shafiq

Ghurbâl and, more recently, 'Abd al'Azîz al-Shannâwî, and on the other side a more left-wing Muhammad Anîs, have all contributed to a debate given new impetus by the publication in 1993 of an Arabic translation of the book by the American historian Peter Grant.<sup>16</sup>

In 1997 preparations began for the Year of Egypt in France and for its sister event, the Year of France in Egypt, under the title *Égypte-France, horizons partagés*, organized by a joint Franco-Egyptian committee.<sup>17</sup> This cultural event was intended to commemorate 200 years of Franco-Egyptian relations and was marked in Egypt by an unprecedented press campaign from a small section of public opinion that produced what I call 'the great misunderstanding'. The French expedition found itself at the center of an eminently Egyptian debate, in which it was used for political and ideological propaganda.<sup>18</sup> Imad Abou Ghazi has summarized the positions in this debate:<sup>19</sup>

The Egyptian intelligentsia now split into two camps. Some commentators believed that Egypt's awakening and modernization really dated from the moment when the French officers and men of the Army of the Orient under Bonaparte, set foot in the country at the end of the eighteenth century. Only then, they argue, did Egypt begin to open up to modern civilization and learn to find in it the elements on which to base its own political and social progress. For those who held this view, therefore, there was nothing intrinsically problematic about commemorating and celebrating the expedition.... From this perspective, the writer Kamel Zuheiry has used the formula 'the cannons departed, printing remained', in reference to the printing press that Bonaparte had brought in the baggage of his army.<sup>20</sup> The vision of the opposing side, by contrast, was national or even conservative, and its supporters presented the French occupation as a sombre period in the history of our country and indeed in the history of the entire region, in that the expedition helped to destroy the region's unity and prepared the way for the colonial enterprise, in addition to introducing foreign customs and practices that had a negative influence on our peoples and altered our historical identity.<sup>21</sup>

These latter arguments were also set out in a publication of the CEDEJ (Centre d'Études et de Documentation Économique, Juridiques et Sociales), a research institute funded by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>22</sup> Laïla Enan, a teacher at the University of Cairo who was deeply hostile to the commemoration, used this work and other publications<sup>23</sup> to express her trenchant views, including that 'all-conquering colonialism, European "civilization" in its arrogant uniqueness' had produced the 'flood of racist, chauvinist and colonialist fantasies of the historians'.<sup>24</sup> The only historians to find favor in her eyes were François Furet and Denis Richet, who had written in 1965 that 'in many respects, then, it appears that Bonaparte was not the creator of modern Egypt as we have so often been told. His imprint was not

only impermanent but it was nothing more than an empirical response to old problems.<sup>25</sup> Laila Enan concluded thus, 'more than one Egyptian historian – and I know several – has research that supports this conclusion ... but will they be asked to speak or be listened to?' The events of 1998 gave these scholars an opportunity to express their views and to publish books and articles, which they did in large numbers.

The exhibition *Bonaparte et l'Égypte*, held in 2008–2009 at the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris and later in the museum at Arras, and in particular the exhibition catalogue on which the present chapter is based, presented an opportunity to strike a better balance between, on the one hand, the military actions with their associated excesses, and on the other, the works of the savants, while also giving due attention to the relations that developed between Egypt and France in the course of the nineteenth century and that had their origins, whatever some believe, in the famous expedition. With the joint Franco-Egyptian scientific committee formed for the occasion, my object was to consider what Egyptian and French historiography had contributed that was new, with respect to actions that, paradoxically, became no less sensitive as they recede in time or are examined from the standpoint of one or other political current.

The best analysis of the various currents in Egyptian historiography is by Imad Abou Ghazi, professor at the University of Cairo, and forms a major article in the catalogue to the exhibition *Bonaparte et l'Égypte*.<sup>26</sup> The author identifies the points of agreement – few in number but real – between the main tendencies.

First, the fact that the expedition was a salutary shock that roused the Egyptians from their apathy; second, equally incontestable, that the expedition was an integral part of the new French colonial project in the Orient. Egypt now found itself at the centre of the interests of the imperialist powers of the day, becoming an object of rivalry between France and Britain; and lastly, a point upon which there is broad consensus, the idea that taking inspiration from the West will necessarily lead to progress and to a place in the general movement of civilization.

Outside of this consensus, of course, was the current of political Islam, which considered that the expedition marked the beginning of the cultural invasion and westernization of Egypt (meaning that it damaged the country's cultural integrity). For Imad Abou Ghazi there are two main groups of historians who situate an Egyptian national awakening in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. The first group includes Abderrahman el-Raf'ei, Mohammed Sabri (nicknamed *le Sorbonicole*), Mohammed Fou'ad Shukri, Fawzi Guirguis, Hussein Fawsi, Louis Awad and Yunan Labib Rizq, who 'consider that the basis of modernization was contact with the West, whether the contact occurred during the French expedition or shortly

afterwards, during the reign of Muhammad 'Alî and through the political project that he promoted'. A second group, 'including Ra'uf Abbas, Samir Amin, Nelly Hanna and Laïla Enan, believes that the contact with the West merely prejudiced the chances for a genuine renaissance, of which the initial signs and social foundations can be discerned in Egyptian society in the second half of the eighteenth century'.

The points of divergence between these two currents have come into much sharper focus in the last 25 years, but their origins go back to the 1920s. Using an ostensibly simple element as an example, the divan or council created by Bonaparte, Abou Ghazi shows the range of possible interpretations:

The establishment of the divan by the French contained the seed of a consultative regime that was completely new to the country yet could equally claim a link to the principle of consultation or *shura*, thus allowing the Egyptian element to participate in government.... The fact remains that the Expedition seriously weakened the bases of the old regime and prepared the way for the establishment of a new regime. Better still, the Expedition revealed to the world a country that had been isolated and inward-looking for three centuries.<sup>27</sup>

Imad About Ghazi ends his analysis with an observation:

Another group of historians, by contrast, tends to play down the consequences of this event [the Expedition] for Egyptian society and its political culture. For Ahmed Ezzat Abdelkarim: 'The relations of the Egyptians with western civilization during the Expedition itself were limited, not developing on a large scale until later, during the reigns of Muhammad 'Alî and of Ismâ'îl, and becoming a characteristic aspect of modern Egyptian history.' Ahmed Abderrahim Mustafa thinks that the French presence did not last long enough to have a real influence in the social and cultural spheres.... Not until the epoch of Muhammad 'Alî did Egypt in fact open its doors: it was this period which may be considered to have responded clearly in every sphere to the first western stimulation received by the Egyptians at the time of the expedition.<sup>28</sup> ... The historian Helmy el-Namnam considers it insulting to Egypt and the Egyptians to claim that the French Expedition is what pulled it and them out of the dark ages where they had been kept by the Malelukes and Ottomans.<sup>29</sup>

### **Relationship between the policies of Bonaparte and Muhammad 'Alî**

One consequence of the French invasion – more the result of psychological shock (notably the demonstration that the Ottoman yoke was not an inevitability) than of a direct effect on the country – was to favor the rise



to power of a 'providential man' in the person of Muhammad 'Alî. After arriving in Egypt in spring 1801, 'Ali quickly and lucidly assessed the situation and concluded that the best course for him and his Ottoman troops was to rely, even temporarily, on the British and their fleet to drive out the French. Following the French departure, 'Ali successfully exploited the divisions among the Mamelukes and the weakness of the Sultan's authority in Egypt, with support from the British.

But it must be recognized that what caused a serious problem for Egypt was not the French presence so much as the French withdrawal. The country slipped back into its former instability, and in place of the French it now had to contend simultaneously with the Mamelukes, the Turks and the British. Civil war was an ever-present threat. After the last foreign troops left in March 1803, Muhammad 'Alî did not take sides in the political crisis and quickly established himself as a viable alternative leader and force in his own right. In July 1805 'Alî received a *firmân* from the Ottoman sultan appointing him viceroy of Egypt.

As regards the direct French legacy taken up by Muhammad 'Alî, here is what Khaled Fahmy wrote in 2008:

Some historians in the last century, like Edouard Driault (*Mohamed Aly et Napoléon (1807–1814), correspondance des consuls de France en Égypte* (Cairo, 1925), saw many similarities between Muhammad 'Alî and the French emperor. They suggested that the Pasha modeled himself on Napoleon by implementing the ambitious projects that the young French general had imagined for Egypt during his short stay. This romantic vision of Muhammad 'Alî and his long reign has been challenged by research. Recent scholarship based on the study of contemporary documents in the Egyptian national archives and a critical reading of early chronicles of the Pasha's life, emphasizes the influence of the Ottoman background – rather than the supposed French inspiration – on the policy of Muhammad 'Alî.<sup>30</sup>

In 2008 Robert Solé also took the view that the French were on the banks of the Nile for too short a time [38 months] to be able to transform the country. But they did subject it to great disruption, dismantling its political system and opening the way for Muhammad 'Alî. Bonaparte's enterprise was like a ticking time bomb with far-reaching repercussions: modernization of the Egyptian state; the birth of Egyptology; the construction of the Suez canal; British colonial occupation; and the diffusion of French culture across the land of the Pharaohs.<sup>31</sup>

As Taha Hussein has written, however, the Egyptian campaign had the effect of a 'thunderclap in a sleeping world'. The campaign may not have played a decisive role in the history of Egypt, but it did nonetheless lay the ground for encounters that were to continue throughout the nineteenth

century. When Muhammad 'Alī was planning his reforms, he took western cultural and scientific levels as the benchmark on which to align his country, without in any way repudiating its cultural and religious roots. He encouraged contacts with the main European powers, including France, sending students to be trained there and surrounding himself with French experts in key subjects. Diplomatic gifts, including the two obelisks of Luxor, further strengthened the ties between the two countries. Jomard, director of the first Egyptian educational mission in Paris, initiated a fertile dialogue. His pupils,<sup>32</sup> who included Rifâ'a al-Tahtâwî (1826–1831), and then their pupils in turn, were the makers of modern Egypt in the nineteenth century. It was they who formed the bridge that linked Bonaparte's expedition and the *Nahda*, the Egyptian renaissance.

### By way of conclusion: complementary legacies

Muhammad 'Alī and his successors built upon the tentative first measures of reorganization introduced during the expedition. The new ruler of Egypt surrounded himself with Europeans, Frenchmen in particular, to assist in laying the foundations of a modern state. The Pasha showed a keen interest in a vast range of topics that ranged from medicine and the art of warfare, to public works and cotton-growing, and even included the nascent science of Egyptology, after heeding Jean-François Champollion's memoir on the damage to Egyptian monuments. Another Frenchman, Auguste Mariette, was appointed to create a conservation service for the antiquities of Egypt, intended to protect the country's archaeological treasures from looting and destruction.

As Anouar Louca has pointed out, 'the monolithic dominators–dominated relationship gave way to more personalized relations of reciprocity and responsibility'.<sup>33</sup> All involved contributed in their own way to the construction of an Egyptian collective identity, which, by the end of nineteenth century and in a reaction against the British occupation, led to the birth of a genuine sense of Egyptian nationhood.

The *Description de l'Égypte*, whose publication beginning in 1809 initiated nineteenth-century scientific thinking, may well be the real before-and-after break established by the expedition. Before, knowledge of the country and its history was fragmented and incomplete; after, a process was set in motion that would lead to the birth of Egyptology and an improved understanding of Arabo-Islamic art. In this way a number of dreams, including the more fanciful outlined in the *Description*, began to acquire substance, for example, Champollion's deciphering of hieroglyphs or the piercing of the Suez isthmus, a project first studied by the Romans then by Bonaparte's engineers, taken up by the Saint-Simonians and finally realized by Ferdinand de Lesseps. But it should not be forgotten that the *Description de l'Égypte* also

did much to generate interest among Westerners in the nineteenth century for Islamic art, which is a major component of Orientalism.

Other consequences can be observed in the phenomenon of Egyptomania, the re-use of decorative themes borrowed from ancient Egypt,<sup>34</sup> which was made to serve the glorification of the emperor in his lifetime and later became one of the components of the Napoleonic legend. Dominique Vivant Denon was the main agent behind the emergence of a politically inspired Egyptomania, an official fashion intended to divert attention from memories of the expedition's military failure. The forms affected included architecture, interior décor, furniture and *objets d'art*. The most original distinctive features of Egyptian art – cavetto cornices, nemes-adorned heads, decorative sphinxes – were taken up and adapted for such new uses as Egyptian motifs on Sèvres porcelain services, sphinx-form firedogs and inkwells, candelabras supported by Egyptians. In short, the whole of ancient Egypt was now represented and recreated in miniature. The original participants in the Egyptian expedition (who became known as *les Égyptiens*) often chose to be buried in tombs decorated with Egyptian themes. The fashion for the Egyptian style enjoyed great popularity and spread across Europe, taking slightly different forms in each country. Together with the birth and development of Egyptology, it encouraged appreciation of Egypt among the public at large, complementing the efforts of Muhammad 'Alî to reinforce the country's links with Europe.

In addition, Egyptomania, like the memory of the Egyptian expedition, contributed actively to the legend of Napoleon that grew over the course of the nineteenth century. So it was that almost 100 years later, audiences of the shadow puppet theater at the *Chat Noir* Paris cabaret, could still feel a shiver of excitement on hearing Bonaparte's famous phrase: 'Soldiers, from the top of these pyramids, forty centuries of history are gazing down upon you'. The link between Bonaparte and Egypt was by then more than a simple fact – it had long been deeply anchored in popular culture, and even more so in the French collective unconscious. The painter Gérôme captured this point exactly when he chose as subject of his *Edipe* (1867–1886) Bonaparte's face-to-face with the Sphinx of Giza.

As this chapter has shown, however, it was not only on the French side that Bonaparte's military campaign left indelible traces. As Anouar Louca finely observed in the conclusion to a colloquium on the expedition:

The faces of Egypt and of France thus both changed. To the familiar features of the one and the other were added wrinkles and scars. What remained to discern, to disentangle from the effects of time, are the significant features, to pick out what was essential and genuine, and to rethink the expedition as lived by both sides.<sup>35</sup>

## Notes

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2. Raoul Lacour, *L'Égypte: D'Alexandrie à la seconde cataracte* (Paris, 1871), 37, cited by Frank Estelmann, *Sphinx aus Papier: Ägypten im französischen Reisebericht von der Aufklärung bis zum Symbolismus*, *Studia Romanica*, 134 (Heidelberg, 2006), 109–110 and note 138.
3. Gabriel Thomas, *En Égypte* (Paris and Nancy, 1894), 5, cited by Estelmann *Sphinx aus Papier*, 110 and note 139.
4. Recent studies include: *Napoleon and the French in Egypt and the Holy Land, 1789–1801*, Second International Congress of Napoleonic Studies (Israel, 1999), ed. Aryeh Shmuelevitz (Istanbul, 2002); Juan Cole, *Napoleon's Egypt: Invading the Middle East* (New York, 2007); Juan Cole, 'Playing Muslim: Bonaparte's Army of the Orient and Euro-Muslim Creolization', in *The Age of Revolutions in Global Context, c. 1760–1840*, ed. David Armitage and Sanjay Subrahmaniyam (New York, 2010), 125–143.
5. Patrice Bret, 'Compte rendu de l'ouvrage d'Henry Laurens', *Orientales*, vol. 1, 'Autour de l'expédition d'Égypte', *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, 340 (2005): 197–200.
6. Laurens' most important work is *L'Expédition d'Égypte, 1798–1801* (Paris, 1989, new edn Paris, 1998).
7. Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London, 1978).
8. Bret, 'Compte rendu', 197–200.
9. Farouk Mardam-Bey, 'L'expédition française dans la littérature égyptienne', in *Bonaparte et l'Égypte, feu et lumières*, ed. Jean-Marcel Humbert (Paris, 2008), 135.
10. Claude Savary, *Lettres sur l'Égypte...* (Paris, 1785–1786; new edn. 1798).
11. Constantin François de Chassebœuf, Comte de Volney, *Voyage en Syrie et en Égypte pendant les années 1783, 1784 et 1785* (Paris, 1787).
12. Philippe Bourdin, 'Compte rendu de l'édition des actes du colloque dirigé par Patrice Bret, L'Expédition d'Égypte, une entreprise des Lumières (1798–1801)', *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, 324/1 (2001): 194–195.
13. Anouar Louca, 'Repenser l'Expédition d'Égypte', in *Actes du colloque L'Expédition d'Égypte, une entreprise des Lumières (1798–1801)*, ed. Patrice Bret (Paris, 1999), 377.
14. Shafîq Ghurbâl, 'Le général Ya'qûb, le chevalier Lascaris et le projet d'indépendance de l'Égypte en 1801', in Alleaume, *L'Expédition*, 184–185.
15. Nâsir Sulaymân, 'L'administration de l'Égypte au temps de l'expédition française (1799–1801)', doctoral thesis, (University of Cairo, 1999), review in Alleaume, *L'Expédition*, 210–212.
16. Peter Grant, *Islamic Roots of Capitalism: Egypt, 1760–1840* (Austin, 1979; Arabic translation, Cairo, 1993). See Ramadân al-Khûlî and 'Abd al Râziq 'Îsâ, 'Un bilan controversé: Le point de vue des historiens égyptiens', in Alleaume, *L'Expédition*, 26–28.
17. See Jean-Marcel Humbert (ed.), *France-Égypte: dialogues de deux cultures* (Paris, 1998).
18. See Helmy el-Namman, *Les Égyptiens et la campagne de Bonaparte* (Cairo, 1998), 7–17; Ahmed Zakariya el-Shalaq, *La modernité et l'impérialisme: l'invasion française et la problématique du Réveil égyptien* (Cairo, 2005).

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20. Helmy el-Namnam, *Les Égyptiens et la campagne de Bonaparte* (Cairo, 1998), presentation by Yunan Labib Rizq, 5.
21. *Ibid.*, 7–9.
22. See Alleaume, *L'Expédition*.
23. Laïla Enan, *L'Expédition française, entre légende et vérité* (Cairo, 1992); *idem*, *L'Expédition française: lumières ou mensonge?* (Cairo, 1998); *idem*, *L'Expédition française au jugement de l'Histoire* (Cairo, 1998).
24. *Idem*, 'Si tu le sais, alors c'est une catastrophe... La commémoration: pourquoi, pour qui?', in Alleaume, *L'Expédition*, 18.
25. Françoise Furet and Denis Richet, *La Révolution française* (Paris, 1965, new edn 1973), 241–243, quoted by Enan, *ibid.*, 21.
26. Abou Ghazi, 'L'Expédition française', 129–134.
27. *Ibid.*, 131.
28. Subhi Wahida, *Fi usul al-mas'alat al misryya* (Cairo, n.d.), 14–15.
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30. Khaled Fahmy, 'Muhammad 'Alī et la nation égyptienne', in Humbert, *Bonaparte et l'Égypte*, 324–329, note 8. See also, Kenneth Cuno, 'Muhammad Ali and the decline and revival thesis in modern Egyptian history', in *Islah am Tahdith? Misr fi 'Ahd Muhammad Ali (Reform or Modernization? Egypt in the Reign of Mehmed Ali)*, ed. Raoul Abbas (Cairo, 2000), 93–119, cited in Khaled Fahmy, *Mehmed Ali: From Ottoman Governor to Ruler of Egypt* (Oxford, 2009), 115–116. See also, Khaled Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men: Mehmed Ali, His Army, and the Making of Modern Egypt* (Cairo, 2002).
31. Robert Solé, 'XIX<sup>e</sup>–XX<sup>e</sup> siècle: deux siècles de relations franco-égyptiennes', in Humbert, *Bonaparte et l'Égypte*, 396.
32. For details of the Egyptian members of the Mission, see Yves Laisus, *Jomard, le dernier Égyptien. L'École égyptienne de Paris* (Paris, 2004), 303–330.
33. Anouar Louca, 'La Médiation de Tahtāwī', in *La France et l'Égypte à l'époque des vice-rois (1805–1882)*, ed. Daniel Panzac and André Raymond, Actes du colloque, Aix en Provence, 1998, *Cahiers des Annales islamologiques*, 22 (Cairo, 2002), 65.
34. Jean-Marcel Humbert, *L'Égyptomanie dans l'art occidental* (Paris, 1989); *idem*, Michael Pantazzi and Christiane Ziegler, *Egyptomania, l'Égypte dans l'art occidental, 1730–1930* (Paris, 1994; English edition: Ottawa, 1994; German edition: Vienna, 1995); Jean-Marcel Humbert (ed.), *L'Égyptomanie à l'épreuve de l'archéologie*, Actes du colloque, Paris, 1994 (Paris and Brussels, 1996); Jean-Marcel Humbert and Clifford Price (eds), *Imhotep Today: Egyptianizing Architecture*, Conference Papers, 'Encounters with Egypt', London, 2000, (London, 2003); Jean-Marcel Humbert, 'Une conséquence inattendue de la campagne d'Égypte: l'égyptomanie entre les arts et la politique', in *Les Troupes de la marine et les colonies sous le Premier Empire*, ed. Jacques-Olivier Boudon and Antoine Champeaux, Actes du colloque, Fréjus, 2002 (Panazol, 2005), 229–237.
35. Louca, 'Repenser l'Expédition', 376.

## **Part V**

# **Inside the Napoleonic Hegemony**

# 22

## Pride and Prejudice: The Napoleonic Empire through the Eyes of Its Rulers

Michael Broers

There is a pronounced irony at the heart of Napoleonic imperialism. Its makers espoused universalist principles, yet its *juste milieu*, the imperial core, was limited to specific areas of western Europe, beyond which its public institutions and the ethos that powered them failed to take root. More than this, its makers sought to impose a uniform template in their hegemony, while carrying with them a set of pronounced prejudices about those they ruled.

Napoleonic imperialism originated in an Aristotelean *polis*, that of France as it had emerged from the revolution of the 1790s, thoroughly reformed but now ready to reintegrate what it felt appropriate from its *ancien régime*. The empire was, in this sense, national and nationalist; it was the product wholly of ‘the city’, that city being France. Yet, rooted in its own version of enlightened universalism, Napoleonic imperialists embraced the Ciceronian conception of a human nature that always recognized its best interests in good government – ‘a good law is a good law’ in the words of both Condorcet and his ultimate master, Cicero. When the Napoleonic armies put most of western Europe under the hegemony of the French *polis*, Condorcet’s successors at the helm of the French state embraced Cicero’s dictum as their working template for imperialism. The foundations of Napoleonic imperialism were as unalterable as those of the Aristotelean *polis*, and as universalist in their claims as those advanced by Cicero for Roman law.

It was a lethal combination for those forced to swallow it, but a potent one for those who embraced it willingly. No clearer, better-defined model for imperial rule had emerged in the western world since Rome itself, and Rome became the most consistent, pervasive model for the Napoleonic Empire, probably for this reason. The melding of the unbending template of the French *polis* with the universalist claims of one, dominant current of the French Enlightenment would, at one and the same time, single out the Napoleonic Empire as a new stage in European history.

## Pride: the French model

Direct annexation to the French Empire or the conversion of *ancien régime* states into satellite kingdoms under a Bonaparte left no significant room for deviation from the norms, institutions or mores of the French state as it had evolved from the start of the revolutionary process, in 1789, culminating in the great Napoleonic reforms with the completion of the Civil Code in 1804. Thereafter, the internal reforms enacted in France were transposed without nuance not only to the non-French 'imperial departments', but to the satellite states as well. The French model was mandatory in these territories, for as long as Napoleonic rule endured, and often even beyond. Where it was a question of annexation, a strict timetable was set for the occupied territory concerned to be readied for the wholesale introduction of French legal and administrative institutions; in the intervening period – which could range from two years, in the case the Piedmontese departments, 1800–1802, to barely ten months, in that of the four Hanseatic departments in 1810 – specialist French commissioners were despatched for the civil administration, the judiciary, finances, ecclesiastical affairs and security, to prepare for the abrupt passage from *ancien* to new regime. On a fixed date, the new, Napoleonic order began. Before any appreciation of Napoleonic imperialism can begin, the nature of this new order must be grasped.

The essence of the French *polis*, from its inception in 1789, was unity and uniformity, held in place by the centralization of power. That power began as parliamentary in the 1790s, and was gradually, if determinedly, twisted into autocratic authoritarianism by Napoleon between 1799 and 1804, but the guiding assumption that all authority was concentrated in a central government was never abandoned, in whatever form that authority was exercised. There was never any question of a federal devolution of power, or the existence of intermediary bodies within the state. Regional political organs were swept away at a stroke, beginning with the French *parlements* and estates and moving on to the senates of the Hansa cities, the estates of the Dutch Republic, the municipal corporations of the Rhenish cities and, in theory, the Spanish *audiencias*. Any structure other than that predicated on a single polity under a uniform set of public institutions was unthinkable.

By the time of the greatest period of imperial expansion between 1806 and 1810 the structures of the French public sphere were set firmly in their mold. At the apex of the state sat the relatively powerless elected assemblies, but the real nerve center of a Napoleonic regime, whether in Paris, Madrid, Milan, Kassel or Naples, was the Council of State, a unique Napoleonic institution, created in the wake of *Brumaire*. It comprised selected experts who drafted legislation to be rubber-stamped by the assemblies and formulated ideas for the consideration of the all-powerful executive. When the executive – be it the French emperor or a Bonaparte king or queen – and the



Council of State were agreed, orders and new legislation were passed to the respective ministries for their application.

Uniform laws and institutions composed the public sphere, all of them under the direct control of the central government. However, its bureaucrats reached the center by chains of command from their respective ministries, in a network akin to a spider's web, their strands converging on the center of the state. Each branch of the administration – justice, police, finance and taxation, civil administration – reported and was accountable to its own minister. However, they were co-ordinated at local level by another Napoleonic innovation, although one with clear *ancien régime* antecedents, the prefect. The Revolution had swept away the complex heritage of local and provincial bodies and put in their place the uniform unit of local government, the department, whose elected councils were then directly responsible to the central government. When that government was transformed from a parliamentary regime into an autocracy, the councils became the adjuncts of the prefects, centrally appointed officials – always men from outside their departments – who coordinated all civil administration within their departments, but did not actually command any other branch of local administration unless authorized by the central government. Neither the judiciary, the police in its two branches – administrative under police-general and the gendarmerie under war – nor the tax bureaux, were under his ultimate control, although he could call on them at will. This method of administration derived from a doctrine firmly entrenched in Napoleonic ideology, the concept of the balance of powers. Despite the wording of the term, the balance of powers as understood by the regime bore no meaningful relationship to a balance of powers among the different institutions of central government as formulated by Montesquieu or as exercised in the British or American public spheres contemporary to the Napoleonic Empire. It had nothing to do with a balance of power between the executive and legislature, for this was a firmly autocratic edifice. Rather, it hinged on a firm division between administrative, judicial and policing powers and institutions. Each branch of government had its own sphere of action, its own areas of competence and its own internal mechanisms of self-regulation. This concept of the balance of powers was axiomatic to the Napoleonic regime. In practice, the office of *burgomaster*, which specifically combined local administrative, judicial and policing functions, and was widespread in the Old Reich and many Habsburg provinces beyond it, as in modern Slovenia; equally, it was the antithesis of the essential attributes of the Spanish *audiencias*, bodies which wielded comprehensive powers in most provinces.

The one component of government, whose autonomy was punctiliously guaranteed by adherence to the concept of the balance of powers, was the judiciary. If there was any trace of Montesquieu's definition of the term extant in its Napoleonic namesake, it was the relative independence of the magistracy. This was far from complete – there were thinly disguised

purges of its ranks in 1807 and 1810, which greatly diluted the concept of tenure for life, and frequent sackings of incompetent or corrupt judges on an ad hoc basis over the years – yet the Napoleonic autocracy was, by and large, held in check by the law, and that law prided itself on being codified in a clear, coherent and uniform manner. The most autonomous and independent component of the regime, the magistracy, had the task of imposing the most unyieldingly uniform element of the Napoleonic order, the implantation and administration of the Napoleonic judicial system. This is where the model of Ciceronian empire emerges at its most emphatic. The initial hopes of the revolutionaries to forge a single code of civil law for France, and the attendant abolition of all existing statutes – national and local – was finally realized in 1804 with the Civil Code. It was followed in the next few years with Criminal and Commercial Codes and, of equal importance, Codes of Procedure for civil and criminal affairs, which fixed how trials were conducted. The Codes of Procedure were probably enforced with more ruthlessness than the statute laws, ensuring that the open, public and published trial by a triumvirate of judges replaced all existing forms of trial, everywhere. It followed an iron axiom of the regime, that French statute law, as embodied in the Codes, was inseparable from French court procedures; the bond between them was unbreakable. These laws were enforced by another seminal and universally present institution of the regime, the gendarmerie, a paramilitary police force drawn from the plentiful pool of veterans generated by the wars, and dedicated to policing the highways and, above all, the countryside. Its six-man brigades honeycombed the territory of the empire and most parts of its satellite states; where it failed to take root as a local force – being composed entirely of outsiders, like the prefects or, indeed, the public prosecutors of most tribunals – exposing that the limits of imperial power had been reached. Where it firmly implanted itself, however, imperial power and law became a reality, and its rural peripheries found themselves more thoroughly, and often brutally, policed than at any previous time in history. Prefects were obliged to tour their departments three times a year; when they did, the gendarmerie went with them.

This was the template of governance imposed on Napoleonic Europe, formulated in the spirit of the Aristotelean *polis*, firm in the belief that the French had achieved the perfect state within their own borders, but then transformed into a universal model in the Ciceronian maxim that a good law is good law, exportable anywhere. The French applied this to the whole edifice of their state, to their entire public sphere. This was rooted in a deep sense of cultural superiority – Aristotelean and Ciceronian, alike – bolstered by a Napoleonic ideology which sought to embrace the reforms of the Revolution and the achievements of a French *longue durée*, at last distilled into a coherent whole by the reforms of 1799–1804, thus producing the perfect model of the modern state, its perfection readily transformed from a

national to an imperial system of government. The stunning military victories of 1805–1807 galvanized this sense of manifest destiny as the French began to shoulder responsibility for their vast, varied hegemony. Their military success reinforced their collective sense that their revolution – their unique self-liberation – and its harmonization under Napoleon, had made these triumphs possible. It had enabled France first to survive and then to prosper. It was the key to modernity, which any society bent on progress had to follow or fall away from the civilized community of nations. It was an invariable truth among French imperial administrators that they valued only those characteristics and institutions of the non-French parts of the empire which most closely resembled their own. The other, if truly other and novel, held no serious interest for them, and was to be swept away.

### **Prejudice: a human geography of the Napoleonic hegemony**

The imperial reality was strikingly different from the Ciceronianism of its rulers. Western, southern and central Europe – the area of Napoleonic hegemony – was among the most varied areas in the world in its human geography, and the French were far from blind to this as they sought to impose the uniformity of their *polis* upon its peoples.

Revolutionary Napoleonic expansionism made of the French Empire what Bourbon France had long been, a composite state in terms of its human geography, part Mediterranean, part Atlantic and part Mitteleuropean. The Midi contained the salient cultural characteristics of the western European Mediterranean; the western ports shared in the commercial life of eighteenth-century Atlantic maritime networks; eastern and northeastern France – seen as the cultural and economic heartland – was a world of essentially localized, alluvial commerce, centered on the Rhine–Saône–Rhône axis, with western branches along the Loire and Somme, a world of prosperity, but not of commercial or financial speculation on the more intense, capitalist model of Atlantic commerce. Imperial expansion magnified and intensified the differences among these three macro-regions, augmenting the size of each, and politicizing them, in the hands of a regime bent on uniformity, integration and centralization. To them was added a third, the feudal marches in central and eastern Germany, and in southern Italy and Spain, together with a singular Balkan march in the Illyrian Provinces, which combined east European feudalism and a Mediterranean coastal region. These macro-regions were very real, but they were not discrete: the Lombard territories of the Republic–Kingdom of Italy, and the Piedmontese departments, belonged firmly within the inner empire, although south of the Alps; the Illyrian Provinces and the Kingdom of Naples had large regions dominated by feudalism; parts of the states of the Confederation of the Rhine – in many ways the hub of Napoleonic hegemony – had been feudal enclaves under the Old Reich; the Vendée, if technically a hinterland

of both the French Atlantic coast and the alluvial networks stretching from east-central France along the Loire, had much more in common with the meridional parts of the empire, in the eyes of the regime. The wider point would seem to be that exceptions to a regional rule could be fitted into the stereotype of another region easily enough in the official mind.

France had always been a composite state, but its regions had lacked political identity for many centuries by 1789, beyond local level. This was not so in the newly acquired lands under the Consulate and Empire, where every *ancien régime* polity swept up – and often away – by Napoleonic hegemony reflected the social and cultural realities of its people and region, even if in a despotic fashion and dysfunctional manner, more organically than could a foreign importation, imposed abruptly. Political loyalties – dynastic or otherwise – may have been tenuous, even fraught, before the French conquest, but they could sharpen, less through any sense of nostalgia than by hard first-hand acquaintance with the heavy-handed incongruity of Napoleonic rule felt by a wider spectrum of society than could ever have been envisaged without foreign occupation or the imposition of alien institutions. There were important degrees of opposition and integration, however, and they molded to a powerful degree both the concrete reality of Napoleonic hegemony in its lifetime and the future shape of Europe. On these differences of likeness and otherness hinged the degree to which French innovations were, indeed, innovations, and whether they would be assimilated or rejected by German, Dutch, Italian and Spanish local elites, *ancien régime* political loyalties notwithstanding. There was the phenomenon of outright, almost holistic, rejection of the new regime, but there was also a wide spectrum of relative acceptance, ranging from political resentment of foreign occupation – which did not reflect an objective consensus around the intrinsic merits of Napoleonic reform – to a welcome acceptance of the new regime by the elites, juxtaposed to its often violent rejection by the popular classes, with a complex scale in between these extremes.

Under Napoleonic domination, the attitudes of the new French rulers mattered far more in how the new regime was established and run than those of the ruled or indigenous opinion. The French carried their own set of priorities, prejudices and preconceptions with them into their hastily acquired empire. The clarity and conviction of their opinions on government accounts for the thoroughness and determination with which their reforms were implemented. The intensity of their ideological convictions, and the precision of their model of the state, more than compensated for the brief period of their imperial domination. They arrived not just with a clear, rigid model of their ideal, but with equally clear prejudices about their new subjects. These prejudices were molded by climate, topography and economic life, all of which they felt found ultimate expression in the cultural, religious and political characters of the states they now ruled over. The French arrived not only with their own vision of civilization, of their

*polis*, and not just with a sense of manifest destiny to impose it on others, but with increasingly hardened stereotypes of their new *administrés* to guide them and keep them on their guard.

The French had a clear, if not always spoken, macro-geography of their hegemony, divided into its Atlantic, Mediterranean, alluvial and feudal regions, and a micro-geography within each of them. The macro-regions were subdivided into centers and peripheries, based on local topography, usually that of highland and plain, the latter being both coastal or valley in origin, derived from the configurations of the *ancien régime* states the French usurped. Montesquieu's dictums were deeply ingrained and now became their guide to how they saw the ruled, if not quite as to how they would administer their empire.

The true heartland of the Napoleonic hegemony was where the French felt themselves most at home, in those parts of western Europe that most resembled northeastern France in their culture, economies and their previous experience of enlightened reform in the public sphere. Theirs, then, was a world rooted in state service, in codes of Roman law and in a rigidly uniform, centralized public sphere. It was statist, *dirigiste* and centered on a public sphere intensely defended by a professional, deeply respected bureaucracy and magistracy. Its natural home was an economic order as alluvial as it was allodial, composed of moderately sized urban centers, surrounded by a tamed, productive countryside. This was a world of commerce by river and canal, not of the open sea, of well-trodden routes, not new horizons. It was an urban world, but in a very traditional sense, of old centers, not sprawling new conurbations. It was secular and literate, the world of the *salon* but not the *café*, of the theater but not the opera, of Enlightenment yet not of restless innovation. The French horizon was continental, a vision that did not face the Atlantic any more than it did the Mediterranean. As such, it corresponded only to one of the three major macro-regions of their own heartland of old France. The lands of the inner empire clustered around the eastern borders of France, but they were not synonymous with those of *l'ancienne* France for, as time progressed, it became clear that the core of the empire was really the Rhine–Saône–Rhône axis. The administrative norms of the centralized, professional state, born in the 1790s and honed in the first half decade of Napoleonic rule, took root more readily in these places, as did the Code. This is seen less in the workings of the regime under Napoleon than through the alacrity and facility with which the elites of these new provinces adapted to the *moeurs* of the new order. Rhinelanders may have looked down on the new French jurisprudence in comparison to their own, but they knew how to absorb and work within it, to the point they demanded, and received from their new Prussian rulers in 1814, the right to retain the French Code and court system. Several Piedmontese magistrates rose high in the Napoleonic service. It was a Belgian *jurisconsulte*, François-Joseph Beyts, who brought the Code to the Dutch and Hanseatic

departments. Neither the Vendéean nor the Provençale departments could boast such service to the new regime.

These were not always areas where Napoleonic domination was welcome, but they were where the Napoleonic reforms were comprehensible, recognizable and, often, desirable. There were places where there might, indeed, be a consensus around the new imperial regime. However, even if political resentment existed, the inner empire was a reality where the pre-Napoleonic experience of a region allowed it to become an arena for contested concepts of enlightened reform under the French, rather than the dialogue of the deaf that marked the macro-regions that composed the outer empire. There were Mediterranean regions, such as northern Italy, which fell firmly in the core of the inner empire, and the heritage of Bourbon attempts at reform had created extensive support among the Neapolitan and even the Spanish elites for Napoleonic rule. In the case of the latter, their commercial life had closer links north of the Alps than with the Mediterranean, and a wide social base which had absorbed the reforms of Joseph II. Whereas in Naples and Spain Napoleonic support remained the preserve of an embattled, if dynamic, sector of the elite.

Towns and small cities on a traditional pattern of market and administrative centers were one thing. Large urban centers of a more modern stamp, and the culture of commerce they bore, could be quite another, however, and the distinction is important in defining the cultural geography of the empire, most certainly in the eyes of its makers. It is very clear in the thoughts of Louis-Joseph Faure, a former president of the Tribunalate and a Bonapartist of the first hours, who had the task of organising the judiciary of the new Hanseatic departments, just along the coast. Faure never criticized the basic competence or integrity of the native magistrates, but he had little respect for their legal culture, or the society he felt it reflected. His reports emphasize the gulf between the people of the Hansa ports and France and, interestingly, Faure did not see their commercial economy as an agent of civilisation. Quite the reverse: 'The character of these cities is such that they are dominated by commercial interests, and so they have little liking for Roman law, which they should learn to respect. There are some civil and criminal regulations that, even if they have largely fallen into disuse, are not compatible with the mores of civilized nations.'<sup>1</sup>

This was a judgment that applied to the Dutch, and even to the *milieux* of the French Atlantic ports, for whom the regime showed scant concern in its application of the Continental Blockade, which ruined them in the short term, and its wider Continental System, a projected reorientation of the European economy that sought to center commerce entirely in the interests of the inner empire, rather than of France as a whole, away from the Atlantic and towards the alluvial networks of west-central Europe. The French imperial administrators saw this culture as alien in its maritime, commercial ethos, its apparent worship of Mammon, and its concomitant

aversion to public service, as a statist regime understood it. The municipal voluntarism of the Dutch and Hanseatic cities escaped the French, for they saw in it only unregulated amateurism; what struck them was the aversion of these elites to the unpaid post of *juge de paix* and a legal culture where trials could be moved up the rota for a fee. They saw an economy built on financial speculation that led to recurring panics; it was a disdain they practiced within the borders of France itself, and in their new territories along the North Sea coast. Napoleon brought the Banque de France under ever tighter control, and his suspicion of high finance and overseas trade is well known. This culture was not inferior, in the manner of the empire's meridional regions or of the feudal marches, yet it was alien and somehow morally warped; Amsterdam and Hamburg were a Carthage, close in their ethos to Britain, the blood-enemy, neither decadent nor primitive, but amoral and inherently unstable. The Atlantic march had its own vision of progress, and its cities were often materially very advanced, but they were, in the eyes of both rulers and ruled, the outer, unassimilated empire. Their lawless hinterlands were not rugged mountains or forests, but the floors of stock exchanges and the quiet inlets where contraband goods flowed to and fro, in defiance of both the Blockade and a Continental System bent on diluting their lifeblood.

The Mediterranean component of the Napoleonic hegemony was its most difficult, least welcoming element. In the official mind, its urban centers were nests of degeneracy, all its social classes brought into moral atrophy by centuries of the cultural influence of the Catholic Reformation that fostered a dependency economy, be it through charity or patronage, coupled to a loss of political direction under the rule of weak, impotent states. Unlike their response to the urban centers of the Atlantic world, the French found nothing significant to admire in this milieu; it was devoid of the vibrant – if amoral and destabilizing – entrepreneurship of the Hansa or the Dutch ports. The elites of the meridional centers seemed to lack any sense of responsibility; even if their innate intelligence was readily acknowledged, it had been perverted by petty political horizons and the influence of the church. There was more than a grain of truth in the importance the French attached to the negative impact of the rule of small, weak states on their societies. The mountainous hinterlands which constituted the Mediterranean peripheries contained some of the least governed communities in western Europe. The French found backwardness a-plenty by their own standards, but also micro-regions used to autonomy, and so free of dependency, untouched by the civilizing tides of the previous centuries, for good or ill. When confronted by these places, the French fell back on a stereotype rooted in Rousseau's noble savage; of communities which were undisciplined by the standards of the modern state, but which had rules of their own; the fiercer the resistance, the more respect they actually won. The answer for both center and periphery in the meridional hegemony was the advance of the Napoleonic

state. This, more than any other single part of their hegemony, was where imperial rule hinged on its civilizing mission.

Where the Napoleonic advance reached its feudal marches, it found entire social orders built on foundations wholly alien to its own, where it was emphatically stopped dead in its tracks and forced to cede to well entrenched structures. It did not so much compromise as succumb. This was not for want of trying. Concerted efforts were made in the kingdoms of Naples and Westphalia to enforce the statutes of the Civil Code, which categorically abolished all forms of feudalism, and the native magistracies were as active in this as the French, but little was achieved. In contrast to the territories of the inner empire, an assault on feudalism in these regions entailed not just the abolition of particular rights and privileges among the nobility, but the deracination of an entire social order, a task which simply proved beyond the regime.

The potential, and lack of it, for significant assimilation into the French model can be seen at the opposite ends of the Napoleonic hegemony. In the Duchy of Warsaw the institutions and legal codes cloned from those of France remained dead letters, and the feudal social order remained; in return, the political loyalty of the Polish elites and the huge conscript levies supplied by the Duchy were all but assured. Spain presents the mirror image of the Duchy of Warsaw. No part of Europe resisted Napoleon so ferociously, over as long a period, as did Spain, yet highly influential elements within its political elite collaborated with the Josephist regime; the leading *afrancesados* were not marginal figures in the Spanish state before 1808, and Joseph had no trouble in filling the higher echelons of his government with Spaniards, however ephemeral his grip on most of the kingdom. Perhaps more revelatory of the future was the compulsion felt by the Cortez of Cádiz to press forward with reforms of its own, in open competition with Joseph. The need to follow the Napoleonic lead was gradually recognized by the restored Ferdinand VII, if not immediately after 1814, then more so after the revolution of 1820–1823. This process culminated in the rapid introduction of many Napoleonic institutions after his death in 1831. Popular fury and dynastic loyalties overlay a deeper trend in Spain, whereas personal loyalty to Napoleon and nascent Polish nationalism, of themselves, did not betoken a society fitted to accept the French model in the Duchy of Warsaw.

### **Europe through French eyes: a blurred vision?**

There is good reason to approach Napoleonic imperialism through French lenses. Their vision of their hegemony was peopled by stereotypes, but they were not merely the subject of after-dinner conversation. Rather, their prejudices were the bases on which the French formed judgments and relationships with their *administrés*. It all crystallized around the receptiveness of a given society to the fundamentals of their political model, and



a willingness to accept the world defined by the Civil Code. If the new *administrés* were seen as malleable to the French model, they were civilized men who recognized the universal truth of a good law; if not, they had to learn such truths through the good government Napoleonic hegemony brought them. The French imperialists set about creating an empire of laws: 'Among free peoples who possess equality before the law we must cultivate an affable temper and ... a loftiness of spirit.'<sup>2</sup> Cicero's words encapsulate the aspirations of the Napoleonic imperialists. When they failed, the French retreated to the closed world of the *polis*, and the sense that only France could produce *l'homme régénéré*.

## Notes

1. Archives Nationales de Paris, BB5 268 (Organisation Judiciaire, dépts. hanséatiques) Faure to Minister of Justice, 26 January, 1811.
2. *On Duties*, Book I.

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