Napoleon's Italy

Desmond Gregory

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Napoleon’s Italy

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Italy is a mistress whom I will share with no one.

—Napoleon
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Preface

THIS IS LARGELY A WORK OF SYNTHESIS AND MAKES NO PRETENSIONS to originality, though I have not neglected primary sources, mostly printed in the nineteenth century. My reason for writing Napoleon’s Italy is the lack of any book in the English language that deals exclusively with this subject.

There are, of course, numerous books in English about the empire of Napoleon as a whole, about the state of Italy in the Age of the Risorgimento, and about the various men and women whom Napoleon appointed to govern Italy. There are lives of Joseph Bonaparte, Joachim Murat, and Eugène Beauharnais, and of Elisa, Napoleon’s sister. But in French and Italian, there are innumerable books, as well as learned articles on Napoleon’s dealings with Italy, and his special relationship with that country.

I have tried to draw extensively on all these sources and produce a balanced summary of the conclusions reached by historians in answer to the following questions: what was Napoleon’s interest in Italy, and why did it continue to command his special attention to the end? What were his apparent intentions in regard to the future of Italy? They were not consistent and were complex, not simple. And what was the impact on Italy of fifteen years of Napoleonic rule?

The French historian Paul Fleuriot de l’Angle wrote in 1938 that “of all the countries subjected to French rule, Italy remains even today, in the effect it had, the richest and most interesting field of study to explore. . . . Following on conquest, innovations were made which, more than anywhere else perhaps, modified the political structure of the country”.¹ Another French historian, Fernand Braudel, writing half a century later, joined de l’Angle in his encomium. “Wherever the Napoleonic regime was established [he wrote] laws, customs and minds will retain their mark, notwithstanding [all] the bitterness and hatred aroused by the occupation.”²

Not all British historians of modern Italy agree with these claims. The degree and extent of Napoleon’s impact on Italy give ground for discussion. What is, however, beyond dispute is that that impact remains a topic that will continue to fascinate any student of Italy’s history.
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Acknowledgments

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I should also like to express my thanks to the staff of the British Library, the London Library, the University of Sussex Library and of the Warburg Institute for their help to me in locating books. In addition, my thanks are due to the late Richard Lamb, who gave me the idea of writing this book.
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Napoleon’s Italy
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Bonaparte in Italy 1796–97: Icon and Scourge

When the French army broke through into Italy in the spring of 1796 under the commander of the young General Bonaparte, inflicting decisive defeats on first the Piedmontese and then the Austrians, Italy consisted of eleven states, including two diminutive ones, the republic of Lucca and the duchy of Guastalla. Five of the states had become little more than provinces of the Habsburg Empire, ruled by children or grandchildren of the late Empress Maria Theresa, or by the husbands of those children. Tuscany until 1790 had been ruled by her son, Grand Duke Peter Leopold, and thereafter by his son Ferdinand; Lombardy was ruled by the Archduke Ferdinand; Modena by Duke Francis IV; the empress’s daughter Maria Carolina was the wife of King Ferdinand IV of Naples (and III of Sicily), and another daughter, Maria Amelia, was married to Ferdinand, Duke of Parma (first cousin of Charles IV of Spain). Sardinia/Piedmont was a monarchy, ruled by Victor Amadeus III, a member of the house of Savoy; Genoa and Venice were ancient republics, and the Papal states, which spread themselves over much of central Italy (the Legations of Ferrara, Bologna and Ravenna, the Marches, whose principal town was Ancona, and the provinces of Umbria and Lazio) were ruled by the current pope, Pius VI.

Not only fragmented territorially, the Italian peninsula was characterised by its great diversity of climate, soil, geographical features and the language spoken by its inhabitants (as many as twenty different dialects). The fertile valley of the Po in the north was a world away from the soil-eroded areas in southern Basilicata, or the poverty-stricken mountain valleys of the central Appenine mountain range. Fragmentation was exacerbated by the lack of easy communication. If “the one good road in the Kingdom of Naples led out of it to Rome” (to quote J. M. Roberts), the road network in other Italian states could not boast any great superiority. In addition there were different currencies, different systems of weights and
measures, different legal systems obtaining and customs barriers between the states.

Italy was a country where municipal loyalties took precedence over those to the state, and where nobles chose to live in the towns, alongside merchants and professional men, so that there was no great social gap between noble and non-noble, nor did the nobles have a military tradition to accentuate a difference of class. Such glaring social contrasts as existed were between town-dwellers and peasants in the countryside, but there was, in contradistinction to
Italy, Spring of 1796.

France, no element of sans-culottism or of widespread peasant unrest. There was, however, a restive mood apparent in all Italian classes when news of the revolution in France brought hope to those desirous of change.

A social and economic crisis, caused by the rise in the price of foodstuffs while wages showed no comparable rise that had been in process for fifteen years, had brought impoverishment to the peasants. The lot of the latter, despite the abolition of the most onerous feudal exactions in the majority of Italian states, was made worse by enclosure of common land by proprietors seeking to increase
production, so as to profit by the rise in prices. The middle classes sought access to posts of influence hitherto denied them by aristocratic privilege, while the nobles had little confidence in the governments under which they lived.

The rulers of the various states in Italy were, by the end of the eighteenth century, facing not only a financial crisis induced by rising administrative costs, but by one caused by successful resistance by the aristocracy and the clergy to attempts to modernize their states by the abolition of privileges. Even in states that already possessed a centralized bureaucracy, like Tuscany and Lombardy, the rulers encountered bitter resistance. In Lombardy the nobles resisted their exclusion from important administrative posts; in Tuscany there was popular resistance to the Jansenist policy the ruler had adopted toward religious houses and popular religion. In addition, in Piedmont, there was peasant resistance to the policy of forcing communities to redeem their feudal obligations by the sale or lease of common land; while in the southern kingdom of Naples the attempt by the monarchy to pay for the devastation, caused in Calabria by the earthquake of 1783 and by the dissolution of monasteries, merely made worse the lot of peasantry already suffering acute land-hunger.

In the quarter century that preceded the outbreak of the French Revolution there was a vigorous intellectual ferment apparent throughout the towns of Italy, and enlightened groups of bourgeois and nobles met, discussed and wrote books and articles on political, social and economic questions, more especially in Milan, Florence and the city of Naples. Newspapers and the press generally, though not free to criticize the government of the state in which they operated, were free to inform their readers about events that were taking place in other countries, and to give much prominence to French ideas. The concepts of liberty and equality, propagated in Western Europe since the outbreak of the American Revolution, made a great appeal to Italian youth and were kept alive in masonic lodges, from which emerged the Jacobin clubs that spawned in many Italian towns. Jansenism also played its part in promoting the cause of Jacobinism, and Jansenist priests were prominent in educating those in their charge in the principles of republicanism. François Cacault, the French Republic's agent in Italy between 1793 and 1796, who resided for some time in both Florence and Genoa, as well as acting for a brief time as chargé d'affaires in the kingdom of Naples, wrote in the spring of 1794 that a revolution could count on the support, not just of young idealists, but of the majority of the middle class, and that establishing a republican régime in Tuscany or north Italy...
would be a comparatively simple task. The Italians, he thought, were far better disposed to revolutionary ideas than the people of Belgium and Germany.

Sympathy with revolutionary ideas spread also to the peasantry, and agrarian revolts broke out in Piedmont, the Bologna region and the Abruzzi, invoking French revolutionary slogans; but they were isolated incidents. There was among the majority of Italians no idea of bringing about a revolution by violent means; such few as held this idea found refuge abroad. Some intellectuals were active campaigners for the idea of a united Italy, but most merely wanted modernization within the bounds of their state or city, of the kind that had been already enacted by the Habsburg ruler of Tuscany.

Lombardy was the center of an intellectual group whose most prominent members were Cesare Beccaria, who died in 1793, author of the influential *Crimes and Punishments*, and Pietro Verri, who was the author of *Meditations on Political Economy*. They propagated the enlightened ideas usually associated with the French *philosophes*: a humane system of criminal justice, a society organized to achieve the greatest happiness of the greatest number, equality before the law and the liberation of the economy from fiscal burdens and restrictive regulations. Their influence was international, their works translated into other languages and both Beccaria and Verri were rewarded with official recognition by their native, though Austrian-governed, state.

Intellectuals in other parts of Italy also achieved international recognition. The kingdom of Naples threw up a whole bevy of enlightened men who favored reform: Ferdinando Galliani, whose analysis of economic science was highly regarded by Diderot; Antonio Genovesi, another economist, who advocated land redistribution as well as free circulation of goods; Domenico Grimaldi, whose *Plan for Reform* proposed a revolution in farming techniques; Giacinto Dragonetti and Melchiore Delfico, who wrote books on political and social problems, the latter preaching that “Equality and Liberty are reciprocal words in politics and morality”; and Gaetano Filangieri, whose *Science of Legislation* was almost as influential internationally as Beccaria’s *Crimes and Punishments*.

In the Papal states academies sprang up, all designed to disseminate enlightened ideas on agrarian reform. Chairs of economics were endowed in the cities of Naples and Milan, while Tuscany, under its Habsburg rulers, was a meeting ground for intellectuals to debate the nature and mode of reform. What, however, was lacking in Italy was not a multiplicity of progressive ideas but the political
incentive to translate them into action, and, even more important, the bureaucratic means and ability to implement them.¹

Inspired by recent events in France, there had occurred, two years before Napoleon’s army entered Italy, a number of revolutionary plots in Naples, Bologna and Turin. All had been discovered and repression had followed. The use of the word “democracy” had by then become common among educated people, and Italian patriots liked to describe themselves, without any shame, as “democrats,” while their enemies dubbed them “Jacobins.” Even the bishop of Imola (the future Pope Pius VII), in a homily delivered on Christmas Eve 1796, told the faithful, “Be good Christians and you will be excellent democrats.” Not all the democrats were Jacobins. Many were moderate republicans. The Italian Jacobins were Robespierrist who looked on the revolutionary France of 1793–94 as the model they wished Italians to follow. They were totally committed to the idea of the independence of Italy, either as a federation of republics or as a united state. They were violently anticlerical, though burning with a religious fervor for what they called “The Supreme Being.” Some looked for redistribution of property and most for state help for the impoverished and education for the masses. It was not long before the French Directory came to regard them as dangerous anarchists.²

Lombardy, of which Milan was the capital, a city of 131,000 people and the largest in the Habsburg Empire, had experienced enlightened reforms during the reigns of recent emperors, Joseph and his brother Leopold (former ruler of Tuscany): law reform, a humane penal code and the curbing of the power of the Catholic Church. However, since 1792, when Francis II inherited the throne, imperial attitudes had changed as a result of events in France, and were now bitterly opposed to the ideas of the French Revolution. The archduke who presided in Lombardy was an autocrat of narrow vision whose views were brought into sharp conflict with those of liberal aristocrats who were led by Francesco Melzi d’Eril, and included the economist Pietro Verri, who had long corresponded with the French philosophes. They supported the idea of constitutional government, and when they found their Austrian ruler had turned his back on enlightened reform, they looked with hope to the French Republic in search of support for their ideas. For this reason they welcomed Napoleon as the representative of the French Directory, convinced that the latter stood for the principles of progressive reform and constitutional government.³

Though in Lombardy, unlike Naples and Sicily, feudal and clerical privilege were very largely nonexistent, there still remained
ample scope for change, and an active spirit of revolution was kept alive by the secret societies and clubs that had sprung up in all its cities. When Napoleon Bonaparte and Cristoforo Saliceti, the French Directory’s civil representative, arrived in Milan in May 1796, after the Archduke Ferdinand had fled, they were greeted by a deputation from one of the political clubs, who assured them that they represented the people, and did not wait for new laws to be passed to suppress the use of titles of rank, the term “signore” being replaced overnight by that of “cittadino” as the mode of address.4

Piedmont’s capital was Turin, a city of 93,000 people. The state had a weak economy but a strong army and efficient civil service. Its king, Victor Amadeus, behaved as a military autocrat and his kingdom was widely regarded in Europe as the Prussia of Italy. He held strong conservative views on all subjects, as did the local nobility, whose feudal privileges were deeply entrenched. In consequence the bourgeoisie were profoundly hostile to the government and to a system that denied them the prospect of political or social advancement. Discontent was more rife in Piedmont than anywhere else in Italy.5 The fact that Sardinia/Piedmont’s boundaries abutted on those of the French Republic made the country extremely susceptible to revolutionary influence. Many Piedmontese saw themselves as French, culturally if not legally, and the army’s language of command was French. Piedmont was, in the words of Michael Broers, “not fully or exclusively an Italian state.” It was also a state where loyalty to the dynasty was deeply ingrained and where profound antipathy between royalists and republicans (the self-styled Italian patriots) was to color the course of events in Piedmont throughout the whole of the coming years.

Fear and hatred of the French Revolution had caused King Victor Amadeus to adopt a policy of such repression that one nobleman, Count Dalmazzo Vasco, was sent to prison merely for writing an essay in support of a constitution.6 Victor Amadeus was closely allied to the French royal family. One of his daughters had married the brother of the ill-fated Louis XVI, and his son was married to the French king’s sister. Understandably therefore, Turin soon became a center for royalist emigrés. The king had no love for Austria, but the annexation by the government in Paris of his territories of Savoy and Nice, in revenge for his harboring royalist exiles, had driven him into an alliance with Austria in a war that was fought to defend thrones and altars.

A republican plot to depose the king, uncovered in 1794, caused a flood of political refugees to seek asylum in republican France.
The principal plotter was Filippo Buonarroti, a Tuscan of noble family, whose aim was to bring about revolution not just inside Sardinia/Piedmont but throughout the whole Italian peninsula. Together with his mentor “Gracchus” Baboeuf, he founded the Pantheon Club in Paris and tried to persuade the French Directory to promote revolution throughout Italy’s length. On 25 March 1796 he wrote to the Directory, pleading his case: “All Italians are brothers and should all unite with one another and make common cause.” His plan was to provoke a revolution inside Piedmont as a preliminary to causing one in every state in Italy. He gained the qualified support of the French foreign minister Charles Delacroix, who instructed Cacault, his agent in Genoa, to support the action of Italian patriots, but to refrain from encouraging subversion in states not actively hostile to France.

The Venetian Republic was in decline and had been for over a century. Ruled by an inward-looking oligarchy, it treated its mainland provinces as colonies, while its cities were consumed by mutual jealousy. Its tiny army consisted of 3000 Sclavonian mercenaries (for it dared not arm its own subjects) and its navy was in a state of decay. The Republic of Genoa was even more decadent. Ruled by a wealthy group of nobles who financed government by taxing the poor, its tiny army was largely symbolic and its navy, like Venice’s, badly neglected. There were twenty warships, including nine battleships, but there were not the trained crews to man them. French revolutionary ideas had made considerable headway there and the government, with strong financial ties with Paris, was very sympathetic to the French Republic. Its neutrality since 1793 had been violated by both the British and the French and, in October 1796, it agreed to pay the French Directory the enormous sum of 4 million livres for being allowed to retain its neutrality, while permitting French troops to garrison its strongpoints.

Tuscany under Duke Peter Leopold, who left Florence in 1790 to succeed his brother Joseph as emperor, had become in the space of 35 years the model of an enlightened state. Its economy was liberalized, with no restriction on the passage of goods either in or out of the duchy; its criminal justice was humanized, with torture and capital punishment abolished. Its bureaucracy was efficient and streamlined, its medical services free to the poor. There were state-sponsored schemes for agrarian reform; no longer could landed estates be entailed; local civic government was encouraged and the army and navy were both dispensed with as being unnecessary and wasteful in a state that was threatened by no hostile power. Ecclesiastical censorship and the Inquisition were declared at an end, a
Gallican policy was adopted in regard to church decrees from Rome and religious houses were dissolved. A Tuscan subject of the archduke, described by the historian Eric Cochrane as being “one of the brightest of the young Florentine economists,” wrote with enthusiasm to Thomas Jefferson: “I now live under the most humane prince in the universe, one who . . . has abolished every trace of despotism . . . and who has assured a more than sufficient freedom of conscience for every individual.”

Peter Leopold’s successor in Tuscany was the “mild and characterless” Grand Duke Ferdinand III. Though the latter managed to retain many of the enlightened reforms of his father, the Catholic Church’s power and influence remained very considerable. It was for the most part bitterly opposed, as was the bulk of the population, to the Jansenist policies of the former ruler—policies that in 1790 had resulted in a serious revolt. Tuscany was the first state in Europe to recognize the French Republic, though briefly in 1794 it was forced by Britain to take sides against it. However, in the following year, it again proclaimed its neutral status and, when Napoleon entered Florence, in the summer of 1796, in violation of such neutrality, he was prudently given a very warm welcome. Tuscany’s principal port of Livorno was the most flourishing one in Italy and had served for long as a great international entrepôt for the eastern grain trade. Frequent by numerous foreign merchants and with a large Jewish population of six thousand, it was described by one Italian as “a foreign colony inside Tuscan territory.” Its freeport and neutral status had received recent confirmation from the Archduke Peter Leopold who had, to underline the point, withdrawn all soldiers from the town. English merchants for many years had played an important role in the port and of all the foreign capital invested in it, as much as one half was English. It became the principal source of supply for the British fleet in the Mediterranean during the British occupation of Corsica that ended in October 1796—hence Napoleon’s move to control it, though he also coveted its wealth.

The Papal states were largely run by clerics whose administration was considered chaotic, incompetent and hopelessly corrupt by most impartially-minded observers. The countryside was desperately poor, its agricultural economy ruined by taxes on the principal foodstuffs, while most of the towns were depopulated: “they only seem to stand,” wrote the poet Goethe, visiting Italy in the 1770s, “because the earth is unwilling to swallow them up.” The social structure was characterized by a virtual absence of a middle class: something that caused Sir Gilbert Elliot, the British Viceroy of Cor-
sica, to remark on a visit he paid to Rome in the spring of 1794, “There is nothing to be seen among [sic meaning “between”] the ranks of princes and shoemakers, and the houses are palaces or hovels.”

Pope Pius VI had made genuine attempts to reform the papal administration, more particularly on the financial side, but had been frustrated by the vested interests of the powerful landowning class, and had been compelled to dispense with the services of his reforming minister Fabrizio Ruffo (given a cardinal’s hat for his pains). The consequences were continued inflation, deficit in the public finances and endemic disorder throughout the countryside. There had been, in 1794, a conspiracy that was hatched in Bologna to establish constitutional government. It was unearthed and its leader, Zamboni, promptly committed suicide. Though the Pope had not joined Sardinia and Naples in the First Coalition’s war against France, relations between the French government and the Papacy remained very strained. The Pope had issued bulls condemning the civil constitution of the clergy in France, and a Roman mob had murdered France’s first secretary of Legation, de Bassville, when he had, in 1793, paraded the streets in provocative manner, displaying the revolutionary cockade.

The kingdoms of Naples and Sicily had undergone some enlightened reforms during the eighteenth century, but there was not the bureaucratic structure to ensure that they were implemented. Many of the Neapolitan nobles were liberals and in sympathy with French revolutionary ideas. A Jacobin club had been formed in Naples, becoming closely affiliated with other Jacobin clubs in Marseilles; and when, in December 1792, a French fleet commanded by La-touche-Tréville called in at the port of Naples, it received an enthusiastic welcome from Neapolitan intellectuals. Not so, however, from the Queen of Naples, who wrote bitterly, “to avoid war . . . we caress the serpent who will poison us.” A year later an abortive revolt, which involved a sizeable number of nobles, was ruthlessly crushed and many arrested, though only three were condemned to death. Those who managed to avoid arrest fled to the north or sought refuge in France. The queen, sister of the doomed French queen, was savage in her hatred of the French Republic and Naples joined in the war against France in the summer of 1793, having attempted unsuccessfully to form an Italian league against France. Feudalism was entrenched in both kingdoms, where there existed an enormous gap between the rich and the mass of the people, while the clergy possessed great wealth and privilege. Monasteries owned huge estates, and though they served to alleviate the
wretched lot of the peasant population, they were economically un-
productive.\footnote{\textsuperscript{14}}

The aim of the French Directory in staging an invasion of Italy
was the normal step in a war with Austria: Italy provided the low
road to Vienna, as the Danube valley provided the high road.\footnote{\textsuperscript{15}} By
the end of 1795 France was able to reinforce its army on the Italian
front, because it had concluded a peace with Spain, while almost
simultaneously the Austrian government was planning to switch its
main military effort to Italy from Germany. This was the strategy
of Baron Thugut, Austria’s foreign minister, to relieve French pres-
sure on the German states; and the need for such a switch was rein-
forced by the recent French victory at Loano by General Schérer on
the coast of Liguria. Austria had been at war with France since Feb-
ruary 1792, a war that Thugut was to describe as “war to the death
between sovereignty and anarchy, between legitimate government
and the destruction of all order.” The expansionist policy being
pursued by the French revolutionary governments threatened not
only the Habsburg dominions in Germany and Italy but hereditary
rulers throughout all Europe, and notably on the river Rhine and
in the Italian peninsula.\footnote{\textsuperscript{16}} Italy was a tempting prize for a French
government strapped for funds to pay and maintain its numerous
armies. The wealth of its cities in the Lombard plain, and of its
monasteries, churches and shrines, and the productivity of its agri-
culture, would pay for an army and also feed it. There was, in addi-
tion, every hope that the peoples of the Italian states, with certainly
no great love for their rulers, would welcome the arrival of a French
army, posing as their political liberators and apostles of revolution-
ary doctrines. Sir Gilbert Elliot, on visiting the Italian courts to try
to organize resistance to France, had found that the states were
“composed of so many rotten twigs, waiting to be snapped singly
one after the other or [fruit] ripe or rather rotten ripe, and ready to
drop at the first shake of the tree.”\footnote{\textsuperscript{17}}

The French government continued to play a two-faced game in
Italy, on the one hand employing agents to excite revolution
through Italian Jacobins; on the other resorting to old-style diplo-
macy by offering, though without success, territorial gains to a
number of states if they sided with France against Austria. Lom-
bardy was offered to Sardinia, and portions of the Papal states to
the Tuscan Grand duke and the king of Naples. To Genoa it held out
the promise of Loano and Oneglia, and Imperial fiefs inside Geno-
ese borders, in return for free passage for its army and the provision
for its needs. It was also interested in obtaining bargaining counters
at a future peace, with the aim of getting Austrian agreement to the cession of Belgium and the Rhine’s left bank.\(^{18}\)

Napoleon, as commander of France’s army (recently promoted to replace Schérer), was anxious to please his master the Directory, not just by winning military victories, but by sanctioning official looting, while maintaining strict discipline in the army, thus making the campaign pay for itself; and by winning the support of the local people for the cause of France and its representatives, by heady proclamations about equality and liberty for all Italians. He told the Directory on 9 May, “We are all getting fat: the men eat none but the best bread; plenty of good fresh meat, excellent wine . . . discipline is improving every day, though we still have to shoot a good many men.”\(^{19}\) He had already issued a rousing appeal to the Italian patriots, an appeal that Italians in the months to come were to find had a very hollow ring. “The government of the Republic,” he proclaimed, “will always know how to recognise the peoples who, by a generous effort, will assist in shaking off the yoke of the tyrant. . . . Piedmontese patriots, Europe’s eyes are fixed on Italy, the army will know how to secure victory there and the happiness of the peoples.”\(^{20}\)

Napoleon chose his own path in dealing with Italian Jacobins, but in any case he was too preoccupied with his primary task of defeating the Austrians to worry too much about them and their aspirations for the state of Piedmont, let alone the whole peninsula. After he had inflicted on the Piedmontese army a decisive victory at Mondoví, the patriots, meeting at the town of Alba, 30 miles from the capital, Turin, proclaimed Sardinia to be a republic. This they intended as the first step toward a republic for the whole of Italy.

They presented an address of welcome to Napoleon and called on him to free all Italy from the tyranny it labored under. Napoleon studiously ignored their action, writing disingenuously to the Directory: “The people is too soft . . . there is no movement in favour of liberty.” Instead he signed an armistice with the king of Sardinia and abandoned the patriots to their fate.\(^{21}\) By the terms of this armistice, signed at Cherasco on 28 April 1796 and ratified by Paris on 15 May, the king renounced claims to Savoy and Nice and gave France control of the Alpine passes and the use of five Piedmontese fortresses.

Having thus disposed of the Piedmontese threat, Napoleon was able to turn on the Austrians, winning a spectacular victory at Lodi. He forced his enemy to retire to the east and then entered neutral Venetia, where he took possession of the fortified towns of Verona, Legnago and Peschiera. He realized, however, that until he had
taken the great fortress of Mantua, immensely strong and well ga-
risoned, he could not pursue the Austrians further into the Tyrol and
toward Vienna.

On 10 May 1796, the day of Napoleon’s victory at Lodi, which
opened for him the path to Milan, the so-called “Conspiracy of the
Equals” contrived by Babeuf and Buonarroti and designed to
overthrow the Directory, was unearthed in Paris and led to their ar-
rest. Its discovery had a profound effect on the Directors’ Italian
policy, causing them to take a much less favorable view of the Ital-
ian Jacobins, and to regard Napoleon’s campaign in what were pri-
marily military terms, at the expense of ideology. In any case, the
reports the Directory received from its several agents in Italy con-
vayed a most unfavorable impression of the Italians as a people who
merited the support of republican government; indeed they echoed
the verdict of Napoleon, quoted a few lines earlier (a verdict that,
ironically, Napoleon was later to contradict). In the words of Guil-
laume Faipoult, the Italians deserved “to be left in their supersti-
tious ignorance. If they should ever wish to be free, let them do it
themselves,” he wrote. And Fourcauld, writing from Genoa,
adopted very much the same line: “There can be no question of
republicanising Italy. The people are not at all inclined to accept
liberty, neither are they worthy of this boon.” The reaction of both
these agents was, of course, prompted by the resistance of the Cath-
oclic clergy and their peasant flocks to the challenge presented to
religion by French revolutionary principles. Jacobinism in Italy was
essentially urban and bourgeois or noble. So henceforth it was real-
politik that took the place of idealism in determining the Directors’
approach to Italy. Barras stated firmly that a united Italy would not
only constitute a dangerous challenge to France’s position in the
Mediterranean but, further, “would cause an uproar in Europe.”

To this less than lukewarm attitude to the hopes of Italian patriots,
Lombardy was to present a challenge. On the arrival of the French
in Milan, the patriots had already seized power and a crowd of fifty
thousand raised the Lombard tricolor. The city soon became a mag-
net for liberals and radicals from all over Italy, especially from the
kingdoms of Sardinia and Naples. Napoleon, acclaimed on his ar-
rial in Milan, declared himself impressed by the welcome. “This
country,” he told the Directory, “is more patriotic than Piedmont.
It is nearer to liberty. The newspapers that come from here and
writings of every kind will set Italy on fire”; hardly the news the
Directors wished to hear. What Napoleon meant by “patriotic” was
of course supportive of the cause of France. What he wanted was
the speedy restoration of order, and the opportunity to loot the
country, not concessions to radical democracy. If he gave support to the democrats, it was not because he shared their views, but because they were relatively well organized and ready to support the cause of France, whom they hoped would very soon allow the establishment of a Lombard republic. From the outset Napoleon favored the moderates, Austrophobe nobles like Melzi d’Eril, Galeazzo Serbelloni, Parisi and Pietro Verri, to whom he entrusted a provisional government to administer the conquered province. But he soon caused bitter disillusion by levying a heavy monetary contribution—the sum of 20 million francs—and requisitioning clothing and shoes and five to six thousand horses for the army, paid for not in cash but in worthless paper money. The Monti di Pietà (state banks for the poor) were plundered for items of family jewelry, and the churches and religious houses raided for valuable works of art. Melzi recorded in his memoirs that the French military agency in Milan “left behind an infamous memory of robbery. . . No more rapacious army has descended on Italy since the Landsknechts” [the German soldiers of the Emperor Charles V who sacked Rome in 1527], though the individual French soldier often stayed hungry and ill-clothed.

Though Napoleon attempted to make the new government he set up in Milan appear democratic, he refused to allow a general election. There were in Lombardy, he told the Directory, three parties: the pro-French, whom he encouraged; the campaigners for freedom, whom he held in check; and those opposed to France, whom he took care to suppress. “Milan is strongly inclined to liberty,” he told the Directors, “[but] we are going to allow the traditional forms of government to carry on.” The Directors, in their reply, however, adopted a more cautious tone. It was in order, Napoleon was told, to indulge libertarians and patriots, provided this made the French army safer, but “it would be unwise to kindle too strong a revolutionary fire in Italy,” in view of what terms it might be necessary to negotiate at a future peace, meaning the return of Lombardy to Austria in return for Belgium and the Rhine’s left bank. Napoleon understood all this, but he needed to ensure himself local support to bolster his currently weak military position, and by April 1797 he had made the decision to bring into existence what became known as the Cisalpine Republic.

The French occupation of Lombardy compelled the rulers of all the states of Italy to sue for peace. As the British consul in Bologna was to write in February 1797, “It is impossible to convey an adequate idea of the impression of terror and astonishment, which accompanies the progress of the republican armies in their conquest
of Italy; where they are venerated as a superior order of beings to whom nothing is impossible, and are looked upon in much the same light as the followers of Cortez were by the Mexicans.”29 The dukes of Parma and Modena obtained an armistice from Napoleon at the price of a huge indemnity in specie, wheat, forage, horses and cattle, as well as a number of works of art. It was typical of Napoleon’s arrogance that he greeted the Duke of Parma’s minister, who had been sent to negotiate terms, with: “Comment, Monsieur, vous osez me parler au nom de cet Insecte de Prince?” [What, Sir, you dare to speak to me on behalf of that miserable worm of a Prince?]. Since, however, the Duke of Parma was the first cousin of the King of Spain, with whom the Directory was keen to make peace, Napoleon received instructions from Paris to treat the duke with all possible respect.30

On 5 June, in defiance of instructions, Napoleon signed an armistice with Naples, by which the latter recalled from service its cavalry under Austrian command and its warships serving with the British fleet. To justify his disobedience of orders, Napoleon wrote home to the Directory: “The King of Naples has sixty thousand
men under arms and can only be attacked and dethroned by eighteen thousand infantry and three thousand cavalry. . . . Rome has the force of its fanaticism. If Rome and Naples combine against us we shall need reinforcements. . . . At present we cannot wage war on Naples and Austria simultaneously.”

For the same reason, when told to enforce on the Papacy the terms imposed, which the Pope until then had refused to accept (reparation for the murder of Bassville and withdrawal of Papal condemnations of the French Republic and its clerical enactments), and while Austrian armies threatened his flank and still held out in the fortress of Mantua, Napoleon decided to ignore his orders. Instead therefore of marching on Rome, he occupied the Papal Legations and the Romagna as far as Ravenna, till the Pope sued for an armistice. The latter, concluded at Bologna, obtained from the Pope a huge sum in cash, as well as one hundred works of art and five hundred precious manuscripts, though without a mention of the Papal bulls. After this, ignoring Tuscan neutrality, Napoleon turned against Livorno and there was able to make a seizure of property abandoned by British merchants. He justified his violation of neutrality by alleging that some French property had been illegally seized in Livorno, and the French flag had been insulted there. His real reasons were his need for money to be raised by the seizure of British goods to be found in the warehouses of Livorno, and denial to the British fleet of its main supply base in the Mediterranean. Though most British merchants had been forewarned and so had, escorted by Nelson’s ships, removed themselves and their goods to Corsica, some had proved incredulous and obstinate. In the words of the British minister in Florence, the French had found “a tolerable booty,” though not as much as Napoleon had expected. Napoleon, angered at being forestalled, had the governor of Livorno arrested and sent back to a prison in Florence, accusing him of being in league with the British. It was of course a fact that most Livornese were extremely Anglophile. Napoleon retained a small garrison in the city until mid-May 1797, by which time the British had abandoned Corsica and Porto Ferraio on the island of Elba, and withdrawn their fleet from the Mediterranean. Meanwhile the Grand Duke had had to pay the French a contribution of 1 million lire, and the cost of maintaining their garrison, which amounted to a further million. When Napoleon told the Grand Duke that he had only occupied Livorno in order to maintain its neutrality, what he meant was he was determined to punish the port for its flagrantly pro-British sympathy.

The Pope soon after reneged on the armistice that he had been induced to sign at Bologna, convinced the French would soon suffer
defeat and the Austrians relieve the Mantua garrison. In this he
proved to be seriously wrong. Three attempts to relieve Mantua by
Austrian armies were successively defeated, culminating in French
victory at Rivoli. On 2 February 1797 Mantua finally surrendered.
Thereafter Napoleon were able to dictate far more onerous terms to
the Pope, whose neutrality he needed to be sure of before he headed
for the Tyrol in pursuit of the retreating Austrians. He had no diffi-
culty in crushing the resistance of the Papal army in the Romagna
and in the march of Ancona, and forcing the Pope to sue for peace.
By the terms of the treaty of Tolentino, signed on 19 February, the
Pope agreed to renounce all claims to the Legations and the Ro-
magna, accept a French garrison in Ancona till the peace, and pay
a further huge indemnity of nearly 33 million francs. To justify his
action Napoleon informed the largely powerless Directors in Paris,
“My reasons for concluding the treaty are . . . that thirty millions
are worth Rome ten times over, from which we could not have ex-
tracted five million, since everything of value has been removed to
Terracina. My opinion is that Rome, shorn of Bologna, Ferrara and
the Romagna and the thirty millions we are taking, can no longer
exist, this old machine will disintegrate.”

Meanwhile Modena and Reggio had risen against the rule of their
duke in October 1796. Napoleon, for purely military reasons, rec-
ognized the republic they proclaimed and the Italian Legion of pa-
triots they had recruited. Their action was a repetition of that taken
by the Lombard patriots, who had already raised their own Legion,
with its standard the green, white and red tricolor that was to be-
come Italy’s national flag. Soon Bologna and Ferrara followed suit,
declaring themselves independent of the Pope and joining Modena
and Reggio, on 27 December 1796, to form the so-called Cispadane
Republic (one the Pope was forced to recognize by the Tolentino
treaty two months later). To the young Bolognese lawyer, Antonio
Aldini, who had been the organizing brain behind the creation of
the new republic, Napoleon sent a letter of encouragement: “If the
Italians of today,” he wrote, “are worthy of recovering their rights
and giving themselves a free government, one day we shall see their
country figuring gloriously among the world powers.” Such hy-
perbole cost Napoleon nothing, but flattery could also be accompa-
nied by threats. Urging the cities of Bologna and Reggio to take up
arms under his command, he added a warning note that those who
acted in defiance of the people of France would find the wrath of
the latter comparable to that of the exterminating angel of the Bible.
“The time has come,” he continued, “when Italy will show herself
to be one with the powerful nations. Cause the enemies of your rights and liberties to tremble.”

Three weeks later he wrote a letter to General Barraguey d’Hilliers, whom he had recently appointed civil and military governor of Milan: “I thought the Lombards were the most patriotic people in Italy, but I am beginning to think Bologna, Ferrara, Reggio and Modena surpass them in energy; in this country a sacred fire burns.” When the Directory learned what had happened, it was too late to disapprove—they had warned Napoleon not “to give such encouragement to their enthusiasm as to deprive us of many political resources”—and were forced to make out the Cispadane Republic had been formed on their specific instructions. Their commissioner Faipault was greatly alarmed at the revolutionary ferment displayed in the cities of the new republic and recommended its incorporation into the more moderate Cisalpine: something Napoleon only did on 27 July 1797.

Fulsome though his praises might be for those Italians who displayed their patriotism, Napoleon would never tolerate any manifestation of disorder. He reprimanded very severely the council of the city of Bologna for allowing disturbances within its walls: “I hear that ex-Jesuits, priests and religious, disturb the public order. Let them know that while the French Republic protects religion and its ministers, it is inexorable against those who forget their status and interfere in public affairs.” “I am the enemy of tyrants,” he told them, “but above all the sworn enemy of scoundrels, looters and anarchists,” whom he would shoot in the same way as he shot his own soldiers found guilty of looting.

Hostility to France’s policy of rapine, and several acts of sacrilege committed by a handful of Italian Jacobins, led to a number of anti-French revolts, when trees of liberty were torn down and the French cockade trampled underfoot. On learning of such demonstrations in Lombardy in December 1796, Napoleon told the governing council in Milan: “If Italy wants to be free, who can prevent this? It is not enough for the various states to unite; the bonds of fraternity between the different classes in the state must be tied up. Punish the small number of those who love liberty only to effect a revolution, they are the greatest enemies.” When a serious revolt broke out in Pavia and the French garrison of three hundred were forced to take refuge in the citadel, Napoleon had two hundred of the rebels arrested, the members of the city council shot, the city sacked for twenty-four hours and a number of neighboring villages scorched, telling Pavia that if a single member of the garrison had been harmed, he would have burned the place to the ground.
When a similar revolt broke out in Lugo, a town twenty miles to the west of Ravenna, in protest at the military exactions of the French and sparked by rumors that Austrian troops had arrived in the vicinity, Napoleon ordered the town to be sacked and sixty of the insurgents shot. Only the intervention of the bishop, Chiaramonti of Imola, persuaded Napoleon to spare the town from being totally destroyed. As the British consul in Bologna wrote, “The fanaticism of religion is now opposed, in its full fury, to the fanaticism of republicanism, and menaces Italy with the horrors of another Vendée.” Though he went on to add that all the revolts were quite spontaneous and lacked coordination.

The same policy of ruthless action Napoleon pursued toward revolt in Modena, led or encouraged by Catholic priests. “Tell all the magistrates, heads of monasteries and parish priests,” he wrote to General Rusca, “that I respect ministers of religion with true principles . . . but where clergy become instruments of civil war and discord, I will destroy their monasteries and punish personally every parish priest.”

In regard to his policy toward the Church, Napoleon may seem to speak with two voices. While seeking to win over to the side of the political order he represented the Catholic clergy generally, and especially the prelates, insisting that equality was the religion of the gospel, he distrusted clerical influence in all matters political. He succeeded in winning the active support of the bishops of Modena and Pavia, and not least that of the bishop of Imola, Cardinal Barnabo Chiaramonti who, as mentioned earlier, was soon to become Pope Pius VII. But he manifested considerable alarm at the way the clergy were able to influence the elections in the Cispadane Republic in April 1797. “The choice of representatives has been very bad,” he wrote to the Directory; “the priests have influenced all the elections . . . the Cispadane Republic, like Lombardy, needs a provisional government for three or four years while an effort is made to lessen the influence of the priests; otherwise you will have done nothing by giving them their liberty.” The desire to diminish the clergy’s authority was a further reason for the decision to unite the Cispadane and Cisalpine Republics.

At the same time, Napoleon cooperated fully with the Directory in its policy of looting Italian churches, monasteries, convents, and shrines like Loreto. “The commission of experts,” he told the Directory, on 19 February 1797, “has reaped a good harvest in Ravenna, Rimini, Pescara, Ancona, Loreto and Perugia which will be sent to Paris. That, together with what we have from Rome, will mean that we have everything that is a work of art in Italy, save for
a small number of objects in Turin and Naples.”  
Fortunately for Italy’s cultural heritage, Napoleon was wrong in his last statement, always supposing he believed his boast.

The Cisalpine Republic had been proclaimed, with the approval of Napoleon, on 29 June 1797, on which occasion Napoleon had written that he hoped “the inestimable gift of liberty will infuse new energy into this people and will enable it to provide a solid support for the French Republic in future wars.” And he told the Cisalpine National Guards “It is the soldier who founds republics, it is the soldier who maintains them.” Without an army, armed strength, discipline, there is no independence nor civil liberty.” Meanwhile enthusiasm for Napoleon as the great deliverer had reached a fresh peak with the popular recitation of a blasphemous Credo: “I believe in the French Republic and in General Bonaparte its son.”

Inaugurating the republic, Napoleon proclaimed it “free and independent.” “It remains for the Cisalpine Republic to demonstrate to the world by its wisdom and energy, and by the good organisation of its armies, that modern Italy has not degenerated and is still worthy of liberty.”

The republic, divided into twenty departments, was now given a constitution, drawn up by the Italians and not by the French, though it was closely modeled on the French constitution of 1795. Titles of nobility were abolished, as were entail and primogeniture. Religious houses were dissolved and church lands put up for sale. Civil marriage and divorce (within limits) were sanctioned and the Church was subordinated to the state. Bishops were nominated by the government and parish priests elected by their flock. The revolutionary calendar was adopted, state education was introduced and the franchise was extended to all who could show themselves to be literate.

Napoleon insisted on nominating the members of the Cisalpine government, both executive and legislature. He feared the democrats were too strong in Milan and, if left to elect their representatives, the latter might well be tempted to interfere in the conduct of foreign affairs, at a time when he was negotiating terms of peace with the Austrians.

France recognized the state’s independence, offered its protection and maintained on its soil a French army of 25,000, as well as providing a French officer to command the army of the republic. The Cisalpine Republic was required to pay for the cost of both these armies. It was also pledged to refrain from any commercial connec-
tion with Britain. Such was the so-called freedom and independence that Napoleon had proclaimed in June.49

A number of intellectuals and poets, initially opposed to Napoleon, were won over to his side. The poet Ugo Foscolo, at first reproached Napoleon for his betrayal of the cause of Italy in signing the treaty of Campo Formio (soon to be referred to), later enlisted in the Cisalpine militia and fought bravely at Trebbia against the Russians, and under Masséna at the siege of Genoa, during the war of the Second Coalition (1799–1800). Two artists, the sculptor Antonio Canova and the painter Andrea Appiani, made their fortunes by depicting Napoleon. The latter’s painting of Napoleon’s apotheosis that hung in the council hall of ministers in Milan has been described as “the last word in flattery” of a dictator.50

To celebrate the inauguration of the republic, there was a military review at which Napoleon took the salute. One disillusioned spectator commented, “bene la truppa, benissima la quiete, zero per lo spirito repubblicano” [the troops were fine, the peaceful order excellent; what was totally lacking was the spirit of republicanism].51

Napoleon had used the lull between the surrender of Mantua and his summer campaign in the Austrian Alps to sign a treaty with Sardinia/Piedmont on 5 April 1797, in the expectation that he might need its military support in his coming advance toward the imperial capital Vienna. By it Sardinia was to provide a contingent of 8,000 infantry, 1,000 cavalry and 40 guns. To convince the Directory of the treaty’s necessity (one it was to ratify six months later), Napoleon wrote cynically to Talleyrand, it was only a ruse to deceive the Sard king, while supplying the army’s most immediate needs: “When Milan, Genoa and France are governed by the same principles, it will be difficult for his [the king’s] throne to sustain itself, but it will collapse without any action of ours, and beneath the weight of events. The best way to make the revolution master of Piedmont is to mix our troops with theirs and let 10,000 Piedmontese, who are the flower of the nation, share in our successes. Six months later the king of Sardinia will find himself deposed. The Republic is a giant embracing a pygmy and will crush it in its arms. It is killing itself by natural causes through the extreme diversity of its organisation, while on the other hand the Cisalpine is in no state to resist a single regiment of Piedmontese calvary.”52 When therefore serious revolts broke out in four cities in Piedmont including Turin, in July 1797, all of which were suppressed with much bloodshed, Napoleon forbade any demonstration of support for the Piedmontese rebels among the political exiles in Lombardy.53 In the same period he also ensured that the strategic port of Genoa was
finally placed under French control by imposing in June a constitution on what was to be called the Ligurian Republic. The treaty of Montebello was negotiated between Napoleon and Genoese commissioners, headed by the senator Carbonara, a committed Jacobin. It was signed before there was time to receive a reply from the Directory in Paris to a separate Genoese delegation, which had been dispatched to negotiate terms. Accordingly, on 14 June, a provisional government was installed under the nominal headship of the Doge. All its members were committed Jacobins, save five whom Napoleon only permitted at Carbonara’s express request, to appease the general population who were known to be opposed to revolutionary principles. Napoleon cynically observed, however, that “ces cinq aristocrates seraient bons à fusiller d’ici à trois semaines” (these five nobles will be ripe for shooting three weeks from now). The Doge, Giacomo Brignole, resigned his post within a month, and the name of the republic was changed to “Ligurian.”

The new government, however, did not meet with the approval of the clergy, who declared it to be the enemy of religion. Hostility to the régime was moreover shared by all classes of the population: the nobles bitter at the loss of privilege, the merchants angry at their trade’s decline and the peasants finding nothing that offered them the slightest material benefit. Incited by their priests, they marched on Genoa to the battle cry of “Viva Maria” and were only halted by the archbishop, who mediated at the government’s request. The terms agreed were that the Church should remain inviolate, Church property should be respected and the rebels granted unconditional pardon. Thus it was that the rebellion ended, though in the mountains resistance continued until French troops put an end to it. Napoleon praised the action of the archbishop, advised that the clergy be reconciled and told Faipoult, the Directory’s agent, that it was vital for military reasons to keep the areas in rear of his army pacified and undisturbed. In consequence, the Ligurian Republic became “the most Catholic of all the new republics.”

Napoleon left Italy in November 1797. He had stayed there for two years: in no other country save his native France was he to remain for so long a period. By the time he left he had seen the enlargement of the frontiers of the Cisalpine Republic by the addition of Massa Carrara, Modena, Bologna and Ferrara, the Romagna and the lands of the Venetian Republic as far east as the river Adige, and the Swiss canton of the Valtelline, annexed in October 1797. The former gave the state a military Frontier, the latter access for the French army to the Tyrol and Germany.

The addition of the Venetian lands had resulted from the treaty of
Campo Formio, signed by Napoleon on his own initiative in order to force the Directory’s hand, which deeply distrusted the successful general. Napoleon had been completely callous in his treatment of the Venetian Republic and in subsequently handing over its dismembered body to Austria. He knew the Directory would be tempted by the prospect of seizing the wealth of Venice when he had told them that, as he was now “in control of all the strong points Venice possesses on the Adige, you might perhaps like to start a little quarrel with the Venetian minister in Paris so that, after Mantua falls, and I shall have driven the Austrians from the Brenta, I should find it easier to make the demand you want of the contribution of several millions.”56 The wealth of Venice was of course considerable. Its annual revenue amounted to 1.5 million francs; its bank was the financial center for the whole of northern Italy and its luxury products in demand everywhere.57

Napoleon intended to use Venice as a bait to get Austria to sue for peace. In the winter of 1796–97 the position of the Austrians in Italy was desperate. Mantua was closely invested and all attempts to relieve it had failed. Its garrison were starving to death. Thugut was in despair at the Austrian army’s incapacity. “The fact is,” he wrote, “we have no army, we have no officers, that generals rise according to age and that the order of ranks has rendered the commanders utterly incapable.” Once Mantua fell, as it did on 2 February 1797, the Archduke Charles, who had won his laurels on the battlefields of Germany, was appointed to command the army in Italy. He found the task beyond his powers, so disorganized and demoralized was it. Thugut tried vainly to persuade the Emperor to continue with the war, but the nobles opposed this and Vienna was riotous. Accordingly, the Archduke Charles was instructed to arrange an armistice—something Napoleon was glad to negotiate as his own resources were overstretched. It was signed at Leoben on 18 April.58

The terms were Napoleon’s, not the Directory’s. By these Austria agreed to cede both Belgium and Lombardy in return for certain Venetian territory, notably Istria and Dalmatia, though not the city of Venice itself. The Venetians were to be given compensation in the shape of Papal territory (the Legations), and Austria was allowed to hang on to Mantua. The Directory was furious when it learned of them, since they made no mention of the Rhine’s left bank, which they had always intended to trade for Lombardy and not Venetia. They were powerless, however, to disown Napoleon. The Habsburg emperor was also displeased at the territorial sacrifices, but his worsening military position, together with a change of
government in Paris brought about by the coup of Fructidor, which altered the character of the Directory to one that favored a hard-line policy, meant that there was no going back.59

“The government of Venice,” Napoleon had told the Directory, “is the most absurd and tyrannical of all governments; besides there is no doubt it wanted to profit by the moment we were in the heart of Germany to murder us. Our Republic has no more bitter enemies.”60 He had therefore used the popular risings against the Venetian government in Bergamo, Brescia and Cremona (made with the complicity of French commanders on the spot), a counterrevolution in Verona resulting in the death of four hundred French soldiers, the sinking of a French naval vessel on the orders of the Venetian senate as it tried to force its way into the lagoon, and finally a republican uprising inside the city of Venice itself, to order the occupation of that city on 14 May 1797.

In justification of his action, he wrote to the Directory on 26 May: “Venice which has sunk into decadence . . . can hardly survive the blows we have given her. Inept population, cowardly and not made for liberty, without land or waters, it seems natural it should be given to those to whom we give the continent.” And on the following day he continued: “We shall take all her ships, we shall despoil her arsenal, take away all her guns and keep Ancona and Corfu for ourselves. . . . People say the Emperor is going to become a maritime power. It will take a long time, he will have to spend a lot of money and will never be anything but a third-rate one; it will effectively lessen his power.”61

The so-called democratic government that Napoleon now set up in Venice was appointed by a French chargé d’affaires. It lasted for only eight months, while the French systematically despoiled the city, until the Austrians took control of it. The cession of the city to Austria was conceded by the treaty of Campo Formio, signed on 17 October, in return for which the Emperor agreed to recognize the Cisalpine Republic and allow Mantua to be joined to it. The Ionian Islands passed to France and Venetian Albania to Austria. The possession of the former enabled France to block Austrian naval expansion into the Adriatic sea, or further into the Mediterranean, though Thugut showed little interest in Austria’s future as a naval power. What appalled him was Napoleon’s treatment of Venice, though there was nothing he could do about it. “France,” he wrote, “is depriving [Venice] of its last sou . . . leaving us . . . with a land peopled by democrats and consequently most susceptible to troubles and revolts and capable of infecting by their doctrines and examples the remainder of His Majesty’s lands.” The cynical arrangement
sanctioned by the treaty came as a shock to Italian patriots, already appalled by the loss to Austria of the provinces of Istria and Dalmatia, agreed by Napoleon at Leoben. In a proclamation the provisional government had addressed to the peoples of mainland Venetia, it described the cession as nothing less than “the completion of our ruin . . . fatal to the liberties of all the people of Italy.”

How much more so after Campo Formio.

The French diplomat Miot de Melito recounts in his memoirs a conversation between himself, Napoleon and Melzi at the time of the treaty negotiations. Napoleon is recounted as saying:

As for your country, it possesses still fewer elements of republicanism than France, and can be more easily managed than any other. You know better than anyone that we shall do what we like in Italy. But the time has not yet come; we must temporise with the form of the moment, and we are going to have one or two republics of our particular kind. . . . In the meantime I have already expunged two from Italian territory [Genoa and Venice], and although they were quite aristocratic republics, [and] had more public spirit and more fixed opinions than we found elsewhere, they would in the end have hampered us. For the rest, I am quite determined, I will not give up Lombardy or Mantua to Austria. . . . I will give her Venice, and a portion of the terra firma of that ancient republic as an indemnification.

“We both [continued Miot] exclaimed against such a proposition, which would once more see Austria at the gates of Italy, and crush all the hopes of a population which he himself had freed from the yoke of an odious oligarchy, only to transfer them to an absolute monarchy, which would hold them in no less intolerable slavery than that from which he had just delivered them.” Disingenuously, Napoleon replied that he would not do that, unless by some blunder of Paris he was forced to make peace.

Yet it was in fact Paris that was bounced by Napoleon into accepting the terms of the treaty, having been very firmly opposed to seeing the Austrians re-established in Italy. It is scarcely to be wondered at that the Venetian patriots felt betrayed for, when the French first entered Venice, they found a Committee of Public Safety and the pillars in the central Piazetta covered with graffiti praising Napoleon, whom they were calling “Our Legislator.” As the British consul was to record, two days after the entry of the French, “the peaceable inhabitants of Venice are now as mad with cockades as ever I saw those of Paris in 1790. The tradesmen abandon their occupations and patrol the streets, and the youth are inebriated with
Departments of the Cisalpine Republic, December 1797.

the liberty of wearing the sword.” He concluded, “The late government finished like a flash of lightning.”

When on 7 October Napoleon had told Talleyrand, the Directory’s minister for foreign affairs, that it was necessary to make peace with Austria, and that little was to be achieved by renewing the war, he described his deep disillusion with the Italian population:

You don’t know these people, they are not worth having 40,000 Frenchmen killed on their behalf. . . . Since I came to Italy I have received no help from this nation’s love of liberty and equality or at least such help has been negligible. Here are the facts: whatever is good to say in proclamations or printed speeches is romantic fiction. You seem to imagine great things are to be achieved with a people who are soft, superstitious,
deceitful and cowardly. . . . I haven’t a single Italian in my army, apart from, I believe, 1500 rogues [the Legion] taken off the streets of various towns in Italy, who pillage and are good for nothing.

He did however concede that

little by little the people of the Cisalpine Republic will become enthusiastic for liberty; little by little they will organise themselves, and perhaps in four or five years they might have 30,000 passable troops, especially if they recruit some Swiss; for it would need a very clever law-giver to give them a taste for soldiering. They are a very flabby and craven nation. . . . I have never had, since I was in Italy, as a support, the love of the people for liberty and equality, or at least it has been a very feeble support. But the good discipline of our army, the great respect we have had for religion . . . [and] justice, especially our energetic and prompt repression of those with evil intentions and [our] punishing those who declared against us, that has been the real support of the army of Italy.65

It is true, of course, as Albert Pingaud points out, that Napoleon was the first to introduce into the language of politics the terms “Italy” and “Italian nation,”66 but as is evident from what he wrote to Talleyrand in July 1798, his aim had been to render nul the efforts of those Italian republicans who dreamt of achieving Italian unity. Such a republic, Napoleon insisted (and here he might have been quoting Barras), would become too powerful and a threat to France and would soon forget the benefits conferred on it by the French Republic. Gratitude was not a virtue of peoples.

In the two years Napoleon had spent in Italy, his primary concern had been the winning of a military campaign, and the cause of Italy and its peoples was always subordinate to that aim. If he granted new governments to the Italians in northern and central Italy and finally established the Cisalpine Republic, it was only to bolster his military position in his contest with the Austrian armies; and his treatment of the Venetian patriots demonstrates how far the lofty concepts of liberty and equality were really of importance to him, if they stood in the way of realpolitik. Throughout all this period, however, he was really no more than an army general, subject ultimately to the decisions of the government of the Directors in Paris. He could not formulate an Italian policy.

All this was to change when he became France’s civil ruler, first consul in 1800, consul for life in 1802 and emperor in 1804. Italy then became for him a forward bastion against Austria, a right wing of his Grand Army, a colony to be exploited for its rich resources
in money, matériel and men, and a launching-pad for the destruction of British power in the Mediterranean and for an assault on the Ottoman Empire. Already in February 1797 he had stressed in a letter to the Directory the importance of retaining the port of Ancona in any future treaty of peace: “You can reach Macedonia from there in twenty-four hours and Constantinople in ten days. Its possession will give us great influence with the Ottoman Empire and make us masters of the Adriatic.”\(^6^8\) Italy also opened the path for a resurrection of the empire of Charlemagne, with Rome the second city in it. “All my ambition is directed towards Italy,” he told Girolamo Lucchesini, the Prussian minister, in September 1806. “She is a mistress whose favours I want no one to share. I want the whole Adriatic Gulf. The Pope will be my vassal and I will conquer Sicily.”\(^6^9\) As Albert Pingaud has emphasized, Napoleon’s Spanish policy was complementary to, not a renunciation of, the projects he had for an Italian-based strategy, and the mastery of the Mediterranean remained to the end his principal aim. Corfu, lost to Russia in 1799 but recovered by France in 1807, he saw as the key to the Adriatic, and only the Italian ports of Venice, Ancona and Brindisi could ensure Corfu was kept supplied.

Even after the Russian disaster, Napoleon announced he was determined not to cut back on the armaments of Venice; while in 1813, when defeated at Leipzig, and with all Germany lost to him, he told Melzi that “whatever happens, the kingdom [of Italy] can count on me not to abandon it . . . the Austrians will not be masters of Italy.”\(^7^0\)

Napoleon’s methods for shaping Italy changed with the growth of his ambitions and with the progress of the wars. But whatever role he designed for Italy, he always regarded it as being a very special part of his empire. The years of his first victorious campaign, conducted on Italian soil, had generated and inspired in him an ambition that was to focus on that country.
Melzi and the Italian Republic

Much had happened in Italy between November 1797, when Napoleon left Milan, and his victory at Marengo in June 1800, shortly to be followed by the treaty of Lunéville (February 1801) and then the more general Peace of Amiens, concluded in March 1802. All this quite apart from the fact that, since the coup of Brumaire in December 1799, Napoleon had now become First Consul and so the de facto ruler of France.

During 1798 and the first half of the following year, French-sponsored republics had been established in the Papal state of the kingdom of Naples. The French Directory had not sought these creations, had no wish to provoke Austria into a renewal of the war that would merely advantage France’s enemy Britain, and the foreign minister Talleyrand regarded the Italian republics (as well as those of Holland and Switzerland) as commitments that weakened France militarily. But, as pointed out by two historians, Carlo Zaghi and R. R. Palmer, the revolution had by now acquired an unstoppable momentum of its own, and French generals in Italy (Brune, Joubert and Championnet) showed far more sympathy for the Italian democrats than ministers of the Directory of Paris.¹

The French army’s occupation of Rome and the proclamation of a Roman republic was forced upon the Directory by the murder of its envoy, General Duphot. The change of government in Rome was not met at once by clerical resistance, and fourteen cardinals con-celebrated a Te Deum in thanks for “liberty regained.” Only as the new rule became more radical and the miserable fate of the invalid Pope (deported from Florence, whence he had fled) became more generally known, did priestly attitudes begin to change.²

The Directory resisted extremist clamor on the part of Italian Jacobins to overthrow the Bourbon monarchy in Naples. It was only the Neapolitan attack on Rome in the autumn of 1798 that led General Championnet not only to repel the Neapolitan army but to pursue it into Naples and there establish a Neapolitan republic. His
action was not approved by Paris and he was shortly after recalled. General Macdonald was sent to replace him and Faipoult, whom Championnet had expelled, sent back to enforce the Directory’s orders. The Neapolitan democrats then sent a deputation to Paris to get their republic formally recognized, but it found itself officially rebuffed. However, when Macdonald and most of his troops were withdrawn, as they were shortly after, to meet threats of an Austrian advance in the north, leaving only garrisons in the Naples forts, the Neapolitan Jacobins took over effective control of the city. Their triumph was to prove short-lived. In the spring of 1799 they were effectively liquidated by the army of Ruffo’s Sanfedisti and the British naval squadron commanded by Nelson.3

The resumption of France’s war with Austria, which became the war of the Second Coalition and began in December 1798, was instigated by British diplomacy, though largely provoked by the actions of France. Austria could never tolerate the establishment of a series of republics, all revolutionary in character, nor indeed could the Russian Tsar Paul, posing as they did a threat to monarchy and a social structure they were determined to preserve.

The triennio of 1796–99, a heady period of liberation for the Italian democrats and made possible only by the success of French arms, was followed by thirteen months of reaction, consequent on successive victories by the armies of Austria and Russia. Only with Masséna’s victory at Zürich, the withdrawal of Russia from the coalition and the defeat of Austria by Napoleon at Marengo in the following year, did the fate of Italian patriots and reformers, whether of moderate or Jacobin complexion, appear to be taking a change for the better.

In Piedmont in 1797 there had been a series of peasant revolts that had been bloodily suppressed by the royalists and supported by local patriots, and the king had allowed a French garrison to occupy the citadel of Turin, after receiving protests about attacks being carried out on French troops. It was not enough to satisfy General Joubert commanding the Army of Italy when, in 1798, Austria was threatening an attack. He demanded the arsenal be handed over and Piedmont supply a force of nine thousand to fight against the kingdom of Naples, whose troops had recently occupied both the city of Rome and the port of Livorno. When the Piedmontese king, Charles Emmanuel IV (Victor Amadeus had died in October 1796) agreed to provide the contingent of soldiers but refused to abandon the arsenal, he was accused of pro-Austrian sympathy. The French thereupon seized the fortresses of Cuneo, Susa and Alessandria and made their garrisons prisoner, causing the king to flee the country,
first to Parma and then to Florence. The Jacobins took over Turin, planted a tree of liberty there, renamed as the Temple of Wisdom the Superga basilica (in whose vaults Savoy kings were traditionally buried) and scattered the bones of the royal family.

Only a few months later, however, the French were driven out of Piedmont by Austro-Russian forces under General Suvorov. When Suvorov first entered Milan on 29 April 1799, he invited the Piedmontese to rise, and a peasant army called the Massa Christiana, with the active encouragement of most of the clergy, joined forces with the Austro-Russians. They fought bitterly against the French, attacking their depleted garrisons, and hampering and harassing their withdrawal, and were savagely treated in return. But once the French were finally expelled, there developed a clash of views between the Austrian and the Russian commanders. Suvorov wanted a provisional government under the noble Thaon de Reval, the Austrians demanded the return of the king. When shortly after the Russians withdrew, the Austrians obtained a free hand to administer the country till the king returned. It proved to be an unhappy solution, so far as the Piedmontese were concerned, the Austrian commissary, a Friulian, was both dictatorial and venal. He claimed Piedmont was a conquered country and must be administered as such, and forced the people into Austrian service. In consequence the population found Austrian rule no more acceptable than that of the French that it had replaced, and feared, with some reason, that the Emperor at Vienna cherished ambitions to annex their country.4

The patriots returned after Marengo, but Piedmont had once again to endure a forcible military occupation. The financial burden of this was made worse by Napoleon’s action, in September 1800, of detaching from Piedmont the Novarese, a fertile strip that lies between the Sesia and Ticino rivers, and joining it to the Cisalpine Republic. Napoleon approached the king, Victor Emmanuel (Charles Emmanuel having abdicated) about forming a military alliance with France, but the king’s condition for agreement, the restoration of the severed lands and of all the dissolved religious houses, proved, not surprisingly, to be unacceptable. Nor would he agree to abandon his allies, nor to close the Sardinian ports to their warships or their merchant vessels.

Throughout 1800 anarchy reigned in the mountainous areas below the Alps, provoked by the wildly unpopular exactions and requisitions of the French commanders, and in 1801 the Val d’Aosta experienced a serious peasant rising. On 12 April 1801 Piedmont was declared to be the twenty-seventh military district of France and divided into six departments; though when a deputation
of Piedmontese went to Paris in June of that year to petition Napoleon to annex their state, they were not accorded an interview with him. It was not until more than a year later that Napoleon finally agreed to annexation, and on 11 September 1802 Piedmont was proclaimed to be part of France. It was possible for Napoleon to do this without arousing the anger of Russia since the Tsar Paul I, who had constituted himself the protector of the House of Savoy, had been murdered in March 1801, while the new Tsar, Alexander I, was willing to accept at their face value the vague promises Napoleon made about compensation for the King of Sardinia. This amounted to certain territory recently surrendered by the King of Naples: Piombino and the Presidii, or possibly the duchy of Parma. But the king of Spain raised strong objections, so Victor Emmanuel in the end got nothing.5

After 1802 the Gallicization of the ex-state of Piedmont proceeded apace: the French language became compulsory in schools and in all official business transactions: the religious orders were totally suppressed and freedom to practise all religions proclaimed. The number of bishoprics was halved and the Piedmontese army, eight thousand strong, was incorporated into the army of France, subject to its discipline and military law. Napoleon justified his action on what were purely military grounds: France needed Piedmont as a gateway to Italy and must hold on to it for as long as the Austrians held on to Venice. But, when in 1805 by the Peace of Pressburg, the Austrians removed from Venice, there was never any indication by Napoleon that he might return Piedmont to its former ruler.

Initial Piedmontese reactions to annexation were most unfavorable, and Jourdan, in command of the French garrison, reported at the end of August 1802 that the people were thoroughly discontented: “Generally they heartily detest us, and those who support us grow daily fewer.” But a year later the picture had changed and the secretary-general of the military division reported to one of the councilors of state that the situation was much more stable: “Those who continued to support the former rule, because they were afraid it would soon return, have now become supporters of the French régime; those who were committed royalists now submit because they are compelled to; the Italian party [patriots] is rallying to the French out of necessity at the moment, but soon they will become attached to us by interest.” The merchants were pleased because the country was reunited with Savoy and Nice, from which it had been severed since 1792, and the peasants welcomed the abolition of feudalism.6
The more conservative General Menou replaced Jourdan in 1803 and headed a general administration until its abolition in 1806. For the next two years Prince Camillo Borghese, husband of Pauline Bonaparte, was the governor general of both Piedmont and Liguria, the so-called “Departments beyond the Alps”; but in 1808 both these departments were administered directly from Paris. Liguria suffered the same fate, though three years after that of Piedmont. Although Genoa held out for long against a besieging Austrian army, the battle of Marengo ensured that the French were soon in occupation again, after Masséna had been forced to surrender it. Napoleon in October 1801 gave Genoa a constitution, personally nominating the doge and thirty senators, but the government was effectively in the hands of Saliceti, the French commissioner. It was the latter who, in 1804, prompted the Genoese senate to request the republic’s annexation to France, something Napoleon graciously agreed to at his coronation in Milan.

Once the war with Britain was resumed, as it was in May 1803, Napoleon had need of Genoese sailors and the assistance of Genoese shipyards. In May Genoa dispatched four thousand sailors to Toulon and a further five thousand in October, as well as equipping six new warships. Napoleon justified the annexation by telling foreign ambassadors: “When the English give back Goa to the Portuguese, Ceylon to the Dutch, the vast inheritance of Tippo Sahib to his heirs, they will be entitled to protest at the union of a territory already an enclave of the French empire.” But the annexation was the last straw, so far as Austria was concerned, and led the Emperor to join Russia and Britain in what became the war of the Third Coalition.

Lucca was given a constitution modeled on that of the Italian Republic (mentioned later in this chapter) and became narrowly dependent on France. In 1796 the republic, like other central Italian states, had paid a ransom to remain unoccupied. In 1798 it had been coerced into lending the first Cisalpine Republic 150,000 lire (roughly 178,000 francs) to pay for supporting the French occupying army. In January 1799 French troops commanded by General Serrurier took over the city of Lucca and the nobles were made to grant a loan amounting to 2 million lire (more than 2.25 million francs). The French troops eventually left in July 1799, on the approach of the Austro-Russians, but returned a year later to exact more money after the battle of Marengo. Masséna, then Brune, then Saliceti followed each other in quick succession between July 1800 and January 1802, each demanding fresh monetary contributions. By the time that Lucca was at last conceded its democratic constitu-
tion, it had in various forms paid the French no less than 22 million francs.  

The fate of Parma and Tuscany was tied to Napoleon’s insistence on keeping the support of the Spanish Bourbons, with whom France had been allied since October 1795. The assistance of the large Spanish navy, the trade with Spain’s American colonies, the hope of acquiring Louisiana and the cooperation that Spain afforded in maintaining command of the Mediterranean, all weighed heavily with Napoleon. By the treaty of Lunéville in February 1801, Austria renounced the Habsburg claim to the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, while by a parallel treaty with Spain, signed at Aranjuez, also in February, the Duke of Parma (a Spanish Bourbon) renounced his duchy in favor of France, in return for his son Ludovico being given the throne of Tuscany, with the title of King of Etruria, while Spain handed over Elba to France. On the Duke’s death in October 1802, the French occupied the duchy. At the Congress of Lyon (mentioned later in this chapter), Napoleon promised the Italian Republic, which was to replace the Cisalpine, he would add Parma to its dominions, but in the event he decided to keep it, and in 1805 incorporated it as an integral part of the empire of France. Presumably military reasons decided. The duchy’s geographical position was of extreme strategic importance, controlling all roads into the peninsula as well as an important bridge over the Po at Piacenza.  

Tuscany, though given to Ludovico, was forced to support a large French garrison. In the spring of 1799, before Austro-Russian victories had driven the French from most of Italy, French forces had entered Tuscany, forced the Grand Duke to flee his capital and had set up a provisional government, without proclaiming a republic. Though the French declaimed a great deal about their bringing liberty, the Tuscans soon became aware of the military contributions levied and the plundering of their art treasures. When Russian victories caused the French to depart, there was a popular counterrevolution. Beginning in the cities of Arezzo and Siena, in the name of the Catholic religion and to the cry of “Viva Maria,” trees of liberty were uprooted, the houses of French collaborators pillaged and four hundred suspected Jacobins murdered, together with nineteen Jews who were burned. Disorder and anarchy ruled for three months and extended to the capital Florence, until the Austrians imposed some order and maintained it until they eventually withdrew after Napoleon’s Marengo victory.  

When General Murat visited Florence in January 1801, he gave a discouraging description to Napoleon of the devastation wrought by recent events. “French, Austrians, Neapolitans and English have
passed through, and the Tuscan people have suffered the horrors of war and intestinal quarrels. Exorbitant contributions have been levied and officials and generals have given an example of extraordinary immorality.” The same story was told to Napoleon by the French officer who was in charge of commercial relations in Livorno: “Tuscany has been taken by assault; there is no people more miserable than the Tuscons... no words can describe the atrocities committed in every commune.” The country was in a state of anarchy, not helped by the huge financial contribution it had to provide to pay and maintain the French army of occupation. Yet Murat contrived to live in great state in the Corsini palace on the banks of the Arno.11

The new king was under clerical influence, which remained very powerful in Tuscany. The French ambassador, General Clarke, raised strong objections to this state of affairs and raised the matter with Talleyrand, but the latter replied that Napoleon had no wish to upset the Spanish king and that the internal affairs of Etruria were a matter for king Ludovico alone.12

Rome had suffered much from a French revolutionary republic, established by General Berthier. The French had done their best to despoil Rome, after Berthier was succeeded there by the arch-plunderer General Masséna. “This Babylon,” wrote Commissioner Haller, “gorged with the spoils of the universe, must feed us and pay our debts.”13 Soon, however, the tables were turned by the armies of the Second Coalition. The Legations were occupied by Austria, and Rome by the Neapolitans. A new pope, Pius VII, was elected at a conclave that was held in Venice, but by the time he arrived in Rome, Napoleon had triumphed at Marengo. Though at first unwilling to recognize a pope elected under Austrian influence, Napoleon soon decided that Pius was not the Austrian puppet he had feared, and a man with whom he could do business. He was eager for political reasons to reach an agreement with the Catholic Church, first in France and then in Italy. When he entered the cathedral in Milan on 5 June 1800, he hastened to assure the assembled congregation that “the French are of the same religion as you. Admittedly we have had our quarrels, but all will be arranged, all will be adjusted.”14

Negotiations for a concordat followed. After long delays it was eventually signed in September 1801. Though Napoleon’s relations with Pius VII became very strained in the years to come, Napoleon had traveled far in five years from his stance in 1796 when, flushed with victories, he had urged the Directory to destroy “this centre of fanaticism [Rome],” had announced his intention of going south to “free the Roman people from their long slavery” and had only been
deterred from doing so by military considerations of the Austrian threat.\textsuperscript{15}

After Cardinal Ruffo and his Sanfedisti had compelled the French garrisons to evacuate Naples and republican forces to surrender, the king had returned to his capital where he exacted a terrible vengeance on all who had taken the republican side. His army again took possession of Rome and then invaded Tuscany by sea, though very soon it was forced to retire. After Marengo Napoleon gave orders for Murat to march on Naples but canceled the orders at the last moment, when urged by Tsar Paul to hold his hand. Paul fancied his role as protector of Naples, as well as of the House of Savoy, and had responded to a personal call made to him by the Queen of Naples. Napoleon, at this time being anxious to cultivate the friendship of Russia, told Murat to get the Neapolitans out of Rome without a fight. He also saw the value of winning the support of the Neapolitan Bourbons, provided he could secure their agreement not to assist the British fleet and to lend him the use of their
ports in Apulia, from which he could send his troops to Egypt. Accordingly, in March 1801, a treaty of peace was signed at Florence by which Ferdinand agreed to pay half a million francs as indemnity for excesses during the counterrevolution, to allow the return of political exiles, to renounce in favor of Tuscany Porto Longone on the island of Elba, Piombino and the Presidii, and close his ports to British and Turks. The treaty also had secret clauses that gave France the right to garrison the Adriatic ports of Pescara and Otranto, and Naples agreed to give France three frigates. The treaty meant that Naples had become effectively a vassal of France, a point that did not escape the queen, who complained bitterly about Naples becoming nothing but “a Gallo-Spanish province.”

After the treaty of Amiens, the French garrisons were withdrawn, but when the war with Britain was resumed, as it was in May 1803, Napoleon sent his troops back into Apulia. From then on until 1805, when Naples finally broke with France, a state of tension persisted between the court of Naples and the French ambassador, the acerbic Jacobin Charles Alquier. The court was influenced principally by the English-born minister General Acton, whom Alquier complained was “only a member of the British cabinet.” When Napoleon put pressure on the court to dismiss Acton and Hugh Elliot, the British resident minister, Acton was sent to Sicily (though he still retained his influence at court), but Elliot did not relinquish his post.

In the Cisalpine Republic, after the departure of Napoleon in November 1797, the Jacobins again took control. Their club, which Napoleon had closed a fortnight before he left Milan, was reopened and freedom of the press and freedom of meeting were allowed again. This was not at all to the Directory’s liking. Between August 1798 and the end of April 1799 it made two attempts to close the club, each time frustrated by its resident general. It also imposed a new constitution with the aim of reducing the power of the Jacobins, cutting the number of deputies from 240 to 120, increasing the power of the executive and making the franchise less democratic. The Directory also forced the republic to accept a military treaty of alliance, by which the republic was compelled to finance an army of 30,000 men as well as pay and keep supplied a French army of 25,000. Ex-Duke Serbelloni went to Paris to try to obtain less onerous terms, but all he got from Talleyrand was a reduction in the size of the army from 30,000 to 22,000. The treaty was eventually ratified on 14 March 1798, but only after much protest in the chambers, something the Directory took in bad part.

The arrival of the Austrians at the end of April put an end to the
First Cisalpine Republic. What followed for the next thirteen months was a reign of terror for Jacobins, accompanied by onerous taxation. All laws passed by the Cisalpine Republic were declared to be null and void. Church property that had been sold to individuals was seized but not returned to the Church. Seigneurial courts were reinstated and primogeniture and entail restored. A draconic censorship was imposed. Eight hundred Italian Jacobins were arrested and deported to prisons in Hungary and Dalmatia, while hundreds more, headed by Marescalchi, took refuge in France at Chambéry. It was not therefore very surprising that Napoleon found himself acclaimed when he visited Milan soon after Marengo. But he showed no more sympathy for the Jacobins than he had in 1797. Indeed he took steps to welcome priests and threatened anyone who insulted religion. “An irreligious society is like a ship without a rudder,” he announced—a marked change from his attitude four years earlier, when he had firmly closed his eyes to a series of anti-religious disorders. He told Talleyrand it was the only way to live in peace with the Italian peasantry. He ostentatiously attended a solemn Te Deum in Milan cathedral to celebrate his victory, and told the cardinal archbishop of Milan he intended to live in friendship with the Church. There were scenes of general enthusiasm. Foscolo composed his “Oration to Bonaparte,” and Melzi, from Spain, wrote to a friend, “Let us thank Heaven in having in Bonaparte a pledge for our future happiness.”

Such sentiments of warmth did not last long, for the newborn Second Cisalpine Republic proved to be a worse edition of the first. Instead of a French ambassador, there was now a French proconsul exercising plenary powers; military license replaced the law and the republic was put to the sack with the complicity of three corrupt men (Sigismondo Ruga, Giambattista Sommariva and Francesco Visconti) who constituted the Consulta of government. In ten months the republic had to pay to the French, who were its so-called liberators, the sum of eighty-two million francs from an annual budget of fifty-two. Foscolo described the second Cisalpine as “a mockery of proconsular thieves, quarrelling citizens, timorous magistrates.” There was mutual hatred between Cisalpine cities, who were unified only in hating Milan. Bologna was especially resentful; it even rejected Milan’s decrees and claimed that its army was independent. But such interregional rivalry was typical of the Italian scene. “A Lombard regarded the Piedmontese, Venetians, Romagnose and Genoese not as compatriots, but as strangers, in the same category as the English or French.” Moreover the interregional mix had been increased by the treaty of Lunéville, when
more Venetian territory was added to the Cisalpine republic: half the Veronese, including Verona, and the Polesine at the mouth of the Po.

Serious disturbances took place within the boundaries of the republic. The political exiles who had returned were active in their demonstrations against the government in Milan, against the clergy and against the aristocracy, and were courted in turn by the Austrian party, who tried to stir up counterdisorders. The anticlerical demonstrations, and the policy of the government to allow the marriage of Catholic priests and their election by their congregations, led to the bishops taking flight. The hardships endured by the population were made worse by the damage caused by storms and severe floods in Lombardy, and in the valley of the Po, during the course of 1801. There was now a grave economic crisis: the cost of living rose, families starved and Milan became the center of attraction for paupers, deserters from the army, vagabonds and criminals. In other cities such as Novara, Modena, Bologna and Brescia, there were riots and pillaging of churches. All classes of society were distraught, willing they said to give themselves “to the Turk or even to the Devil,” provided that a new régime could produce a remedy for the bitter hatred and deep sense of disillusion they felt for the French’s broken promises and their arrogant behaviour. The arbitrary exactions and requisitions by local French commanders was becoming intolerable. For instance General Varrin, who commanded French troops in the Lower Po department, had demanded to be furnished with 500 pairs of boots, 6,000 pairs of shoes, 6,000 shirts and 6,000 hats and provisions for 8,000 men for eighteen days; yet as Marescalchi complained to Talleyrand, Varrin’s total force in the area did not amount to half those numbers.

Though Napoleon had decreed the closure of political clubs and radical papers, the Milanese government had failed to keep order, since it could not pay its national guards. Melzi, who had been living in Spain, to which he had retired in disgust with the radicalism of the first republic (he was half Spanish and had estates in Aragon), appealed to Napoleon to solve the problem. “How many hopes,” he wrote, “your appearance has created! Everyone awaits the return of the general.” Two years later he told Baron Moll, the Austrian minister in Milan, “I never pretended to Bonaparte that I could consider the existence of the Cisalpine [Republic] as an established system, but only as a position; it was a building without foundations, ready to collapse at the first shock of events.”

A deputation from Milan of the wealthy Bolognese lawyer, Antonio Aldini, whom Napoleon had known since 1796, and of Duke
(ci-devant) Serbelloni, a great Lombard nobleman who was a supporter of revolution and once-time ambassador to Paris, waited on Napoleon to explain to him the appalling state of affairs in the republic. Napoleon was extremely angry, attacked them over the anarchy and corruption of the Cisalpine officials, but realised something drastic must be done. Four months later he gave orders for the summoning of a constituent council at Lyon, to discuss the drafting of a new constitution. Meanwhile he summoned Melzi to Paris to consult on the changes that were required. He respected Melzi’s antiradical views and his quality as a diplomat following the latter’s performance at Rastadt as the representative of the Cisalpine Republic, where negotiations were held to discuss the terms of peace between France and the Empire.

The congress of Lyon was supposed to discuss, but in reality merely to approve, the draft constitution already prepared by the president of the French council of state, Pierre-Louis Roederer. It had already been approved, with a few minor modifications, by Melzi, Aldini, Serbelloni and Marescalchi, the latter already resident in Paris as representative of the Cisalpine Republic. The congress met in January 1802 and sat until the end of February. Napoleon had chosen the venue of Lyon, a city midway between Milan and Paris, to preserve the delegates from local influence and from the intrigues of the diplomatic corps. The congress was very well attended by no less than 484 notables (the term indicating someone who paid the highest taxes), and drawn from every educated social class; but, as might have been foreseen, with so numerous an assembly, endless discussions produced no agreement. After weeks of debate, Napoleon appeared and settled everything within a fortnight.

The constitution of the new republic provided for three electoral colleges: Possidenti (landowners) who met in Milan, Commercianti (businessmen) who met at Brescia, and Dotti (intellectuals) who met at Bologna. They were to be summoned every two years and their session was to last a fortnight. The government consisted of a president and two councils, a legislative council and a council of state, half nominated by the president and half by the electoral colleges. Although the first members of the legislative council were nominated by Napoleon, they were to constitute in the years that followed a real opposition to the executive. One may well wonder what would have happened had they been a freely elected body.

Only in appearance was the régime constitutional. The presidency was what really counted: indeed the complexity of the constitution and of its electoral procedures, as well as its numerous
component parts, were designed, as with the French constitution, to enhance the powers of the president.\textsuperscript{29} This office was offered to Napoleon’s brother Joseph, but he refused it when he found the conditions that he insisted on were not accepted. He wanted Piedmont included in the state, and the French garrison withdrawn. He objected to the financial tribute that had to be paid to maintain the French troops (if indeed they were to remain), and particularly to the presence of Murat, the officer in command of those troops. His refusal came as a relief to Melzi, who told Talleyrand that “for such a dignity . . . either noble birth or deeds, the fame of which singles him out from others to rule them and will seize men’s imaginations, is necessary . . . the lustre conferred on this man by his brother the First Consul is certainly considerable, but nevertheless it cannot supply the prestige needful for upholding this office.”\textsuperscript{30} If it had to be a foreigner—something that Melzi had no desire for—then only Napoleon could fill the bill. The deputies at Lyon had initially elected Melzi as president, but unsurprisingly he refused the offer, as also did Aldini, their second choice. Their third choice was the Milanese Luigi Villa, who was not present to refuse or accept.\textsuperscript{31} Thus they had with reluctance to accept Napoleon, who named Melzi his deputy.

Melzi was reluctant to take on the job, on grounds of age and failing health—like Pitt he was a martyr to gout. But he feared the alternative was annexation to France. A dignified man of distinguished looks, a little aloof but a skilled negotiator with a clear and subtle intellect and prodigious memory, tenacious and with an indomitable will, he enjoyed the full confidence of Napoleon. There are varying views about his character. One is that, beneath a diffident exterior, he concealed a love of power and wish to be popular. Though Driault thinks he was the champion of liberty against the all-consuming ambition of Napoleon, Pingaud disparages this view. Roberti thinks the truth lies between. Melzi was certainly an upright man of impeccable integrity and probably with no real ambition, wanting to retire from the affairs of state but still willing to share the weight of responsibility for public policy when, in 1813 and 1814, the power of Napoleon was in visible decline. His enemies among the patriots accused him of pride and vanity, but this was doubtless because he detested all those who held Jacobinical views.\textsuperscript{32}

The new republic was named “Italian,” a skilful propaganda move by Napoleon, designed to get the reluctant delegates to accept his presidency. He told them that from now on they had national, not local laws and must now form a national army. Not unnaturally
the new name was greeted at Lyon with great enthusiasm. In Milan, however, the new constitution, the republic’s name and the name of the president were met with considerable surprise, and with pleasure only by the clergy.\textsuperscript{32}

Napoleon, as President of the republic, delegated all his powers to Melzi, save the appointment and dismissal of ministers, the convocation of the legislative body and the electoral colleges, the handling of the current budget and foreign and military affairs. He wrote to Melzi in February (1802): “My faith in you is complete and absolute. . . . Work tirelessly to achieve the organisation and happiness of the fatherland.”\textsuperscript{34} And because, in the course of the next three years, Napoleon was preoccupied with French affairs, with the war with Britain and the European scene, he was unable to involve himself closely with the administration of the newly formed republic, much was left to Melzi to organize.

The latter was faced with many problems. One was the presence of thousands of Jacobins whom he wanted to eject from the country. These returned exiles, concentrated in Milan, Bologna and other cities, were mostly unemployed, impoverished and hostile to a government that was French-imposed. Napoleon however would only agree to their expulsion from Milan, always hoping to win them over. Jacobin agitation was intense, especially in Emilia. A serious revolt broke out in Bologna, triggered by the high price of bread, but also by anger at the loss of its position as the capital of a province, and by having to reduce the numbers of its national guard, which were seen by the local French commander as a challenge to the garrison. The prefect (a Veronese not a Bolognese) was unpopular, as was his Neapolitan secretary-general who was attacked and seriously wounded. General Verdier was sent to the city with a division to restore order, and Bologna was subjected to a military law for the ensuing months. Then Melzi wisely replaced the prefect by a Mantuan lawyer, Teodoro Samenzari, who was not only a trained administrator but also a tactful man. His Jacobin antecedents rendered him acceptable to the Bolognese, and he carried out a purge of the national guard without appearing to persecute the democrats. Even so, Bologna long continued to be a center of opposition to the central government.\textsuperscript{35} Municipal and regional jealousies also showed themselves in the council of state, where a bitter rivalry developed between Melzi and the Bolognese Aldini. This came to a head in 1803 when Melzi deprived Aldini of his position in the Legislative council. Aldini remained, however, president of the electoral college of the landowning \textit{Possidenti}, and a popular
and respected figure. Melzi recognized Aldini’s qualities but personally disliked him intensely.36

All the ministers of the republic were Italians. The minister for foreign affairs who, significantly resided in Paris in direct communication with Napoleon, was Ferdinando Marescalchi, a wealthy Lombard noble. He had been ambassador in Vienna and then, as mentioned earlier, acted as representative of the second Cisalpine Republic in Paris. He constituted the principal link between Melzi and Napoleon, but was not strong enough to stand up to the latter, and so simply acted as his mouthpiece. Continuity with the second Cisalpine was also provided by the Sienese, Buonaventura Spannocchi, who had earlier been in Austrian service, acted as minister for justice in the revived (second) Cisalpine and was now allowed to retain his post. The minister for war was Alessandro Triulzi, a brave soldier but a poor administrator. The minister for religions was Stanislas Bovara, a former member of the Emperor Joseph’s ecclesiastical commission, a Jansenist cleric who was also professor at the university of Pavia. Most important of all was the minister for finance, the redoubtable Piedmontese Giuseppe Prina, whom Napoleon was later to describe to Eugène, his stepson and viceroy of the kingdom of Italy, as the one essential minister, “the only man of sense and ability.” Prina was a very able financier, incorruptible, energetic and hard-working. He scorned the bitter unpopularity his stringent fiscal measures incurred and, in the end, he died for it—lynched by the mob in 1814. He inherited a chaotic financial situation and so large a budget deficit that the taxes imposed barely sufficed to pay the monthly military tribute. Stendhal described him as greater than Colbert, Louis XIV’s great minister of finance: “France has produced no one equal to this Piedmontese in the art of extracting money to the profit of a despot.”37

A great difficulty in running the administration on the highly centralized French model was the finding of suitable men as prefects. Napoleon insisted on their having not only birth but property, and the salary being offered was hardly tempting. Moreover he refused to allow any to serve in his own locality, and prospective candidates were reluctant to move, preferring to accept a post at home for a salary of two thousand francs rather than a salary of ten thousand in a location some distance away. A further reason for the reluctance to come forward to act as prefect was, certainly until 1805, the fear that French rule was only temporary. “External conditions are unassuring,” Melzi told Napoleon in 1802. Those appointed accepted office only from a spirit of obedience and often proved
timid or mediocre. In the end, many of them resigned or had to be removed for incompetence.38

Another problem facing the government was that of official over-manning, as well as the holding of official positions by men to whom Melzi strongly objected, Jacobins, political refugees, men who had abandoned the priesthood or men who were simply corrupt or incompetent. In the department of Olona alone (whose capital was Milan), he sacked 129 officials out of a total of 171, and Prina sacked all his staff in one day, a total of 133.39 Such ruthlessness was not popular. Melzi complained to Napoleon of the difficulty of governing with “so many divisions in society, secret hates and bitter rivalry. . . . To think you can overcome the habits of a people by decreeing a system is an illusion. If I wanted to employ bad men, I could fill all the departments of state, but I want only good ones.”40

Melzi voiced his differences with Napoleon via his foreign minister, Marescalchi, on a number of different topics, not least his method of governing. Melzi disliked a dictatorial style and admired the English constitution, which he described as “the only one to leave civil liberty intact.” He shared the views of Napoleon on the need for authoritarian administration, but always provided it did not subject Italians to the rule of the French. He wanted the Italian republic to be totally freed from French influence, while Marescalchi remained convinced that Italy needed French protection. He told Melzi, writing to him on 11 March 1803, “Italian liberty and independence for all its peoples are dreams that would take centuries of bloodshed and struggle to achieve. Bonaparte is our sole support. If people are not persuaded of this infallible truth, we shall descend from disaster to disaster.” This was apropos of Melzi’s grand design for an extended north Italian kingdom which he revealed to his friend Baron Moll, the Austrian envoy at Milan. It involved the Italian Republic becoming a monarchy under a member of some royal family and including Venice and the Alto-Adige within its boundaries, Austria being compensated by Prussia and Prussia annexing Hanover. The idea behind it was that this state could act independently of its powerful neighbors France and Austria and form an effective buffer between them. Naturally it made no appeal to Napoleon.41

Another point of difference was the size of the tribute to be paid to maintain the French troops in Italy. Melzi wanted to get rid of them, but Napoleon was adamant on the subject: in his view no Italian army was capable of resisting the Austrians. When he ordered away to Elba and Corsica the volunteer Italian Legion, which he
considered ill-disciplined, it created a bad impression in Italy, but in such matters Melzi could never prevail. In Bologna there were frequent clashes between the French and Italian troops, and rivalry between the engineers supplied by the French and Italian armies engaged in the construction of the Simplon highway: the fact that overall command of the project had been awarded to French officers caused the best Italian engineer officers to threaten to hand in their resignations.

A further source of concern for Melzi was the tense relationship that developed between him and General Murat, in command of all the French troops in Italy. Murat, jealous of Melzi’s position and the favor he enjoyed with Napoleon, told the latter that Melzi was incompetent, as well as being anti-French. Murat, who was impulsive and proud, used the issue of Captain Giuseppe Ceroni to try to get Melzi removed from office. Ceroni, a young poet and propagandist, had privately circulated a poem in which he accused both Napoleon and France of betraying the cause of Italian unity. Murat, when he got to know of this, had Ceroni put under arrest (illegally, as Captain Ceroni was an Italian and not a French citizen), accused him of heading an anti-French plot, and Melzi of criminal negligence in failing to treat the matter more seriously. Napoleon, when informed of this, gave vent to a typical fit of anger at the feebleness of the Milan government and at what he regarded as Italian ingratitude. “The Italians declaring their independence!” he raged. “They had better merit it. When they have an army of 40,000 men, only then will the French leave Italy. Arrest of Ceroni? I would have had him shot. The Italians are a people without character, false, intriguers, whom I have been mistaken in raising to the status of nationhood.”

Learning from Marescalchi of this outburst, Melzi replied that Ceroni was young as well as a person of no importance. If he, Melzi, had adopted measures against all who showed their anti-French feelings, it was difficult indeed to see how he could have carried on the government at all. If a conspiracy ever existed it was only in the minds of Ceroni and his friends. When both Melzi and Murat offered to resign, Napoleon ordered them to be reconciled, and this they were, though nominally only, for Murat continued to denounce Melzi for alleged anti-French activity. But Napoleon gave his support to Melzi and Murat was found another post, in Paris. In any case, with the war against Britain renewed, as it was in May 1803, and tension with Austria beginning to rise, he could not afford to let Melzi resign. Melzi never tired of repeating that any reforms in the Italian republic must be dependent on relieving the
state of the heavy burden of military tribute and reducing the size of France’s garrison, but Napoleon, despite previous promises, remained immovable on the subject. He had no intention of weakening his garrison in northern Italy, which he looked on as an offensive base for a future war against Austria; and in any event the Italian tribute helped him to balance his budget in France. Driault writes that the Ceroni affair gave Napoleon the opportunity to pose as impartial arbiter, impeccable benefactor of the republic and the only person able to assure that order was kept and its future guaranteed.

Murat was not the only general who caused Melzi trouble in Milan. Miollis, in command of the garrison, refused to cooperate with the civic authorities in official celebrations and to lend them troops for a solemn Te Deum that was to be sung in Milan Cathedral when Napoleon was proclaimed as consul for life. Miollis told Melzi that he had fought for different systems and principles; he would have nothing to do with Te Deums and priests. Soldiers of the French Republic, he said, knew only 14 July and 1 Vendémiaire as days to celebrate—the first being the day the Bastille was stormed, the second when the young Napoleon had crushed a royalist revolt in Paris.

The Legislative body was another source of trouble. In 1804, after the introduction of Napoleon’s civil code to the republic, it rejected the law regarding civil marriage, and out of forty-eight members of that body, only thirteen voted in support of the government. Napoleon sent his emissary Jacob to report on the political situation and was told the only way to surmount opposition was by having resort to bribery, and offering opponents favours and office—a course that Melzi refused to adopt.

Napoleon had, a year earlier, written to Melzi of his vexation at the opposition that was constantly shown to so many measures of government, and at the criticisms leveled at France by officials of the Italian republic. “All my efforts to make Italy independent will be fruitless,” he wrote without irony. He deplored the Italians’ ingratitude and criticized the feebleness of the Milan government, especially the ministry of the interior, in its dealing with the Ceroni affair. He was critical of the plays being performed (always conspiracies, culminating in assassination) and of the perversion of public opinion by criticisms of the French army in Italy. One ought rather to calculate, he wrote, the cost in money to the French people of defending the Italian republic that has no army of its own. He also expressed his dissatisfaction with the current anticlerical policy and Melzi’s Josephist attitude toward the Roman Catholic church. “I
want seminaries exempt from conscription and religion and priests constantly protected. This principle, especially in regard to Italy, is *l'esprit de ma marche* [the way I want things to go]. . . . There are many obstacles to surmount in organising a nation that I see has so little real character and so many stupid, mad ideas.*50*

Napoleon has insisted that the concordat with the Pope, signed in September 1801, should be extended as soon as possible to the Italian republic, something that was done in September 1803. Melzi had opposed the measure, because he thought that the threat of clericalism was much stronger in Italy than it was in France. He had told Napoleon the Italian clergy “were of a cast of mind scarcely conforming to the views of the government and secretly supported all that was opposed to it.”*51* He thought the state should protect all faiths and only accepted the concordat with reluctance. In religious observance he was devout but in politics he was anti-Papal, telling Napoleon he “was more Catholic than all the Sacred College put together.”*52* He took care to go to mass at Easter, walk in the Corpus Christi procession and see that the pensions of dispossessed religious who were starving were duly paid,*53* but he introduced in 1804 Organic Articles that displeased the Pope. These reasserted all the rights and privileges possessed by the Habsburg emperors in their capacity as dukes of Milan concerning control of education, and the publication of papal bulls, and embodied in all the legislation introduced by the Emperor Joseph II. Melzi went so far as to declare he was willing to surrender the Legations in return for a declaration by the Pope that he would recognize in perpetuity the Josephist system in the rest of the Republic.*54* But when Napoleon was crowned in Milan, as he was in May 1805, he effectively annulled the offending articles. He had not yet fallen out with the Pope and was anxious to cultivate clerical support, especially in regard to conscription.

The financial cost of creating and maintaining an army for the Italian Republic—conscription introduced in 1802 had raised 18,000 by July 1803—was a heavy burden on the exchequer, in addition to the cost of the fortifications, on which Napoleon set such store, and the building of the Simplon military route. The republic, by the start of 1804, was paying France one third of its revenue, and the expense of the Italian army, numbering thirty thousand by August 1804, exceeded every other single item in the budget, even though the cost of 6,400, while they were training at the Channel ports of France, when Napoleon was preparing his invasion of England, was eventually met by the French exchequer.*55* There were other numerous differences between Napoleon and
his vice-president that eventually persuaded Napoleon that Melzi would have to be replaced. One was over the further extension of the boundaries of the Italian republic. Melzi felt rebuffed when Piedmont was annexed to France, not Italy, in September 1802; and when the Duke of Parma died in October 1803, Melzi’s request that the duchy of Parma might now be joined to the republic, as Napoleon had earlier promised at Lyon, never received a reply from Napoleon. Further, when the Swiss canton of Ticino had sent an appeal to Melzi for help, and an Italo-French contingent was sent there, Napoleon refused to allow the canton to be joined to the Italian republic.56

On the methods Melzi used to govern the republic, there were constant differences of opinion with Napoleon, causing the latter to threaten Marescalchi that if his views were not complied with, he would annex the republic to France. Melzi was still hankering after an independent status for the republic, while Napoleon refused to contemplate anything more than a “national state” that was firmly under French protection. As Marescalchi assured Melzi, when he wrote to him in May 1804, “Neither peace nor war will make Bonaparte leave our countries . . . it is impossible he should concede the independence he seems to have guaranteed.” The end came a year later when, after his coronation in Milan, Napoleon told Melzi that the republic could no longer remain in its present state, too weak to be independent and too strong to be annexed to France. The solution would have to be a monarchy, but ruled (though naturally he did not say so) as an obedient satellite of France. It was to be demoted in effect to becoming another French department on a par with Naples (after 1806), Etruria (after 1807) and Spain (after 1808).57

The Italian republic, soon to be defunct, had achieved much in the past three years, thanks very largely to the guidance of Melzi. National pride had been restored, a well-ordered and disciplined state created, its fiscal and judicial system reformed. The public finances had been transformed by the efforts and skill of Giuseppe Prina who had succeeded in balancing the budget. Roads and waterways had been built and repaired, public health had been controlled and Milan City modernized. The construction of the Simplon route in itself had been a major work of engineering, and doing what Napoleon required of it—enabling a gun to be transported all the way from Paris to Milan without having to be dismounted. It was from a military point of view a much more satisfactory route from France into Italy than over the lower Mont Cenis pass. The latter wound through twisting valleys in Savoy and did not lend itself to
rapid marches; it debouched into Piedmont, which was a country that France could not be absolutely sure of keeping, and it could be blocked too easily by an enemy in control of Turin.

In the field of education, the decayed universities of Pavia and Bologna had been given new life, as had the academies of Fine Arts in the latter city and in Milan, while botanical gardens and observatories had been the recipients of state money. “Never before [it has been said] had literary men and intellectuals received such material and moral encouragement”—at any rate not since the sixteenth century.58

The balance sheet however was not all pluses. The monthly tribute to France ate up one third of the republic’s revenue, even if the money was spent in Italy. The tax on property was far higher than it had been in 1796 and indirect taxes were an unwelcome novelty. The presence of so many troops had caused the cost of living to rise, and though the shopkeepers and landowners benefited from this, the peasant masses were the losers. Removal of internal customs barriers and an improved communications network certainly promoted trade, as did the creation of new markets by the huge increase of civil servants, all of whom were now much better paid. Living standards rose in the towns, though the benefits were not evenly spread: Ravenna, Ferrara and Verona declined, Modena, Bologna and Brescia stagnated, but Milan, whose population was now swollen to a figure of 132,000, enjoyed a period of prosperity it had not known for two hundred years. All in all the general attitude of the population toward the republic remained one of passivity: resignation or defiant neutrality rather than one of warmth and enthusiasm.59

Melzi decided he had no wish to share in the government of the new kingdom. His conscience and sense of duty, he said, forbade his taking an active part in a project that must inevitably lead to Italy becoming a mere outpost of France. He accepted the honorary appointment of arch-chancellor of the kingdom of Italy and was rewarded for his services by being given the title of the Duke of Lodi.
Napoleon’s Satellite Kingdom of Italy

Napoleon’s decision to turn the Republic into the Kingdom of Italy was due not only to his desire to replace Melzi by someone more pliable, but also to the fact that he had assumed the Lombard crown as “King of all Italy,” in a pompous ceremony in Milan that made it impossible for him to remain the nominal head of a republic. His instinct was to appoint as king one of his brothers, preferably Joseph, to calm the fears of Austria. Unfortunately for his design, none of his brothers wanted the job. Joseph refused for the same reasons he had refused the republic’s presidency, but he also had no wish to relinquish his right to the succession to the throne of France, while Napoleon still had no legitimate heir. Louis, on behalf of his second son, to whom the crown was being offered, declined for the same reasons as Joseph; and Lucien’s marriage to an American made his candidature an impossibility, as he refused to divorce his wife. Napoleon therefore saw no alternative to assuming the sovereignty himself.

The Italian council of state in Milan voted in favor of Napoleon as monarch, provided such a settlement was guaranteed by Austria, the military tribute to France was reduced, the electoral colleges agreed and Napoleon was willing to accept the title of “constitutional monarch of Italy.” Napoleon, of course, had no intention of being bound by any conditions. But he did make a pledge that the two crowns of France and Italy would never be united, that the succession would be hereditary and that he would willingly hand the throne to his heir, whether natural or adoptive, when Britain and Russia withdrew their forces from Malta and the Ionian Islands. Meanwhile he proposed to depute the task of ruling his new kingdom to his stepson, Eugène. The news was coldly received in Milan, because of the fear of a war with Austria that would ensue from Napoleon’s actions, and the nobles showed their disapproval by absenting themselves from the celebrations, pleading poverty as an excuse.1
Napoleon had chosen Eugène because he knew his stepson could be relied on—“loyalty was foremost among his virtues”—and because Eugène was still young enough to stand in awe of his brilliant stepfather. He was modest, personable, hard-working and devoted to the profession of arms. He had an abundance of common sense where political matters were concerned, listened to his more experienced advisers and was to prove in the years to come a very capable army commander.

Napoleon showered him with advice. His first instructions were lengthy and detailed on how Eugène must comport himself: “Your duty is to make my Italian subjects happy. . . . Count yourself a failure if you do not succeed in convincing the Italians that you love them. . . . Learn to speak good Italian.” He must never let himself be disobeyed, must acquaint himself with the history of the principal cities of his kingdom, visit the fortresses and battlefields and hold monthly reviews of his troops in the capital. He must trust Prina, his minister of finance, “the only one of his staff who mattered,” keep foreign ministers at arm’s length, distrust all spies and preside infrequently at his council, since as yet he lacked political experience; finally and most important of all, he must send a daily report to Napoleon.² It may astonish the modern reader to learn that Napoleon found the time not only to read these daily reports, but to answer them in detail by return of post. It tells us something of the importance Napoleon attached to Italian affairs.

Though Eugène, in his first address to the legislature, pledged himself to work without respite for “the glory of the people of Italy and for the happiness of its people,”³ he found he was expected to remain, throughout, the compliant instrument of Napoleon. When deemed to have overstepped his authority in dealing with taxation or the legislature, he was very rapidly hauled into line and told by Duroc, on behalf of Napoleon: “Your system of government is simple. The Emperor wills it.” And, more emphatically: “If Milan is on fire, await his orders before trying to have the fire put out, even if the city should burn down meanwhile.”⁴ Even during Napoleon’s campaigns in distant Poland and East Prussia, he retained his hand on Italy, sending back to Milan his nominations of prefects, magistrates and bishops.⁵ Though Eugène worked through his ministers, presided over the council of state, commanded the troops and the militia and corresponded with Napoleon through Aldini, the secretary of state, normally resident in Paris, it was Napoleon alone who convoked or adjourned the legislative body, summoned the electoral colleges, decreed public works, allocated funds between departments, checked the monthly
accounts, nominated officials and made decisions about the size and location of the army garrisons. Aldini, the secretary of state, had to follow Napoleon all over Europe to receive the most minute instructions on what may appear quite minor matters. His policy, Napoleon told Eugène, was “La France avant tout” on every question: Italy must always take second place where the two countries’ interests seemed to conflict.

In the ten years of its existence, the kingdom of Italy saw its boundaries extended, reduced and then reextended, according to the fortunes of war and Napoleon’s arbitrary decisions. There was a party inside Piedmont who wanted to be united to Italy, but Napoleon refused to contemplate this. He told the mayor of Alessandria: “I know the Piedmontese don’t like me, but you are to declare unambiguously that the country’s annexation to France is irrevocable.” Not only Piedmont but Liguria, Tuscany, Umbria and Lucca were all excluded from joining the kingdom of Italy. Venice, Istria and Dalmatia were added to it by the treaty of Pressburg; but in 1809 the last two were removed from it, in accord with the terms of the treaty of Schönbrunn. Ragusa was added in 1807, Ancona and the Marches in 1808 and part of the Tyrol in 1809, but the kingdom of Italy remained a state without any real territorial center, without firm geographical frontiers, with no outlet to the Tyrrenhian sea and a coastline on the Adriatic that was constantly threatened by the British navy. At its heart lay a wedge of imperial territory, the duchy of Parma and Piacenza, that had the effect of dividing the kingdom into two distinct unequal halves. At one stage Napoleon contemplated adding Tuscany to the kingdom, and told Eugène so in November 1807. He instructed a Tuscan delegation to bring their homage to him in Milan, and ordered Tuscan troops to report to Bologna, prior to joining the Italian army. Yet, four months later, he changed his mind and proclaimed the kingdom of Etruria to be henceforth part of the empire of France. The reason for this change of mind lies perhaps in a letter he wrote to Cambacérès, his arch-chancellor: he wanted to extend the French coastline, he wrote, in order to recruit more sailors, and develop the port of La Spezia as an important naval base. Tuscany was also on the route to Rome, a city Napoleon had decided to annex. His action angered patriots and intellectuals, since the acquisition of Tuscany would not only have given the kingdom of Italy an outlet to the Mediterranean, but Tuscany was considered, culturally, the cradle of Italian civilization.

If a part of the Papal states were joined to the kingdom in 1808, it was because it was deemed impossible to direct the affairs of the
Catholic world except from the Empire’s capital Paris, and because at that time Napoleon still clung to the hope that he could induce the Pope to join him in a league against the enemies of the Empire. Thus it was that, in May 1808, only the Marches were joined to the kingdom—a poor area and only important because it included the port of Ancona. The junction was to prove a liability, because the Marches’ inhabitants were forbidden by the Pope to swear an oath of loyalty either to Napoleon or those acting for him.10

The tiny enclave of Massa Carrara, which had long formed a part of the kingdom of Italy, was transferred to the republic of Lucca, when the latter was given to Elisa Bonaparte. It was in fact a sensible arrangement, as a mountain barrier separated the enclave from the rest of the kingdom of Italy. In exchange, Napoleon arranged for the kingdom to purchase from his other sister Pauline the tiny duchy of Guastalla, lying on the right bank of the Po, between Mantua and Reggio Emilia. The acquisition was to prove important, as Guastalla had been allowed to become a notorious center of the contraband trade.11

As to the constitution of the kingdom, it proved little more than a facade. The legislature was tacitly suppressed, after Eugène had told Napoleon, as early as August 1805, that its mood was clannish, stupidly vain and striving after popularity.12 Napoleon decided not to recall it and, instead, gave the senate (which in 1808 he created to replace the council of state) the job of registering laws and decrees. But the senate had no political clout: it was nothing but a refuge for the great landowners, archbishops and bishops and high state officials, and its functions were purely consultative, though it was also allowed to send deputations carrying petitions to the viceroy, and was (ironically) given the task of repressing “abuses of civil liberty.”13

The electoral colleges from 1808 found themselves deprived of all their functions and were not again summoned until 1814, when the news arrived of Napoleon’s abdication. Eugène’s ministers became mere clerks, and Prina, the only one with real influence, communicated directly with Napoleon over the head of the viceroy.14 As Pingaud writes, Napoleon was fortunate to find in this minister of finance a man after his own heart, “of rare technical competence, completely obedient to Napoleon’s wishes and ingenious in devising fiscal resources to meet all the demands of his master.” He was to be the only minister whose services Napoleon retained to the end.15

Eugène had the benefits of French advisers as well as of Italian ones: Count André Abrial, his legal adviser; General Anthoulard,
councillor for military affairs; Lagarde, minister of police in Venice; General Radet, Gendarmerie; Caffarelli minister for war (after Pino); Hennin, treasurer; La Folie, prefectures; Darmay his private secretary and then minister for posts; and Etienne Méjean, his main confidant, a member of the college of Dotti and a councillor of state. A number of Italian ministers who had served in the Italian Republic retained their posts in the kingdom of Italy including, of course, Prina (minister of finance), Luosi, minister of justice, and Bovara, minister of religions. Aldini, who had been no friend of Melzi, but whom Napoleon thought highly of, was now secretary for foreign affairs, the post previously held by Marescalchi, and because he had to reside in Paris was, after Prina, the most influential of all the viceroy’s ministers.

These men were efficient, honest and hard-working and the administration as a whole attracted the best type of civil servant, offering a worthwhile and remunerative career to the educated sons of the bourgeoisie. Napoleon paid particular attention to the selection of the kingdom’s prefects and, on one occasion in 1809, reproved Eugène for the choice he had been making: they must, Napoleon wrote, be men who were able not merely to see that taxes were collected, but capable of administering provinces, and be persons of recognized character. The problem of administrative over-manning, tackled earlier by Melzi and Prina, remained a problem and was tackled afresh, starting from the bottom of the bureaucratic ladder and continuing up to the highest posts. Judges were nominated by Napoleon and now became irremovable (save, of course, on Napoleon’s orders). The French system of law courts was introduced, with a justice of peace in every canton, a court of first instance in each capital of department, a court of appeal in the major cities, and a court of Cassation in Milan.

As a soldier and a commander of troops, Eugène played his part with some distinction, even if he lost one battle (Sacile) to the Austrians in 1809. During the 1805 campaign the command of the army in Italy had been given to the more experienced Masséna, but, after Austerlitz, Eugène was promoted commander-in-chief of the kingdom of Italy. Though losing Sacile, Eugène went on to win his laurels at the battle of Raab, before joining Napoleon and the Grande Armée for the battle of Wagram. In the years that followed he commanded with distinction in Russia, Germany and finally Italy, in the last days of the Empire’s existence.

He tried to change the attitude of young Italians toward military service by establishing schools for officers and creating royal guards and guards of honor (of which more in Chapter 7).
had told him in 1805 that he must win over Italian youth: “You and you alone can form the troops; I don’t think there is an Italian general who knows how to.” Much of Eugène’s time was occupied in inspecting the kingdom’s fortresses, for Napoleon attached the greatest importance to their construction and maintenance. He told Eugène he regarded Mantua as being “the bulwark of the kingdom” and of such importance that his stepson must spend a month there during every winter. The decisive blow against a hostile Austria would always be dealt in the valley of the Danube, but in Italy there must be a system of fortresses to act as the right flank of Napoleon’s Grand Army. Apart from the so-called Quadrilateral of Mantua, Peschiera, Legnago and Verona, there were the more advanced strongholds of Osoppo, sited on a rock and commanding the valley of the Tagliamento, and Palmanova, a fortress that commanded all the exits from the Isonzo plain. “All my strength in Italy,” Napoleon wrote, “lies in my system of fortifications.” In 1813 these last two fortresses held out for six months against an Austrian invasion, and only surrendered at the armistice; while the fortresses of the Quadrilateral enabled Eugène, in 1813–14, to maneuver successfully and hold his positions while commanding an army greatly inferior to that his enemies had put into the field.

At sea Napoleon was determined, after Trafalgar, to build a fleet to challenge British superiority, and for this his shipyards and naval bases at Venice and Ancona were very important. Austria had never seriously developed the navy she had inherited from Venice by the treaty of 1797, and had allowed most of it to rot. This was not only because Baron Thugut had shown no interest in such development but because, even after he resigned his post in government in 1801, lack of money remained the deciding factor. By the treaty of Pressburg in 1805, when Venice was retroceded to France, the Austrians made over to France only three frigates, one corvette, three brigs and a number of gunboats. Napoleon had almost to start from scratch the task of building the Italian navy. In 1806 he sent a team of technicians and naval engineers to Venice, and created a special naval division within the ministry of war. In July of that year he had conscripted the population of the coastal areas to serve on board his navy’s ships and, by the end of 1807, he had 280 naval officers and 400 sailors in Venice. Venice became a great naval arsenal, employing timber from Istria, hemp from Ferrara and copper from the Dolomite mines. By the end of December 1806, a little flotilla of gunboats was ready; by February of the following year there were being constructed in the shipyards in Venice five battleships of seventy-four guns, two frigates of forty-four guns, as well as three cor-
vettes and two brigs. In March 1807 two brigs were launched and in July a further two. When Napoleon visited Italy in November/December 1807, he spent most of his time in Venice inspecting the shipyards and fortifications. A frigate was launched in the following February, and two more corvettes were ready soon after. But the construction of the *Rivoli* (a seventy-four-gun battleship), which started building in September 1808, was badly delayed, and not finally finished until September 1810. Eugène blamed the shortage of materials, and particularly the shortage of timber, which he complained was being captured continually by privateers.\(^{23}\)

The Italian navy rarely risked a fight. It lost two brigs in 1809, and five frigates in a battle off Lissa against a numerically inferior British force. In March 1812 the *Rivoli* was captured, though more through bad luck than bad seamanship. But by that time two more battleships and another frigate were ready for launching. Venice had been transformed into a well-defended naval fortress, with shore and floating batteries and its harbor dredged on a massive scale. At Ancona, too, the harbor had been dredged and a mole built, ready by the start of 1812, to accommodate nine battleships and six frigates. There were also plans to fortify Pula, thus giving Napoleon three bases with which to dominate the Adriatic. The loss to the British of the island of Lissa (modern Vis), in 1811, had been a big blow, but while Napoleon retained Corfu, ceded by Russia in 1807, he felt he still had in his hands what he called “the key to the Adriatic.” He wrote in October 1810 that, if ever the British obtained Corfu, the Adriatic would be lost, and was frequently pressing Eugène to dispatch quantities of grain and rice to keep the island’s garrison supplied. Its loss, he wrote, “would ruin even the trade of Venice and Italy, and my kingdom is more concerned than France with the retention of this island.” Corfu was never attacked by the British, being considered too highly fortified, but Napoleon was never successful in gaining naval control of the Adriatic.\(^{24}\)

Venice interested Napoleon not only as a naval base but as an important source of revenue. He reproved Eugène for making changes in Venice’s customs dues on wine. “You don’t realise I want a lot of money,” he wrote in February 1806. “The Venetian province is worth nothing to me unless it yields 863,000 francs a month and costs only 700,000.” Arguments followed between the two about how much Venice could yield in revenue. Eugène wrote on 3 March: “In accord with your wishes, I have not added to any expenses not authorised by the Austrians, and I hope that mine are now less. I merely wanted to warn you that the resources of the
Venetian states were, I fear, insufficient to pay the country’s expenses and of your armed forces.”

The incorporation of Venice into the kingdom proved a financial liability for it. The cost of paying the salaries of the generals and officers of the Grand Army was 1.2 million francs a year, and the military tribute for French protection cost a further 2.5 million francs (an increase of one third since 1805). So much of Eugène’s correspondence with Napoleon related to the subject of money, with disputed details of costs and receipts. At the end of May 1806 Napoleon complained that “the administration of Italy seems to be chaotic . . . there are great abuses in it”; and six days later he complained again, this time that “the demands for the army of Italy are excessive,” accusing the Italian quartermaster staff of making false claims for living expenses—something that was probably true.

But the kingdom of Italy as a whole, by way of annual military tribute, together with the mounting cost of building the fortifications of Venice, paid a sum of some 30 million francs, of which 8 million francs alone were spent on the arsenal of Venice.

Napoleon told Eugène, in November 1809, that he could not lighten his financial burden, because of the expenses he had recently incurred in fighting the Walcheren campaign, amounting to 50 million francs, together with the cost of raising new levies and his immense armament in Spain which, he alleged, “continue to ruin me.” Yet out of the ceded Venetian territories Napoleon carved twelve hereditary fiefs. These were rewards for his French generals, and Eugène was forbidden to lead any Italians to hope for getting a share in these spoils. The fiefs were generously endowed with sums amounting to one fifteenth of the public revenue of Venice. But, in other respects, Venice was well treated, in marked contrast to what had happened during 1797, and Napoleon told Eugène he had no wish to upset the Venetians’ feelings by removing any of their works of art.

Nevertheless, Napoleon persisted in his low view of the Italian character and warned Eugène accordingly. “You are wrong,” he wrote in July 1805, “to think of the Italians as children—there is a malevolence there; don’t let them forget that I am master and do what I wish; that has to be dinned into all peoples but especially the Italians, who only obey the voice of a master; they will only respect you in so far as they fear you, and they will only fear you as long as they perceive you know their duplicitous and false nature.”

Again, he told Eugène, through the voice of Duroc, “Don’t listen to those around you. The Italians are clever intriguers.” And again in April 1806, “My Italian people, know me well enough not to
forget that I know more in my little finger than they do in all their heads put together.” And in regard to his decree for the union of Venice with the kingdom of Italy and its unpopularity in Milan: “They want to be a great nation without paying more taxes and with many troops, but I know what is best. Everything that strengthens the system in France strengthens it in Italy, and everything France does to keep Venice is in conformity with the interests of my Italian crown. . . . My French people pay more in taxes and contributions than the Italians.”

Napoleon had no illusions about the loyalty of the Italians, telling Eugène in 1810: “If I lost a great battle, two million Frenchmen would rally to my colours and all the banks would be opening their doors to me—my kingdom of Italy would desert me.” As the French customs officer in Livorno said after Eugène’s defeat at Sacile—something that had caused a panic in Milan—“It only needs one lost battle to break our bones. The existence of the French in Italy depends on one bulletin.” Much the same sentiment was expressed by the French consul in Venice: “There is no deceiving oneself that the fate of Italy depends on the fate of the Grande Armée.”

Realizing how volatile Italian sentiment always remained in regard to himself and to his kingdom, Napoleon gave Eugène instructions, before the battle of Austerlitz, to keep constant watch on the iron crown, powerful symbol of Napoleon’s sovereignty, and to be always in a position to remove it without anyone noticing. “Although I count on Italy,” he wrote, “be assured that its fate is safe wherever I am. . . . If you have to leave Milan, proclaim I shall be back within a month.”

The benefits French rule had bestowed during the period of Melzi’s rule, between 1802 and 1805, were continued and enlarged upon under the viceroyship of Eugène, though it was military reasons, of course, that promoted the further improvement in communications. To supervise this, Napoleon created a ministry of roads and waterways and a corps to carry out the work involved. There were engineers-in-chief, inspectors-general, as well as numerous civil engineers, backed by a special school of engineering, whose students were recruited from the universities, and from the school of military engineers. Napoleon kept a constant watch on the progress of every engineering project and complained, predictably, of its slowness. The construction of the Simplon highway, already mentioned in the previous chapter, had cost Italy 7 million francs, though it had given four thousand employment. Ending initially at Domodossola, it was now extended to Milan by the so-called
“Strada Napoleone,” culminating in a triumphal arch just inside the walls of the city. An important highway was also constructed between La Spezia and the city of Parma: crossing the Appenines and the valley of the Po, it linked central Italy with the Mediterranean. Ancient roads were also repaired, the work carried out by refractory conscripts, whom the gendarmes had succeeded in rounding up. Milan became the center of communications, with six great roads converging on it, thus making easier the problem of running a highly centralized government. The floodwaters of the Po were also controlled, though the great canal that was begun to link Pavia to Milan was never completed. Napoleon also had a plan to link up Venice with Genoa, enabling him to transfer warships from the Adriatic to the Mediterranean, but this scheme remained on the drawing board.

Much attention was also paid to improving the look of the principal cities. Napoleon established a commission to impose uniformity on street plans, and ensure the houses had symmetrical facades, but this was essentially a long-term project. In Milan trees were planted on the ramparts, triumphal gates erected to the north and south, a public garden planted in the center and a vast stadium was erected for great military parades and spectacles. A new facade was added to the cathedral, streets were widened, new barracks built and a number of disused convents demolished. Thus it was that a provincial capital was transformed into that of a powerful state. The Duc de Richelieu, governor of Odessa between 1803 and 1814, on viewing Milan in 1819, exclaimed: “What a magnificent town! If Bonaparte had held power for a few more years, it would without doubt have become the finest city in the world.” The amphitheater at Verona was restored, the fortifications of Mantua repaired, a splendid theater built at Brescia, Venice was cleaned, its canals cleared and it was given a public park, lighthouses and fortifications, though the population was in serious decline in the years following 1810.36

The improved land communications made possible the transport of goods overland, now the war had made the sea too dangerous. But many projects for land reclamation, or for construction of canals that would merely benefit agriculture, attracted no interest in Napoleon, who concerned himself only with military schemes.37

As to the arts, education and the press, Eugène created the Brera Museum (which was given the grandiose title of the Royal Palace of Science and Arts), to house works taken from religious houses. He patronized the painter Appiani, who painted the walls of the royal palace and the rooms at Monza with enormous frescoes. He also founded the Conservatoire of music. Rewards were given for
works of literature, written in praise of the Emperor Napoleon, who
told Eugène that he wanted the censorship of all printed books com-
pletely suppressed, though naturally this instruction did not apply
to works critical of his régime. Printers of libels against the govern-
ment were, like their authors, severely punished, and there were al-
ways bureaucratic difficulties in getting books of any sort
published. Only one political paper was permitted in each depart-
ment, and the stage was subject to the strictest censorship.38

The ministry of education, inaugurated in 1802, was given new life in
1807. Lycées were started, a college for women founded in Milan,
chairs were endowed at the universities of Bologna, Padua and
Pavia, and scientists and academicians given comparatively gener-
ous pensions. The smaller universities of Modena, Parma, Reggio
and Ferrara found their existence terminated, though Modena was
allowed to keep its veterinary school and military academy. Napo-
leon insisted that all universities possess a military organization:
students were formed into battalions, had to undergo two hours
training a week and could, if they wished, be transferred to a mili-
tary college. The system, unsurprisingly, was not much liked by the
academic staff who were compelled to act as officers during the stu-
dents’ military exercises.39

Napoleon told Eugène in 1808 that he
wanted the various academies at Pavia, Padua, Bologna and Venice
to form themselves into an institute for the whole of the kingdom
of Italy. “In France,” he wrote, “everything is in Paris, in Italy not
everything is in Milan.”40

The economy of the kingdom of Italy will be dealt with in chap-
ter 8, but it may here be said that it still remained prosperous,
though overall balanced in favor of France. The main burden of tax-
ation was felt chiefly by the poor and led to several serious revolts
(see chapter 9). The bourgeois and upper classes did not fare badly
where taxes were concerned, for these were graded, for political
reasons, so as not to put too much strain on their loyalty.41

In order to win support for the régime (referred to as the rallie-
ment), Napoleon created a new order, that of the iron crown of
Lombardy, and then two years later a new nobility. The Order of the
Iron Crown, created in 1805, was initially reserved for those who
had distinguished themselves in battle and was mostly reserved for
French, not Italians. But this arrangement was soon changed.
Maresscalchi and Aldini were both awarded the highest rank within
the order and given the task of distributing the honor of member-
ship of the order among a hundred of the Possidenti, prefects, prel-
ates, members of the Dotti and important ministerial officials. The
creation of a nobility followed. By a decree in September 1808,
those holding high office were made counts for life. Bishops, the presidents of electoral colleges, presidents of courts of appeal and the mayors of all the principal cities, having served ten years, were created barons. It was also possible to purchase the right to make the title hereditary. In 1809 a number of these titles were bestowed on generals, prefects and courtiers, and by a decree of 1812 that, however, was never signed, Prina and the grand-chamberlain Litta were each given the title of duke. But the only dukedom that was actually conferred was that on Melzi, as duke of Lodi. A similar creation of noble titles also took place in the kingdom of Naples.

How popular was the régime of Napoleon’s Italian kingdom? He had told Eugène in 1805: “Our Italian subjects are more deceitful than our French. The only way to preserve their respect and achieve their happiness is to tell no one what you think of your ministers and high officials. In any other position than that of viceroy, glory in being French, but you must not forget it, and you will only succeed if you persuade the Italians you like them. Surround yourself with young Italians, the old are good for nothing.”

Generally the clergy supported the régime—Cardinal Caprara was a senator, and Bovara worked well with the Catholic bishops. Eugène avoided embarrassing the clergy by being a regular attendant at mass. The middle class by and large were supportive and favors were heaped on men of letters and artists like Foscolo and Appiani. Foscolo, who continued to dedicate his poems and write adulatory letters to Eugène, was the lucky receiver of no less than three pensions; while some other authors received three or four. This was an illegal practice, but Eugène was instructed by Napoleon not to enforce the law too strictly when dealing with “men of exceptional talent.”

Yet despite his charm, personable appearance, industry, accessibility, administrative competence and clear judgment, Eugène was not, as Fugier stresses, much loved by his Italian subjects. His vice-reine, Augusta of Bavaria, was devout, intelligent and cultured and could have won the devotion of the people, had she not hated public life. Litta told Napoleon on Elba that the reason why Eugène did not succeed in winning enduring popularity was “because he despised [his subjects] too much.” Napoleon had warned him against this, but vainly. He surrounded himself with French friends and advisers, and among a total of nine aide-de-camps only one of them was an Italian. In 1807 he was known to have made an unfortunate reference to “these dagger-carriers,” and in turn was referred to as “the half-sovereign,” a word denoting a currency debased. Apart from his military and civil cabinets, his court was exclusively Ital-
ian, though he found it difficult to persuade the Italian nobles to come to court. He lived in splendor in his royal palace and his court bore comparison with that of the Tuileries.\textsuperscript{47}

Eugène remained loyal to Napoleon to the end and rejected out of hand in 1813 an offer from the allies of the crown of Italy if he would throw in his lot with them. Though given instructions by Napoleon, when the latter learned of Murat’s defection, to withdraw to the Alps, though leaving behind the garrisons of the Quadrilateral fortresses, he continued to confront the Austrians while Murat’s behavior remained equivocal. It was only on learning of Napoleon’s abdication on 11 April 1814 that he signed a convention with the Austrians by which it was agreed that all French troops should be withdrawn from Italy. He was unaware that Napoleon had already, by signing the Treaty of Fontainebleau, renounced all his claims to the kingdom of Italy.\textsuperscript{48}
The Challenge of Papal Authority

THE RELATIONS OF NAPOLEON WITH THE PAPACY, SO FAR AS ITALY WAS concerned, were governed by three considerations: first, the need to get Papal backing for the secular measures Napoleon enacted, the most important of which were conscription and recognition of his civil code of law. Second, to obtain Papal assistance, in the Pope’s capacity as temporal ruler, for the war against Napoleon’s enemies, principally Britain, the Bourbons in Sicily and the royal House of Savoy in exile. Third, to get the Pope to acknowledge Napoleon’s claim to be Charlemagne’s successor, not only as the crowned head of all Italy, but as someone who could dictate to the Pope in every matter affecting the empire.

As André Latreille has pointed out, the French in general had a poor opinion of the Romans and their government, and were disconcerted by the contrast between the enormous moral influence the Papacy exerted and its weak material organization. They regarded clerical government, such as existed in the Papal states, as obsolete, corrupt and out of step with the ideas of Enlightenment, and so attributed its influence to the prevalence of superstition and the invincible ignorance of the Italian masses. Napoleon largely shared these prejudices, describing Rome’s “stupidity” as equal only to its material weakness. Nevertheless, he was the first to recognize the Papacy’s influence in the world, and the importance of its support.

Even before he became First Consul, Napoleon had decided that France required an understanding with the Catholic Church, if the Republic was to command the support of the major part of its subjects. “If I were master,” he told Cardinal Mattei, “we should have a concordat tomorrow.” That was before the coup of Brumaire. “No society,” Napoleon once said, “will survive without a code of morals, and there can be no proper code of morals without religion. Only religion therefore can give the state solid support . . . the people need religion . . . that religion must be controlled by the government.” He wanted to be able to appoint the bishops and, once
appointed, he expected them “to behave as prefects in clerical
dress.”3 He required the organization of the Church to coincide
with that of the state, Church boundaries to coincide with civil, and
the number of parishes and sees to correspond with that of the com-
unies and departments. The Church must have no organization
that could exist independent of the state: this was one reason
(though not the only one) for his abolition of religious orders and
of all Church confraternities. He also insisted on the abolition of
most of the saints’ days of the Church, since they did not relate to
the secular state, and holidays meant less work was done. He was
also to forbid public Church processions, in the interests of order
and to curb superstition.4

By the Concordat of 1801, published in January 1802, Napoleon
obtained from Pope Pius VII most of what he wanted for France:
the recognition by the Pope that Catholicism was not the state reli-
gion, but only that of the majority of Frenchmen; the right to ap-
point the French bishops, even if the Pope must consecrate them;
and the acceptance by the Pope that Church buildings were state
property, rented to the Church and then administered by the payers
of rates through parish councils. The religious orders were not men-
tioned, but Napoleon tolerated only those that could be seen as use-
ful to the state, through teaching or running hospitals. Napoleon
also restricted the right of the Pope to have papal bulls and briefs
published in France, in the so-called “Organic Articles” that Napo-
leon published without papal consent. Napoleon had therefore
achieved his main aim, to reconcile the Church to the state, a repub-
lic that the Pope’s predecessor, Pius VI, had openly condemned.5

The signature of the (French) Concordat was greeted in Rome
with great rejoicing since Napoleon, as a quid pro quo, now with-
drew his troops from the Papal states (even from Ancona, though
not immediately), and loaned to the Pope two French brigs, to assist
him in combating the raids carried out on his coasts by Barbary
corsairs. Before the brigs were handed over, Napoleon, as a further
measure of good will, ordered the names of the ships to be changed
to those of Saints Peter and Paul. In turn, the Pope received in audi-
ence the French naval officers from these warships. But the whole
arrangement, from the Pope’s point of view, had been one of choos-
ing the lesser evil. Napoleon had forced through the agreement and
the Papal secretary of state, Cardinal Ercole Consalvi, confessed to
grave reservations about it.6

The next step was for Napoleon to extend the Concordat to Italy.
The need for such a concordat in Italy was even more pressing than
it was in France, since the power of the Church in the former coun-
try was far greater than it was in the latter.7 The Pope was initially reluctant to sign a concordant with Italy’s republic, afraid that it might well contain stipulations contrary to the Catholic religion, given the Josephist tendencies all too prevalent in Milan. He was also reluctant to acquiesce in the annexation of the Legations, surrendered in 1797 by the terms of the treaty of Tolentino. He was further afraid that any concessions he might have to make in such a concordat would prejudice future negotiations with other rulers of Italian states. However, he was realist enough to see that if he were to refuse to accept some sort of religious reorganization, a settlement would almost certainly be reached not only without him but against him. Alarm had already been caused in Rome by the Lyon congress in 1802, drafting in outline organic articles to regulate the Italian clergy, and by the appointment in Milan of a minister for religions (in the plural). It seemed wiser therefore to grasp the nettle.8 The Italian Concordat was arranged in Paris between the Pope’s envoy Cardinal Caprara (more flexible than Cardinal Consalvi) and Marescalchi, the secretary of state; but Napoleon did not get things all his own way. The opposition of Pius VII, Cardinal Consalvi and the Sacred College meant Napoleon had to make concessions.

He was, however, realistic enough to see that there were important differences between the French and Italian cases. By the Concordat the Catholic Church was recognized as the established church within the Republic of Italy, and financial provisions were made to support the seminaries and to pay the clergy, who were exempted from military service. The Italian Republic was therefore given a confessional character that contrasted with the lay character of its predecessor. The advantages Napoleon obtained were the redrawing of the diocesan boundaries to correspond with the departmental, the right to appoint the Italian bishops, the oath of allegiance the clergy must swear and the guarantee of secure possession for those who had purchased sequestered church property.

When the Concordat was being negotiated on behalf of the Pope by Cardinal Caprara, Napoleon led the latter to believe, by vague references to the Legations, that the latter might be restored to the Pope, if Pius accepted Napoleon’s terms. It was of course nothing but a ruse. Pius, however, was never reconciled to the loss of these fertile territories, which deprived the Papal states of more than one third of their population and the second largest of their cities, and which carried serious consequences for the finances of the Holy See. By the terms of the Concordat the Pope had to accept that the naming of bishops for the Legations was to be placed on equal foot-
ing with the naming of other Italian bishops. Cardinal Consalvi asserted, however, that this did not mean that the Pope had confirmed the clause of the Tolentino treaty by which the Legations had been surrendered, and Pius was to continue for several years to raise this vexed question with Napoleon.9

As already mentioned in chapter 2, Melzi tried to undo some of this. He published his own organic articles, which the Pope refused to ratify, endangering the whole Concordat. While Napoleon’s organic articles had contained nothing that contradicted the terms of the Concordat signed with France, those of Melzi clearly did contradict the terms of the Italian concordat, for Melzi asserted that the latter was overridden by former laws, and that the president of the Italian Republic enjoyed the same rights and privileges as had been enjoyed by the Austrian rulers. It required Napoleon’s intervention, four days before he was crowned in Milan; to resolve what appeared to be an impasse. He made no mention of Melzi’s Organic Articles.10

The implementation of the Concordat in the kingdom of Italy met with obstruction and was very unpopular. The bishops resented having to submit the texts of their pastorals for civic approval and, when the new catechism was introduced, as it was in 1807, most of the bishops refused to endorse it. Its terms required all Catholics to believe that Napoleon was the Lord’s Anointed, raised up by Him in troubled times, and that it was the duty of Napoleon’s subjects to love him, pay taxes and submit to conscription, under pain of suffering eternal damnation.11 The solemn feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, 15 August, was named the day of Saint Napoleon, a figure hitherto undiscovered in the usual calendar of the Church. The suppression of popular cults was not liked, but it was a subject on which Napoleon insisted on taking the strictest line. In 1806, on learning that a woman claimed to be the recipient of the stigmata, and to have had a vision of the Virgin Mary, Eugène had her arrested and imprisoned, together with the priest who supported her claims.12

However, most of the Italian clergy complied with the demands of the state. They persuaded people to accept vaccination, said prayers for the Emperor in a special collect, and sang *Te Deums* for Napoleon’s victories. They condemned evasion of conscription, and depicted the war to their congregations as a crusade in defense of order: the archbishop of Ferrara adjured obedience to the constituted authority, and the bishop of Novara defended conscription by appealing to Italian patriotism. Over civil marriage, prescribed by the code, the bishops, with the aim of avoiding disorders, told the
faithful that in submitting to it, they were doing their duty by obeying the law. When Napoleon, in 1807, ordered the Tuscan dioceses to form part of the Gallican church, now that Tuscany was a part of France, only the bishop of Fiesole refused to swear the oath of loyalty; for which, inevitably, his reward was exile.13

In Naples, which, from 1806, became another satellite kingdom, Joseph Bonaparte introduced the civil code, but no real attempt was made by his government to enforce the law regarding divorce, which was far too unpopular. Both Joseph, and his successor Murat, cultivated the support of the clergy: priests were popularly honored and two given seats on the council of state (the archbishop of Taranto and the bishop of Pozzuoli). In suppressing the serious revolt in Calabria, General Reynier sought clerical support; Roederer, Joseph’s minister of finance, urged the clergy to condemn the practice of submitting false tax returns; and Radet, the minister of police, canvassed the clergy in order to obtain suitable recruits for the gendarmerie. Though even the most moderate complained of the reduction in the number of clergy, and the confiscation of monastic lands, the secular clergy in the towns rallied to support the Napoleonic state, certainly until the Pope’s imprisonment, that took place in 1809. In contrast, the regular clergy were hostile, and in Calabria often acted as the leaders of guerilla bands.14

Between the signing of the Italian concordat and the occupation of Rome by the French, culminating in the Pope’s arrest and deportation, Napoleon exerted steady pressure to undermine the Pope’s temporal power. To achieve this, he sent Cardinal Joseph Fesch, his uncle, as his ambassador to Rome. Though told by Napoleon to behave with tact, Fesch was a man who lacked that quality. Promoted archbishop and cardinal at the early age of thirty-nine, he has been described by Frédéric Masson as of limited intelligence though limitless vanity, jealous, credulous and ignorant of diplomacy, Roman traditions or the world in general. But then all Napoleon wanted in Rome was an instrument to transmit his commands, and Fesch, as a member of the Bonaparte family, could be trusted to perform that task to the letter.15 “I am Charlemagne,” Napoleon wrote to Fesch, “the sword of the Church. I notify the Pope of my wishes. If the Pope does not accept, I shall reduce him to the situation in which he was before Charlemagne.” The Pope, when notified of this outburst, replied that Napoleon was Emperor of the French, but “there is no Emperor in Rome.”16 By the summer of 1806, however, Napoleon felt Fesch was not achieving enough and replaced him by Charles Alquier (formerly ambassador at the court of Naples). Napoleon told Fesch that he must now leave the distasteful work to
Alquier, and the latter was given specific instructions to take a very strong line with Rome, whose uncooperative attitude was the source of the gravest dissatisfaction. "The man who murdered Duphot is still at the head of the Roman police," Talleyrand wrote to Alquier, "and other men equally criminal find protection in the circle of the secretary of state. You must speak firmly to the Holy Father, and remove the influences of those men who are his advisers and who are always endeavoring to harm us."

Napoleon, as we know, was merely biding his time before imposing a final solution. He wrote to Eugène shortly after Tilsit: "Perhaps the time is not far distant when I shall recognise the Pope only as bishop of Rome, the equal and with the same title as the other bishops of my states. I shall not be afraid to reunite the Gallican, Italian, German [and] Piedmontese churches in a council to arrange my business without a pope, and remove my people from the pretensions of the priests of Rome."17

The Pope, for his part, believed sincerely that his temporal power was not only essential for his independence as head of the Church, but a sacred trust he could not betray, likening the Papal states to the seamless garment of the crucified Christ. Understandably he was deeply upset to see the occupation of Ancona by Napoleon’s troops in October 1805, Civita Vecchia in April 1806, the Marches in November 1807 (annexed to the Italian kingdom in the following April), Rome in January 1808, and finally in May 1809 the loss of his rule altogether, when what remained of the Papal states was incorporated into Napoleon’s Empire.

The Legations, seized in 1800, were acknowledged by Austria at the treaty of Lunéville to be part of the Cisalpine Republic, but the Pope continued to press for their return. Ancona was occupied in October 1805, when it was feared that Russia and Britain were about to make a landing on Italy's coasts (something they did in fact carry out in the bay of Naples a month later). At that time the Russians held Corfu and were well placed to undertake an assault on the Adriatic coast, with the assistance of the British fleet. When the Pope demanded the French troops be withdrawn, Napoleon sent back a furious letter, stating that Ancona’s occupation was due to papal incompetence, and the port was safer in French hands than in those of Napoleon’s enemies. He gave orders to General Lamarois to occupy not only the port of Ancona, but the whole of the Adriatic coastline from Rimini to the boundary with Naples, not only to stop British contraband goods being landed in the area, but to prevent the replenishment of the Russo-British naval squadron.18

The same considerations prompted Napoleon to order Joseph, in
1806, to occupy the port of Civita Vécchia, and assume control of all the coastline from Piombino to the boundary with Naples, though there was a further object in this: to interrupt communications between Sicily and the mainland of Italy. Eugène was ordered to assume command of the troops sent to Civita Vécchia, and to close Ostia and the mouth of the Tiber to the approach of British vessels.\(^{19}\)

Relations between Napoleon and the Pope had now sunk to a very low level—Napoleon was even demanding the extension of the concordat to the whole of Italy. By his decrees of 1806 he had made both the Venetian territories (recently acquired by the Treaty of Pressburg), and his sister Elisa’s principality of Lucca, subject to the terms of the Italian concordat and also to those of his civil code.\(^{20}\)

The long struggle to deprive the Pope of his temporal power in Italy had been closely linked with the Pope’s refusal to abandon his cherished neutral status. After the treaty of Pressburg was signed on 26 December 1805, Napoleon had placed pressure on Pius to join in the struggle against his opponents. “Your Holiness is the sovereign of Rome, but I am the Emperor and all his enemies must be his.” Napoleon saw in the Papal States “a door always open to the enemies of Italy”, and was concerned that the British from Sicily might land an army in an area that swarmed with those known to be hostile to France.\(^{21}\) When the Pope as sovereign of the kingdom of Naples had refused to recognize Joseph as king, Napoleon had retaliated by recalling Fesch, forcing the Pope to dismiss Consalvi, and seizing the revenues of Ancona and of Civita Vécchia. Napoleon further offended the Pope by giving away, as rewards for service to Bernadotte and Talleyrand, the two Papal enclaves in the kingdom of Naples, Benevento and Pontecorvo. In retaliation, Pius refused to institute candidates for Italian sees.

The Pope still recognized Ferdinand IV as King of Naples and his right to nominate the bishop of Capri. The Neapolitan cardinals in Rome were allowed to keep over their doors the royal Bourbon coat of arms and the British minister Thomas Jackson (accredited to the Sardinian court) was permitted to continue to reside in Rome. Rome became a harbor for political exiles and Joseph complained that the Papal states had now become a convenient refuge for the brigands and assassins of the kingdom of Naples.\(^{22}\)

An attempt was made in 1807 to restore relations between the two rulers when Pius, though with great reluctance, agreed to close his ports to the British, renounce his sovereignty over Naples, relent over his previous refusal to institute bishops to Italian sees and cre-
ate more French cardinals (who now filled one third of the Sacred College). However, he still refused to join in any military alliance. When pressed by Alquier to do so, Pius replied, “You may tell them at Paris that they may hack me to pieces, that they may skin me alive, but that always I shall say no to any suggestion that I should adhere to a system of confederation.”

Further pressure was exerted on the Pope later on in 1807 by the French occupation of the Papal marches, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, but the Pope continued to be unyielding.

The reason why Napoleon deferred ordering the occupation of Rome itself was that he was too much preoccupied with his military campaigns in Prussia and Poland in 1806 and 1807. Not until January 1808 was General Sextus de Miollis ordered to take over the city of Rome, ostensibly only to secure French interests and not to end the Pope’s temporal power. Pius and Pacca, his secretary of state, retreated into the Quirinal palace, but the papal white and yellow flag still flew above the castle of Sant’ Angelo. Napoleon continued to pretend the occupation was temporary, and Champagny, Napoleon’s foreign minister (since Talleyrand’s dismissal in August 1807) informed Caprara that its only object was to get the Pope to join a military alliance against the enemies of the Empire, after which (he said) the French troops would be withdrawn. However, a letter from Champagny to Alquier makes clear that this was completely untrue. Napoleon had only postponed a decision until May of the following year, because his attention had been diverted by his campaigns in Spain and Austria. It was then that Rome was formally declared to be “a free imperial city,” and the Pope was deprived of all temporal power and reduced to the role of bishop of Rome, though allowed his revenues and papal palaces.

When in 1808 Rome was occupied, together with Lazio and Umbria, the Pope retaliated by forbidding his subjects to swear an oath of loyalty to a régime usurping his power. Miollis ordered the papal troops to be incorporated into his army and forced them to wear the Italian cockade. Napoleon ordered him to shoot any soldier who persisted in wearing the papal cockade, and recalcitrant officers were deported to Mantua. Miollis also forbade anyone to say prayers publicly for the Pope or to speak in public about the Maccabees (the leaders in the second century B.C. of a Jewish revolt against the Syrians). But Miollis was in a difficult position while Napoleon, for reasons already stated, temporized over giving the order to bring an end to the temporal power. “Everyone,” wrote Miollis, “is a monk or priest, or employed by the Papal government,” and he asked Napoleon what he was to do if the government ordered disobedience.
He had already disarmed the Pope’s guards, stationed outside the Quirinal palace, and ordered the clerical governor of Rome, Monsignor Cavalchini, to be sent to Fenestrelle, the bleak prison fortress in the Alps. But when he formed a civic guard in order to counter brigandage, the Pope ordered the provincial governors to place its members under arrest. He was also confronted by the refusal of magistrates to sit in the law courts, in protest at the papal police being placed under orders of the French. He reached the conclusion that Cardinal Pacca, the Papal secretary of state, was really the head of all this obstruction, but an attempt to arrest the cardinal failed.

Miollis tried to win the support of the populace by ordering the Carnival to be revived (Pius had suspended it till the French departed), but the Romans steadfastly remained in their houses, though on the anniversary of the Pope’s election the whole of Rome was illuminated. Finally, when Murat visited Rome, on his way to Naples to assume the throne there, Joseph by now having left for Spain, Pius refused to receive him in audience. In consequence, Murat advised Napoleon that the only way left was the Pope’s deposition.25 Murat was intriguing to replace Miollis. He wrote to Napoleon in September 1808 and again in the following December, February, March and April, suggesting he be authorized to put an end to Papal rule. He did his best to create a Neapolitan party among a number of Roman nobles, especially Doria, Colonna and Palaviccini, all of whom had large estates bordering upon the Kingdom of Naples. His actions were suspected by Eugène, who warned Napoleon about them. Napoleon did not replace Miollis, though he was to order Murat to supervise the eventual deposition of the Pope.

Napoleon had written that the Pope was a madman who ought to be incarcerated, but when his orders to arrest the Curia were interpreted as an order to arrest the Pope, Napoleon made out that his orders were exceeded, once he realized how unpopular the action was and that it had turned Pius into a martyr. “I am annoyed the Pope has been arrested; it is utter folly,” he told Fouché. But the hollowness of this protest is shown by the fact that he made no attempt to release the Pope from incarceration at Savona. At the same time as the Pope was seized, all the cardinals, save the old and sick, were ordered back to their own countries, as well all heads of religious orders, the chief officers of Congregation and members of the council of state, while the Papal archives were removed to Paris. Napoleon hoped the unfortunate Pius, deprived thus of his closest advisers, would realize Napoleon had won and submit.26

The excommunication of Napoleon that followed the Emperor’s declaration that the temporal power was at an end was initially ig-
nored by the Roman clergy, when they found that the practice of religion was not affected by Napoleon’s action. They appeared satisfied with the Emperor’s assurance to the deputies of the Roman departments that he did not “intend there should be any change in the religion of our fathers. . . . Jesus Christ did not consider it necessary to establish a temporal sovereignty of St. Peter . . . your bishop is the spiritual head of the Church as I am its Emperor.”

However the Pope’s firm injunction, to refuse to swear an oath of allegiance to those usurping his lawful authority, soon led to widespread recusancy and a corresponding persecution of the laity as well as the clergy. Napoleon told Murat in September 1809: “I learn that several members of the principal families of Rome are ill-disposed. Tell the Consulta to order their dispatch to Paris. In this way all spirit of opposition will soon be destroyed.”

The clergy who took the oath were generally despised but were numbered among the discontented, since their salaries remained unpaid. Napoleon decreed that future emperors would be crowned first in Paris and then in Rome; and popes, who must abide by the Gallican articles, could choose to reside in either city. He told Murat in 1809 that it was his intention to establish in Rome a court more brilliant than the Pope’s, and one that would spend more money. He had already told Gaudin, his minister of finance, that he did not wish to impose on Rome any extraordinary financial burden: “I have not made the annexation of Rome a matter of finance,” he wrote. In 1810 he proclaimed Rome to be the second city in the Empire, and when in 1811 a son was born to him, the boy was entitled “King of Rome.” Napoleon had always been fascinated by everything appertaining to the Roman Empire and to the history of ancient Rome. His favorite painter was Jacques Louis David, the greatest exponent of the neoclassic style, his favorite sculptor Canova, his favorite actor Talma and his bedside reading Plutarch. In 1802, when posing for Canova, he could talk of nothing but Rome and its history. He and his officials like Miollis and Tournon saw their task as one of rejuvenating Rome, ridding it of its clerical government and clergy and its “iniquitous” Inquisition and restoring Rome to its ancient glory materially and spiritually.

The Roman state, under French rule, was on the whole a benevolent one, due to the enlightened approach of Miollis who, until February 1810, acted as head of a Consulta, before being appointed acting governor. All members of the Consulta were French, save only for Cesare Balbo, its secretary general, and another Piedmontese, Fernando del Pozzo. All these men were efficient administrators, but it proved difficult to find suitable prefects among the
Roman notables, owing to the Papal prohibition from taking an oath of loyalty. Many improvements were carried out during the course of the next four years, due to the fact that Napoleon had created a special fund of 1 million francs to be spent locally on public works: excavating Roman remains, rendering the Tiber navigable, constructing bridges, building new squares (the Piazza Venezia and the Piazza del Popolo), planting a botanical garden and making two abbatoirs, a cemetery and a covered market. And because Rome had been declared to be a “free and imperial city,” different from other parts of the empire, the considerable cost of guarding and maintaining its numerous ancient monuments was now to be met from imperial funds, the public debt of the Roman state being absorbed into that of the Empire as a whole. Miollis, unlike King Joseph in Naples and his sister Elisa in Lucca, laid great emphasis on the importance of Italian culture, as opposed to French, organized literary clubs, encouraged and revived the study of Virgil, and of ancient history and philology. Not that this impressed Napoleon, who grumbled that it was not Miollis’s “business to reform the Academy or construct promenades.” In most other respects, the Roman state was organized on the model of France, divided into two departments, each administered by a French prefect: Tevere, with its capital Rome, and Trasimene, with its capital Perugia. The creation of the department of Tevere put paid to the fiction that Rome was any longer the “free imperial city” Napoleon had declared it: Rome was now simply the headquarters of a department administered by the prefect Count Camille de Tournon. Roman time became Paris time, the currency in use was French, and the French excise system introduced, with state monopolies of salt and tobacco. A fire brigade was organized in Rome, as was an efficient postal system, and the streets were lit for the first time. Outside the city, new crops were grown, an attempt was made to cultivate cotton, to afforest and colonize the Campania and drain extensive areas of marshland. The Inquisition was abolished and Jews, no longer confined to the Ghetto, were at last conceded civil rights.

Though, on 17 April 1810, Napoleon decreed the abolition of religious houses, and instructed Miollis “to show more vigour,” the latter persisted in his policy of appeasement: a number of convents and monasteries, engaged in teaching or in caring for the sick, were allowed to continue their existence, and he turned a blind eye on monks and nuns who had clandestinely returned to their houses, as he did on the reopening of churches without official authorization. His generosity toward the clergy, especially in regard to paying their salaries, caused friction with the prefect of Trasimene Antoine
Roederer, a hard-liner and bitter anticlerical, though receiving support from Camille de Tournon. It was however a situation Napoleon refused to tolerate for long. In a furious interview with Tournon, whom he had summoned to Compiègnes, he raged at the ingratitude of the Roman people. “Tell them,” he said, “I owe them nothing. I owe them only death.” He sent to Rome, as chief of police, de Norvins, a violent anticlerical, who carried out a purge of disloyal clergy. In May 1812 Napoleon issued a decree that Miollis was powerless to circumvent, that all who refused the oath of loyalty, whether lay or ecclesiastic, must appear before a military commission, suffer loss of property and be declared outlaws. The sees of the nonjuring bishops were abolished (twenty out of thirty-two), and confiscated church property was used to liquidate the public debt.36

The dissolution of religious houses and the seizure of their property was the cause of enormous unpopularity, especially in Rome and the Kingdom of Naples. In Rome ten thousand religious were expelled out of a total of thirteen thousand. Certain women’s convents resisted the decree and troops were used to evict the nuns, both in the capital and in Umbria. A total of 519 houses were dissolved in the Roman departments alone. Some bishops refused to accept the situation and were, like bishop Mancini of Fiesole, arrested and then dispatched into exile. Good Catholics, however, were forbidden by the Pope to purchase expropriated monastic property.37

In Lucca Elisa Bonaparte closed sixty churches and oratories, and used ornaments seized from the churches to decorate her palace at Piombino.38

Two prelates of the city of Rome and most of the cathedral canons and clergy refused to take the oath of loyalty, but the fear of losing their property resulted in a panic among the laity, and 1,227 of the latter very soon came forward to swear as required. The clergy, having no personal property, proved more courageous in their resistance, and large numbers of them were deported to France, Corsica and Fenestrelle. In the Roman department of Trasimene nine bishops out of twelve refused the oath and, as a result of arrests and suspensions, Umbria, by the end of 1811, had lost no less than one half of its clergy. These deportations of the clergy continued until the Empire’s end, and Rome became the target of Napoleon’s displeasure: he characterized it angrily as “the city which gives scandal to the Empire.”39

The passive resistance in the Papal states was, as Michael Broers observes, in its own way a rival to the more violent resistance that the French were shortly to encounter in Spain.40 People resented the
opening of the Ghetto and the establishment of a Freemasons’ lodge (under the auspices of General Radet), for they saw the Jews as the enemies of Christ and Masons as the instruments of Satan. In Rome the churches remained empty. According to Ortoli, French chargé d’affaires, the clergy found they could not prevent those who swore loyalty from receiving the sacraments—at Easter there was threat of a riot if they were refused communion—but priests could still refuse absolution to those who were known to collaborate. The same French diplomat reported that, on the feast of Saint Napoleon, great celebrations took place in Rome. “People are like the ancient Romans,” he wrote, “peaceable if given panem et circenses.” He seems to have forgotten that the day in question was also the Church’s Feast of the Assumption. In 1811 more than half the choir of the Imperial (Sistine) Chapel in Rome refused to celebrate the birth of the son born to Napoleon by his Empress. As a result the director of music, the composer Nicola Antonio Zingarelli, was instantly removed from his post (he later found employment at the court of Murat).41

The general response to Napoleon’s action in deporting the Pope was extremely hostile, where the peasant masses were concerned. The French troops escorting the Pope’s carriage had to hurry him out of Italy, for fear the crowds might attempt a rescue; and Elisa dared not allow the convoy to remain one night on her Tuscan territory.42 The Pope, having declared excommunicate all who were responsible for his deposition, refused once again to fill vacant sees until he was allowed to return to Rome. When Napoleon tried to fill the vacancies, the Italian clergy resisted firmly. They refused to accept the nomination of Osmond as the new archbishop of Florence, or of Déjean as the new bishop of Asti. Napoleon’s reaction was predictable. He sent to prison three canons of Florence, and the Vicar-General and four canons of Asti.43

When religious holidays were banned, the people simply ignored the veto. In 1811 in Novi, Liguria, “an infuriated subprefect stood by powerlessly, as the populace celebrated the banned feast of their patron saint for two days”; and troops had to be employed at Pisa, during the Easter festival, to disperse crowds protesting at the order that outlawed parts of the liturgy blaming the Jews for the death of Christ. People refused to have their children baptized by a priest known to have sworn allegiance, and landed families ignored the divorce laws, which they feared might have a deleterious effect on their valuable marriage settlements. Meanwhile very great hardship was caused by the expulsion of nuns from convents. The nuns’ fam-
ilies often refused to take them back into the family home, and the women were in consequence reduced to beggary.  

In the kingdom of Naples, which the Pope still regarded as a vassal of the Holy See, Joseph sought to win the support of the Catholic clergy whose influence over the population he realized was paramount. Such support was initially forthcoming before the Pope made clear he refused to recognize Joseph as Naples’ lawful sovereign, referring to him simply as “Prince Joseph,” much to the fury of Napoleon.

When Joseph made his initial progress through Calabria and Apulia in the April and May of 1806, he was greeted with warmth by the Catholic prelates, and, on his arrival in Cosenza, the archbishop of Cosenza preached a sermon in which he threatened with excommunication all those who rebelled against Joseph’s rule. The entry of the first French troops into Reggio (Calabria) was celebrated by a solemn Te Deum. The attitude of the Calabrian clergy, however, was divided between those who supported and those who opposed the French régime. Clerics of middle-class origin were influenced by French ideas and those of the Enlightenment, while those of peasant origin were very conservative in their views, often poorly educated, and could see in the French only harbingers of Jacobinical and heretical ideas. This class included the mendicant orders, who were bitter opponents of the new régime, and some of whom joined rebel bands and even acted as their commanders. Once French rule became associated with the dissolution of religious houses, and the Pope’s seizure and his condemnation of all who swore loyalty to his captors, the general attitude of the clergy and the mass of the people became one of hostility. When French troops occupied the city of Rome, the Neapolitan prelates there were immediately taken back to Naples, and were required to swear an oath of loyalty to the new King Joseph. Two signed (Caracciolo and Ruffo di Bagnara, ironically the former Bourbon general), but the rest refused and were sent into exile.

The dissolution of religious houses, in an attempt to assist Joseph in solving his pressing financial problems, began in September 1806 and was continued at intervals until May 1808. The religious dispossessed were awarded pensions and some became teachers or administered schools. As so many of the kingdom’s population, notably in the poorer provinces, had been largely dependent for employment or charity on religious houses, the government’s action was deeply unpopular, quite apart from exacerbating the problem of widespread poverty.

A further motive in carrying out the dissolution of monasteries
and convents was the desire to make more productive, in a strictly material sense, so large a proportion of the population, something Bourbon sovereigns had also attempted, until the outbreak of the French Revolution had altered their attitude to reform. In 1806 the number of clergy in the kingdom of Naples was 100,000 (more than half of whom were regulars) out of a population of 5 million. It was also for this reason that Joseph decreed that the number of secular priests should be limited to five per thousand of the population, and that no one should be admitted to a seminary who had not attained the age of eighteen.49

When Murat succeeded Joseph as king he made priests and prelates swear an oath of loyalty, and related complacently how thirty bishops had prostrated themselves at the foot of his throne. He held bishops responsible for the failure of their priests to cooperate, and arrested those preaching against the codes. However, he showed some understanding of the part religion played in the south, and received a rebuke from Napoleon for paying public homage to Saint Gennaro, and presenting the cathedral chapter at Naples with a gold medal and a monstrance of gold.50 “Too many of these things deceive no one and do harm,” Napoleon acidly observed.51

The refusal of the Pope to institute bishops had more serious consequences in the kingdom of Naples than anywhere else in Italy. By the end of the year 1806 fifty-four sees were already vacant, and by 1815 the figure was ninety, amounting to one third of all the sees in the kingdom. Of the twenty-four sees in Calabria, only nine still had a bishop, and of these bishops only three, for various reasons, continued active, four of them choosing to reside in Naples. The prefects and minister of religion (Ricciardi) complained that the dioceses, in consequence, were full of vagabond and useless priests and that parish discipline was seriously relaxed. In the absence of the bishops, their houses were ransacked either by brigands or local people, and the title deeds of property from which the bishop derived his income were systematically destroyed.53

Though the work of suppressing religious houses, begun by Joseph, was completed by Murat, the latter reversed some laws passed by the former, reopening seminaries and returning their property, and canceling the law that restricted the number of priests per head of the population. He also exempted from military service seminarians as well as priests. All laws affecting the clergy, however, were subject to exceptions to meet local needs, and these exceptions became more frequent as the situation of the Empire grew worse. The chapter of the Metropolitan of Naples had its property restored in 1813, and Caroline Murat, who in 1814 ruled the kingdom as regent
for her husband, during his absence in northern Italy, ordered a solemn *Te Deum* to be sung in all the churches of the kingdom to celebrate the Pope’s return to Rome.\(^{53}\)

In the last months of his crumbling empire, Napoleon released the Pope from captivity in the hope of recovering Catholic support and preventing Murat, whom he knew by now to be guilty of betraying him, from annexing Rome to his kingdom of Naples. When the Pope eventually arrived in Rome on 24 May 1814, he was greeted by ecstatic crowds.\(^{54}\)

Though Napoleon’s approach to the Papacy was always aggressive and sometimes brutal, it had paid him dividends until 1809. But he then made the fatal mistake of arresting and removing the Pope from Rome. The cooperation of Pope and clergy was basic to the success of his effort to win his Italian subjects’ support, and because his actions now forfeited this, his policy of *ralliement* was to prove a failure.
Replacing the Bourbons in Naples and Tuscany

The Kingdom of Naples, by its geographical position, played a key role in Napoleon’s schemes for winning supremacy in the Mediterranean, for conquering Egypt and then India and for dominating the Ottoman Empire. Napoleon sought at first to control it by marriage, allying the Neapolitan Bourbons with his other ally, the Bourbons of Spain. This was why he encouraged the union of one of the daughters of King Ferdinand of Naples with the eldest son of King Charles of Spain, and of the hereditary prince of Naples with the Infanta, King Charles’s eldest daughter. Unfortunately for the success of this scheme, the respective queens of the two states had a passionate hatred of each other and this, coupled with the Anglophile influence on the policies of Naples of General Acton, its principal (English-born) minister, and the duplicity of Manoel Godoy, who effectively controlled the policy of Spain, meant that Napoleon could not rely on the support of the king of Naples. Furthermore, the latter’s queen, Maria-Carolina, had a bitter hatred for republican France, and Napoleon rightly distrusted her. It was for this reason that, in 1803, when war between Britain and France was resumed, he reoccupied Naples’ ports in Apulia. To rid his kingdom of this imposition, Ferdinand agreed to a treaty of neutrality, at a time when Napoleon was heavily engaged in his campaign against the Austrians and needed the troops he had left in Apulia. But the ink was scarcely dry on the treaty before Ferdinand and his queen had requested the help of Russian and British forces to drive out the French from Italy. A joint Anglo-Russian army was landed in the bay of Naples in November 1805, but Napoleon’s decisive victories to the north of the Alps at Ulm and Austerlitz compelled the British and Russians to withdraw, the first to Sicily, the second to Corfu. Confronted by such blatant treachery on the part of Ferdinand and
his queen, Napoleon now had a cast-iron excuse for getting rid of the Bourbons of Naples. The royal family fled to Sicily and the army of Naples was utterly routed by a French army of occupation. The Bourbon dynasty was declared at an end and Joseph Bonaparte was placed on the throne with effect from January 1806. Joseph was a gentler character than Napoleon, and also better educated (he held a law degree from Pisa university), but he was completely dominated by him. An intelligent and cultivated man, with a keen inter-
The Kingdom of Naples.
est in the arts and letters, unambitious but full of good intentions, he was totally loyal to his brother and always desperately anxious to please him. In public office he had wide experience: as a council-
lor of state in the Consulate, he had been closely involved in negoti-
ating the treaties of Lunéville and Amiens, as well as the Papal
Concordat with France. In 1805, during the Austerlitz campaign, he
had acted as head of state in Paris and, as already mentioned in
Chapter 2, had been offered but had declined the presidency of the
Italian Republic.

The immediate advantages to Napoleon of being in direct control
of Naples—for Joseph was merely the instrument of his brother—
were numerous and soon spelled out. First, there was the dynastic
one. Napoleon told Joseph, “I want my lineage to reign in Naples
as long as it does in France. I need the kingdom of Naples.”2 Sec-
ond, there was the strategic one. Roederer, Joseph’s minister of fi-
nance, impressed on his master the value of his kingdom in
forwarding Napoleon’s eastern schemes. “Your territories,” Roed-
erer wrote, “by their position become of extreme importance in the
new system of government in Europe. France needs the Medi-
terranean. Russia is a colossus which, extending its powerful arms
through the Baltic on one side and the Black Sea on the other,
towards England, tries to smother us between the two . . . her com-
munications must be cut.” And as regards the conquest of India,
“Your territories are a jumping-off place for this expedition à la
Alexandre.”3 Naples was also a convenient base from which to at-
tack Sicily and drive out the British from there and from Malta. It
was also, through its Apulian ports, best placed to ensure the con-
tinued safety of the island fortress of Corfu (which passed to Napo-
leon in 1807), and so control of the Adriatic. When Joachim Murat
replaced Joseph as ruler of Naples in 1808, he was constantly being
urged by Napoleon to keep the French garrison in Corfu replen-
ished.4 Finally, Naples in 1806, at a moment when Napoleon was
not fighting on land, seemed a convenient dumping ground for
troops he could not afford to pay, and for difficult civil servants and
generals whom he found deficient or discontented: Briot, Saliceti,
Cavaignac, Roederer, Macdonald and Mathieu Dumas, the jealous,
avaricious Masséna, Jourdan, who had opposed Brumaire, as well
as St Cyr and Reynier, who had both proved disobedient.5 The king-
dom also provided an area where great fiefdoms could be carved
out to reward his followers and keep them loyal. He told Joseph in
March 1808: “You will not be safe unless you surround yourself
with a hundred or so generals, colonels and others, and officers
attached to your court, who own great fiefs in Naples and Sicily. I
think Masséna and Bernadotte ought to be fixed up in Naples with
the title of prince and massive revenues to assure the prosperity of
their families—a policy I have adopted in Piedmont, the kingdom
of Italy and Parma.” He looked to see, Napoleon continued, three
or four hundred French officers enjoying hereditary domains and
who, in a very few years, would marry into great local families. In
this way the throne would be established so as to render superfluous
an army of occupation for the future.6

He had already made a present (as mentioned in the previous
chapter) of Benevento and Pontecorvo, the former to Talleyrand
with the title of duke, and the latter to Bernadotte with the title of
prince. Joseph was instructed, when he had conquered Sicily, to use
the occasion to create three fiefdoms, one of which he should give
to General Reynier.7 Four more royal duchies were created in the
kingdom of Naples in 1809: Reggio (Calabria) for General Oudinot,
Taranto for General Macdonald, Otranto for Fouché and Gaëta for
Gaudin, each with an endowment of eighty thousand francs, pay-
able out of the revenues of Naples. It was in vain that Murat pro-
tested he had no money for such liberality.8

Joachim Murat, king of Naples from 1808 to 1814, was a brave,
tireless Gascon, ebullient, histrionic, charming, first and foremost a
commander of cavalry in which capacity he excelled, as Napoleon
was the first to recognize, but markedly lacking in judgment and
tact. Napoleon described him in 1813 as possessing more courage
than intelligence, with a good heart but vain and shallow. His pride
and ambition were his final undoing. He refused obstinately to play
the part of a mere lieutenant of Napoleon: “I am not Bacciochi,”
he said several times, referring to the colorless and ineffective hus-
band of Elisa Bonaparte. He courted popularity assiduously and did
in fact achieve more in Naples than his predecessor, Joseph Bonap-
arte, though of course he had rather longer to do so, and Joseph
had laid the foundations for him. In command of the army in Spain,
when the French entered it in 1808, he hoped to be offered the
throne of that country. Instead he was offered Naples or Portugal
and very sensibly chose the former. Napoleon expected his sister
Caroline, the wife of Murat, to exercise judicious control of her
husband, for she was a clever and resourceful woman, having, in
the words of Talleyrand, the head of an Oliver Cromwell on the
shoulders of a beautiful young woman. In the frequent angry ex-
changes between Murat and Napoleon in the years to come, she
served as authoritative intermediary, combining the qualities of a
cushion and an efficient lightning conductor.9

Napoleon hoped to find in Naples a further supply of officers and
troops for the various armies of his empire. He insisted on the introduction of conscription, hitherto unknown in Naples, and though Joseph never succeeded in making its enforcement effective, Murat decreed it in 1809. Understandably, it was deeply unpopular. Murat had wanted to rely on obtaining recruits through voluntary service but was overruled by Napoleon, who required men immediately for his war with Austria. Earlier, in 1807, Joseph had sent two regiments to Spain, but they were the scrapings of the prisons and galleys and had proved extremely unsatisfactory, with their indiscipline and proneness to desertion. Murat prided himself on the way he was able to form a Neapolitan army, but Napoleon considered it to be too large, and when its numbers reached forty thousand, Napoleon told him he ought to halve it—in fact the most he needed was fifteen thousand. Murat took no notice and, by 1814, its strength had risen to eighty thousand. Most of the officers were French (ten out of fourteen divisional generals) as were the commanders of the Royal Guards and inspectors general of the army. 

Napoleon’s orders to send troops to the north, in 1809 when about to fight the Austrians, and again in 1811, when he was preparing the invasion of Russia, were resisted strenuously by Murat, though in the end he had to give way. In 1809 he pleaded he was threatened by an English invasion from Sicily—General Stuart brought an army to the bay of Naples but never attempted to land it on the mainland—and in 1811 he pleaded vainly that it was still dangerous to disarm the kingdom; but Napoleon had insisted and, in 1809, was sent two of Murat’s French regiments, together with gunners, guns and engineers. In 1811 he demanded to be sent no less than ten thousand troops from Naples. Murat pleaded that three thousand was the most that he was able to send, but finally dispatched 11,500.

The problem of desertion by army conscripts became and remained a serious one, not only in the kingdom of Naples (as will be discussed in chapter 7), and the rate of army desertions increased when the news of the Pope’s imprisonment was known, priests warning the peasant soldiers they would go blind if continuing to serve. Though not conscripted, the two regiments Joseph sent to Spain in 1807 were just as liable to desert, being men released from prison to serve in the army and consisting of captured brigands and convicts. Napoleon wrote angrily for Joseph’s information that “all his troops in Spain desert . . . [they] are in a wretched state and I will have no more of them. They are a gang of thieves, and poison the country through which they pass.”

When Murat completely reformed the army, he attempted, much
to Napoleon’s disapproval, to organize it on non-French lines, with
different names for formations and commanders: legions instead of
regiments, and lieutenant-generals and field-marshal for those
commanding brigades and divisions. He gave strong support for
the Neapolitan Academy of artillery and engineering that Joseph,
his predecessor, had restored, and proposed to dismiss his French
officers or force them to become naturalized. This resulted in a
furious quarrel with Napoleon, who refused to tolerate such inde-
pendence. Napoleon told him his actions in regard to naturalization
were quite unnecessary, since all the French who were stationed in
Naples had full rights of citizenship already, the kingdom of Naples
being part of the Empire. He then humiliated Murat, by ordering
the disbandment of the army of Naples. Instead, there was to be an
army of Observation, under command of the French General Gren-
vier. The latter was responsible only to Clarke, Napoleon’s minister
for war, and the key coastal fortress of Gaeta was to be garrisoned
henceforth by the French and not Murat’s Neapolitans.

Murat tried in vain to get Napoleon to withdraw most of the
French troops from Naples—he wanted to be rid of fifteen out of a
total of twenty-five thousand—on account of their cost and the lack
of a need for them, now that he had a Neapolitan army, but Napo-
leon refused the request point-blank. The Neapolitans, he replied,
were incapable of defending the kingdom, and the deficit in Murat’s
finances arose only from his having an army twice the size he really
required. Napoleon always held the lowest opinion of the courage
and loyalty of the Neapolitans. He described them as “suspicious
and excitable . . . wanting in courage and political virtue,” and
told Murat in November 1810: “I think little of your troops [who
are] trained too hurriedly, badly clothed and badly organised,”
though his main motive for such disparagement was in order to in-
jure Murat’s pride. He reproved Joseph constantly for allowing
himself to be deceived by demonstrations of popular support. The
people of his kingdom would desert him after the first French mili-
tary defeat. He was always advocating ruthless treatment of any
sign of dissension or revolt. “You will gain nothing by being too
kind. . . . You are too good. In a conquered country it is kind not to
be humane.”

The capture of Sicily was a project that preoccupied Joseph, and
after him Murat; and Napoleon, until 1807, was as anxious as both
to see the island invaded. After Tilsit, however, he appeared to lose
interest, once he had acquired Corfu and become involved in the
Spanish peninsula. As soon as Joseph arrived in Naples he was
urged by Napoleon “not to lose a moment in capturing Sicily.”
latter wrote “I would rather a ten years war, than leave your kingdom incomplete and Sicily an unsettled question,” adding, “You will give me the most powerful assistance to become master of the Mediterranean, the principal and constant aim of my policy.”  

However, in February 1808 a powerful expedition under Admiral Ganteaume, that Joseph had been given to understand was to provide him with the necessary means for mounting a successful assault on Sicily, was directed by Napoleon to relieve Corfu. “Sicily’s fate is known and sealed,” he told Joseph, “Corfu’s is quite unknown and hangs in the balance . . . in the present state of Europe the greatest misfortune that could befall me would be the loss of Corfu.” Joseph still had ready eight thousand troops with which to make the planned assault, but without the transports and the munitions that were promised him from Ganteaume’s ships, as well as the reinforcements they carried, Joseph had to abandon the project.

Soon after he took over Naples from Joseph, and buoyed up by the capture of the island of Capri from a British garrison in October 1808, Murat was yearning to invade Sicily, and in November urged an assault. He told Napoleon that there were only eight thousand British troops on the island and he could be master of it within ten days. However, by February 1809, he realized Napoleon would never allow him to commit himself to such an operation, while war threatened with Austria. But once Austria had been defeated, Murat took up the theme again, writing in October of that year that now was the time to attack Sicily, when the English forces on the island had been reduced to five thousand or less (he was seriously deceived about their numbers, as the British garrison exceeded ten thousand). After further urging on Murat’s part, Napoleon eventually gave his consent, though not until May of the following year. In case Napoleon should change his mind, Murat wrote to him again in June, to convince him an assault was desperately needed: “For four years these provinces have been governed militarily, and contraband carried out to a frightening degree by all the soldiers and fishermen. This is impossible to prevent until Sicily is taken.”

Napoleon remained cautious all the same, and instructed his French generals privately that the expedition must not take place unless success could be guaranteed. It was for this reason that the attempted assault, made in September 1810, was called off when scarcely begun, the French commanders having refused, at the last moment, to commit their troops. Napoleon was furious when Murat gave out, simply in order to save his face, that Napoleon’s purpose had been fulfilled; the great camp at Reggio was broken up and the
transports all returned to Naples. He told Murat that his foolish actions had caused the British to reinforce their army in Portugal rather than Sicily, though Murat showed him that this was untrue. It seems that Napoleon was only concerned in maintaining the threat to Sicily, without intending to carry it out, in order to lead the British to divert their military resources from the Spanish peninsula. It is therefore difficult not to think that Napoleon was either mocking Murat, or purposely misleading him, when he wrote him in December 1810: “There is no doubt you ought to cross and take Sicily, instead of making a useless landing and losing the Corsican battalions as prisoners”; and again in May 1811: “The circumstances seem favourable for an expedition to Sicily—if you muster 15,000 at Reggio, and you have all the summer calms to help. According to reports the British have only 4,000 in Sicily [Napoleon knew this to be untrue!], the country is discontented and there will be no more favourable opportunity, as they will be driven from the Peninsula this autumn, and so will reinforce Sicily and an expedition will become impossible.”

The cost of preparing the expedition had been a great drain on Murat’s finances. The question of money was one that dogged the whole regime from the very start. “As in all Napoleonic states, finance was the most serious problem.” Napoleon was under the illusion that the kingdom of Naples was very wealthy. Nothing could have been further from the truth. Roederer, Joseph’s finance minister, reported that, on the arrival of the French, “not a man in the countryside was not in rags, not a horse that is not skinny, not a mule that has not been flayed raw.” Yet Napoleon wrote to Joseph in March 1806: “Make the kingdom pay thirty millions for the army—it is nothing for the kingdom of Naples. Naples is as rich as Vienna and not as exhausted.” This in response to Joseph’s earlier plea that he needed several million francs, being now in a country where the prince was expected to feed one third of the population of a city numbering half a million. The pay of the army was six months in arrears, it lacked proper clothing, especially shoes, and many soldiers had been led to desert. The troops moreover were suffering from scabies, having most of the time to sleep fully clothed, there being no barracks in which to house them.

Napoleon soon found that he had to contribute to the cost of the army he had sent to Naples, its food, clothing and equipment, and a year later he complained to Joseph that Naples had cost him a lot of money. In July 1806 Joseph was asking for a further advance of 3 or 4 million francs and Napoleon had to send him another half million, though earlier that year he had told his brother: “Don’t ex-
pect any more money from me. The 500,000 from Milan is the last you will get.” 32 Joseph had been driven to raise a forced loan from the 150 wealthiest citizens, but, as he explained to Napoleon, this was only sufficient to fill the gap caused by his not yet having received any tax revenue from Calabria (then in a state of total revolt). 33 A year later he wrote again, to say a million francs a month
was what he needed to make ends meet, and at the moment the treasur-
was what he needed to make ends meet, and at the moment the treas-
ury was empty.\textsuperscript{34} Napoleon then sent him a million francs.

When Joseph wrote again to tell him he needed from 15 to 20
million francs, Napoleon sent him a further million, meanwhile
protesting he had no money. “You don’t realise,” Joseph had to ex-
plain, “I have to pay 60,000 French troops and 30,000 Neapolitan,
and have to purchase everything: powder, lead, cloth, the furniture
for hospitals and barracks. I also have to pay for the maintenance
not only of the latter, but also of batteries, fortresses, port installa-
tions and palaces; fight a war on land and sea and a civil war incited
by priests in the neighboring island of Sicily, with an enemy block-
ading my ports. I have a deficit amounting to a sum of three million
ducats a year, while Calabria, which forms one third of my king-
dom, produces nothing in revenue.”\textsuperscript{35} Four months later he returned

\textbf{Caroline Bonaparte Reine de Naples. Courtesy of The Morrab Library, Penzance, UK.}
to the charge, in a long letter of justification for having to spend so much money: “Your Majesty sees what is lacking, but does not see what I have done in a country continuously at war for two years, where everything was to do.” The accounts of the French and Neapolitan armies remained in deficit throughout the period, and as a result their commanders were forced to resort to forced loans and requisitions: carts, mules, asses, grain and livestock, all practices that were wildly unpopular.

Napoleon castigated Joseph for incompetence in handling his finances. They were, he wrote, “deplorably run, they are all metaphysical; money however is a physical thing.” Yet Joseph’s minister of finance, Pierre-Louis Roederer, was able and honest, and “his staff in the higher grades probably superior to any that had gone before.” He had inherited a debt of 130 million ducats (nearly 30 million francs), when the state’s annual revenue was only 12 million ducats, and had been given the formidable task of sorting out the muddle of finances, regularizing the sources of revenue, standardizing the collection of taxes and ending the practice of farming them out. He is known to have remarked sardonically that his task was “not to administer the finances but to lay the foundations for administering them.” Napoleon, however, ridiculed these reforms, including establishing a Sinking Fund to liquidate the national debt. “It is not a question of baubles,” he wrote, “it is a question of paying the army.” It is true that the shortage of money was due in part to Joseph’s personal extravagance. He maintained a large and overstaffed court where eight hundred servants were employed, and gave to his mistress, the Duchess of Atri, 472,000 ducats (roughly 11 million francs) as a leaving present on departing for Spain. But Napoleon personally distrusted Roederer and showed very little understanding of the magnitude of the task he faced, one made more difficult by a series of earthquakes, two exceptionally hard winters, cattle plague and a major revolt.

Joseph took Roederer with him to Spain and Murat complained, on arriving in Naples, of the state of the finances he had inherited. Payment to various creditors was 14 million francs in arrears, interest was due on a public loan payable at a rate of 5 percent, and there was an outstanding loan from Holland amounting to 3 million florins. Murat was fortunate to bring with him the very able Agar (Count de Mosbourg), who had been his minister of finance in Berg. The secretary to Caroline, Murat’s queen, told Murat’s aide-de-camp in Paris (Jacques-Marie Aymé), that Agar’s appointment was indispensable. The Neapolitan finances, he wrote, were nothing short of an Augean stable and Agar, despite his intelligence, would
need to work night and day for two years if he was to hope to clear them up. “His task is appalling and I defy anyone who is his friend to envy him.” A year later (July 1809) Agar sent Murat a report on the state of the kingdom’s finances: the state of rebellion during the year had had a grievous effect on them. The intendants and the tax collectors had found it impossible to collect any taxes in the areas affected, and tax records had had to be abandoned. The latter, as well as the collectors themselves, had become the target of brigand bands, and no cash could be transported without a very strong military escort. Cash was lacking in the provinces, trade generally was at a standstill and farmers were unable to sell their produce. The blockade of the ports by the enemy meant that customs receipts had fallen to nil, and customs dues had always been an important source of revenue. The situation had improved somewhat by the beginning of 1810, when the revolts had temporarily been suppressed but, even so, the economy of the kingdom, hampered as it was by the Continental System insisted on by Napoleon, never looked like becoming healthy until Murat defied it in 1813.

There were always difficulties inherent in enforcing the Continental System, because of inefficiency, corruption and evasion. Roederer was told in 1807 by one of his senior officials that “never have fraud and smuggling been more rife than they are today.” Despite reforms, little was achieved by the time Joseph left Naples for Spain. The contraband trade that was carried on between Sicily and the mainland of Italy was never interrupted throughout the period. Even senior officials were involved in making a personal profit from it: Saliceti, minister for war and police, Generals Colletta, Manhès and Cavaignac; while Murat himself did not escape suspicion. Joseph asked Napoleon in 1807 if he could take up an offer from an English commercial firm to export grain and oil, as the blockade was causing financial problems. Murat asked Napoleon in 1809 if he could open his ports to Americans: “The trade of my kingdom is absolutely nil; granaries, warehouses and stores are crammed with our produce.” He asked if he could sell oil to neutrals, but Napoleon was adamant. All sea transport was hampered by the actions of privateers and British cruisers, by the high customs duties Napoleon demanded and by military demands for shipping, in preparations to invade Sicily and in keeping Corfu supplied. Things became even more difficult after Napoleon’s Trianon decrees, and Murat prophesied bankruptcy. He begged Napoleon for licenses “such as the Emperor granted for English ports” and permission to enter trade relations with a number of hostile ports. Napoleon did in fact make some concession, granting per-
mission from January 1810 to export oil, silk, grain and licorice, always provided there was no import of colonial goods into the kingdom, though Murat told Agar they might, sub rosa, import soda and indigo. More details about the Continental System, as it affected the kingdom of Naples, will be discussed in chapter 8.

If Naples proved a disappointment to Napoleon financially and economically, the kingdom’s ability to construct him warships and guard its coasts against invasion and raids by the enemy in Sicily also failed to fulfil expectations. Joseph had found in 1806 that virtually all the Neapolitan navy had accompanied the Bourbons to Sicily. Napoleon in July 1807 gave Joseph orders to construct four seventy-four-gun battleships to be ready by the following spring; and in August ordered the construction of two eighty-gun ships as well as two frigates. But Joseph never had the resources to carry out this ambitious program. When told by Napoleon to prepare Castellamare as a naval base, he had to tell his brother that the base would take at least two years to build and its cost would amount to between 35 and 36 million francs. By the treaty of Bayonne in 1808 which sanctioned Murat’s transition to Naples, Murat was bound to lay down annually two battleships, two frigates and two brigs. The battleship Capri, a seventy-four, was launched in 1810, but little more seems to have been achieved, apart from the construction of a flotilla of something over fifty gunboats. Murat pleaded shortage of materials, and copper, hemp and even timber all had to be imported. Neapolitan sailors, when conscripted, soon deserted, and sloops had to be manned by seamen from France, Genoa and Corsica.

Murat complained bitterly to his intimates and his wife about the way Napoleon refused to allow him the independence that he sought. Berthier, Napoleon’s chief of staff, had told him firmly in 1810: “Towards your subjects be a king; towards the Emperor be viceroy. Be French, not Neapolitan . . . about everything consult His Majesty.” But Murat would never accept this situation. He told Agar that, as a soldier in command of Napoleon’s imperial troops, he obeyed orders faithfully, but “in my kingdom I must be independent.” His letters to Napoleon abound with complaints about his treatment as a ruler of Naples, accompanied by lavish protestations of loyalty and devotion towards the Emperor. A letter of April 1810 lists a whole catalogue of his grievances: Napoleon is asking for money that Murat disputes he owes him. Why, now that the war is over, does he have to continue to pay French troops active service rates that are no longer applicable? Why does he have to face the expense of a French general staff and administration of
which he no longer has the need? French officials are uncooperative; Napoleon interferes in his appointment of ambassadors; Napoleon won’t grant him export licenses. Napoleon, he complains to Caroline, “curtails my revenue, crushes my trade, paralyses my industries, commands me to undertake a ruinous expedition, orders me to build a fleet, hampers my trade and commercial relations with foreign countries and, in a word, renders it impossible for me to bear the enormous burden he lays upon my shoulders.” Again, in January 1811, he wrote to Napoleon to protest at the latter’s insistence he should not exclude Frenchmen from administrative appointments, and indeed they should always be preferred to native Neapolitans. “I cannot conceal from Your Majesty,” he wrote, “that while I have over 10,000 employees in my service, the great majority are from Rome, Tuscany, or from the kingdom of Italy, while the Neapolitans are without jobs, are dying of hunger and cry out for bread which is eaten by the foreigners. In the days of King Charles III, Sire, there was a revolution for the same reason and I must expect similar.” Napoleon, however, remained unimpressed. But Murat realized only too well he must be careful not to overstep the mark, ever fearful of losing his throne, as Louis Bonaparte had in Holland, for not complying with Napoleon’s demands.

Napoleon had warned Murat in December 1808 that the popularity he was seeking might have dangerous consequences for him; for Murat reveled in the acclaim he received from the lazzeroni of Naples, who adored their “Gioacchino galante,” “the extrovert hero with the white plume of feathers.” Napoleon took Murat to task for his manifest failure to enforce the blockade; demanded of him the sums of money he had lent him to pay the French troops in Naples; demanded the construction of the warships promised, opposed the enlargement of Murat’s Royal Guard from fourteen hundred to four thousand, forbade his intimacy with the Russian ambassador and his replacement of French officials by Neapolitans of his choice.

He refused to let Murat make modifications to the civil code, once introduced, over the contentious question of divorce, or to reduce the rate of interest on the national debt from 5 to 3 percent. He disapproved of Murat’s methods of reshaping the Neapolitan army by granting amnesties to deserters, pardoning prisoners and encouraging émigrés to return from Sicily to re-enlist. He censured Murat for putting a stop to the sequestration of émigré property, and for removing the restrictions on night fishing off the coast (a prohibition that was most unpopular), telling him this could only result in the British discovering more quickly what was happening
in his capital. And he was angry that Murat had awarded the prestigious Order of the Two Sicilies to prelates of the Catholic Church en masse. It was a decoration, Napoleon told him, that should be given to individuals and then only to those who had sworn allegiance.

Nevertheless Murat persisted in his attempt to assert his independence. He took pride in designing a flag for his kingdom, colored purple, white and blue: “Purple is clear to Your Majesty,” he told Napoleon, “white denotes union with the Empire, the sky blue the ancient colour of Naples” (that of its one-time Angevin rulers). He also designed a coat of arms, depicting the unbridled horse of Naples and the three-pointed emblem of Sicily. He insisted on having his own diplomats at the courts of Russia, Prussia, Bavaria, Lucca, Holland and the kingdom of Italy. But he went too far when he tried to insist that all French officials in his employ must assume Neapolitan nationality or resign. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, this merely led to Napoleon inflicting on him a wounding humiliation. “You are surrounded by men who hold France in detestation,” wrote Napoleon, “and who are aiming at bringing about your downfall . . . remember that I only made a king of you in the interests of my system. . . . If you cease to be a Frenchman you will be nothing to me.” He told the French ambassador Durand to inform Murat that if he resisted the measures he, Napoleon, had ordered, namely for Grenier to occupy Gaeta and Perignon to resume the governmentship of Naples (of which he had been relieved by Murat), then Murat would be deposed from his kingship. Murat sent his wife to Paris to mediate, but in the end was forced to capitulate. The minds of the people must be left in no doubt that Naples was only a satellite kingdom and that Murat was only permitted to rule as the Emperor’s subservient viceroy. Murat accepted Napoleon’s conditions, in return for being given command of the cavalry in the Grande Armée destined for the invasion of Russia, conditions that involved appointing his wife, Caroline, as regent during his absence.

When, during the retreat from Russia, he handed over to Eugène the command entrusted to him by Napoleon, and returned to Naples to resume his throne, he received a blistering written rebuke from Napoleon. “I suppose you are one of those who think that the lion is dead . . . the title of king has turned your head. If you want to keep it, behave yourself.” From then on Murat’s loyalty wavered and his passionate desire to keep his throne led him to make his peace with the allies and, in 1815, to make his fruitless attempt to champion the cause of Italian nationalism. When Napoleon learned
of Murat’s defection, as he did in February 1814, he ordered the recall of his ambassador in Naples and of all the Frenchmen in Murat’s service, as well as directing French warships to attack all Neapolitan vessels. But by that time Napoleon’s empire was lost.

One aspect of Murat’s activities, as ruler of the kingdom of Naples, that must have interested Napoleon, was his commitment to public works. While Joseph’s interest in them had been largely confined to improving the look of his capital—building a road up to Capodimonte, constructing the Corso Napoleone and widening, lengthening and lighting the streets—Murat devoted his attention to the kingdom’s roads, bridges and port installations. He formed a royal corps of civil engineers under command of General Colletta, and a general council for roads and bridges that met and conferred in weekly session. In order to quell the revolts in Calabria and to pursue, until 1811, his plans for invading Sicily, it was vital that roads and bridges were built. The village communes were made responsible for doing the work and paying for it, under the supervision of the army, but the trouble was that they had no money.

It was one thing to give an order, quite another to have it carried out. Murat tried to modernize the port of Crotone, the only port in Calabria, but in the end nothing was done. He tried to see that Catanzaro received a regular supply of water, but private interests stood in his way. He ordered the draining of areas of marshes in the province of southern Calabria, but it had to be admitted in 1814, by the ministry responsible, that none of the work projected had been done. It is doubtful if Napoleon ever understood the nature and extent of the serious problems facing a ruler in the south of Italy.

Tuscany (Etruria)

Though in 1802 Ludovico, son of the Bourbon duke of Parma, had been installed as king of Etruria, Napoleon insisted on maintaining in his kingdom a very sizeable French garrison, to counter a possible threat of invasion. General Clarke, the French ambassador in Florence, was urged by Talleyrand in February 1803, writing on behalf of Napoleon, to place Livorno in a state of siege, and station French troops in the neighboring ports of Piombino and Orbetello. Were the British to capture these places, he wrote, they could sever all the land communications between the north and the south of Italy and launch attacks on Elba and Corsica.

Ludovico, though having no option but to agree to French troop dispositions, became increasingly disillusioned with the actual
presence of these troops on his soil, and the burden they placed on his finances. Clarke (French ambassador), in his turn, never ceased to deplore the weakness of Ludovico’s government, the influence exerted on him by his minister Count Selvatico, and the even more dangerous influence of the Papal nuncio and the archbishop of Siena. Selvatico, he described to Talleyrand as “a sort of Godoy, not omitting his morals, a disgusting libertine, ignorant and foolish to a rare degree, who gives employment only for the price of gold.” The revenues were anticipated two years in advance, crown property and the public domain were mortgaged, public employees were not being paid and the bishops, all of them Francophile, were allowed to censor books and the press. “A sick king, a favourite minister led by priests and sold to Spain, an inept and greedy nobility and a discontented people,” wrote Siméon, first secretary of the French legation in Florence, in February 1803. A month later,
Clarke told Talleyrand that the whole administration was sinking, and contrasted the prosperous state of Tuscany, under Peter Leopold in the eighteenth century, with the country under its present ruler.72

Ludovico died in May 1803 and was succeeded by his wife as regent, governing on behalf of their infant son. The widowed queen, Maria-Louisa, was the daughter of Charles IV of Spain, and was an excessively pious woman, much influenced by her Spanish mother.
and by the priests by whom she was surrounded. Clerical influence in Tuscany had always been strong and was to remain so. In a state whose population was 1.2 million the clergy numbered 25,000 and included no less than eight hundred monks, fifteen bishops and three archbishops. Soon after the death of Ludovico, Clarke left Tuscany and was eventually replaced by Hector d’Aubusson la Feuillade, who proved as critical as Clarke had been of the way Tuscany was being governed.

Despite the efforts of a Genoese banker, Eynaud, to rectify the Tuscan finances, the budget continued in deficit and the pay of French troops fell into arrears. Their commander Verdier, in exasperation, took possession of Livorno’s revenues until the outstanding arrears were paid. When Napoleon was in Milan for his coronation, the queen sent two of her ministers to him, requesting the French troops should be withdrawn. They were told brusquely, “Your queen is too young and the minister Mozzi too old to govern the kingdom properly.” Even so, Napoleon did agree to the suggestion put forward by Eynaud, that the French troops stationed in Livorno should be replaced by Spanish ones, most of whose cost would be met by Spain. He also agreed to dispense with the subsidy Tuscany paid for French protection, provided French troops were paid their arrears.

He was, however, being fed continually with reports from his legation in Florence, from Eugène and from his sister Elisa (the ruler of Lucca and Piombino), that Tuscany was a center of intrigue, organized by the court of Palermo, and was now a nest of Sicilian spies. D’Aubusson complained to Talleyrand of the hostile attitude of the Tuscan nobles, and wrote in November 1806: “Italy is in a state of continual conspiracy, and will always be, while the two non-French governments remain in existence and are not reformed according to our laws” (referring to Tuscany and the Papal states). A month later, he wrote again, describing the queen’s four ministers as very old, very feeble, rambling in their talk and very Franco-phobe. The police were so badly organized that Englishmen resided without their knowledge, and a suspected Sicilian spy had spent several days in Tuscany without having been apprehended. It required strong complaints from Eugène and d’Aubusson before the authorities were moved to arrest three Anglophile Corsicans, currently residing in Florence, who were known to have backed the British in Corsica during its occupation by them and were in receipt of British pensions.

Napoleon sent the queen, through Eugène, a warning, but really a thinly veiled threat, that her kingdom had been allowed to become
a center of anti-French intrigue, financed by the Emperor’s enemies. He tactfully suggested she was ignorant of this, but urged her to dismiss her close advisers, since Napoleon would never tolerate a territory abutting on his own that welcomed foreign enemies.\textsuperscript{77} The queen rejected these accusations and in taking her stand received the support of her mother, the queen of Spain.\textsuperscript{78} But this did not prevent d’Aubusson from continuing with his protestations and complaints. He demanded that the governor of the island of Giglio be punished for protecting British privateers, whose depredations on the coasts of Elba and of Tuscany were increasing all the time. He also accused the Tuscan clergy of giving protection to brigands and deserters. The queen continued to ignore these protests, though she did consent to forbid the clergy issuing restrictive regulations about clothing worn in churches and streets, since these had caused deep offense to the wives of several French senior officers.\textsuperscript{79}

In 1807, for military reasons, Napoleon transferred the Spanish troops stationed in Livorno to the north coast of Germany, and the port was given a French garrison once more. French troops were also sent to Pisa, and the Tuscan government was ordered to pay sixty thousand francs a month to maintain them. Livorno was of immense importance as a center of international trade. It was, among other things, the principal depot for grain coming from the Black Sea ports, from Barbary and the kingdoms of Naples and Italy. British merchants dominated its trade, bringing in textiles, cutlery, saltfish, poultry and colonial goods. Napoleon had requested the arrest and sequestration of all ships arriving from Britain or ships that were carrying British goods, but the queen had steadfastly refused to comply, as such action would spell economic disaster: Britain would declare war on the kingdom and it had no means of defending itself. Spain was also very interested in maintaining Tuscan neutrality. The Spanish ambassador to France had told Talleyrand, in December 1804, that war would mean a blockade of Livorno, and France and Spain both needed the port as a valuable entrepôt for their trade.\textsuperscript{80} By 1807 the situation had changed, and Napoleon was now determined to enforce his continental system on the whole of Italy. The Livorno merchants, under pain of death, or of being sent to Fenestrelle, were ordered to declare any goods arriving from either Malta or Sicily, as well as facing confiscation of such goods if not declared, and payment of a fine of triple their value.\textsuperscript{81}

In order to solve the problem posed by the recalcitrance of Tuscany’s queen, Napoleon toyed with the idea of marrying her to his brother Lucien, or alternatively to his stepson Eugène. But Lucien
refused to marry a Bourbon, and Eugène found a more attractive bride in Princess Augusta of Bavaria. So, after Tilsit, Napoleon moved swiftly, against Tuscany, Spain and Portugal. By the treaty of Fontainebleau, in October 1807, the queen and her son were offered north Portugal in exchange for their Tuscan kingdom, without any option but to accept. On 10 December French troops entered Florence and the queen left, followed by the Spanish ambassador. Not long after, a deputation of Tuscan notables arrived in Milan, which Napoleon was visiting briefly, requesting their kingdom be annexed to France. This, of course, was a pure formality. The rule of the Bourbons in Tuscany had lasted only so long as Napoleon retained his alliance with the Bourbons of Spain.

The kingdom was eventually to become a Grand Duchy, to be ruled by Napoleon’s sister Elisa, the wife of the Corsican Prince Felix Bacciochi, a man of no particular talent. Elisa had, in 1805, been put to rule in Piombino, once a possession of the king of Naples, together with the principality of Lucca, and given a battalion to guard the coast and maintain communications with Elba. But Elisa had long had her eye on Tuscany, a more prestigious prize than Lucca, and had done her best to supply Napoleon with tales of incompetent government there, and how it had been allowed to become a center of anti-French intrigue. But it took fourteen months before the kingdom was ready to be handed over to her. In that time, it was administered by a *Consulta* consisting of the Councillor of State Dauchy, General Menou and other French officials. New civil servants were appointed, the state was effectively secularised and divided into three departments, and French-type gendarmerie was formed to combat the problem of banditry. Elisa eventually assumed control of what was now retermed a Grand Duchy on 2 March 1809.82 Though Prince Bacciochi commanded the troops, the government was in her hands. She was an able and ambitious woman who, of all the Bonaparte family, most closely resembled her brother Napoleon.83

It seems that the transfer to Elisa’s rule arrived not a minute too soon. The régime of Dauchy and Menou had not been well received by the Tuscans. Eugène told Napoleon, “I must inform Your Majesty that public spirit in Tuscany is far from satisfactory . . . the Gallicisation of the country has been undertaken too rapidly, the placing alongside one another of French and Italian judges who do not get on.” He added that the fact that Menou was living openly with a ballerina was also a cause of public scandal.84

The Grand Duchy was a satellite state (indeed still an integral part of the Empire), though Elisa did her best to pretend it was not,
and that she was an independent ruler, as she had been largely in the Lucca principality, and where she had avowed she had no wish to be no more than her brother’s subprefect. She complained to Napoleon of the interference she had to endure from French officials and, though forbidden by Napoleon to meddle with the duchy’s finances, she held the prefects responsible for the organization of conscription and for the running of the police. She also directed her own secret police, and insisted on being personally consulted on the appointment of local officials. The advantages to her of a shared control was that she could blame the imperial government for any measure that proved unpopular, while herself taking credit for popular ones. Like her brother Joseph and like Joachim Murat, she tried to cultivate popularity. She succeeded in making a triumphant progress through her dominions on first arriving and was, in the city of Volterra, acclaimed as the “Mother of the People.” But such popularity did not last long, for she was confronted by numerous problems, not least the endemic banditry and the bitter opposition to conscription in a state with a very long pacifist tradition. Her avowed anticlericalism did not endear her to the clergy, and she found that Napoleon’s treatment of the Pope and the abolition of the temporal power aroused great hostility among her people. Nor was she liked by the Florentine nobles, though they, and the property class as a whole, had welcomed the restoration of order. The strain imposed by Napoleon’s wars on the Tuscan economy as a whole led to increasing discontent: there was mass pauperism in the cities, and counterrevolutionary forces continued to be active in the city of Arezzo. Certainly many reforms were effected, despite all the obstacles encountered and there was a very positive side to the rule of the Napoleonic archduchess, details of which will be discussed in Chapter 8.
6

Administrative, Legal, and Judicial Reform

Napoleon made clear what his views were on the organization that was needed, and the methods that must be used to run, the constituent territories of his empire. These applied more closely to Italy, perhaps, than to any other of his dominions. “Political liberty,” he wrote, “so necessary to a state, does not consist in . . . [the] multiplication of authorities, but rather in a stable system, manifest and secure, of good administration . . . weak government is what produces tyranny.” The “good administration” of which he spoke he had introduced already into France, and it was to be copied in the satellite kingdoms of Naples and Italy and in all Italian territories he annexed at intervals to France. Piedmont, Parma, Liguria, Etruria, Lazio and Umbria were given the same legal codes, the same administrative structure, the same judicial organisation, the same system of finances, the same structure for education as the other provinces of his empire. On an administrative level, almost all the changes proved irreversible: the changes in the laws, the restructuring of the public debt, the reform of the administration, both at the center and on the periphery, the uniformity of weights and measures, the abolition of internal tolls. Feudalism was swept away and land registers reduced to uniformity every form of the ownership of land.

To achieve all this it was necessary to train a class of Italian bureaucrats, and Napoleon set out to recruit them from enlightened members of the propertied classes: supporters of the concept of a secular state, centrally and efficiently run, as opposed to one where privilege counted, where regional and municipal loyalties still remained the dominant factors, and where, in purely secular matters, the Catholic Church still exercised power. Control of the administration rested throughout in Napoleon’s hands. For a time, when he was busy elsewhere, he allowed Melzi a degree of autonomy in running the Italian Republic, but from 1805 all that was changed. As has been shown in chapter 3, the kingdom of Italy, with Eugène as
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its viceroy, was totally under Napoleon's control. Nor did Napoleon, as shown in chapter 5, permit any deviation from his views in Tuscany, when ruled by Elisa, nor in Naples when ruled by Joseph and Murat. He was completely indifferent to the reactions of the peoples he ruled, and was scornful of Joseph's altruism, when the latter told him that, "to raise up a subject people, one must treat it today as it will be tomorrow."4

Everywhere government was centralized, through the introduction of prefects and vice-prefects, controlled by the minister of the interior, a complete reversal of the long tradition of municipal self-government that obtained in central and northern Italy.5 Genoa, after 1805, was divided into three departments, with their respective prefects and subprefects, converted into a free port and given French law and a decimal system. On the surface the changes appeared impressive, but French officials were continually frustrated by the "laziness" of the Genoese and the conduct of many of its leading citizens. The second mayor of Genoa, for instance, Gian Carlo Serva, accumulated an enormous fortune and spent most of his time in Paris, or shut up in his palazzo; and the French prefect, Bourdon, complained bitterly of the influence at all administrative levels of two great Genoese families, the Serva and the Pareto, and how he had to struggle vainly against what he termed "a mountain of corruption." The government found itself opposed by a policy of sustained inertia over every scheme of reform introduced, especially over education. The nobles retained in their palaces the insignia of the old Republic, protected religious congregations, when the latter were suppressed by government order, and joined with the people in celebrating feasts of the Church that had been prohibited.6

In the Papal states, after annexation, the French met with more cooperation from the local aristocracy. Though the highest administrative posts were occupied by Frenchmen and by Piedmontese, the lower-ranking posts were very soon filled by members of the Roman nobility, and many young nobles became subprefects.7 The same occurred in Tuscany, and in Naples also the local notables were enlisted to run the administration, though they seldom showed much enthusiasm.8 The kingdom of Naples was divided into provinces, districts and communes, each with its respective intendente, sotto-intendente and decurianato, each supported by a council chosen from the local property owners. The system produced a better balance between the capital and the provinces than had existed hitherto, and respect was shown for local tradition: division into provinces instead of departments, intendentes appointed instead of prefects, and decurions instead of maires. The old more democratic
village parlamenti were now replaced by municipal councils, the qualification for sitting on which was to be the owner of property. Until 1808 local officials were either elected or chosen by lot, but thereafter all was centrally controlled. The decurion in the larger communes was chosen by the minister of the interior on the recommendation of the intendente, and in the smaller appointed by the latter.9 The provincial councils of ten to twenty members met once a year only, to apportion the land tax, receive the accounts of the intendente and report on the state of the poor in the province, sitting for a maximum of twenty days. The district councils, of ten members each, sat for at most fifteen days in the year, their only function being to apportion the taxes on land among the communes. Councillors were nominated by the king, and were drawn from a small class of property owners; professional men and men of business were not eligible to be selected unless they were also landowners.10

French ministers in Naples like Miot and Roederer were convinced they were introducing a series of enlightened reforms to a land that was prosperous by nature, but had been impoverished by neglect, wrongly adopted policies, an idle self-indulgent nobility and an inordinate number of clergy. Their remedy was to abolish feudalism, dissolve the numerous religious houses and introduce an efficient bureaucracy. But, as John A. Davis has pointed out, the Bourbon kings who preceded Joseph had, since the middle of the eighteenth century, endeavored to introduce these reforms, but had been obstructed by both nobles and clergy. There was therefore a strong vein of continuity between the Napoleonic reforms and those the Bourbons had tried to effect—“the creation of a centralised, bureaucratic, autocratic state.”11

The period of the second Bourbon restoration from 1799 to 1806 was one that left the kingdom’s situation—political, social and economic—in a worse state even than it had been at the end of 1798. The peasants generally were disillusioned by the failure of the government to implement fiscal and land reforms that Cardinal Ruffo had promised them. Though the king’s ministers were able administrators (Giuseppe Zurlo` and Luigi de Medici), baronial and clerical privileges still stood in the way of organic reform. A general property tax was imposed on all landowners in 1805, but it had not been possible to apply it before the arrival of Joseph Bonaparte. Discontent among all classes was widespread, brigandage had revived in 1803 and a dangerous conspiracy in Calabria had been unearthed in the same year. The arrival of the French was not therefore unwelcome and there was no mass rising of the lazzaroni
(as there had been in 1799) when the first French troops arrived in the capital.\textsuperscript{12}

Joseph Bonaparte was fortunate to have under him a team of honest and capable ministers, especially his minister of the interior, André François Miot de Melito. The nobles of Naples were flattered by getting ceremonial jobs at court and seats on the royal council of state, though some were awarded ministerial posts: Marquis Gallo in charge of foreign affairs, Michelangelo Gianciulli minister of justice, Prince Cassano Serra Church affairs; Prince Pignatelli di Cerchiara was put in charge of the diminutive navy and Prince Bisignano of finance (until shortly replaced by Roederer). Most of the intendants were Neapolitan. Murat was also to entrust important posts to Neapolitans, the most important of whom were his minister of interior, Giuseppe Zurlo (who had been dismissed from his post by the Bourbons), and Francesco Ricciardi, minister of justice. Significantly, the ministry of war was, however, always held by a Frenchman.

Joseph produced an enormous program for reform of the kingdom’s institutions, but it was only partly realised before he left for Spain in 1808. Abolition of feudalism was delayed or hampered because of numerous divergent interests; new provincial and district councils failed to work because local landowners refused to cooperate, or excused themselves from serving on them. The sale of public lands proved impossible, save only in the province of Naples, because of widespread rebellion elsewhere, and the power of the intendente was limited by the overlapping of authority enjoyed by the commanders of military districts.\textsuperscript{13} Lack of means and unhelpful attitudes stood in the path of good administration. Funds were either not available or were dispensed irregularly; even the enthusiastic Miot wrote to his superior Briot: “One must often abandon oneself to discouragement if one could not count on your indulgence.” There was conflict between different authorities because the reforms were not simultaneous in different government departments; there was conflict with the military command, especially over requisitions and payment for what had been requisitioned. In 1810, for instance, when Murat’s preparations were going ahead for the invasion of Sicily, the requisition of boats and sailors from the coastal towns of the bay of Naples, and in the islands of the bay, caused terrible hardship and even famine. Finally, Murat’s minister of the interior had to make the strongest representations to the minister for war and finance before the situation could be righted. There were local jealousies and feuds in abundance, local bullies and godfathers, a rapacious rural bourgeoisie and a savage and impover-
ished peasantry: in the words of one senior French official, “Naples is not France, where civilized behaviour prevails.” In the province of Principato Ultra the intendente wrote in 1809. “More than half the mayors [here] are rogues; and labourers, who can scarcely write their name have been forced by the barons of their commune to accept office, with the principal aim of legalising the offences they commit.” In some districts of Abruzzi and Calabria men were simply not available to fill the various official posts, and too often there was difficulty in getting the communes to render accounts: it needed fines, threats, and sometimes police action, before they could be induced to produce them. Even intendentes sometimes fell down on the business of supplying proper accounts and were taken to task by Zurlo` for doing so.14

The old abuses still continued among junior and even senior officials, though at the very top of the scale there were honest and very able administrators, like Pietro Briot and Simone Colonna. But the traditional attitude of most Neapolitans to office was that it was a reward not a function (what Roederer described as “a division of leisure”), and the lack of reliable junior officials was a serious barrier to sound administration. The provincial council of Upper Calabria, complaining of its inability to fill government posts with suitable people, lamented that “the most honest, the most enlightened, most notable among citizens refuse to accept such office, because they know it carries with it all the contempt, insults and humiliations that the lowest of the low would refuse to suffer.”15

The abolition of feudalism, first proclaimed by Joseph in 1806, was achieved only under Joachim Murat through the efforts of the tireless Giuseppe Zurlo` and his collaborator David Winspeare. Murat told Zurlo`, in 1810, that “without doubt the greatest benefit of my reign will be the abolition of feudalism.” 16 Feudal tenures were abolished on crown domains; the barons lost their rights of jurisdiction, to personal services and the use of water. Entail and the inalienability of land were also abolished at the same time. Common land was subdivided between the barons and the municipalities, and municipal land was shared out in turn among the poorest peasantry. Tithes, rent-charges and imposts owing to the barons were declared to be redeemable and, if considered exorbitant, were reduced or abolished completely. Fourteen hundred feudal rights were swept away by this legislation, including all baronial rights to free transport and free pasturage. All this was the work of the commission (set up and directed by Giuseppe Zurlo`), which decided over two thousand lawsuits that, till then, had been holding up the process of reform. But it was one thing to adjudicate, quite
another to implement the judgments, and many cases were outstanding for years, and some even until the second and third decades of the twentieth century.

Zurlò inevitably became unpopular with the Neapolitan barons, who resented their loss of privileges. Prince Pignatelli di Strongoli, in his *Memorie Storiche*, accused Zurlò of persecution, and Caroline Bonaparte, Murat’s wife, wrote to her husband in August 1810 that the nobles were ruined and as a result were unable to afford attendance at court. She tried to make out that the nobles’ ruin would mean the ruin of the city of Naples, but Murat continued to support his minister.

Save in very few cases, these changes failed to create, as hoped, a class of small proprietors, ready to improve and develop the land. In general those who benefited were the wealthy proprietors, and those notables who were by tradition associated with running provincial administration. Some new men (speculators and bourgeoisie, the so-called *gentiluomini*) also profited by the redistribution, but their numbers did not alter the proportion of those already owners of land. The subdivision of the common lands did not, as it should have, benefit the peasants. They lacked the necessary capital to purchase the plots allotted to them, and these were bought up by speculators. As Stuart Woolf has written, “the abuses and illegalities of the *gentiluomini* often merely replaced those of the feudatories.”

In the Republic (and then Kingdom) of Italy, the French inherited from the Austrians a modern and competent civil service that succeeded in transcending party and class. Though under Melzi and at first Eugène, the prefects were chosen on the basis of class, landed wealth and social prestige, and patriots with Jacobin associations were very firmly excluded from office, the picture altered in 1807. The prefects became career-civil servants, and even ex-Jacobins were awarded posts, if they proved themselves capable and hardworking. New career opportunities opened up with the proliferation of offices—one ministry alone, that of finance, was already employing, in 1805, no fewer than five thousand civil servants. There was a preponderance of Italian nobles in all organs of the administration, indicating a total *ralliement* of the landed aristocracy. Even so, the nobles were very reluctant to accept the new Napoleonic titles, partly owing to a fear that one day the old régime would return, but also because of their resentment at the growing burden of taxation, because of their support for the Catholic Church, and also because of snobbish contempt for a parvenu aristocracy.

In the crucial sphere of finance and taxation, the aim of Napo-
leon’s administrators was to replace chaos, improvisation and perpetual budget deficits, by order, method and simplification, to ensure that the state could pay its way. There was no attempt to equalize incomes, though the level of property tax was higher than it had been under the previous régime. What was aimed at was to raise enough money to meet the pressing military demands, without antagonizing the landowners by imposing too heavy a burden on them. Though, during the Italian Republic the proportion of direct to indirect taxes was approximately the same, from 1805 the balance altered, and indirect taxes were steadily increased: customs duties, taxes on foodstuffs, salt, tobacco and gunpowder, and the stamp duty on legal documents. The work of Prina, as minister of finance, has been dwelt on in a previous chapter: able and ingenious though he was, he found it difficult to balance the budget, due to Napoleon’s ever-increasing demands for military purposes. Between 1805 and 1811 revenues rose by 50 percent, but unfortunately the public debt increased by no less than 500 percent. 19

In the kingdom of Naples, prior to 1806, the principal taxes, apart from the poll tax, were levied on articles of consumption. The barons paid very little tax and the main fiscal burden fell on the poor. The régime of Joseph brought radical reform, with a single tax on property replacing twenty-three existing taxes. It was intended to be fair, but until a land register was compiled, there was no guarantee that it would be so. Agar (Mosbourg) introduced a new land register in 1809, but it was not completed until 1818. 20 Meanwhile there were many complaints about the assessments for the land tax, especially for being based on land values when prices for land had been very high, and in consequence bore little relation to the value of land in 1806. Tax-farming was abolished on payment of compensation, and sequestrated lands of the Church mortgaged as security for the national debt. Though the bonds, over time, fell seriously in value, they never descended to the depths the assignats had done in France. The sale of the extensive estates of the suppressed religious houses (a policy that had been begun by the Bourbon monarchs in the eighteenth century) failed to realize the prices expected, partly because of a shortage of capital, partly because of the depression in agriculture resulting from the wars, civil unrest and the effects of the naval blockade. In collecting the taxes there was much fraud, not only because both the taxes and the means of collecting them were new, but also because of venal officials. The excellent work of Pierre-Louis Roederer, in control of the national finances, has been mentioned already in chapter 5 and, though Murat complained of his legacy, he owed a great deal to that honest Alsatian. Roederer
reformed the customs and excise, but the task of reducing them to uniformity was an extremely complex one. In addition, there was widespread peculation. A report by Roederer’s nephew stated that “stealing and theft by employees is unbelievable; the vice had passed into their blood and they carry the marks on their face like smallpox.” Under Murat the venal and corrupt collectors were replaced by a newly created corps of customs and excise officers, whose numbers increased to twenty-four hundred. Murat abolished some unpopular taxes, such as those on the sale of livestock and milk, and reduced many other indirect taxes affecting the export of primary products: grain, olive oil, silk and wool; but he also created state monopolies of salt, tobacco, cards and gunpowder.21

Some taxes proved impossible to collect, as for instance the one on milled flour in a poor province like the Molise, where the population was extremely scattered, and some districts in the province were deserted for as much as six months in the year, when people migrated to Apulia in their annual search for casual work. Zurlo emphasised to the intendentes the necessity of not distinguishing between social classes in collecting taxes, and of not letting the system “degenerate into a means of injustice and oppression.” But these objectives were difficult to realize, given the social structure of the kingdom.22 All classes, in any case, resented the taxes, as their level always continued to rise to meet the cost of Napoleon’s wars.

As a means of restoring confidence in the kingdom’s economic position, Murat founded a new state bank—the Bank of the Two Sicilies. It was modeled on the Bank of France and was to be the forerunner of the modern Banca di Napoli.23 The previous state banks had both been ruined, first in 1799, and again in 1806 when Ferdinand and the court had fled to Sicily, taking the contents of the treasury with them. Those holding shares in the farming of taxes and all the creditors of the state were awarded annuities and bonds, again in order to restore public confidence in the credit-worthiness of the state.24 Such confidence enabled Agar, despite Napoleon’s angry veto, to reduce the interest on the public debt from five percent to three percent. Economies were made at court. The salaries of court employees were cut and their numbers were drastically reduced, putting an end to the employment of the marshal of the palace and the chief cook. Ministers were compelled to give up their salaries awarded them as counsellors of state, and the civil list was also pruned. Napoleon, paradoxically, accused Murat of being a miser and of deceiving his creditors (Murat personally owed Napoleon large sums), so he ceased to boast of his achievements in
this sphere and resorted instead to a plea of poverty. But the general picture of the kingdom’s finances was one of orderliness and prudence. In 1806 the public debt was 130 million ducats; by 1814 it had been reduced to a mere 840,000. In 1808 the budget showed a deficit, but in 1814 the budget balanced. According to a foreign observer, who was no friend of the régime, the entire financial edifice passed in 1815 “with the minimum of effort from the hands of the military to those of the legitimate occupiers.”

Yet the hope of discharging the national debt by the sale of the estates of the Church was only partially realized. Roederer had been convinced that the fundamental cause of the kingdom’s economic backwardness was the unproductive wealth of the clergy, especially that of the regulars, who owned one quarter of the revenues of the state. He started by suppressing the Jesuit order (restored by King Ferdinand in 1804) and confiscating its property. The Benedictines and the Cistercians were his next target in 1807, to be followed in 1808 by the wealthiest of the women’s convents. The money thus raised was not enough to overcome a financial crisis, and the suppression of religious houses was extended to the remaining orders; Dominicans, Franciscans, Theatines, Trinitarians and others. In the ten years of French rule in Naples, thirteen hundred religious houses were dissolved. The only survivors were the enclosed orders, about one hundred mendicant houses and the houses of seminarians. After the Bourbon restoration, only four hundred of these houses were revived and the religious orders in Naples never recovered from Napoleonic rule.

The value of the religious properties (sales by 1807 had raised 30 million ducats) was sufficient only to liquidate a portion of the national debt, pay for the cost of Napoleon’s wars and of modernising the administration. And the sale of émigré property, ordered by Napoleon, did not realize a great deal, since the great majority of wealthy nobles had opted to remain on the mainland, rather than follow the king to Sicily, and had since accepted official posts under the rules of Joseph and Murat.

In the Roman states, the sale of church property was directed, as it was elsewhere, to the discharge of the national debt. Taxes on gaming and flour were abolished, though those on salt and tobacco weighed heavily. As mentioned earlier in chapter 4, Napoleon had told his finance minister he had no wish to turn Rome’s annexation into a financial burden on the people, but not all French promises were kept. The public debt was not paid off, despite the suppression of religious houses, and the tax burden was not made lighter. In fact the tax on landed property tripled. In the liquidation of the na-
tional debt, state creditors were compensated by bonds secured on the sale of Church property. As the value of these bonds declined, many nobles and bourgeois found themselves bankrupt, with their incomes reduced by as much as seven-eighths.

The imposition and maintaining of order, as well as the collection of taxes and the enforcement of conscription, required the formation of a force of police. Melzi, in the Italian Republic, was confronted from the first with a problem of brigandage, endemic but aggravated by war and by political revolution. In July of that year he organized a massive round-up of criminals, by the use of fifteen thousand troops, supplemented by what police there were. The criminals were tried in special courts and the trials lasted over six months. In 1803 a gendarmerie was formed, and between 1805 and 1806 it was given training by General Radet. When he handed it over to General Polfranceschi, the organization was still incomplete; it numbered fifteen hundred gendarmes, out of an establishment of two thousand. Each canton was allotted a detachment of five gendarmes (three French and two Italian), and their work eventually won the support of the local notability. Control and overall organization was deputed to the commander of each military district, and only in those areas where there was a general director of police was the gendarmerie not directed by the military. Great difficulty was experienced in recruiting for the gendarmerie, if only because of poor pay and conditions, and total numbers were never sufficient to control any collective resistance: suppression of revolt had therefore to be left primarily to the regular army.

In Piedmont General Wirion was given the job of forming a gendarmerie. It replaced the Piedmontese gendarmeria, a body that had proved inadequate to the task of restoring order. Most of its members were recruited from France’s Army of Italy. They were required to be literate (a requirement that proved impossible to fulfill), to be at least twenty-five years of age, at least five feet six inches in height and to have served in at least four campaigns since the year 1789. Roughly one third were Piedmontese, the other two thirds being French. Though often arrogant and violent and so deeply unpopular, they played a very significant part in the restoration of order in Piedmont (as will be recounted in chapter 9), so that by 1809 the countryside enjoyed a degree of peace that it had never till then experienced.

Menou, in charge of security, relied on a law of the French Republic (10 Vendémiaire Year IV) to punish recalcitrant local communities by stationing troops inside their houses and levying a collective fine; but in 1807 Napoleon ordered the practice to be discontinued. He had no wish to see the people ruined, since he re-
quired them to pay his taxes; and he wanted cooperation from the local notables on whom he relied to see taxes collected and the requisite quota of conscripts raised. D’Auzers, the chief commissioner of police, preferred to use administrative action (Haute Police) rather than normal criminal procedure, to deal with really dangerous men: detention without trial and exile to Corsica; and to judge by the number of denunciations and requests he received to employ this power, it seems to have been a popular measure. In Tuscany its use was frequent as a cheap and quick way of dealing with criminals. It was used not just against dangerous men, but for every type of criminal offense, including offenses against public morals. As A. J. Davis has pointed out, it was hardly a measure of enlightened government but rather a retrogression to the methods of pre-Leopoldine rule.

In the kingdom of Naples Cristoforo Saliceti was appointed by Joseph as minister of police, and he continued to serve in that post till his early death in 1809. Extremely efficient and hard-working, he was ably supported in his task by his subordinate, Maghella. He ran an army of spies and informers, countered the activity of the agents of the queen of Sicily shipped over from Ponza (in Bourbon occupation until 1809, though not again until 1813), and forestalled a plot for an insurrection involving members of the nobility (all of whom were executed), as well as a plot to assassinate Joseph. The quality of the lower ranks of the police left, however, much to be desired. D’Aubusson, Napoleon’s envoy in Naples, wrote disparagingly of their being drawn “from amongst the most immoral, the most corrupt and the most venal sections of the population.” He suggested, moreover, that neither the minister of the interior nor of police had any control over their agents.

A gendarmerie was organized and trained by the same General Radet who had earlier worked in the kingdom of Italy. Though recruiting officers was never difficult, recruiting rank and file was never easy, as was the case in Piedmont and Lombardy—gendarmes were despised by the regular troops. An auxiliary gendarmerie was also formed to maintain order in rebellious provinces. It was recruited locally and replaced the armies of retainers and guardians the barons had employed to keep order in the communes; but its members were generally detested by the people as being government spies and informers.

During the rebellions in Calabria and Abruzzi, a Free Corps was organized to combat the actions of the masse (the name given to the partisans). Its units were often under the command of one of the former chiefs of the masse, poachers who had turned gamekeepers.
In addition, in the affected provinces, a civic provincial guard was formed, to protect property and maintain order, a local type of vigilantes organized by the landowners. Each province had a legion of the civic guard: its members were equipped at their own expense, its cost was paid for by the communes and it was normally commanded by a nobleman. The system was wide open to abuse, and in Upper Calabria captains of these guards acted not only as police but as judges, imposed fines and, in the words of Jacques Rambaud, “did more to foment brigandage than repress it.” As a force of order it was thought useless by the local military commanders, unless it was backed by regular troops.34

The changes effected in the legal system by the introduction of Napoleon’s codes and the restructuring of the judicial system were radical and met great opposition, especially in the kingdom of Naples. In the Italian Republic under Melzi there had been an unsuccessful attempt to codify the law for the whole republic, and it was not until 1806 that the new civil code was introduced; the commercial code followed in 1808, a compromise between the French texts and the recommendations of Italian jurists and the Italian Chamber of Commerce. Between 1807 and 1810 the criminal code was introduced in modified form and without juries, but in 1810 Napoleon ordered its introduction without any changes. The equal division of property between the male and the female children, which the civil code provided for, aroused objections, especially by the clergy, as also did the new laws regarding civil marriage and divorce.35

In the Roman departments, Napoleon wanted everything removed that might recall either Papal supremacy or the temporal power of the Pope. All the existing law courts were abolished, as was the temporal jurisdiction of the clergy, and the right to grant and obtain sanctuary. Feudal jurisdictions were also swept away. The departments were given the Napoleonic codes of civil and criminal law and procedure. This amounted to nothing less than a revolution for the Roman bourgeois, but not least for the Roman lawyers, and for the Roman nobility.36

In the kingdom of Naples the changes effected in the legal and juridical system were much needed and beneficial. So much so that, after 1815, the restored monarchy decided to retain virtually all the Napoleonic reforms because they enhanced the powers of the state. Prior to 1806, great confusion had been caused by justice being varied with the status of the litigant, and procedure varied from one court to another. There were a multiplicity of courts, each dealing with a different subject; the laws were uncertain, jurisprudence con-
tradicory and the laws’ delays and the cost of justice, not to mention flagrant dishonesty, constituted a public scandal. Now, with the introduction of the codes, the laws were simplified, as were the courts, and the practice of holding trials in public restored a sense of justice to a population who had long since lost faith in the judicial system. Hitherto, justice had been the subject of arbitrary interference by the ruler, the jurisdiction of feudal barons and the intrigues of local oligarchies, though, as pointed out by Francesco Lemmi, it was easier to draft new laws than to find officials to carry them out in the spirit in which they were conceived. The old abuses long continued in the lower and even higher ranks of officialdom—the habits of centuries were too ingrained.

Legislation affected every sector of society: the abolition of feudalism, baronial jurisdiction, primogeniture and entail; the equal division of property between spouses and the freedom of children from parental control on their attaining majority. The pattern of family life was changed, as was the clan structure of the nobility. The juridical system was transformed, though Napoleon admitted the jury system was unsuited to southern Italy, and allowed Joseph to drop divorce from the provisions of the civil code to get the latter introduced more rapidly. In fact Joseph delayed the introduction of the civil code until 1809, in order to avoid offending his subjects, as they were offended by the laws affecting marriage and division of inheritance.

Judges and magistrates were now appointed by the head of the government and were made irremovable. The judiciary was organised on the French model, and judges were henceforth paid by the state, and forbidden to receive any presents from litigants. The problem originally confronting Joseph had been that the judicial power over one quarter of the population rested in the hands of some ninety nobles, who also wielded economic power over 70 percent of the rural population. Napoleon was not slow to grasp that the key to ridding any ruler of such preponderant baronial power was to abolish the law of entail. So, in reply to Joseph’s pleas that the civil code in Naples should be modified, Napoleon wrote: “Make changes if you must, but bring the code into force nevertheless: it will consolidate your power, and once in force, all power that is dependent on entails will vanish, with the result that there will be no powerful families except those who you choose to create as your vassals. That is why I have myself argued the need for the civil code, and why I have always gone to such lengths to see it is carried out.” The fortunes of the great noble families were certainly reduced by the abolition of entail, but ways were found to get
round the law. Younger sons were induced, by family pressure, to renounce their share of the family inheritance in return for being given an informal life interest. In fact, no families, wealthy or peasant, favored partition of the family heritage, resulting in this article of the code remaining largely a dead letter. As for accepting the right to divorce, the landed classes never did, as it threatened important marriage settlements: only one application for a divorce, before 1814, has been recorded. Further, as Michael Broers has emphasised, the abolition of feudal jurisdiction had only a limited success in easing social and economic tensions. The barons were still able to overawe the officials in local government, and there were not sufficient magistrates to replace the barons in the courts of law. Moreover, as Rambaud indicates, what was not reformed in the kingdom of Naples was the inordinate number of lawyers, nor indeed the condition of the buildings that were made to serve as courts of law.

The one-time minister for war, General Pietro Colletta, in his History of the Kingdom of Naples, published in 1825, enthused about the wonderful effects of the introduction of Napoleon’s codes (the criminal not until 1812): “The kingdom presented a noble spectacle, a tribunal in every commune and superior tribunals in the districts and provinces; the trials began and ended on the spot; the sentence and the judges themselves always on the side of the people, despotic urges [sic] abolished . . . besides the deception and torture formerly employed towards the accused and witnesses forbidden.” Joseph had personally intervened to remedy delay in criminal cases. After visiting Calabria in 1806, when he found the prisons overcrowded and some prisoners waiting for years to be tried, he instituted four extraordinary commissions to try every case within three months that involved a prisoner of the crown. Work was also done to repair the prisons, or turn disused convents into prisons, in order to relieve the shortage of space. It seems as if conditions did improve, at least as regards the food given to prisoners, though the results were only short-term. One remembers Gladstone’s savage indictment of the state of Neapolitan prisons, when he visited them some forty years later.

But the juridical system, for all its merits, was introduced in too much of a hurry and in consequence functioned inefficiently. Though Ricciardi, Murat’s minister of justice, weeded out the lazy, corrupt and incompetent, magistrates and judges often failed to appear when their presence was required in court, and the new ones were frequently less than capable. Conservative attitudes persisted and vested interests long continued to stand in the way of real improvement.
Whether, in the words of Professor Frederick Scheid, Napoleon really “sought to transform Italy through the militarisation of its society,” or whether he simply regarded Italy as yet another source of cannon fodder, the fact remains that the kingdom of Italy alone supplied him with 200,000 troops, quite aside from the three regiments that the kingdom of Naples sent to Spain and the many thousands of Piedmontese, Tuscan and Roman citizens who were sent to form part of his Grande Armée.¹

In forming an Italian army, Napoleon sought to denationalize it. Italian regiments fought in French corps or as part of the French army that was sent to Spain, Russia, Austria, Germany, Dalmatia and the Ionian Islands, and conscripts in Italian territory directly annexed to Napoleon’s Empire were drafted into French formations. Napoleon gave instructions in 1807 that Piedmontese were not to be sent to units of the Italian army, and severely reprimanded Eugène for agreeing to accept young Piedmontese nobles, who had estates in the kingdom of Italy, into his Guard of Honour in Milan.²

Shortly before Napoleon’s first entry into Milan, on 16 May 1796, the city’s municipal government revived its ancient urban militia. On 18 May Napoleon transformed it into being a National Guard, gave it an Italian tricolor and organized it into eight battalions. In July Ferrara formed its own National Guard, followed by Reggio, Modena and Bologna. In March 1797 National Guards were also formed by Brescia and Bergamo, and soon all these guards were federated, on Napoleon’s orders, to form one body. In July 1797 there was held a Feast of Federation, when thirty thousand National Guardsmen paraded, in company with eight thousand French troops.

Quite apart from these National Guards, whose task was really a policing one, Napoleon authorized a Lombard Legion, formed at the patriots’ request, “to defend liberty and independence.” Its strength was over thirty-seven hundred and included a battalion of
men drawn from all over Italy. The latter contained many so-called "anarchists," friends of the revolutionary Buonarroti; small wonder therefore Napoleon came to hold such a low opinion of it, describing it as "a compound of rascals, picked up off the streets of Italian towns, who pillage, rob and are good for nothing." Yet the Legion fought well beside the French in action against the Papal troops and in suppressing the revolt in Verona.

The Cispadane Legion of patriots, formed early in 1797, was fused soon after with the Lombard Legion to become the Cisalpine Republic’s army. Just twelve months after Napoleon left, it was merged into an army of France, when a measure of conscription was introduced to bring its strength to nine thousand men. This measure proved highly unpopular, as conscription was unheard of in Italy. Nevertheless this army, made up of volunteers and unwilling conscripts, conducted itself with considerable credit during the war of the Second Coalition. Two divisions, commanded respectively by Italian Generals Pino and Lecchi, fought bravely under General Macdonald, and defeated an Austro-Neapolitan corps in the vicinity of Siena.3

The newly created Italian Republic, formed in February 1802 to replace the discredited Second Cisalpine, needed an effective national army, in the opinion of its vice-president, as its forces then numbered only eight thousand. "Without a permanent military force, independence is a dream," Melzi wrote, "and the state is always precarious." He therefore introduced conscription on 13 August 1802, a measure that won Napoleon’s approval.4 The latter in addressing the Italian Consulta, on the formation of the new republic, had said, when encouraging that body to "assume national attitudes": "Finally, you have no army; the powers who would become your enemies are strong, but you have the ability to produce [an army]—a numerous population, fertile land, and the example given in all essential circumstances, as the first people of Europe."5

By August 1803, 13,500 conscripts had reported for duty, and a year later 30,000.6 Murat, whom Napoleon had placed in command of all his forces in Italy, advised him strongly against the measure. It was not in the interests of France, he wrote, to allow the Republic to have its own army, and the wealthy landowners were not in favor, as it deprived them of their laborers. They preferred that their country should be defended by mercenary forces of Poles and Swiss. Napoleon, however, ignored the advice and backed Melzi rather than Murat.7

When the Republic came into existence, its tiny army consisted only of five demi-brigades of infantry, two cavalry regiments and a
corps of artillery and engineers. It was under-strength, poor in quality and lacked competent officers and commanders. It was made up of volunteers, mostly from outside the Cisalpine area, including Germans, Austrians and French, ill-clothed, badly disciplined and prone to desert at the first opportunity. In the new army one third of the officers were to be French, on Napoleon’s insistence (Corsicans or natives of Nice, who understood the Italian language), but its generals (Italian) were a very mixed bunch. Domenico Pino, a young Milanese, was described disparagingly by Stendhal as “assez beau mais peu général.” He eventually became the minister for war, whose duties he performed with less than competence. He was really little more than an adventurer, and deserted Eugène in 1814. Pietro Teulié was another Milanese. Brave, talented and popular with his troops, he was killed in 1807 at the siege of Colberg. Achille Fontanelli was a Modenese noble who had enlisted in the Cispadane Legion at the age of twenty-one. He became an aide-de-camp to Napoleon, was minister for war in the kingdom of Italy from 1811 to 1813, and was a loyal and courageous soldier. But most senior officers resembled Pino rather than Teulié or Fontanelli.8

Melzi’s reforms were to involve a drastic purge of the officer corps, future officers receiving their training at the Military Academy at Modena, and a corps d’élite for young nobles was formed and given the name of Guard of Honour.9 Conscription, however, proved very unpopular, as the country had no military tradition, unlike the neighboring state of Piedmont. By the law of August 1802, men between the ages of twenty and twenty-five were liable to four years military service, unless married, widowers with dependent children, or clerics (including seminarians). The provision of substitutes was permitted and the wealthy purchased themselves exemption. Men resorted to various ruses in order to escape conscription, such as self-mutilation, joining a seminary or marriage to an elderly woman, often aged between sixty and eighty. To put a stop to the latter practice, a law was passed in 1811 forbidding marriage to those over sixty. Men also fled across the nearby frontiers into Bavaria, the Tyrol, Tuscany and the Papal states, until the last two were annexed to France.10

Drastic measures were undertaken to chase those seeking to evade the draft, and by 1804 their numbers had decreased. Men were comparatively willing to serve if their own country was being invaded, but correspondingly unwilling to fight in the emperor’s foreign campaigns. Because in the war of 1805 the enemy was Austria, failure to report for call-up did not rise above 10 percent, but
in 1813, when men were being summoned to fight in Spain and Germany, the failure rate was 77 percent. Desertion however was on the increase, affecting six percent of the infantry and three percent of the cavalry. Prefects blamed the local authorities for not arresting those deserters whom they must have known had returned to their homes, and Melzi blamed the military authorities for stationing conscripts in their home departments. Eugène told Napoleon in January 1807, “It is shameful to admit that one third of the conscripts desert after being fully clothed.” Local officials were also blamed for not enforcing the conscription laws: Melzi wrote of their “great reluctance” and Eugène, in 1807, of their “softness.” Corruption also entered in. Melzi told the prefects in 1803 that “without a citizen army there is no patria, no nation” and the clergy were enlisted to support the authorities. The archbishop of Udine referred to desertion from the army as “a shameful fault,” but many priests opposed conscription. One prefect wrote in 1806, “the priests do not like conscription and hence their teaching on the subject is ineffective.” This was especially true in departments once part of the Papal states.

Eugène had boasted earlier that, after the first fourteen to eighteen months of service, desertion rates in the army fell, because conscripts became used to military life; yet between 1806 and 1810 desertions were running at 17 percent. The practice of officers beating their troops was an additional cause of it, though in 1812 it was forbidden for officers to carry a cane, and the beating of a soldier carried with it the penalty of imprisonment. In 1813 desertion was rampant, when Eugène called up a second draft to include those aged over twenty-five and also any men who were married. It was in vain for him to appeal to Italians to fight for Italy (“this sacred name”), defend the independence of their country and remember their heroic emperor who had restored to Italy “her ancient existence and fame.” The losses suffered by Italian troops in the Emperor’s campaigns on foreign fields, Spain, Russia and Germany, were not to be easily forgotten. Out of 30,000 sent to Spain only 9,000 had returned; out of 27,000 sent to Russia only 1,000 men survived; and of 28,000 who fought in Germany, the survivors numbered a bare 3,000. Such losses were horrific by any standard. In February 1814 Melzi, who had been recalled by Napoleon to act as Eugène’s deputy, while the latter was commanding troops in the field, recommended not calling up only sons, because this was so unpopular. The experience of the past months had shown that out of every ten men called up, between six and eight failed to report or deserted as soon as they had done so. They went to swell the
ranks of the brigands, and there were not the forces to prevent them.\textsuperscript{16}

Periodic amnesties and special courts that were set up to try deserters failed to provide a solution to the problem, whose attributable causes were manifold: lack of esprit de corps as a result of the constant posting away of officers, NCOs and senior soldiers to the gendarmerie or President’s Guard; poor medical attention; badly ventilated barracks that were frequently verminous and damp; the inadequate provision of soldiers’ bedding, with dirty mattresses and unchanged straw; lack of essential articles of clothing, more especially shirts and shoes (troops sent to Apulia in 1803 arrived at their destination in rags); and probably, most important of all, the inadequacy of the soldiers’ pay, for Napoleon had insisted in November 1804 that the rates of pay for Italian troops should be lower than those of French troops in Italy.\textsuperscript{17} In order to try to impede desertions, no movement was allowed outside a department unless one carried an identity card, but this measure was extremely unpopular, for those who lived in poor communities often had to travel to find seasonal work simply in order to survive. Bitter resentment was also aroused by searches carried out by the gendarmerie.\textsuperscript{18}

Between 1802 and 1815 more than 165,000 men were conscripted into the Italian army, and in 1810 its strength comprised as much as two percent of the nation, a percentage that was only equaled in the kingdom of Westphalia and the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, though in France it amounted to four percent.\textsuperscript{19} The size of the army increased steadily from around a figure of 23,000 in February 1804 to 40,000 in November 1807, 50,000 in 1810 and in 1812 nearly 72,000.\textsuperscript{20} By this time many of its officers were drawn from outside the kingdom of Italy. The Armée d’Italie was itself separate from the army of the kingdom of Italy, consisting of both French and Italian regiments, roughly in the proportion of two to one: commanded by French marshals until 1806, it was then handed over to Eugène by Masséna.\textsuperscript{21}

The Italian ministry of war was a purely administrative organization. It had no operative function and was subordinate to the ministry of war in Paris. Its minister, the less than competent Pino, was replaced in 1806 by the French General Caffarelli, who proved an efficient and industrious soldier. He ran the army economically, formed a Royal Guard, a Guard of Honor, a corps of Light Infantry, an Istrian battalion and in addition a Dalmatian Legion.\textsuperscript{22} There were state arms factories at Pavia and Brescia, the former for artillery, the latter for small arms, but as their output was limited they could not supply all demands of the army. Private factories had to
be employed, and France was called on in time of need. There were army schools for officers in Modena (artillery and engineers), Bologna and Pavia (for infantry) and Lodi (for cavalry), but in the last years of the régime officers were promoted directly from the ranks, and French officers constituted 14 percent of the officer strength. The Italian army suffered heavily among its officers in the campaigns fought in Russia and Germany, losing over half of its officer strength.23

As already mentioned in Chapter 3, Napoleon conceived of the army’s role in Italy as purely secondary, and placed all his faith in fortifications to withhold any further Austrian onslaught. He foresaw invasion by two obvious routes, the valley of the Tagliamento and the road from Vienna to Trieste, hence his concentration on building fortresses at Osoppo and Palmanova. He also wanted a fortress built to block the more difficult approach via Caporetto and Udine, but Eugène objected to the expense and therefore it was never built. Yet it was through this gap that the archduke John broke through into Italy in 1809, and took Eugène by surprise at Sacile.24

Eugène was told from the very start of his tenure of the viceroyship to use his experience to form an army, and to supervise personally and daily the maneuvers of the Milan garrison. He proved a good organizer and trainer of troops as well as a successful commander, after learning his lesson at Sacile.25 So successful was Eugène in creating an army of size and quality that Napoleon found it possible to make gradual withdrawals of French troops from his kingdom, something he never achieved elsewhere. But Napoleon permitted this only because the Italian army was not really national, but merely a section of the army of France, called upon from time to time to supply the latter with its best formations.26 Its quality was much admired, and French generals compared its Royal Guards favourably with those of the French, and considered Italian infantry regiments the equals of their best French counterparts. Only the Italian cavalry failed to come up to the same high standards. Napoleon’s own opinion on the subject changed radically over the years. In 1806 he told his brother Joseph that among the nations he ranked the Italians, as soldiers, fourth, after the French, the Russians and Germans; but in 1809 he wrote, in his bulletin regarding the campaign just fought in Spain: “The troops of the kingdom of Italy covered themselves with glory . . . since the Romans no period has been so glorious for Italian arms”;27 and in 1811 told his council of ministers (again speaking of the fighting in Spain): “Two of my marshals, Macdonald and Suchet, are each wanting an Italian divi-
The number of senior Italian officers increased with the passage of the years: between 1802 and 1812 twelve of the seventeen divisional generals, eighteen of the forty brigade commanders and forty-one of the seventy-three colonels were Italian officers, not French. There was, however, a severe shortage of trained Italian engineers, and of NCOs in every arm, for the conscripts were farmers or illiterate peasants, and the shortage grew worse with the heavy losses incurred in Russia and Germany. Only by transferring NCOs from the army in Spain and the Grande Armée was the army of the kingdom of Italy able to continue to function at all.29

The Royal Guard of the Italian army was made up of two brigades, the Guard of Honor and Veliti reali (Royal militia). Though formed more for social than military reasons, to attract young nobles into the army, and entry to which was restricted to those whose families could subsidise their sons, it was nevertheless extremely efficient and was permitted, until 1814, to serve alongside the Imperial Guard. The Guard of Honor was recruited exclusively from the sons of members of the Possidenti, and cadets eventually joining their regiments were given junior commissioned rank. The Veliti were recruited from wealthy bourgeois, whose cadets when they joined their regiments held the noncommissioned rank of serjeant.30

Though intent that the army raised by his kingdom was not an independent one, Napoleon encouraged its esprit de corps by a blatant appeal to Italian nationalism. Caffarelli, minister for war, issued a directive in 1809 to all the Italian army’s commanders that “the concept of an Italian army [must] be drummed into the conscripts” daily, and they must be reminded constantly that they were serving “for the splendour of Italy.”31

The army of the kingdom of Naples was quite a different proposition. When Napoleon sent his army in 1806 to wrest the kingdom from Bourbon rule, the invading force that Masséna commanded was a heterogeneous miscellany: seven regiments from the army of Italy, several Polish regiments, a battalion of Swiss, two regiments each of Africans and Corsicans, and two regiments of foreign nationals—“a real Noah’s Ark” in Rambaud’s words.32 As for the Neapolitan army, Joseph described it to Napoleon as being quite simply “nonexistent and has always been so, and could only become an army in the course of time and with much effort.” Though this was exaggeration, the performance of that army at Campotenese (1806) under the command of General Damas was clearly a deplorable one.33 Joseph set out to re-create the army, though only on a very
small scale and designed principally to combat brigandage with provincial guards and a royal guard. The business of defending the kingdom against invasion from Sicily was left entirely to the French.

Napoleon had no illusions about the quality of his Neapolitan troops and did not wish to see their numbers increased, as this would only add to the kingdom’s expenses. He told Joseph in 1807 to raise very few Neapolitan troops as they were totally unreliable: “You could form a regiment and send it to France where I would arrange to have it paid for; it would be useful for service in the Pyrenees.” Again he wrote in the following August, apropos the latter’s renewed pleas for money: “If you want money, you will have to lose French troops, and for as many Neapolitan regiments that you form, I will withdraw French ones. That is replacing good money with bad. I have derived some benefit from Italian troops in the Grand Army, but they are ones I have trained for six years and were in camp at Boulogne.” French officers stationed in the kingdom of Naples realized that service in the army there carried with it no prestige, and heartily disliked being employed in the suppression of brigandage. Like Masséna, they sought to get recalled so as to join the Grande Armée again. Marshal Macdonald recalled in his memoirs how, when offered Neapolitan service, he rejected the offer with contempt: “My blood boils even now as I write these lines and think what a degree of abasement I should have fallen into had I been desired to command Neapolitan soldiers.”

The army that Joseph came to command was much the same motley one that Masséna had originally brought into Naples; it included Corsicans and Poles, and those who had left the Grand Armée because discipline was less strict in Naples. There were tensions between the French officers who had seen service in Napoleon’s army, and ex-Bourbon Neapolitan officers who had been cashiered for the part they had played in the 1799 revolution but who had now been allowed to return. As for enlisting Neapolitan soldiers, Joseph was unable to impose conscription and had to resort to enlisting convicts in order to satisfy Napoleon’s demand for regiments to be sent to Spain. As mentioned in an earlier chapter, their conduct on arrival (gross indiscipline and desertion) infuriated Napoleon. At the time when Joseph departed for Spain, the strength of the Neapolitan army had risen to 31,120 with nearly five thousand serving outside the kingdom. Joseph had hoped he was creating the basis of an army of forty thousand, not (unlike Murat) with the purpose of making the kingdom independent of Paris but merely less dependent on it. Yet, when Murat arrived to assume the throne, he found
such an army was largely a fantasy. The African regiment was mutinous and constantly subject to desertion, the Corsicans suffered from lack of recruits, and the best part of the Royal Guard had been taken by Joseph when he went to Spain. Out of six regiments of infantry and cavalry, five of them were serving in Spain or in the Ionian Islands, and all that was left were a few hundred officers, including six divisional generals and eleven brigade commanders. General Péreignon, called to Naples in 1808 to report on the state of the Neapolitan army, wrote frankly to the minister for war that it had “neither the stability nor strength one could have thought it had, and that it will no doubt require. There is nothing in it to be counted on at the moment.”

By the terms of the Treaty of Bayonne, signed by Murat in 1808, he was bound, by accepting the throne of Naples, to supply Napoleon with a contingent of 20,500 Neapolitan troops (18,000 infantry, 2,500 cavalry), for whose pay he was responsible, even if they had to serve outside Italy. He therefore set about immediately reforming and reorganizing the army, which he found had not been paid for nine months, and which also was lacking essential equipment. He wrote to Clarke in March 1809 requesting a thousand muskets and bayonets, for which he said he was willing to pay, as his arsenals were unable to produce more than six hundred of these weapons a month. He relieved the army of responsibility for maintaining internal security by forming a civilian militia, though this compulsory service for landowners was much resented and often ignored. He issued an amnesty for deserters, determined a fixed rate of pay for the troops, recognized the Royal Guard under command of French officers, created a corps d’élite of Veliti that attracted four thousand volunteers, created three more line regiments, reorganized the artillery under French officers, and finally, if reluctantly, introduced conscription (two per thousand of the population). Not surprisingly the measure was deeply unpopular, and in Calabria was the cause of a renewal of brigandage. Reliance had to be placed once more, if units were to be kept up to strength, on enlisting convicts from the prisons. When in August 1812 three thousand of these were sent to the army in Germany, their gross indiscipline enraged Napoleon, who sent back one thousand of them in disgrace.

By the end of the year 1809 the army numbered thirty-thousand, well equipped and regularly paid. When peace in Calabria was restored, even Calabresi were permitted to volunteer for the Royal Guard, and soldiers of the Bourbon army who had gone to Sicily in 1806 were now permitted to return to the mainland. For senior officers, however, Murat was largely dependent on the French.
protested to Napoleon, in September 1809, that he could not comply with the order given that no French soldiers should be commanded by any officer other than a Frenchman, unless he were sent five or six more French generals. French troops, he explained, were dispersed throughout the provinces to ensure that taxes were collected and the bands of brigands captured or killed, so it was inevitable that their commanders came under the direction of provincial headquarters. “I have only one French divisional general and four brigade generals,” he wrote, “one of whom is chief of the General Staff. Only General Cavaignac commands in Calabria and I have not been able to give him a French brigade commander.” 43 Nevertheless, by the end of 1810, ten out of fourteen generals were French, as were the inspectors of infantry, artillery and gendarmerie, the principal engineer officer and the commanders of the Royal Guards. 44 On the eve of the invasion of Sicily, all the divisional commanders were French, and all but two battalion commanders. There were, however, difficulties about conflicting chains of command. General Grenier, the commander of the French divisions in Murat’s kingdom, was liable to receive separate orders from Napoleon, and even from Clarke, his minister for war, from those Murat received from Paris. 45 Murat was also entirely dependent on French NCOs for his Royal Guard, and wrote to protest in 1810 at an order to send back to their corps of origin all French soldiers serving in his Guard. “I can’t replace them,” he wrote, “with young Neapolitan recruits.” 46 The attempts by Murat to transform his army into an independent force have already been mentioned in Chapter 5, as have Napoleon’s countermeasures to ensure that no such thing could happen.

In Piedmont conscription was introduced a year after the country was annexed to France and, as everywhere else in Italy, it was bitterly resented and where possible evaded. The most recalcitrant area was inevitably on the Ligurian border and the disturbed valley of the River Stura, where banditry and smuggling had long been endemic. The business of enforcing the call-up and of tracking down deserters was part and parcel of the larger problem of restoring order in that part of the country, long renowned for its lawlessness. The fining of families whose members had deserted proved to be unworkable, since the families were too poor to pay the fines: it was mobile columns and the gendarmerie that proved in the end to be effective in stopping desertion and draft evasion, though it took more than six years to do so. However, by the year 1811, the prefect of the Stura was able to report that the problem in question had now diminished with every military draft that was raised. The engine of
government had proved too strong and the population was compelled to acquiesce, as it did in the kingdom of Italy (at least until the Empire was crumbling), in a measure that it saw itself powerless to resist.  

The Napoleonic era in Italy had turned many Italians into soldiers and thousands had served Napoleon loyally and paid for that service with their lives; but if Napoleon’s aim had been to militarize Italian society, as opposed to accustoming quite a number to undertake military service in defense of their native land, he had certainly not succeeded in doing so.
A gloomy picture of Italy’s economy during the Napoleonic occupation, in which Italy is described as being the victim of colonial exploitation, was painted by the Russian historian Eugène Tarlé, in a book published in 1928. Tarlé’s assessment has since been attacked by a number of Italian historians, notably Carlo Capra and Pasquale Villani, the French historian Max Tacel, as well as by several English ones and notably by Stuart Woolf, as being selectively unfair, and based largely on the crisis years of 1810–11, when the whole of Europe was confronted with most difficult economic conditions. It also ignores, they allege, the undoubted prosperity enjoyed in a number of sectors of the economy, notably that of agriculture and concentrates on Italy’s trade with France without considering the importance of numerous other external markets.

What is clear, however, is that Napoleon certainly looked on Italy’s economy as a field to be exploited ruthlessly for the benefit of France and the Empire as a whole. As he wrote to Eugène in August 1810, objecting to raw silk from the kingdom of Italy finding its way into English markets, Italian silk must be sent to France, to the exclusion of all other countries. “If this does not happen,” he told Eugène, “my silk manufactures will suffer badly and this is one of my principal commercial resources. . . . My principle is La France avant tout. Italy is independent only because of France, and this independence is the price of blood and victories and one that Italy should not abuse. It is unreasonable to calculate if France is getting commercial advantages. Parma and Piedmont also produce silk and I have made the same orders about the sale of it only to France. Why should I prefer Italy to Piedmont?”

There was no doubt that France depended for the prosperity of its silk manufactures on the raw material imported from Italy. In the words of a report of the French Council of Commerce and Manufactures, written in 1811, “Italian exports have revived our industry . . . Italy remains . . . our sole resource.” By the same token, Italy
was seen as a secure and guaranteed market for all types of French manufactured goods. By a trade treaty Napoleon imposed on the Italian Republic in 1803, French imports were given favorable treatment; even more so by a treaty of 1808, which Napoleon imposed on the kingdom of Italy, by which French imports were required to pay only two thirds of the normal duty. Though Italian goods imported to France were to enjoy the same reduced rate, France was the real beneficiary, since it was a far more industrialized country. Eugène objected that certain clauses in the treaty would ruin many branches of Italian manufacture, and this in turn would affect his finances, but concluded weakly that Napoleon knew best what was in the interest of their two countries.\(^5\) And a favorable trade treaty concluded with Bavaria, giving Italy a ready market for its exports, was disallowed by Napoleon, who saw in it a threat to the French economy.\(^6\) Two years later Napoleon prohibited the entry of any textiles to Italy other than those manufactured in France, and it was in vain for Prina to argue that Italian industry would be ruined, if manufactured goods from France did not pay three quarters of the normal duty. Further to restrict Italian competition, textile machinery from France was not allowed to be sent to Prato, and Napoleon decreed, in 1812, that no skilled workers were allowed to leave France to take up employment in Italy. Understandably, the Italians reacted badly to such blatant commercial exploitation, and customs officers were known to query whether goods imported were really French, sometimes to the extent of seizing them and burning genuine French manufactures.\(^7\)

Three quarters of Italy’s agricultural exports found their readiest market in France (Napoleon considered Italy “the granary of the Empire”), and as these exports included livestock, Italian farmers began to complain of a serious lack of beasts of burden.\(^8\) When in September 1810 there was a serious shortage of grain in both Italy and France, Napoleon insisted that all restrictions on its export from Italy to France should be lifted, telling Eugène, in justification, that he cared nothing for landowners’ interests, but always supported those of the people. Yet, as Tarlé points out, the action envisaged could only result in the landowners’ benefit, by causing a rise in the price of grain.\(^9\)

The removal from the kingdom of Italy of the fertile province of Istria, given, as it was, with Dalmatia, to the Illyrian provinces in 1810, was a serious blow to Italy’s economy and especially to that of Venice, since Istria was a valuable source of foodstuffs, cheap salt and timber for shipbuilding.\(^10\) The ruin of much Italian manufacture (the element that relied on external, rather than an internal,
market) accounts for the fact that in 1814 it was the commercial and industrial classes who were most incensed against Napoleon’s régime.\textsuperscript{11}

The political imposition of frontiers within the Italian peninsula meant that Italian manufacturers were prevented from obtaining raw silk from Piedmont, save at quite exorbitant prices, while Piedmont in its turn found it had lost its traditional market for wine in Lombardy.\textsuperscript{12} The incorporation of the Papal Marches into the kingdom of Italy caused a decline in their woollen manufactures, as they thereby lost their normal supplies of good quality wool from the Lazio province, which was still a part of the Papal states and soon to become a part of the Empire; and the incorporation of the Trentino into the kingdom of Italy meant the closure of the former’s German market for its produce of wine, tobacco and silk, while subjecting it to the strong competition of the kingdom’s Lombard and Venetian producers.\textsuperscript{13}

In the kingdom of Naples, Murat tried to assert his independence of Napoleon by placing a tariff on French imports on 24 February 1809. But in the following October Napoleon insisted on the free importation of French textiles and other manufactures. Agar protested vigorously to Murat that if this were allowed, it would throw out of work six thousand of his subjects, reduce the kingdom’s revenue by two thirds, deprive three thousand customs officers of their jobs, and cause an increase in smuggling.\textsuperscript{14} Murat passed on the protest to Napoleon, warning him imperial finances would suffer if his orders were to be carried out, and adding disingenuously that perhaps Napoleon intended his directive to apply only to clothing and materials required by French troops who were stationed in Naples. Napoleon relented to some extent and, since the whole of the Neapolitan market was monopolized by French manufactures, he agreed in October 1810 to allow the imposition of a moderate duty. Murat stood out against Napoleon’s attempt to exclude from Naples all non-French products, and insisted on retaining the existing treaty, which was one of reciprocity, despite Napoleon’s fears that English goods (and more especially English textiles), smuggled in from Sicily, would be sent to France as Italian manufactures. Murat tried further to assert his independence by starting up the manufacture of woollens, cottons, leather goods and arms, albeit on a very small scale; Napoleon replied by doubling the tariff on Neapolitan cotton goods, insisting that this would not be lifted until Murat removed all the duties on goods imported to Naples from France. The price of Naples cottons fell as a result, though it picked up slightly
in 1812 and, when Murat proclaimed an end to the blockade, as he did in November 1813, prices naturally fell.\textsuperscript{15}

Carlo Capra, the Italian historian, in his critique of Tarlé’s book, thinks the latter places too much emphasis on the industrial and commercial elements in the Italian economy, and the possible expansion of French manufactures. He concedes that Lyon’s competition severely damaged the Italian silk industry, but insists that to compensate for this, there was strong growth in woollen manufacture, assisted by removal of English competition and stimulated by the demands of the army in Italy for woollen clothing. Tarlé, Capra thinks, also ignores the growing importance of mining and metallurgy, even if hampered by lack of fuel, skilled labor and technical backwardness, in response to the demands of not only the army but the growing population of the kingdom of Italy that increased from 3 to 7 million between 1805 and 1814. The Italian cotton and woollen industries, moreover, received their first technical innovations through the enterprise in Lombardy of the Swiss, Adam Kramer, and the German businessman Friedrich Schmutz; in Piedmont two French entrepreneurs, Genseul and Brussin, introduced new methods, attracted into Italy by the state subsidies and the privileges offered them. In 1811 the Alsatian Xavier Bucher was given the Baths of Diocletian in Rome as a site for the manufacture of cottons, but the necessary capital was lacking and the raw material was not forthcoming. He started by employing six hundred workers, but when the enterprise eventually failed they joined the already swollen army of impoverished and unemployed. Capra does, however, concede that there was stagnation, and finally a real crisis, in numerous branches of industry and commerce, especially in Italy’s major ports, after the renewal of the war with Britain (in May 1803). The number of ships entering Genoa’s port fell from 953 in 1802 to 136 in 1804, and her rope and canvas industry suffered from possessing a much smaller navy, and a much reduced merchant marine. The port of Venice fared even worse, and by 1807 resembled a corpse, in the words of Napoleon’s viceroy Eugène, in a secret report he made to Napoleon. The urban economy suffered everywhere, except only in the capital Milan: apart from the latter, the major towns all showed a fall in their population, and if Milan boasted a modest growth, this was due largely to the influx of bureaucrats, and the presence of the viceroy’s court.\textsuperscript{16}

Pasquale Villani is also critical of Tarlé’s economic thesis. It was, he writes, only on account of the strong Italian competition, whereby Italian customs duties were higher than they had been under Austrian rule, that the 1808 treaty of trade was drawn up,
with its preferential tariff for French silk manufactures, thus depriving the Italian silk industry of its monopoly of sales in Lombardy. Even so, Italian silk manufacturers could still market their products abroad, until Napoleon, in 1811, tightened the continental blockade.\textsuperscript{17} Italian exports of raw silk, which formerly went to Britain and Germany, and were now directed to markets in France, were very largely responsible for Italy’s favorable balance of trade, while Italian manufacturers were able to survive because they were able to export commodities, such as fabrics the French were unable to make, to Germany and Russia until 1810, and to the Levant until 1811 when the route thither through Austria was closed and the port of Livorno shut by blockade. Piedmont, however, being part of France, was inexorably tied to the French market and its silk production to the requirements of the French manufacturers in Lyon. As the latter were able to absorb only half of the silk that Piedmont was able to grow, there was inevitably overproduction and a consequent depression of prices.\textsuperscript{18}

In the kingdom of Naples, as already shown, Murat tried his best to avoid becoming totally dependent on the economy of France. Yet “it was not possible to create in a few years a manufacturing structure diffused and efficient in a country lacking the most elementary infrastructure, where agriculture was at a low level and there was a serious transportation crisis”.\textsuperscript{19} In Calabria such minerals as there were could not be extracted profitably, because the necessary capital was lacking, and because there was always a shortage of miners, if only on account of low rates of pay. The manufacture of those commodities that were able to serve Naples’ military needs—gunpowder, saltpeter and nitrates—were always commercially practicable, but there was no profit in extracting salt, in face of the flourishing contraband trade that made it cheaper to import from Sicily. As a result all Calabria’s salt works, save only one, were compelled to close.\textsuperscript{20} Murat was fully determined to supply all local demands, including those of the military, with home-produced cloth, whether woollen or cotton, and a textile industry began in the province of the Campania.

Employment for people was also found in the shipyards of Naples and Castellamare, but work there was hampered by a shortage of iron, and when Napoleon, in 1811, doubled the duties on the export of iron, shipyard production was brought to a halt.\textsuperscript{21} Murat got two Frenchmen (Plan and Praud) to set up a porcelain factory, and another Frenchman (Darestre de la Charanne) to start up a tobacco factory. The state financed an arsenal, a powder factory and a coral factory, but it was clear that for industry to flourish everything de-
pended on state support. Individual Neapolitans however showed no interest in investing their money in it.

Murat’s protectionist policy (in 1813 he forbade altogether the import of any goods from France) encouraged foreign textile manufacturers to come to Naples and start up business. Subsidies were made available, as were the premises of disused convents to the Swiss entrepreneur Jacques Egg, and an ex-ducal palace to two French men of business in which to manufacture woollen cloth. But the whole enterprise was severely handicapped by the lack of up-to-date equipment, few foreign markets, low domestic demand and the scarcity of skilled manual labor, as the presence of foreign workers was resented. A further handicap was the popular ill-will manufacture aroused among the local peasants, who made a part-time living by spinning and saw the market for their products disappear.22

The effect on Italy of the Continental System ordered by Napoleon was dire indeed, though its worst effects were not felt till 1810, when he tightened regulations for the blockade. Until the system was introduced, trade with Britain had predominated. But by the Milan decree of June 1803, English goods were ordered to be seized and trade with Britain was henceforth forbidden. In June 1806 a further decree forbade the importation into Italy of goods reputed of British origin, including all cotton and woollen goods, unless they were imported from France, and other goods that might originate from Britain such as cutlery, metal objects and clocks, were only admitted through specified posts. All colonial goods were prohibited entry unless they carried a French certificate that they did not originate from Britain. Until December 1806, when Britain was declared to be under blockade, it had been possible to evade the regulations by continuing to export to Britain commodities such as wine, raw silk and straw hats. The Continental System also cut off supplies of raw cotton and wool to Italy, unless they were imported from France. The Papal states had up to then supplied raw wool for the Lombard mills, but once the former became part of the Empire they were not allowed to export raw materials.

The new boundaries imposed on the Roman states, when the Marches were annexed to the kingdom of Italy, were a cause of poverty and much resentment. Until then Umbria had obtained three quarters of its grain from the Marches and now found itself cut off from this province and commercially united as a part of the Empire with the much less fertile Tuscany. As a consequence contraband was rife, and armed bands of smugglers, sometimes thirty or forty strong, roam the mountainous areas and attacked cus-
toms posts and customs officials. During the summer of 1813 ten customs officers in Umbria were killed, resulting in customs posts being deserted and many customs officers resigning. The activities of French customs officers were bitterly resented in the kingdom of Italy. They seized goods, stopped boats on the Po whose cargo they might confiscate and impounded gold coin on the slender pretext that they were enforcing the regulation prohibiting the export of specie, while giving the owners worthless receipts. Trade was in consequence severely disrupted, and great fairs, like that of Reggio Emilia, hitherto exempt from customs regulation, found themselves financially ruined. As an inevitable result the amount of smuggling increased, and even French merchants connived at this, sending to Italy English cloth that was falsely labeled “product of Lyon.” Until 1807, when Tuscany became part of Napoleon’s Empire, English goods found their way in through there, as its customs regulations were much more lax than they were in the kingdom of Italy. But after the Treaty of Tilsit was signed, and the regent of Tuscany was displaced, regulations were more strictly enforced. British merchandise was seized at Livorno and, from October 1810, all goods considered of English origin were made liable to seizure and burning. Nevertheless, contraband goods continued to arrive in Italy via Malta, the Adriatic coast, the Roman states and Tuscany itself. In November 1810 an order was made to seize all imported woollens and cottons, until their origin could be verified, an order resulting in endless delays that sometimes lasted for several months. The Trianon decrees of 1810, imposing fresh tariffs on colonial products, made them too costly to import and substitutes had to be found from the Levant or cultivated locally. The imperial decree that cotton be grown proved to be unenforceable, save in certain areas of the kingdom of Naples, since terrain and climate were often unsuitable. Farmers were made to abandon the culture of olives, oranges and vegetables in order to plant a cotton crop, for which they received a bounty, but when it failed they refused to persist. Only in the last days of the Empire did Eugène allow the entry into Italy of cotton, wool and leather from Switzerland, and other materials for manufacture.

The fate of the ports has already been mentioned. Genoa was ruined by the British blockade and the customs barrier with the kingdom of Italy. In peacetime, Genoa had bought her grain from Sicily and even the Crimea. Now, when she was forced to buy it from Piedmont, its price inevitably rose and, in 1812, there was threat of famine. Livorno flourished until 1807, when Tuscany was annexed to the Empire. Ancona suffered from the competition of Austrian
Trieste until 1808, when it was joined to the kingdom of Italy and its commercial importance ceased. Venice, though already in decline, had been ruined after being made part of the kingdom of Italy in 1806. Though Napoleon declared it to be a free port, the British naval Adriatic squadron ensured that its maritime trade was blocked. It suffered further when Istria and Dalmatia were removed from Italy in 1810 and its trade with the latter could in no way compensate for the loss of its trade with the Levant. The Venetians complained of being treated as if they were a conquered people and Napoleon showed his contempt for them when he wrote that they trembled at the sight of a gun.

Trading licenses were granted to Trieste (annexed to the Empire in 1809), Livorno and Genoa, but not to Venice or indeed to any other Italian ports. Venice and Ancona could export grain and cheese, but their ships returning must dock at a port that was within the boundaries of the Empire, not those of the kingdom of Italy. Napoleon proved extremely reluctant to grant licenses to Italian merchants and was determined to keep out of Italy any goods not deriving from France. Much English thread found its way via Switzerland into the kingdom of Italy, and so indignant did Napoleon become at what appeared Eugène’s culpable laxity that he even threatened him with annexation of Italy, as he had already done with Louis in Holland. His letter to Eugène in February 1810 expressed his extreme dissatisfaction with the enforcement of customs regulations and Eugène’s decree allowing the entry of colonial products of unspecified origin. The decree must be revoked, he ordered; and American vessels that were entering, or already within, Italian ports were to be seized, together with their cargoes. “While I deprive Holland of independence,” he wrote, “because she violates the laws of blockade, I cannot tolerate this behaviour in the kingdom of Italy.”

Tuscany suffered badly from Napoleon’s regulations. The port of Livorno was blockaded, the textile industry of Prato languished, since it was unable to find new markets, and the inability to export olive oil was a serious blow to its agriculture. Livorno’s fate is best expressed in the number of ships that entered the port: in 1800 there were 713, in 1811 only seven, and in 1812 no more than one. Its manufactures also suffered (coral, marble, alabaster, soap, rope and tanning) from the virtual closure of the port. Elisa three times in 1810 complained to Napoleon that his economic measures were being the ruin of her country—the price of wheat had doubled and everywhere there was unemployment and poverty.

In the kingdom of Naples, Joseph asked vainly if he might solve
his financial problems by exporting olive oil and grain, having received an offer for their purchase by a firm acting for British merchants.\textsuperscript{27} Murat, in his turn, tried to win approval for an agreement with the U.S. consul Broadbent to export oil in return for cash; to be granted licenses to trade with some hostile Mediterranean ports, and to have the duties on cotton goods and colonial products removed.\textsuperscript{28} Eventually Napoleon relented, and in November 1810 (as already mentioned in chapter 5) agreed to allow Murat to export oil, silk, grain and licorice, provided he admitted no colonial goods.\textsuperscript{29} Naples was badly hit by the blockade, for it had done most of its trade with Britain, and was now cut off from Sicily, North Africa and the Levant.\textsuperscript{30} The interruption of its maritime trade meant that materials destined for Marseille had to be sent by sea to Venice, thence overland to Genoa and by sea once again to their destination. Fishing suffered from police restrictions, and the coral trade off North Africa was brought to a halt by the British navy. The blockade caused silos of grain to overflow and the price of grain dropped by one half in Apulia.\textsuperscript{31} Regulations were of course avoided by extensive smuggling, especially from Sicily, and by the corruption of officials, a number holding the highest positions (as also mentioned in chapter 5).\textsuperscript{32}

In contrast to the fate of much Italian industry, agriculture flourished during the period, helping to give the kingdom of Italy that balance of trade that enabled it to finance public works, improvements in education, cultural projects and a sizeable army. The amount of irrigated land in the kingdom increased in the period by 13 percent, rice cultivation by 20 percent and arable land and plantations of mulberry by as much as 21 percent.\textsuperscript{33} Though most attempts to increase production by the introduction of new techniques, to grow more cotton, to cultivate sugar-beet and to breed a race of merino sheep, failed to produce the results expected, agriculture flourished nevertheless, helped by a steady rise in prices that started at the end of the eighteenth century, the secure and large market provided by France and the reform of land registration. The period witnessed an enormous growth of rice cultivation and of silk in the Lombard-Piedmontese plain, but there was no farming revolution. In Tuscany the practice of share-cropping continued, and in the Veneto unfair taxes weighing on the peasant were not reallocated as the land registers were incomplete.

Agriculture was much assisted by the great improvement in communications, flood prevention and scientific drainage, but in Naples division of the common land had been effected in such a way that the lands remained in the same condition they had been in under
feudalism, and some woodland was cut down and cultivated that ought to have been allowed to stay as it was.\textsuperscript{34} Murat had attempted to improve farming methods by issuing instructions on planting and sowing, especially on those lands that had lain fallow and were now being redistributed. He tried to encourage the growth of those crops that were normally imported to Naples—cotton, sugar cane and indigo—by subsidy and by tax exemption; tried to reafforest eroded land, enforce laws against cutting down trees and increase the amount of livestock bred, again by granting tax concessions.\textsuperscript{35} But all his good advice fell on deaf ears, and ten years of French rule resulted in no real improvement in Neapolitan agriculture. The blockade, plus brigandage and speculation, caused a fall in the price of grain and led to very serious shortages by the crisis year of 1810. So serious was the situation that Murat was forced to abandon the policy of free trade in food products initiated by Joseph Bonaparte and regulate the export of grain to ensure the city of Naples was fed.\textsuperscript{36} The reallocation of common land caused conflict between the arable and grazing interests, and the consequent reduction in grazing land aroused considerable popular resistance.\textsuperscript{37}

What really weighed most heavily on the Italian economy throughout the whole peninsula, however, was of course the burden of taxation levied for military purposes. As has been made clear in previous chapters, Melzi in the Republic of Italy, Joseph and later Murat in Naples, as well as Elisa in Tuscany, never ceased to complain to Napoleon about the weight of the contributions to pay for Napoleon’s military establishment. Melzi told Napoleon that the cost of the army was too much for the country to bear, and of the annual 12 million francs that left Italy for France, scarcely half came back in the shape of payment for provisions supplied to the occupying army. In 1805, in the war with Austria, the kingdom of Italy had to find an additional 6 million francs for supply and maintenance of the army, and this figure did not include the requisitions for food and forage. In 1806 the kingdom was paying an annual total of 26,400,000 francs toward Napoleon’s military expenses, in 1807 30 million and the figure increased year by year. France maintained in the kingdom of Italy 76,000 troops, in Illyria 26,000, in the Roman states 2,000, and 7,000 in the Ionian Islands, though by 1812 the Corfu garrison was swollen to nearly 13,000. There were in addition long delays in paying for equipment supplied to the army, and not until 1810 did Napoleon agree to pay for military equipment that had been purchased in 1800.\textsuperscript{38} So heavy did the burden of taxation become that Melzi told Napoleon in 1812 that in many departments people were simply unable to pay the new ex-
extraordinary taxes, or indeed ordinary ones like the poll tax. The latter, which affected even children and people over the age of sixty was, in the words of Carlo Zaghi, “one of the most iniquitous and vexatious measures [to be introduced] in the social field.” Napoleonic rule however had already told Eugène he must not heed the cries of Italians about the weight of the impositions, as these were made for the good of the army.

There is no question that Napoleonic rule depressed the standard of living of the masses, so far as the lack of statistics will permit so categorical a statement. Prices rose generally throughout the period, and there were years of acute hardship caused by shortages and inflation, first in 1799–1801 and then in 1810–11. The weight of taxation, direct and indirect, especially on salt and foodstuffs, hit the poorest classes in the country hardest. In Milan there was a small rise in wages amounting to a modest four percent between 1802 and 1811, but the cost of wheat in 1815 was 37 percent higher than it had been in the four years preceding 1796. Naturally those who lived on the land were able to subsist on its produce, but in both the towns and the countryside there was a startling growth in pauperism, as there was also of begging and crime. In Florence the objects deposited with the pawnbrokers (Monti di Pietà) rose from 66,337 in December 1808 to 142,477 by the end of 1812. In Turin it was calculated that between one third and one quarter of the city’s population were living in poverty by 1814, and similar figures are apparent for the principal towns in Tuscany. In the Roman departments and in Rome especially, the dissolution of religious houses badly affected the welfare of the poor. Moreover, in Rome so many people were dependent on the pilgrim traffic, now brought abruptly to an end. By the end of 1810 it was reckoned the paupers in Rome amounted to at least 120,000. The French regarded begging as disreputable and, by a decree of 1808, it was forbidden in the department of Olona (Milan). The healthy beggars were sent to the workhouse, the sick to hospitals and the beggars of foreign origin expelled. The criminal code that was introduced in the kingdom of Italy in 1810 made begging a criminal offense, punishable by three to six months in prison.

A study of the incidence of poverty in Tuscany (made by Stuart Woolf) reveals that in 1812, in the department of the Arno, 20 percent of the population were living in poverty, and this did not include vagabonds, wandering beggars or those in hospital. Traditionally the poor had relied on loans from the Monti di Pietà, to avoid the humiliation of begging, but these pawnbrokers shops had lost their funds, having been forced by the government to lend
it money interest free, or at a lower rate of interest than they would expect to receive from pledges. In April 1809 Napoleon decreed the liquidation of the public debt, and all the Monti di Pietà, save only those in Florence, saw their capital lost. A few only were reimbursed, and the rest were restarted on a much reduced scale.

Though the prefects set up welfare offices to administer relief and provide soup kitchens (as they did in 1812), this was a mere cosmetic exercise. Hospitals and other charitable institutions suffered the same fate as the Monti, their funds being compulsorily converted into bonds to extinguish the national debt. When begging became a criminal offense, the Tuscan prisons were unable to accommodate the number of “criminals” sent to them. The criminal statistics for Italy, and particularly for Tuscany and Piedmont, were the worst in the whole of Napoleon’s Empire. The problem of poverty grew ever worse after the crisis of 1811 when food prices hit the roof, silk workers lost their jobs and the burden of taxation was increased still further. In the kingdom of Naples, as mentioned earlier, there was no equitable distribution of land to satisfy the land hunger of the peasants. They lost their rights to the common land and could no longer seek relief, as they had formerly, from religious houses, which by 1810 had all been dissolved.

In contrast to this, the aristocracy and a certain class of bourgeoisie profited immensely from Napoleonic rule. In the Republic and then the kingdom of Italy, decrees of 1803, 1806, 1807 and 1811 gave back to the ex-feudatories their hereditary allodial lands that had been occupied by the state. In the department of Olona, between 50 and 60 percent of the lands, formerly the property of the Church, passed by sale into noble hands between 1797 and 1802. The register of the possidenti in the Italian Republic’s electoral college (subsequently that of the kingdom of Italy) shows that nobles and bourgeois grew ever richer. Alessandro Belmonte of Rimini was worth 20 million francs in 1802, by 1818 he was worth twenty-eight. Ippolito Lovatelli of Ravenna between 1802 and 1808 managed to increase his fortune from 60 million francs to 70. Antonio Colombani of Forlì increased his in the same period from 30 million to 75. And such examples could be multiplied. A number of ex-Jacobins who turned moderates often acquired considerable fortunes. Sommariva, who had been secretary of state in the second Cisalpine Republic and someone whom Melzi violently detested, amassed 16 million francs by his death. Vincenzo Dandolo in a few years accumulated a vast patrimony, invested in business, trade and industry, introduced merino sheep to Lombardy, successfully cultivated the potato and modernized the production of chemicals.
Napoleon dispensed titles, land and money to loyal servants in financial difficulty, and men like Caprara, Pino, Lecchi and Marescalchi were richly rewarded, though looked on with contempt by their fellow Italians, who referred to them as “pappatacci,” a term that can be variously translated as gnats, sandflies or complaisant cuckolds. In the kingdom of Italy these awards were made principally to Italians, but in Naples and the Roman departments the French tended to be the beneficiaries: Saliceti, Mosbourg, Roederer, Daure, Grenier and Exelmans, Miollis, Gerando and Tournon, all were recipients of titles and land.46

In the sales of land in the kingdom of Naples, 65 percent of what was sold passed to those who already held considerable landed property.47 Though the nobles lost their privileges and their legal hold over the peasants, more than half the land in Italy as a whole was retained by the aristocracy. Wealthy bourgeois also profited and bought land to develop it economically in a new spirit of enterprise, though their attitude to peasants was semifeudal. As John A. Davis has pointed out, both Joseph and Murat pursued the most radical measures for agrarian reform put forward by their enlightened advisers, and this for purely political reasons. They needed the support of the landowning class in their attempt to assert their independence of Napoleon and his ministers in Paris.48 In Piedmont 82 percent of the land seized from religious houses was bought by nobles, rich bourgeois landowners, merchants who were entrepreneurs, professional men and office holders in what were approximately equal proportions. The family of Bensodi Cavour grew rich by leasing huge tracts of land and pastured merino sheep on it. They profited by the sale of wool, invested in woollen manufacture and sold the woollen cloth to the army. All this was assisted by Treasury grants, which contributed to making their fortune.49 In Lucca, Elisa also made a fortune. She sold sheep from Corsica to the Lucchesi, claimed dividends from the iron mines of Elba and exploited very successfully the marble quarries of Carrara. She also benefited from the sales of marble busts of Napoleon (nine thousand by January 1809).50

What in the end were the economic pluses and minuses of Napoleonic rule? The freeing of trade made its benefits felt; the abolition of the trade guilds with their antiquated controls and restrictions, the end of the mercantilist curb on the export of rice from Lombardy, the lifting of the tolls on the river Po, Alessandria and Novi becoming free ports; the introduction of the commercial code, the great improvement of the waterways, and particularly the river Mincio and the development of a network of roads.51 The completion of
the road communications between France and Italy, begun with the Simplon in 1805, followed a year later by the Mont Cenis, was crowned in 1810 by the Corniche road, practicable in all weathers and enabling commercial traffic to pass directly from Tuscany, and from the Roman departments, to France without traversing the Italian kingdom. The great arterial roads from Milan to Trieste and to Genoa were both improved, and very many new roads were constructed. All these changes and improvements were of undoubted benefit not only to those involved in trade but to landowners and the consuming public.

The benefits, however, were somewhat offset by the permanent state of war that obtained. Conscription meant the loss of valuable labor, and throughout there was always a sense of insecurity inherent in any despotic government: fear of confiscation, arrests, new taxes, a sudden decision by Napoleon to make an alteration in tariffs and the threat of annexation to France, where that had not already occurred. There was also the unnatural division of the peninsula into zones: those incorporated into the Empire and those that were satellite principalities, with no freedom of trade between them. There was also the vexatious behavior of customs officials applying the laws, and this not only at the frontiers of the Empire. According to the head of the police in Piedmont, referring to the abuses involved in enforcing imperial regulations over the monopolies of tobacco and alcohol: “They entangle the peasants in a maze of laws and regulations . . . they threaten them with legal proceedings, they frighten them too and . . . by the use of such odious means, exact a sort of tax on ignorance and weakness.”

Villani, writing in 1975, expressed the view that it was not clear whether Napoleonic rule in Italy advanced or retarded the Italian economy, but he went on to say that “though it was true that Napoleon’s policies prevented an industrial revolution occurring in Italy, the economy of the kingdom of Italy held up well.” Villani makes no mention of Naples. There the changes effected by Joseph and Murat should have been both far-reaching and beneficial, but they proved in the end to be sadly deceptive.

In summing up the impact of Napoleonic rule on Italy’s economy, Stuart Woolf considers that it merely accentuated the country’s regional divisions, and the differences between economic conditions in the north and south of the peninsula—differences that were already entrenched before Napoleon crossed the Alps in the spring of 1796.
THE RESPONSE TO NAPOLEONIC RULE BY THE ITALIAN ARISTOCRACY varied considerably throughout the peninsula. In the kingdom of Italy it took the form more of passive acquiescence than of positive support, prompted by the desire to preserve its property, and seeing in the Napoleonic rulers safeguards against mob radicalism, even if the new régime deprived it of political power it had formerly enjoyed. French rule, by reforming the public finances, gave security to state creditors, who were principally members of the landed aristocracy, and selling at more than reasonable prices ecclesiastic and common lands, it gave nobles a chance to enlarge their estates. In Piedmont the noble families of Cavour, Lamarmora, D’Azeglio and Balbo were prominent among those who profited from the sale of the beni nazionali; and in the kingdom of Italy the Aldini, Guiccioli and Massari families enriched themselves greatly by similar means. The institutions of the civil code of law gave landowners an absolute right of ownership against customary claimants; and the creation of a centralized bureaucracy offered the nobles prestigious employment as some compensation for loss of privilege.1

In Liguria, Tuscany and the Papal states the nobles were either passively hostile or, if they appeared to cooperate, did so for the sake of money or prestige, while remaining fundamentally disloyal. In the kingdom of Naples the Napoleonic policy of ralliement to the régimes was far more successful than elsewhere, and collaboration with the new rulers was prompted not merely by self-interest but because for the most part nobles shared the same enlightened values as the French. In Piedmont ralliement was at first confined to patriot republicans, and royalists were for long reluctant to accept administrative posts. When in 1807 the Marquis Barolo agreed to become president of the electoral college of the Po, it was little more than a symbolic gesture, since the post and the body were both honorary. Lesser nobles did however accept the minor ap-
pointment of *maire*, a post considered to be safe and devoid of great responsibility.²

In the republic (then kingdom) of Italy, the old Lombard nobility proved largely hostile, even in Milan, but it was different in Emilia and the Veneto. The nobles of Bologna supported the French because they detested Papal rule, those of Reggio out of dislike of Modena, while those of Brescia and Bergamo were pleased to be rid of Venetian government. But support was to dwindle over the years, as they saw the burden of taxation increase, and the Pope deported and humiliated. Those who held administrative posts proved, not unnaturally, the most loyal, and three quarters of the electoral college of the *possidenti* were old nobility.³

Melzi required his prefects to be both wealthy and members of the old nobility, and of the forty-nine prefects appointed between 1802 and 1813, twenty-two were of noble birth. The most loyal of the prefects and subprefects were in Lombardy and Emilia, where there had been a French presence ever since 1796; the least loyal were in the Trentino and Veneto and the ex-Papal territory of the Marches, where there remained a tradition of loyalty to the Austrian emperor and to the Pope.⁴ The Venetian nobles, for the most part, were content to become Vicars of Bray, supporting Napoleon, even if sincerely, because they feared a repetition of the horrors of 1797–99, but on the fall of Napoleon were quick to change sides to the Austrians. Many Italian nobles retained their connections with the previous régimes: Melzi kept in contact with Count Ludwig Cobenzl, the Austrian vice-chancellor, almost to the point of treachery; Luigi Gattinara, minister of the interior to Eugène from 1806 to 1809 (and former Sardinian ambassador at the courts of Naples and Vienna) kept in contact with the exiled House of Savoy; Luigi Rangone, created a Knight of the Iron Crown of Lombardy, maintained contact with the exiled Duke of Modena; Luigi Villa, another minister of Eugène and admirer of the previous governor of Milan (an Austrian) kept in touch with the court of Vienna; and Spanocchi, Eugène’s minister of justice, had a brother serving in the Austrian government. All these men were hedging their bets, just as the generals and ministers of the Anglo-Dutch King William III continued to maintain throughout his reign their secret contacts with the court of Saint Germain, that of the exiled James II. In the words of the historian Carlo Zaghi, those Italians recognized Napoleonic rule as something “purely contingent and temporary.”⁵

Napoleon hoped to fuse together the old nobility and his new creations. He created dukes, counts and barons, whose titles were hereditary in the male line and whose properties were inalienable.
These new dignitaries included knights of the Iron Crown of Lombardy, a title created in 1805 (as already mentioned in chapter 3) and one that remained an exclusive one, since Napoleon made sure that the number of knighthoods was kept down to a minimum and the title bestowed only on the deserving. The title was therefore very popular and Melzi was wrong to predict its failure: it was not abolished in 1815, the Austrians merely substituting the eagle with two heads for Napoleon’s eagle. The noble titles carried with them coats of arms, liveries and salaries proportionate to rank, and after 1808 were purchaseable on payment of three thousand lire. Many nobles were reluctant to accept them, due to fear that Napoleon’s régime would not last, and because they despised the parvenu. Even so, fifty-four of Napoleon’s counts came from the old nobility. But Napoleon’s plan to merge old with new never became the success he had hoped, and the disloyalty of the Lombard nobles was manifested in 1814 when the senate, filled with landed nobles by Melzi, urged the mob to rise against Eugène’s rule, as they did also in Brescia and Bergamo. The nobles in the countryside, however, declined to incite the peasants to revolt.6

In Liguria the nobles were hostile to French rule and on the annexation of the republic, only two out of nine prefects were Genoese. The revival of the old republic by Lord William Bentinck in 1814 received a welcome from every class, though, as became clear in 1815, the Genoese preferred rule by the French to that by the reactionary House of Savoy.7 In Piedmont, on its annexation to France, nine out of twenty-two prefects were Italian. General Menou’s restoration of order won the active support of the notables, but the older generation of the nobility retained their loyalty to the House of Savoy. Nobles who opposed the ideas of the Enlightenment, such as Thaon de Reval, retired to their estates and refused to take office under the French, and young nobles who were liberal reformers, but disliked autocratic, repressive rule they associated with Napoleon, assumed a posture of non-cooperation. They refused to celebrate Napoleon’s marriage, his birthdays and his victories, though they posed no threat to his régime. Prospero Balbo, friend of royalist intellectuals, who only returned from his self-imposed exile from fear his property would be seized by the state, agreed to become head of Turin university.8 Though under police surveillance until 1808, he contrived to prevent the remodeling of the university as Paris had wished, kept control of university appointments and successfully resisted Gallicization. His actions were disliked by intellectuals who were committed republicans inside the university, but he got the backing of General Menou, who sup-
ported the nobles in their demands for retaining the educational structure and the return of religious teaching: the university church of Turin was reopened in 1807 and the teaching of theology resumed in the university in 1810.9

Cesare, Prospero Balbo’s son, offended his father by successively accepting the posts of secretary general to Menou in Tuscany, secretary of the Consulta to Miollis in Rome and in 1811 auditor of Napoleon’s council of state in Paris, though he privately resented French cultural dominance and was disgusted at the annexation of Tuscany and the Papal states. He disapproved of Napoleon’s autocracy but nevertheless went along with it, confessing later in his autobiography that he had allowed himself to be dazzled by the genius of Napoleon: “My patriotism gets confused by my ambition and the two increase together as a result.” Though Prosper Balbo had refused to allow his sons to attend a French-style lycée, many provincial nobles let theirs. Their younger sons took commissions in the army, and some royalist families, like the Barolos and the Cavours, gave steadfast support to the régime. Yet, as Michael Broers has pointed out, there was no amalgame of patriots and royalists, save only in a very few cases. The only amalgame that took place in Piedmont was between the French and the patriots.10

In Tuscany the great Florentine nobles submitted to Napoleon’s rule but did not willingly accept it. They resented the loss of jurisdiction and titles, detested conscription and monetary levies and were nostalgic about the past and the rule of the Habsburg archdukes. Accused of apathy by the prefects, they assumed a posture of passive resistance, refusing to vote or to take part in any of the electoral assemblies, or attend the meetings of those councils of which they had been elected members. But they rarely showed open hostility, as they feared the prospect of being exiled to Elba, and for social reasons disliked the idea of organizing an insurrection. Other Tuscan nobles, however, finding that past anti-French activities were no longer a bar to being offered appointments, provided they proved themselves efficient, agreed to take office as mayors and subprefects (prefectorial office, however, was reserved exclusively for the French) and served the Empire loyalty, to the extent even of supporting conscription. Only when it became obvious that the Empire was about to fall, did they assume a passive role when required to deal with subversive demonstrations.11 In the port of Livorno the local people had clearly no liking for the French, as is evident from the police reports. The director of police in 1810 attributed this to the decline in trade resulting from the economic
blockade, and the consequent growth of pauperism, though he also drew attention to the cultural divide that existed between Frenchmen and Livornesi. There was however only a passive resistance, tinged often with anti-Semitism, for the sizeable Jewish population of the city could now enjoy civic equality, something that had previously been denied them. The notables had, as elsewhere in Italy, rallied to support the imperial government, and by 1812 were occupying most of the important positions in the city, though their loyalty depended on the fortunes of Napoleon. When Bentinck’s Italian Legion landed at Viareggio in December 1813 it was clear that their attitude was at best equivocal.

In the Roman states prominent nobles were offered and accepted prestigious appointments, though their abilities were hardly distinguished, and they were secretly despised by Miollis and by Janet (in charge of finance): Duke Onesti Braschi became mayor of Rome, assisted in that office by Prince Gabrielli, the young Duke Sforza Cesarini (who commanded the National Guard) and Duke Luigi Buoncompagni-Ludovisi, the ci-devant Prince of Piombino. In November 1809 a deputation of Roman nobles traveled to Paris to present Napoleon with the homage of the city of Rome. Other nobles were willing to accept lower administrative posts and a number of younger ones became subprefects. Prince Spada, in 1811, sat in the imperial senate in Paris, and a member of the Chigi family became maid of honor to Empress Marie-Louise. Yet secretly the nobility remained disloyal to the régime, awaiting the chance to show its true feelings and was flagrantly opportunistic to the end. It emerged (to quote André Fugier) “from the French period much as it had been before the invasion of the Jacobins, with the only difference that it danced and ate its sorbets more than it would have done under the Holy Father.” When in 1814, as the Empire was crumbling, Murat took possession of Rome, all the Roman nobility (including Braschi, the mayor of Rome) who had held office under General Miollis, proclaimed their loyalty to the new master.

In the kingdom of Naples the nobility were divided between those who supported reforms, having bitterly opposed the rule of the Bourbons and been savagely punished for doing so, and those who resented the changes being made, particularly the loss of noble privilege and the abolition of feudalism. Though many nobles joined Joseph’s court, they complained about the reforms he was making, which explains why neither Joseph nor Murat ever summoned the legislature, since it was dominated by nobles who were known opponents of their reforms. Four out of Joseph’s ministers
were nobles, including Prince Pignatelli di Cerchiara, and nearly all of the intendenti.13

Neapolitans were awarded posts in the law courts, the police, the diplomatic service, the armed forces, the judicial commissions, as well as the council of state. Joseph lifted the order of sequestration imposed on most of the nobles’ property, lent many nobles sums of money, awarded them the Legion of Honor, gave them lucrative posts at court and made members of great noble families colonels of provincial legions. But many of the landowners in the country resented the abolition of feudalism, and in the disturbed provinces, particularly Calabria, they gave encouragement to bandit bands and looked to the return of the Bourbons. The intendente of Cosenza discovered that Baron Alfonso Barracco, a wealthy grazier whose flocks in summer were pastured on the Sila plateau, was one of the principal “godfathers” of the brigands in the Sila forests. But it was difficult to convict such men. As the commander of Calabria’s gendarmerie wrote to complain in 1812, the names of such powerful men were “so consistently veiled in mystery . . . it is always impossible to obtain factual proof of their complicity.” It was only when such men felt themselves to be threatened by the general state of lawlessness that they cooperated with the authorities and handed the brigands over to the French.14

As was the case in the kingdom of Italy, great noble families hedged their bets, and endeavored to keep well in with both sides. The father of Prince Canosa (favorite of the queen of Sicily) was a councillor of state in Naples; the brother of the Duke of Laurenziana, the chief of police in the city of Naples, was a favorite at the court of Palermo; the brother of Prince Molierno, commander of the queen of Sicily’s troops, was regarded with favor at Joseph’s court; and the brother of Prince Ambrosio (general and diplomat under Murat), was private secretary to Prince Leopold, younger son of king Ferdinand of Sicily. According to the French ambassador, La Feuillade, several ministers at the court of Naples like Bissigiano, Laurenziano and Gallo, had authorization from the queen of Sicily to accept employment under Joseph, as did other nobles with high appointments; and Tito Manzi, Joseph’s secretary of state, corresponded regularly with the queen in Palermo.15

Murat created a new nobility, his ministers becoming Princes and Dukes. Napoleon wrote scathingly about what he called this “tomfoolery business in bad taste,” but it did not deter Murat from continuing to bestow titles on deserving men, like Giuseppe Zurlo and Francesco Ricciardi.16

As for the Italian bourgeoisie, not all who supported the régime
grew rich by the purchase of Church lands. Like the nobles, some rose in wealth and some fell. But there were some, like the brothers Masseni of Ferrara who, by serving every régime between 1799 and 1815, accumulated immense fortunes. The Masseni were given the title of counts, and when Napoleon fell from power, got Pope Pius VII to confirm their titles.\footnote{17}

Most of the prefects of the kingdom of Italy were wealthy members of the middle class. In 1809, of the sixty-two prefects, thirty-one were rich or very rich, twenty-two were described as being moderately wealthy and only nine had no property at all. The bourgeoisie did not follow Melzi in his claims for Italian independence, accepted the kingdom of Italy for what it was, a satellite of France, and served the viceroy loyally. They were interested only in property, and economic not political power.\footnote{18} The Italian historian, Carlo Capra, attributes the sterile conformity and intellectual stagnation among the savants and artists of the period (in contrast to the vitality of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment and the nineteenth-century Romantic revival) not just to restrictive censorship, but to willingness to serve a régime that offered social and material advancement.\footnote{19} Both Napoleon and Eugène heaped favors on artists and men of letters, and found themselves rewarded in return by an almost nauseating adulation. Even Foscolo continued to write poems and flattering letters to Napoleon, but then, as mentioned in Chapter 3, he was in receipt of three state pensions.\footnote{20} Napoleon opposed Melzi’s policy of not employing former republicans, and told Aldini in 1806 to treat Italian patriots well: “The patriot party is the one that has always been the most energetic for France and for the throne.” Former patriots experienced in administration were, on Napoleon’s instructions, used to organize the Venetian territories newly acquired in 1805.\footnote{21}

In Piedmont members of the patriot party controlled the local administration below the prefectorial level, supporting French rule because they feared what would happen if France lost the war, when their rivals the royalists would return to power. But in any case loyalty to the régime was secured by the use of patronage. Both noble and bourgeois Piedmontese were given civil and military appointments not only in Piedmont but all over Italy. Napoleon employed more Piedmontese than any other Italian citizens in the administration of his empire, finding them competent and hard-working.\footnote{29} In the Roman departments the bourgeoisie resented Napoleonic rule, after having made a living as doctors and lawyers from the patronage of the Holy See, the noble families and religious orders; and Roman merchants and shopkeepers felt the loss of the pilgrim trade
to Rome. Resistance to the oath of loyalty imposed has already been referred to in chapter 4. In both the Roman departments and Tuscany there was widespread opposition to conscription, to increased taxes and to the attitude of the French towards religion and the person of the Pope. Encouraged by the clergy, the people took pleasure in celebrating saints’ days that were banned, refused to attend the Te Deum celebrating the victories of Napoleon’s armies, and refused to have their children baptised by clergy who had sworn the oath of loyalty. The mounted gendarmes formed locally in Rome proved totally uncooperative in arresting the numerous draft evaders or in pursuing deserters or brigands (very often synonymous terms). They either themselves joined the brigand bands or chose to negotiate terms with them in preference to attacking them.

In the kingdom of Naples the people in general were either hostile to Napoleonic rule or passively indifferent. Only in certain towns in Calabria were French troops welcomed as deliverers from the plundering of the brigand bands, and in the city of Naples itself, where the lazzaroni delighted in Murat’s panache and in his ostentatious display. King Ferdinand had said of the lazzaroni that only three things were required to rule them: festa, forca (gallows) and farina (bread). Murat embodied the spirit of festa, and his government supplied the other commodities.

As to manifestations of open discontent, there were serious revolts in north-central Italy in 1805–6 and 1809–10, and both Calabria and Abruzzi continued in a state of very serious rebellion between 1806 and 1811. There were mixed motives for the revolts, economic, social and political (in 1809 in Piacento and Veneto, some rebels sported the Austrian cockade). But conscription, poverty and taxation were at the root of all the disorders, even if in the kingdom of Naples, and in the Trentino and Veneto, religion and foreign intervention were factors. Conscription was new to all Italians and the poorest were the hardest hit, because they could not afford to pay substitutes. Driven by fear of being posted abroad or to some other region of Italy, men had resort to draft-dodging, desertion or even brigandage, especially in the mountain districts. In the Tuscan and Emilian Appenines, as also in the mountains of Umbria, great bands of brigands roamed unchecked, and evaded the pursuing military columns by crossing over a nearby frontier. They were also active in the Bergamasco, the Alpine valleys, and in the mountains and forest areas of Calabria and the Abruzzi. In Piedmont banditry existed all over the country in 1801 and remained persistent in the southern departments, where smuggling was a way
of life in the mountains abutting on Liguria. It was secretly protected by powerful men who owed their wealth to the contraband business, and it was not until the bandits started to kidnap the wealthy to obtain a ransom, that the notables stopped accepting banditry and so brought an end to the scourge of lawlessness. The bandits were regarded by the peasants, however, very often as Robin Hoods, plundering the rich and befriending the poor, and Giuseppe Antonio Mayno della Spinetta, known popularly as “King of Marengo and Emperor of the Alps” became a legend in his lifetime (he was killed in 1806). By 1808 the principal bands of Mayno and Scarzello had been effectively destroyed by the use of spies, the offer of rewards, the mobile columns and gendarmerie, and the notables’ cooperation. By 1809 peace reigned in the region. All this was in marked contrast to the situation in the kingdom of Naples, as also in the Tuscan departments, where as late as 1814 mobile columns were still being used to counter banditry.  

Political motivation was apparent in activities of the secret societies: in Piedmont the Christian Fellowship, in Romagna the Sacred Heart of Jesus; the Society of Saint Louis in Lombardy, especially in the Bergamasco, where it was directed by a former Jesuit who claimed a following of thirty thousand. In the south of Italy the Carbonari attracted many followers and spread to the center and north of Italy when Murat advanced in 1814, his armies reaching Florence and Bologna, since a number of his officers were members. It is probable that Murat’s known hostility to the Carbonarist movement weakened the forces he commanded. In the ranks of the intellectuals, and the upper ranks of society and the army, the Adelfi and Guelfia attracted membership, it being seen as a protest against French claims to intellectual hegemony. Little is known about these secret societies, which emerged from obscurity in 1813, but they stood in the main for a constitution and for national independence, influenced by the recent events in 1812 in Spain and in Sicily, where constitutions had been demanded and granted. There were also Italian Masonic lodges, most of which were, admittedly, identified with Napoleonic rule, but inside them a more liberal form of masonry existed that was frankly anti-Napoleonic in tone, though it spurned the activities of the Carbonari.  

The secret societies that were Catholic were also opposed to Freemasonry, but never constituted any realistic or effective opposition to the régime. Collective political opposition was rare, and made its appearance only when the forces of order were thin on the ground, as they were in 1809 in north-central Italy. Only the revolts in the Tyrol and Calabria proved a serious challenge to the authorities, and in each of these
cases the rebels received considerable support from a foreign power.29

Banditry was difficult to distinguish from rebellion: it had deep roots in rural poverty and was aggravated by the attempts of the new régime to centralize and bureaucratize the administrative framework. It was really only a form of protest, without political or social objective. The brigands, mostly sharecroppers or day-laborers, were often joined by draft evaders or those who had deserted from the army and operated in small bands of between two or three to twenty or thirty. Banditry was a problem that was never overcome save only in the Piedmontese departments, despite the exertions of the gendarmerie, mobile columns and summary courts.30

Apart from conscription, the burden of taxation was the principal motive for brigandage, and, on occasion, open revolt. Citizens of the kingdom of Italy were required, in December 1805, to pay an additional fiscal contribution that amounted to 1.5 million lire (rather over a million francs), half of which was to be raised by an increase in the land tax. The poll tax, already levied on all who were aged from fifteen to sixty, was increased from two to more than five lire, and there was an increase in indirect taxes: on flour, candles, hay and vegetables when brought within the walls of a city. In 1809 there was a new milling tax; and between 1805 and 1812 the price of salt was continually raised, and that of tobacco raised three times, both of which products were state monopolies.31

Measures were taken by the Italian Republic to suppress brigandage and maintain public order (as already mentioned in chapter 2) by forming a gendarmerie and national guard, both undertaken in 1802. In 1805 it was found necessary to appoint a director general of police in order to combat rising crime, and in 1809 mobile columns of troops, each consisting of fifty soldiers, were allotted to each department in what was now the kingdom of Italy. In 1808 (as mentioned earlier) vagrancy was made a crime. Some priests proved helpful in urging men to enlist in the gendarmerie, but the clergy in general disapproved of conscription, and one Verona priest condemned it as being nothing less than “a punishment of God.”32 The effectiveness of the gendarmerie was hampered by the growing shortage of manpower, and the hostility of the population. The national guards often failed to provide an adequate back-up for the gendarmes, being badly trained and poorly equipped, and reliance had to be placed more and more on the mobile columns provided by the army. Special courts inflicted summary punishment, including capital punishment, but billeting soldiers on the families of deserters was rarely used, as it proved too unpopular.32
The first revolt against Napoleonic rule took place in Bologna in 1802 and spread to other cities in the region including those of Ferrara, Ravenna, Brescia, Verona and Novara. Its causes and suppression, on Melzi’s orders, have been described in chapter 2. Three years later, in 1805, a much more serious revolt took place in the Piacento and Veneto. It was sparked by the increase in taxes mentioned in a preceding paragraph, and the accompanying requisitions for food, forage, transport, horses and mules (essential to those who lived in the mountains), occasioned by the war with Austria. One of the leaders of the rebels was himself a muleteer. There was also considerable resentment at the enforcement of conscription, and the prospect of being drafted abroad. On the news of the Anglo-Russian landings that took place in November in the bay of Naples, the government at Parma was ordered to raise six thousand troops immediately to be concentrated at Bologna and Modena, and to dispatch to Germany eight companies of the civic guard. The kingdom’s director general of police, reporting to Aldini, the secretary of state, spoke of the terrible poverty in the area, the harshness of the tax-collectors, the requisitioning of animals without payment and the illnesses suffered by the military conscripts who were forced to work in unhealthy marshland, laboring on Mantua’s fortifications. Despite the introduction of the codes, he continued, the old laws were still being administered, feudalism continued in practice, the priests were opposed to government and foreign agents stirred up discontent. It was not an organized, planned rebellion, but collective resistance spread rapidly. The rebels sacked the houses of officials and Jacobins and demanded, under threat of force, to be given food, money and lead for bullets. The revolt extended from the mountains of Liguria to those of Parmigiano and Piacento, and involved twenty-five thousand people.34

In the Piacentine Appenines there persisted a tradition of the vendetta, as there did in the island of Corsica, where to carry a knife was the badge of masculinity; and the Appenine valleys had long been a ground for the operations of smugglers, “more secure in their positions than the bandits of the Mezzogiorno or the Ligurian-Piedmontese border.” One French official described the country as “without justice, without an administration, without policing [and] offered impunity to one and all”.35 Three thousand troops had to be used to bring the rebellion to an end, an end not reached until January 1806. Napoleon was furious on first learning the news and at once replaced General Moreau by Junot, with orders to him to burn villages, shoot a dozen of the rebels and organize mobile punitive columns. When the rebellion broke out again, he issued stricter and
more precise instructions: five to six villages were to be burned, sixty rebels were to be shot, including a priest who was implicated, and severe examples were to be made. The consequences of the revolt, he added, “were incalculable for the security of Italy.” From three and four hundred were sent to the galleys, and mountain areas were compelled to accept a military occupation, though the troops involved failed to receive any help from the local population.

The revolt that took place in 1809 in Emilia and Veneto was more serious than the one of 1805–6. Again it was during a war with Austria, which provoked further increases in taxation, the most burdensome being on the milling of flour, as well as on wine, and on cattle for slaughter. It was also decreed that the property tax be collected up to six months in advance. When the Austrian army entered Italy, defeated Eugène at Sacile, and occupied Padua and Vicenza, it did its best to encourage revolt. Already, before the outbreak of war, Austrian emissaries had been sent to every province in Italy inviting the Italians to fight for independence; and in April 1809 the Archduke John, who commanded the Austrian army of invasion, issued proclamations to the people of the Veneto, urging them to rise against French rule: “You are France’s slaves, your money [and] your blood are squandered . . . the Kingdom of Italy is a mere dream. . . . Do you want to be Italian again? Unite your forces, your arms, your hearts, to the generous arms of the Emperor Francis.”

The rebels, who included many criminals, sacked public offices and burned the records relating to conscription and taxation, and any legal cases pending. Though the Austrian army withdrew in May behind the river Adige and, when Vienna itself was threatened, withdrew from Italy altogether, the revolt spread throughout the whole of the Veneto, despite the activities of special courts that condemned hundreds of the rebels to be shot. Heartened by the news of revolt in the Tyrol, the rebel forces seized the towns of Schio, Feltre and Belluno, proclaimed the return of Venetian laws and the abolition of taxes generally. Though the government yielded to the extent of revoking the taxes on flour, wine and meat, the continued influence of the Tyrolese caused revolt to spread to the mouth of the Po.

As the army of Italy was away, pursuing the retreating Austrians, the maintenance of order in the cities had had to be left to the gendarmerie, the garrison troops and civic guards, and these proved unable to suppress the rebellion. Rovigo was entered by rebel forces who sacked houses of Jews and wealthy merchants and, as was their usual practice, burned all documents in the public offices. Adria and
Bologna were both threatened and the city of Ferrara was besieged for ten days. In places rebels seized both banks of the Po, brought traffic on the river to a halt and took possession of any boats containing grain, salt or arms. Revolt continued sporadically until November 1809 and the insurrection in the Tyrol was not finally crushed until January 1810. In the end, the rebellion was bloodily suppressed, once the army had returned to take control.

Napoleon was deeply disturbed at what had happened and at one stage ordered four thousand troops to be sent by Murat from Naples to Bologna: 675 people were arrested, 150 of them were shot and 125 given terms of hard labor. It had been a revolt against centralized government, though in some areas a desire was displayed to return to the rule of former masters: at Vergato, in the Appenines, between Bologna and Piacenza, men had cried, “Long live the Emperor Francis II!” Disturbances continued for several months in the remoter areas, the marshes of the Po and the Modenese mountains, and brigandage remained endemic until the Empire was brought to a close.

By far the most serious revolts took place in Calabria and Abruzzi in the years from 1806 to 1811. It took the French over five years to suppress them, and cost them twenty thousand casualties. Because of brigandage, raids from Sicily, including full-scale invasions by armies, leading to the battles of Maida and Mileto, and the reduction of coastal fortresses, Calabria remained until 1811 in a virtually permanent state of war. It had a longstanding tradition of brigandage, akin to that in the Appenine valleys and, in the words of a French observer, “Peasant or brigand—[these] terms [are] almost synonymous in this country.” Ninety percent of the population were peasants; there were only four towns of any size (Monteleone, Reggio, Catanzaro and Nicastro) none of which had a population that exceeded fifteen thousand, and between the population of the country and the towns there was a major cultural divide. The brigand bands were known as *masse* and most of the capimassa were poor: Joseph described the revolt to Napoleon as “the war of the poor against the rich.”

After the victory of Maida by Stuart over Reynier in July 1806, the *masse* were given every encouragement to rise up and throw off the rule of the French: encouragement by the Queen in Sicily, by General John Stuart (for a time) and by the British Admiral Sydney Smith, who carried out a series of coastal raids, supplied the *masse* with arms and equipment and finally captured the island of Capri. Reynier was pursued by eight thousand Calabresi until he could join forces with Verdier at Cassano, but he burned and sacked every vil-
lage on the way from which he thought the masse might derive assistance. He was shortly after replaced by Masséna who was given the task of crushing the revolt. The military situation was sufficiently serious for Eugène to be ordered to send to the south a division under General Lecchi to assist Masséna in his operations.42 The latter, by the end of July 1806, had succeeded in forcing the surrender of Gaëta, which, with a garrison commanded by Hesse and a force of Neapolitan troops, had been holding down ten thousand French troops. He was then able to concentrate on the suppression of the rebellion. He declared a state of siege in Calabria, forced the local municipalities to pay for the maintenance of French garrisons, seized the property of the capimassa (though most had little to confiscate), closed monasteries that assisted the masse, took and sacked the town of Lauria that had foolishly held out against his army, and reoccupied the city of Cosenza, that Verdier had earlier had been forced to withdraw from. Terrible atrocities were committed by both sides, with prisoners castrated, impaled and flayed, crucified, boiled and burned alive. Most of the leaders of the masse fled for temporary refuge to Sicily, and the coastal town of Amantea, that for thirty-eight weeks had held out successfully, supplied by sea by the British navy, was finally taken in February 1807. Michele Pezzo (a.k.a. “Father Diavolo”) held out in the mountains of Abruzzi with two thousand men till November 1807, when he was captured and publicly hanged.43 Napoleon wrote to Joseph in July 1806: “Grant no pardons, execute at least 600 rebels, for they have murdered a great many of my soldiers. Let the houses of at least thirty of the principal heads of the villages be burned and distribute their property among the troops. Disarm all the inhabitants and pillage five or six of the villages that have behaved the worst. . . . Conisci the public property of the rebellious villages and give it to the army.” He refused Joseph’s request for more troops and reproved his brother for being too kind-hearted, convinced that one decisive victory would bring the revolt to a speedy end. Joseph, however, forbade further burning of towns and villages in Calabria, after learning of the appalling destruction wreaked by French troops at Lauria.44

The capimassa were a ruthless lot; only one, Geniale Versace, generally known as “Generaliz,” was generous to those he captured (he was killed in August 1806). Nicola Gualtieri (“Pane di Grano”) led a band consisting largely of ex-convicts; Antonio Santaro was a sheep farmer and commanded a troop of other sheep farmers; Paolo Macuse (“Parafante”) was another son of a peasant farmer; Giuseppe Rotella (a.k.a. “il Boia”) was aptly called “the executioner”;
and the *capo* Scapitta had the reputation of dining on freshly severed heads. One or two of the *capimassa* who operated in the Abruzzi mountains including Ermengildo Piccioli (member of a distinguished family) and Giuseppe Costantini (a.k.a. “Sciablone,” or “the slasher”) changed sides later on and led columns of troops against the rebels.\(^45\)

The attitude of the Mezzogiorno clergy was one of discouraging attacks on the property of landed gentry, but some became leaders of rebel bands, and in the Abruzzi three secular priests and three friars were identified as such.\(^46\) An important part in quelling the revolt was played by the municipal guards and commissions manned by landowners, but it was French troops who finally crushed it, and Masséna’s ruthlessness paid off: in three provinces of the Abruzzi alone four thousand rebels had been killed on sight by the end of December 1806.\(^47\)

By January 1809 it seemed that the French were once more in control of the kingdom. Reggio and Scylla, captured by the British during their invasion in 1806, were retaken in February 1808, and in October Capri was recaptured. But in the summer of 1809 a fresh rebellion broke out in Calabria, encouraged by a British landing near Scylla, the withdrawal of the French from Lower Calabria in face of Stuart’s threat to Naples, and the loss of two islands in the bay of Naples, Procida and Ischia. The principal cause of rebellion, however, was serious economic hardship; the year had been one of terrible scarcity, and the introduction of conscription and the property tax had made matters worse.\(^48\) The task of suppressing the new revolt was given by Murat to General Manhès, a tireless, honest and resolute soldier, though depicted by some as a ruthless monster. “Remember,” Murat told him, “I want no more amnesty, and it is a war of extermination that I want waged against these miserable creatures.”\(^49\) Manhès waited for the onset of winter to guarantee the success of his task, for the brigands depended on the villages for food. Every village in the affected areas was placed under a military guard and the villagers’ cattle brought inside it at nightfall. No food might be taken outside the villages under the penalty of death, and any communication with brigands was also punishable by death. Many villagers were unfairly executed, but the policy of starving the *masse* worked, though those commanded by Parafante continued active in the forest of the Sila until the end of February 1811, when Parafante himself was killed.\(^50\) The rebellion had been a formidable one but not as serious a threat to the French as the rebellion of 1806, because more troops were available. Even so, the preparations for invading Sicily throughout the summer of 1810 were con-
tinually hampered by brigand activity, military convoys being frequently attacked. If Murat had persisted in his project for the invasion of that island, interruptions such as these to his line of supply might well have had serious consequences.

As Milton Finley has pointed out in his account of the rebellions in the south, the guerrilla bands were not coordinated, and each numbered only a few hundred men, but they effectively brought to a halt the raising of taxes in one third of the kingdom, made enforcement of conscription impossible, cost the government a lot of money and helped those engaged in the contraband trade by distracting customs officials from their job. It is impossible to be precise about the total numbers involved in armed rebellion at any time. It is however estimated that in Basilicata alone some eighteen hundred brigands were operating between 1806 and 1807, and two thousand in the summer of 1809. In the Abruzzi province in 1808 the numbers were reckoned to be five hundred; and in 1810 in Calabria it was estimated that three thousand were involved, of whom two thirds were operating between Reggio and Catanzaro. Religious fanaticism had played some part in sustaining the rebels’ morale—it was common practice to carve a cross on the musket balls to be fired at “French devils”—and the Queen of Sicily had also tried hard to incite a class war against those she termed “traitors.” But the guiding motive all along had been the determination to resist the centralization and bureaucratization inherent in Napoleon’s administration.

In the Roman departments brigandage, thought to be extinct by December 1809, grew steadily until by 1813 it had become a serious problem. The brigand bands were recruited from those who had crossed from Sicily in British ships, sponsored by the Bourbons and the British command, and those who resisted the unpopular conscription. Costly military expeditions achieved indifferent results, public executions of captured brigands merely served to arouse popular hatred (on 28 December 1813 the guillotine was erected in Rome), and all the roads in the Roman states became unsafe for travelers unless accompanied by an armed escort. Serious armed resistance to conscription was manifest in certain areas of Umbria between 1812 and 1813. A serious revolt broke out in two cantons bordering the frontier with Tuscany during the spring of 1812, and lasted well into the summer of that year.

Most landowners and priests were implicated and drastic measures were taken to suppress it. Two of the priests were executed and two others, who were convicted of being the leaders of rebel bands, were deported to Corsica. Eleven more priests who were ac-
cused of inciting resistance to conscription were dealt with in a sim-
lar fashion. An even more serious outbreak of revolt was to occur
in 1813; it centered on the mountainous area of south Umbria, and
involved as many as four cantons. Bands of rebels roamed the area,
supported by the local peasants, who often had relatives among the
bands, as well as by priests and some maires of communes. The
garrisoning of troops on the families of draft dodgers proved to be
totally ineffective, but when the fathers of the refractories were
taken into custody (fifty-three in one commune alone), most of the
conscription evaders surrendered. Four priests were executed, in-
cluding two members of religious orders, and many others were
arrested and made to live under police surveillance. The clergy’s
involvement was in part a protest at the dissolution of the monas-
teries and convents, and the imposition of the oath of loyalty (as
already mentioned in chapter 4).53

Until 1814, when the Empire was ending, there were no more
revolts in Italy. Then Carbonarists crossed over from Sicily, pro-
claiming Ferdinand IV as king and independence from French rule;
and more Carbonarists from British-held Lissa arrived on the Abruzzi coast and raised the standard of revolt in March. But the aims
of the rebels were not all the same, some proclaiming Ferdinand as
king, some favoring a republic, others Italian independence and
others the resumption of Papal rule. Both rebellions were quickly
smashed. A number of Neapolitan generals aimed at establishing a
constitution, and Generals Carascoso and Ambrosio petitioned
Lord William Bentinck, then in Tuscany, to march on Naples and
there proclaim one. It was something Bentinck threatened to do, if
Murat refused to withdraw his troops, but eventually he yielded to
pressure from Austria and a compromise was reached with Murat.
Another Neapolitan General (Pepe) had a plan for raising a revolt
in the Marches in support of Italian independence, but was arrested
before he could act. Only in Milan, in 1814, was there contact be-
tween rebels and patriots, when Melzi’s attempt to get Eugène ac-
cepted as king of the north of Italy was frustrated, following a mass
uprising.54

There was at no time any coordinated or effective Italian Resis-
tance movement during the years of Napoleonic rule. In 1808 a Ne-
apolitan called Biancamano arrived in Sicily via Capri and tried to
persuade the British commanders and the British minister, William
Drummond, that such a movement did exist and that he spoke on
behalf of the heads of all political parties in Naples who, he alleged,
were in league with others throughout the whole of Italy.55 The
British were rightly sceptical. Colonel Henry Bunbury, the chief of
staff, wrote to Lowe, the commander of the Capri garrison: “I fear there are no leaders, nor any one common durable bond which could ensure to us the united and continued aid of the Tuscans, Romans, Neapolitans and Piedmontese.” The British admiral Cuthbert Collingwood, commanding the fleet in the Mediterranean, was of the same opinion as Bunbury. He wrote: “There is no stuff to work on there—the people are licentious, the nobles are unprincipled. It is a superior army alone that can effect a change and maintain it.” The Italian people, in his opinion, did not possess the “Spanish spirit.”

Murat meanwhile was perfectly aware of the British correspondence with patriot leaders in the cities of Venice and Bologna, and the rumored pledge of twelve thousand Romans to take up arms if the British landed, but he attached small importance to them. He assured Napoleon that a general uprising in Italy was an impossibility.

Lord William Bentinck held a different opinion, as later on did Colonel Bunbury when in 1809 he became undersecretary of state for war. Between 1811 and 1813 he and Bentinck both lobbied for a major expedition to Italy to raise the standard of popular revolt there, convinced that it would receive massive support. But the British cabinet was rightly sceptical. Although Lord Bathurst, secretary for war, was sympathetic to Bentinck’s aim, he told him privately that “among our rulers . . . there is no belief of any character or energy among the Italians.” When in December 1813 Bentinck sent a force of a thousand Italians under Colonel Catinelli to seize Livorno, hoping to spark a general uprising, the attempt proved to be a complete fiasco. Livorno continued to hold out, and there was no indication of popular support, even though Lucca and Viareggio were captured. What is important to remember in assessing the unwillingness of the Italians to form a coordinated resistance movement is that the nobles and the bourgeoisie had no wish to encourage a peasant revolt that might threaten their own social position, which had benefited so substantially under Napoleonic rule.
The Awakening of National Sentiment

How far was Napoleonic rule responsible for the movement for Italian unity that crystallized in the nineteenth century? There is no doubt that Napoleon’s victories in 1796 and 1797 were greeted with enormous enthusiasm by a small number of Italians—intellectuals, lawyers, men of letters—who shared the ideas of the Enlightenment and were variously described as Jacobins, revolutionaries or quite simply patriots. Concepts such as constitutional government, republicanism and national unity were ones to which they all subscribed, and they found in the triumph of French arms over the monarchs and princes of Italy an opportunity not to be missed to translate their political ideas into practice.

In June 1796, the Bolognese lawyer Antonio Aldini proposed to Napoleon that all the territory occupied by the army he commanded should be brought under a unified rule. In September, the Milanese Matteo Galdi published a pamphlet entitled “The Need to set up a Republic in Italy.” A few months later Francesco Leina, another Lombard, wrote Napoleon a letter pleading for “the unity and indivisibility of the Italian states.” The Romagnolo Giuseppe Compagnoni wrote numerous pamphlets, all favoring Italian unity, that were published in 1796; and in the same year Gregorio Fontana, an inhabitant of the Trentino, prophesied that an Italian republic would embrace the whole peninsula. These men had yet to experience the realpolitik that governed the actions of the French Directory and also Napoleon. The policy of the French Directors was to destroy the old régimes, not to promote the erection of new ones; and Napoleon only supported the formation of the Cispadane and Cisalpine Republics because they offered him assistance while the threat remained of a renewed and dangerous offensive by the Austrian armies. Though these republics (soon merged into one) were permitted to continue in existence after the Austrian defeat, the sacrifice of Venice to Austria, as a quid pro quo for Lombardy (as already mentioned in chapter 1), betrayed the hopes of the patriots,
and the Treaty of Campo Formio, signed in 1797, earned the reproaches and invectives of men like Vincenzo Dandolo and Ugo Foscolo, both of whom were Venetian citizens.1

The government of the first Cisalpine Republic had clearly reflected the aspirations of the Italian patriot party. Fontana, when addressing its legislative body, forecast that within a very few years the republic would extend its existing boundaries to embrace the whole peninsula; and Serbelloni, its ambassador in Paris, was instructed to draw the Directors’ attention to such lofty expansionist aspirations. But he found that neither Talleyrand nor Napoleon gave him the slightest encouragement.2 A secret patriotic society was formed in Bologna in 1798 that was called the Society of the Rays, because it proposed to shine its rays throughout the whole of Italy. Italian generals, from different parts of Italy, met in Milan in the same year to propose Italian independence and unity.3

During the thirteen months in which Austrian rule returned to Italy (1798–99), many Italian patriots fled abroad, mostly to Chambery, Grenoble and Paris, where they petitioned the Council of 500 to create a democratic republic when the Austrian armies were expelled from Italy.4 As the military tide began to turn, Ugo Foscolo wrote what he termed a “Discourse on Italy,” addressed to General Championnet, the general who had been responsible for setting up a short-lived republic in Naples. Foscolo wrote: “France cannot hope for safety without Italy . . . but to win, you need Italians, and to secure their loyal assistance, you must declare the independence of Italy . . . make Liguria a department of Italy . . . As you gradually liberate the states, proclaim them departments of the Italian Republic.” This was in October 1799. A month later he repeated these sentiments in his famous ode to “Napoleon Liberator,” welcoming Napoleon as savior of Italy from the fury of Austro-Russian reaction, but also from the humiliating tutelage of the commissioners of the French Directory.5 Francesco Lomoriato and Vincenzo Cuoco, Neapolitan exiles who had fled to Milan, after the Bourbon counter-revolution effected in 1799, wrote and published pamphlets in 1800 forecasting the inevitable union of the whole Italian peninsula; and after Marengo the Society of Rays reformed in Bologna and resumed its program.6

Napoleon’s shrewd move at the Lyon congress to change the name of the Cisalpine Republic (reinstated in 1800) to that of the Italian Republic was greeted by the delegates with huge enthusiasm, and Foscolo, at the instigation of two of the Cisalpine deputies, delivered an oration to Napoleon in which he thanked him for having given his country opinions, laws and arms, the sentiment of
independence and the desire for effective liberty, and for having brought about, in so short a time, a transformation that would otherwise have taken several generations to accomplish.7

Melzi, before returning to Italy from his self-imposed exile on his Spanish estates, had written Napoleon a letter, in November 1799, pointing out the mistakes that the French had made during their occupation of Italy in the three years following Napoleon’s victories, making themselves hated everywhere for their brutal rapacity and exactions. He expressed the hope that Napoleon, the consul, now that he wielded civil power, would work for the good of Italy in order to create an Italian nation. As already mentioned in chapter 2, Melzi, when installed by Napoleon as vice-president of the Italian Republic, wanted to create a federation of all the states in north Italy, to be ruled over by a chosen monarch. It was to be a state that was independent, though clearly reliant on Napoleon’s goodwill, and one that was to play a neutral role in the conflict of interests between France and Austria.8 Napoleon of course had no use for such talk, unable to accept that a neutral country should remain in control of the Alpine passes. Though rebuffed over his hopes to rid Italian soil of French troops, Melzi remained intent on giving the Italians a sense of national identity. As he told Marescalchi in 1803, “It is not a question of preserving public spirit, but of creating it. Italians have to become accustomed to thinking nobly . . . to make them become citizens of a state [instead of merely] inhabitants of a province or a district even smaller than a province.”

Gould Francis Leckie, a Scottish farmer who was resident in Sicily at the time, wrote of the patriots in 1806: “There exists in Upper Italy a society of men consisting of the principal nobility, whose political views are directed to the grand object. This society has existed for several years, and many who adopted the dress and language of republicans secretly held the following doctrine: that Italy ought to become one head and that she should adopt, as far as circumstances would permit, a limited constitution of monarchy.”9

Agents of the British government and of the Queen of Sicily did their best to contact and encourage societies such as the one that Leckie wrote of. Murat told Napoleon in February 1809 that patriot plans had reached maturity for a general uprising in Italy. The patriots exchanged information between Naples, Rome, Florence, Ancona, Bologna, Milan, Venice, Turin and Genoa, and were supported by the English, who gave them arms, munitions and money—“They dream only of a united Italy.” But, as mentioned in the previous chapter, Murat went on to assure Napoleon there was no real danger of a general insurrection. Two years later the Queen
of Sicily had wild plans for Prince Moliterno to attempt the liberation of Italy, with the aim of establishing a constitutional monarchy under the Bourbons for the whole of Italy. The plan depended on British assistance, but Lord William Bentinck, the British commander and minister plenipotentiary, refused to give any support to the scheme until Sicily was granted a constitution, which the king and queen refused to do. In any case there is little evidence that Moliterno would have gained support of many people in Italy, given the reactionary reputation of both King Ferdinand and his queen.

In 1814, when Napoleon had abdicated, Melzi tried to get Eugène to proclaim independence for the kingdom of Italy, convoke the electoral colleges to give their approval to such a scheme and confront the allies with a fait accompli. In doing this he had the support of many officials and army officers, but not, it transpired, of the Milanese nobles who constituted the Italian senate, and to whom Eugène mistakenly appealed. The nobles were jealous of Eugène’s French advisers, wanted to play a more leading part than hitherto allowed to them in the governing of the kingdom of Italy and to have as their sovereign an Italian, not a Frenchman. Though Melzi had already warned Eugène that he must become an Italian citizen and rid himself of his French entourage, events moved too swiftly for his plan to succeed, and the people of Milan, incited by the nobles, rose up in revolt and welcomed the Austrians.

Melzi’s wish, as early as 1802, to create a genuine Italian army, not only to show that the Republic could defend itself without French assistance, but also to build up a national spirit, was fulfilled, despite the fears that were voiced by Murat that it might prove a dangerously subversive force. Murat told Napoleon at the time that “the great majority of those men one might call Italian patriots want the independence of all Italy, and without considering their present inability to preserve and defend liberty, they simply regard the French on their territory with displeasure. This party is the more dangerous because it is the party of all Italian military, and it is [a party that is] on the increase.” Yet, as Stuart Woolf has pointed out, there was little real danger to Napoleon’s rule, and in any case Napoleon took care to disperse units of the Italian army throughout the different parts of his Empire.

Certainly the creation of such an army was to be an important step in making Italians nationally conscious. Stendhal wrote that it had two results: one was to create an Italian language, since following Napoleon’s instructions, soldiers were made to learn the Tuscan tongue; and second to cause the disappearance of a merely local patriotism (exactly as Melzi had intended). Men from different
provinces of Italy met each other, and fought together, under the same Italian flag on the different battlefields of Europe. As Professor Frederick Scheid has written, “the army was a catalyst of Italian nationalism and many of its veterans would later play significant roles in the emergence of the modern Italian state.”

A young Italian officer in the Grande Armée wrote in 1804: “I serve my patria when I learn to be a soldier. Our republic will certainly gain more reputation and glory from its few soldiers than from all the sessions and laws which the legislators might pass.” This view was confirmed by a remark of the Sardinian ambassador to London, after the final fall of Napoleon: “The nation has altered considerably in five years... the changes which have taken place... and above all the military habits which have been introduced here, have given a new impetus, a new spirit to our land.”

What was Napoleon’s attitude to the creation of a unified Italian state? At Saint Helena he told Las Cases that “one of my grandest ideas was l’agglomération... the single aim was to guide, guarantee and hasten the education of the Italian people.” Montholon, who remained on Saint Helena with Napoleon until the latter’s death, wrote in his Memoirs that Napoleon “wanted to create Italy as a fatherland: to reunite the Venetians, the Milanese, the people of Piedmont, the Genoese, the Tuscans, the inhabitants of Parma and Modena, the Romans, Neapolitans, Sicilians and Sardinians into a single independent nation... This great and powerful kingdom... its fleets in union with that of Toulon, would have dominated the Mediterranean. Rome, the Eternal City, would have been the capital of the state.”

As Fugier points out, it is difficult to imagine that Napoleon would ever have agreed to relinquish Piedmont and Genoa, economically and strategically vital to France; and Napoleon’s opposition to Melzi’s idea of an independent north Italian kingdom was due to fear it would become too powerful and challenge France’s predominance. In 1796–97 Napoleon posed as the champion of Italian nationalism, and in his proclamations he frequently used the expression “the Italian nation”; but if he was at all sincere about
the use of such a term, it was always in the context of a national state that could exist only under French protection. He postured again in 1805, when replying to the Italian deputies who brought him the iron crown of Lombardy, telling them that since he had first crossed the Alps, he had always cherished the idea of “making the Italian nation free and independent.” Yet, when he offered his brother Joseph the throne of the Italian kingdom, he had refused the latter’s demand that the kingdom of Italy should have both those attributes.

In the words of the historian Carlo Zaghi, 1805 marked the end of an epoch, and of the illusion that Italy could ever be independent and free while Napoleon held the reins of power. The kingdom of Italy was now demoted to the rank of a French department, completely subordinated to the interests of France—as Napoleon impressed on his viceroy Eugène, his motto (as mentioned in earlier chapters) must always be “La France avant tout.” On 20 December 1807, at the end of his last visit to his Italian kingdom, he addressed the electoral colleges in Milan. In his speech he recalled the past glories of Italy and the decay into which it had fallen through vicious regional rivalries. Since he arrived, he went on, much had been done and much remained to be done to recover the country’s former status. The French and the Italian peoples must now regard themselves as brothers and the guarantee of Italian independence was the union of the imperial crown with the iron crown of Lombardy. It was intended as a stirring address, but it was in effect an open admission—and Italians saw it as such—of the perpetual subjugation of Italy to the power of France.¹⁹

Napoleon toyed with the idea of making Italy a federation, based on members of his family as rulers of its component parts; then later, with the birth of his son, of fusing all Italy into the Empire. He threatened Eugène in 1810 with the annexation of the kingdom of Italy, unless Eugène tightened the economic blockade; and the threat of annexation was held over Murat, when he tried to assert the independence of Naples. In fact Napoleon kept changing his mind about the political shape of Italy. Just after his coronation in Milan, he put forward a plan that involved creating a sub-Alpine confederation, grouped round the kingdom of Italy, but then changed his mind and annexed Liguria. In 1807 he told Tuscan deputies that their state should be joined to the kingdom of Italy, but upon returning to France he decided against this, and annexed Tuscany to France.²⁰

It is true, as mentioned in chapter 1, that Napoleon was the first to introduce the expressions “Italy” and “Italian nation” into the
language of international politics, expressions hitherto only used in a literary or geographical context, but it is difficult not to agree with J. M. Thompson when he writes: “There is not a sign, in Napoleon’s actual policy, that he cared at all for Italian unity or aspirations. The only ‘unity of thought and feeling’ he aimed at was unanimous submission to French laws, French conscription and French taxes . . . the patriotic movement which shaped Italy into a national state was inspired by hatred of almost everything Napoleonic.”

In 1814 and in 1815, when the Empire of Napoleon was drawing to a close and again during the Hundred Days, appeals were made by various people and for a variety of reasons to the cause of Italian nationalism, independence and unity. The Italian response was totally negative. The Austrians hoped, both for political and military reasons, to profit by widespread anti-French feeling by appealing to the Italians’ obvious desire to be free and independent of the yoke of France. The Austrian general Count Nugent in December 1813, when invading northeast Italy, proclaimed that he stood for Italian independence. And the Austrian commander Fieldmarshal Bellegrade, three months later, when facing the army of Eugène on the Mincio, called on Italians everywhere to throw off the bonds of the foreigner. In Milan the Austrophile Italians thought they could enjoy a political independence under the protection of the Habsburg monarch, and though they had no desire to return to the days of the earlier Lombard régime, dreamed of being ruled by an Austrian archduke who would act as a constitutional sovereign. This idea found its principal sponsor in the aristocrat Count Federico Confalonieri, a member of the Milanese senate who had been a minister of Eugène and held the office of prefect of police, and who led a movement of Italiani puri committed to its realization.

Lord William Bentinck, the British commander of all land forces in the Mediterranean, was an ardent campaigner for Italian independence, inspired by Whig liberal sentiments. When he landed in Tuscany with his army from Sicily in the early spring of 1814, his proclamation, issued at Livorno, called on all the Italian people to rise up and unite in the common national cause: “Italians hesitate no longer; be Italians, and let Italy in arms be convinced that the great cause of the country is in your hands! . . . Warriors of Italy! You are not invited to join us, but you are invited to vindicate your own rights and to be free. Only call and we will hasten to your relief, and then Italy by our united efforts will become what she was in her most prosperous periods, and what Spain now is.” He went on to liberate Genoa and then revive its ancient republic but, though
the Genoese welcomed his action, there was no sign in Tuscany that his proclamation had awakened a response.

Milan, however, was different, and when its people had risen up to overthrow the rule of Eugène, its council and mayor had appealed to Bentinck. He was asked by the Italian puri to use his influence to see established an independent Italian kingdom, with a liberal and constitutional government. When Bentinck sent them General Macfarlane to conciliate and restore some calm, the latter was met by representatives of every social class in the city, expressing their wish for Lombard independence. When Bentinck was reproved by Castlereagh for taking this political initiative, Count Federico Confalonieri went to Paris to interview Castlereagh. When urged to support Lombard independence, Castlereagh told him not to be deceived by any assurances he might have received from British military officers who, he said, often expressed views that were not held by the British cabinet. When Confalonieri then suggested an independent north Italian kingdom under a constitutional monarch chosen from the royal House of Habsburg, Castlereagh assured him he had nothing to fear from Austria’s “paternal government,” and advised him not to press for a constitution that would not only be useless but dangerous. Lombardy’s annexation to Austria was announced officially on 12 June. This movement of so-called Italian puri was really confined to Lombardy and found few echoes elsewhere in Italy.

When, during the Hundred Days, Murat made a bid to unite Italy under his crown in support of Napoleon, he deceived himself about the degree of backing his appeal to the nation would receive. “Venice is open and badly armed,” he wrote to one of his generals, “the Piedmontese are already tired of the government of their inept king; the Milanese abhor Austrian domination; the Venetians have not lost the memory of their ancient glory; the Ligurians groan at what has been done to them; the bellicose population of Romagna spoil with desire to serve under my flag. Austria is in no condition to fight on two fronts. I will beat them.” Marching north from Naples, he arrived at Bologna where, to an enthusiastic crowd who shouted, “Long live the great Gioacchino! Long live the King of Italy!,” he declared he knew “no limits for Italy save for the mountains and the sea.” And at Rimini he made a further declaration that he was marching to liberate Italy. He urged all Italians to fight for “the accomplishment of the great destinies of Italy. Providence summons you to be an independent nation,” and he went on to proclaim the adoption of a national purple and green cockade. But in the words of his contemporary Colletta, Murat’s “edicts and
speeches . . . only produced promises, applause, poetic effusions, but neither arms nor action.” 28 If the crowds in the Romagna greeted him with cheers, it was not to celebrate his arrival but the departure of the Austrians, and few volunteers came to join his army, which was already the victim of desertions. 29 So far from the Austrians being unable to confront him successfully on the field of battle, they defeated him decisively at Tolentino, after which his army melted away.

The apathy that characterized Italian reactions to all appeals, by whoever made, to rally to the cause of national unity disgusted the small minority of patriots like the poet Ugo Foscolo. Sickened by the plaudits with which the Austrians were received when their troops reentered Milan, he wrote that Italy had become a corpse. “Be slaves and shut up!” he told his fellow Italians, “Let us leave the dead in peace; he who has no father-land has nothing on this earth”. 30

In the three decades following Napoleon’s death Italian nationalism did spring to life in the provinces of Lombardy and Venetia, where Austrian rule came to be detested, but in the remainder of Italy regional loyalties remained very powerful and continued so into the twentieth century; while Naples and Sicily remained two separate countries even if nominally united as the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. Nevertheless Napoleonic rule did leave a legacy not easily erased, and one that undoubtedly contributed to the feeling of national identity. Service in the Italian army, experience of a common educational system and of a common legal system, and the common use of the Tuscan dialect, all conduced to mold Italians into what eventually became a nation. 31
Epilogue: Legacy and Aftermath

By the terms agreed at the Congress of Vienna, finalized in 1815, the old governments returned to Italy, though the republics of Genoa and Venice were never to be resurrected. Genoa passed to Sardinia/Piedmont and Venice to the Habsburg emperor. Tuscany was returned to the Grand Duke Ferdinand, Modena to Francis IV of Este, the Austrians ruled once more in Milan, the Pope in Rome and King Ferdinand in Naples, his kingdom now united with Sicily to form the kingdom of the Two Sicilies. Only Parma had a new sovereign in the ex-empress Marie Louise, the grass widow of Napoleon. Most Italians (save the Genoese) did not initially quarrel with the Vienna settlement. They were glad to be rid of Napoleonic rule, with its burdens of heavy taxation and conscription, imagining that their returned rulers would be more easygoing and less demanding. The resurrection of the customs barriers between Italy’s seven separate states was an inevitably unpopular measure with merchants and manufacturers, as well as landowners who looked outside the boundaries of their own state for markets for their surplus grain and wine.¹

What was the legacy of fifteen years of Napoleonic rule? Napoleon had sought to impose uniformity of institutions within his empire, one that was based on the French model: territorial subdivision into a neat array of departments, each administered by its prefect; landed property instead of heredity as the basis of political power; and the imposition of the legal codes. All parts of the Italian peninsula, whether governed directly from Paris or indirectly by Eugène and Murat, were made to conform to Napoleon’s prescription, while all male Italians of military age were forced to perform their military service.² The historian Zaghi credits Napoleon with giving the Italians their self-respect.” [He] made Italians fearless soldiers, capable administrators, zealous bureaucrats, honoured judges, and gave them a feeling of public spirit and the capacity to look beyond the bounds of the municipio.”³ Had Napoleon stopped there, there would have been a few dissenting voices. But because Napoleonic rule came also to mean ruinous taxation and the hated burden of
conscription, it became utterly detested, not so much for the fact that it was foreign as for its destruction of family life. Melzi’s last-minute attempt to persuade Eugène to abandon French nationality, in the hope of winning him Lombard support for a claim to the throne of Italy, was doomed to failure from the start. Eugène was unpopular, not principally because he was French, but because he was associated with every aspect of Napoleonic rule.

It used to be said that this rule had played a significant role in bringing to birth the spirit of Italian nationalism. This question was dealt with in chapter 10. But quite apart from the fact that Napoleon had no use for national sentiment unless it served a military purpose, his legacy was, to quote Mack Smith, “one of division” between North and South. He did not create the division but his policies served to underline it. Under his rule the north of Italy was brought into closer contact with France through the economic ties he established. The construction of the Simplon and Mont Cenis highways eased the passage of people and goods between Paris, Turin and Milan. The Italian statesman Camillo Cavour, who bears the greatest responsibility for the unification of Italy half a century after Napoleon’s downfall, was only too conscious of this divide. “To harmonise the North with the South,” he said, “is more difficult than to fight Austria or to engage in the struggle with Rome.”

Austria’s dominance of Italy in the fifty-odd years following 1815 was a legacy of Napoleon’s attempt to turn Italy into a satellite of France. The Allied Powers who defeated Napoleon were therefore determined to exclude French influence from any part of Italian soil, at any rate for the foreseeable future. It was to this end they supported Austria in her claim to Lombardy and Venetia, and invested her with the role of guardian of the status quo throughout the peninsula. Metternich, Austria’s principal minister between 1815 and 1848, was a firm opponent of anything that smacked of political liberalism. He vetoed granting a constitution to any of the Italian states and was prepared to use force if required. To this end Austrian troops intervened in Piedmont, Naples, and the Papal States in 1821 and 1831. As for the national aspirations of those who campaigned for Italian unity, Metternich dismissed them with the much-quoted phrase that Italy was only “a geographical expression.” To bring about Italy’s unification was in the end to require a shift in the balance of power in Europe and the intervention of France and Prussia. It also required the tacit support of the British government. Napoleon’s rule had been a positive hindrance to the process of Italian unification. All he had been able to demonstrate
was that northern Italy could be united by displacing the rulers of the ancien régime.

A further legacy of Napoleon’s rule was the emergence of a middle class enriched by the purchase of the _beni nazionali_ and rewarded by being given responsible posts within the bureaucratic state. Without such a class it is difficult to see, as Denis Mack Smith is at pains to stress, how enough support could have been found for the creation of a national state. With the end of Napoleon’s rule in Italy there arose a class of discontented unemployed officers and frustrated bureaucrats, deprived of their jobs by the new dispensation. It was to become the nucleus of numerous revolutionary movements that became such a feature of Italian history in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Napoleonic rule had also spawned a number of secret societies opposed to his rule. The most famous of these was the _Carbonari_. Their aims were not notably republican, but were rather liberation from Napoleonic, centralized, bureaucratic control. Some aimed at Italian unification, but most demanded a constitution on the model of the Spanish or Sicilian ones that had been proclaimed in 1812. They became far more active and increased their membership after the end of Napoleon’s rule when they realized that the restoration of the displaced rulers meant stricter censorship, sometimes exclusively clerical rule, and the total denial of a constitution.

Not all Napoleonic institutions were abolished by the incoming régimes. The judicial and administrative reforms of Napoleon that had served to increase the power of the state naturally appealed to the restored rulers who were often in no haste to dispense with them. The Austrians in Lombardy and Venetia retained much of the administrative framework created under Melzi and Eugène, and were glad to use the efficient, trained and centralized civil service that they inherited. In the kingdom of the Two Sicilies the enlightened minister Luigi de Medici welcomed the services of Murat’s officials for, in the words of Stuart Woolf, “the administrative unification of the kingdom of Naples and Sicily would have been inconceivable without the French decade in Naples.”

Though the Napoleonic codes were abrogated by the Neapolitan king, the new codes issued in 1819 retained the major provisions of the former. The civil and commercial codes, the greater part of the criminal code, and the reformed judicial procedures were preserved. The extraordinary tribunals were also retained as a useful method of trying bandits. The codes, as J. A. Davis writes, “proved the most long-lasting of the reforms.” However, the attempts by Joseph and Murat to create a centralized bureaucratic state had failed
dismally for the lack of material and human resources. It was not
the monarchy but the feudal barons who remained the “authorita-
tive power” in the kingdom.10

Reaction set in both in Piedmont and in the Papal states. Ironi-
cally, an effective instrument of such reaction in the state of Pied-
mont was the powerful gendarmerie, a creation of Napoleon. No
sooner restored to his former throne, the king transformed the gen-
darmerie into the Carabinieri Reali as early as 1814. This police
force still exists and was to become, in the words of Michael
Broers, “a model for other new police forces” during the nineteenth
century. As a consequence, Broers noted, “Piedmont entered the
post-Napoleonic world a more orderly society than it had ever been
before,” and banditry did not return there, as it did in the south of
Italy.11

In Piedmont, under the ministry of arch-reactionary Count Cer-
ruti, all French enactments were repealed. The codes went, as did
the principle of equality before the law. There was no longer open
trial in criminal cases, even if torture was not reinstated. These
measures were accompanied by a total purge of the existing civil
service. This attempt to put the clock back well before 1796 was,
however, to prove unworkable, and “the practices, institutions and
in many cases even the men of the Napoleonic period reasserted
their usefulness in the course of the 1820s and 30s.”12 In states like
the Papacy and Tuscany, the relatively short period they had been
subject to Napoleonic rule meant they had had little time to absorb
French legal and social practices.13 Clerical rule was reintroduced
in the seventeen provinces into which the Papal States were now
divided. The Napoleonic codes were abolished, as was equality be-
fore the law, and clerics were once again entitled to be tried in ec-
clesiastical courts. Torture, flogging, capital punishment and trial
for heresy were not brought back, but criminal justice in the Papal
courts “returned to its pre-Napoleonic state of complexity and ineff-
cacy.” Jews were the principal sufferers. They could no longer
hold property, were forced to sell the houses they had bought,
might not practice their religion openly and were deprived of their
civil rights. Many chose therefore to migrate to Tuscany, Lombardy
or Venetia.14

While Cardinal Consalvi was in office (he resigned in 1823 and
died in 1824) he managed to prevent the worst excesses of reaction
in the provinces north of the Appenines. There, in the Legations
and the Marches, which had known French rule for considerably
longer than the remainder of the Papal States, the restoration of
papal rule presented especial difficulty. Consalvi told Pacca in June
1815: “The young people have never known the Pope’s government and have a very low opinion of what it is like. They resent being ruled by priests. The old may think differently, but they do not count. Most of the people’s minds are not on our side.” Consalvi aimed to achieve a compromise but, like all compromisers, was disliked by both sides, accused by conservatives of being a Jacobin and by reformers of being a reactionary. He introduced a French-style administration run by delegates instead of prefects, but all the delegates were clerics. Most of the civil servants were laymen but were publicly disguised as clergy by wearing cassocks instead of trousers. After the death of Pius VII, which coincided with Consalvi’s retirement, there were no further attempts at reform. Under Pius’s two successors the grip of reaction became ever firmer: the judiciary bowed to the executive, and senior clerics maintained a strict censorship and total control of education. There was, however, no restoration of baronial exemptions or feudal privilege, nor of the ancient guild restrictions.

Nor was there any attempt to restore to the Catholic Church its sequestered lands. One of Napoleon’s most important legacies was the removal from the Church in Italy of much of its enormous wealth, and with it economic and political influence. Even in the states of the Pope those who had purchased seized church property were permitted to retain it. Only in the duchy of Tuscany was some of the Church’s property returned. Many of the religious communities, however, were able to return, including the Jesuits who, at the ducal court of Modena, acquired considerable influence. In the kingdom of the Two Sicilies, religious houses were reestablished, though less than one third of their original number before the Napoleonic invasion. Church courts were reinstated, as was the episcopal power of censorship; but by the terms of a concordat, signed in Naples in 1818, the state was able to regain control of many activities of the Church. The latter lost its right to grant sanctuary, the right to plead benefit of clergy, and to claim exemption from military service. The state still licensed ordinations and the crown continued to nominate bishops, who in turn appointed parish priests.

In Tuscany the restored Grand Duke proved another arch-conservative, and Napoleon’s institutions were swept away. Ferdinand, however, was no blind reactionary, spending money on improving education, and showing a surprising tolerance of political subversives who sought refuge in his state. Another arch-conservative, but without the Tuscan Grand Duke’s moderation, was Francesco IV, the restored Duke of Modena. He dismissed all Napoleonic officials and allowed the Jesuits to sway his policy. In contrast, the
régime in neighboring Parma, was a different story. Under the rule of Marie-Louise, Napoleon’s wife and then his widow, the codes remained intact for five years, and then only to be replaced by ones of a very similar character.\textsuperscript{19}

The restored régimes were fortunate to inherit a sound financial situation and the Bourbons of Naples, who had left behind an enormous debt when they fled to Sicily, returned to find the national debt had been effectively liquidated. It was the same in the other Italian states. They inherited an ordered fiscal system, and the creation of proper land registers (in Venetia left for the Austrians to complete) made the task of collecting taxes easier. Though feudalism remained abolished, entails and primogeniture were restored in Piedmont and the Two Sicilies. Wars and consequent economic depression had caused many nobles to mortgage their estates, but as has been shown in chapter 8, many of them had enlarged their estates by purchasing Church and common land. More than half of the land in Italy remained in the hands of the aristocracy.\textsuperscript{20}

Under Napoleonic rule agriculture on the whole had prospered and had led to an enormous growth in the rice crop in the plain of Lombardy and of silk in Lombardy and Piedmont. The benefits of improved communications, land drainage, and flood-prevention, continued to be felt in the post-Napoleonic years, but the customs barriers removed by Napoleon, but now everywhere reimposed, were a serious obstacle to trade. This proved particularly serious along the banks of the river Po, since it flowed through Piedmont, Lombardy/Venetia, the Papal States, Parma and Modena, and was the principal artery of traffic passing between those states.\textsuperscript{21}

The port of Genoa was eventually able to recover some of its former prosperity, but Venice continued its decline, one that was already evident before Napoleon arrived in Italy. It was unable to compete with Trieste, which the Austrian government chose to favor. Nor did Livorno ever recover the commercial importance it had formerly enjoyed. The years of Napoleon’s occupation had taken a very heavy toll and the downward trend proved irreversible. Many of the foreign merchants who had made the commercial fortune of Livorno had left the city, never to return, while those who chose to remain were ruined. After 1814 a group of Greeks of Milanese origin arrived in the port and did a great deal to reactivate the trade in grain. Some of the British firms returned and tried to restore former trade connections, and direct the American trade to Livorno. Jewish firms plied a modest trade with the Barbary states and the Levant, but real prosperity proved elusive.\textsuperscript{22}

The roads and canals that were built by Napoleon were a legacy
for which the Italian states in the north of Italy continued to benefit. In the kingdom of the Two Sicilies, however, public works projects begun by Murat, particularly drainage and harbor improvements, were left unfinished for financial reasons, and for identical reasons remained incomplete for many years. But the cities of Naples, Rome, and Milan still bear witness to the vast improvements that embellished those cities under French occupation, though they and other Italian cities also witnessed the unscrupulous plunder of art treasures of every kind. By no means was everything returned from the Louvre to their original homes after 1815.

In the field of national education, Napoleonic rule made important innovations by making elementary education not only compulsory but free. In the department of Olona in 1814, nearly 64 percent of the population of school-age were being educated; but Lombardy was an exception. What sort of an education, one is bound to ask, was being offered elsewhere in Italy, when teachers were untrained, classes overcrowded, teaching methods rudimentary, and the children regularly kept away from attending school at the time of the harvests? Capra considers the Napoleonic period ushered in an era when the masses in Italy were no longer illiterate and ignorant, but such an assertion can have no relevance where the south of the country was concerned. Even in 1836 only one percent of the population of the province of Molise went to school, and in 1911, in Reggio Calabria, 79 percent of women were illiterate, as were 61 percent of the men.

What Napoleonic rule had done to Italy was to modernize the old aristocracy and, in the words of Carlo Capra, “transform them from nobili into notabili,” thus enabling them to survive in a changing political and economic climate. It had trained a new middle class to be efficient, conscientious civil servants, not numerous but very influential in the formation of a unified country, though in this formation the mass of Italians were to remain almost totally excluded. The transfer of land to a middle class had benefited the capitalists at the expense of the subsistence farmers and so widened the gap between the rich and the poor in Italy.

In the opinion of Denis Mack Smith, “neither the novelty nor the permanence of Napoleon’s contribution must be exaggerated”; some of his reforms had been anticipated by enlightened rulers of the eighteenth century, and others lapsed after 1815. Though there is clearly much truth in this statement, Italian society, its structure and attitudes, its inward-looking provincialism, and its varied administrative and legal systems, were never to be the same again after the years of Napoleon’s rule.
Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>AHRF</td>
<td>Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française (Paris, Nancy)</td>
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<td>ANSI</td>
<td>Annuario dell’Istituto Storia Italiana per l’età moderna e contemporanea (Roma)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASI</td>
<td>Archivio Storico Italiano (Firenze)</td>
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<td>FO</td>
<td>Foreign Office Records at the Public Record Office, Kew, England</td>
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<td>HJ</td>
<td>The Historical Journal (Cambridge)</td>
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<td>JHM</td>
<td>Journal of Modern History (Chicago)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NRS</td>
<td>Nuova Rivista Storica (Milano)</td>
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<tr>
<td>REN</td>
<td>Revue des Etudes Napoléoniennes (Paris)</td>
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<td>RH</td>
<td>Revue Historique (Paris)</td>
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<td>RHD</td>
<td>Revue Historique Diplomatique (Paris)</td>
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<td>RISN</td>
<td>Rivista Italiana di Studi Napoleonici (Pisa)</td>
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<td>RS</td>
<td>Ricerche Storiche (Naples)</td>
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<td>SSI</td>
<td>Storia della Società Italiana, Part 4, vol. xii, L’Italia giacobina e Napoleonica (Milano: 1985)</td>
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Notes

Preface


Chapter 1. Bonaparte in Italy 1796–97: Icon and Scourge


8. Heriot, *The French*, 73. In 1797 the British minister in Venice wrote to Lord Grenville, the secretary of state, that “the Venetian nobles during the whole contest have improvidently distrusted their own subjects, and have been afraid of allowing them the use of arms to protect themselves” (Worsley to Grenville 18 March 1797, FO 81/12/5; Palmer *The Age*, 2.284).


21. Ibid., 33; FO 67/21/143. Napoleon’s lack of revolutionary zeal in this case is shown by his reply to protests that the terms of the treaty of peace with Piedmont accorded an amnesty to the rebels: “Don’t worry . . . if these people give you any more trouble, you would do well to hang them as soon as you can, and no one would bear you any ill-will” (Trevor to Grenville 18 June 1796, FO 67/21/234).

22. Palmer, *The Age*, 2.271. Bignon, French envoy to the Cisalpine Republic, was to write that the Directory was convinced that anarchy, suppressed in France, had taken flight to Italy and wanted to establish itself there (Woolf, “Storia politica,” 175).


27. Heeder, *Italy*, 20–21. Napoleon offered sops to the patriots in Milan by encouraging the moderate elements to join the civic guard and the Lombard Legion: both carried the Lombard colors—green, red and white—and the legionaires wore in their caps the inscription “Libertà italiana” (Fugier, *Napoléon*, 73).

28. Thompson, *Napoleon*, 75–76. The Directory had told Napoleon: “All the information we have received about the attitude of the people of Italy shows that they are not ready for liberty, or rather they have been rotted by slavery and the vices it brings in its train” (Stuart Woolf, *Napoleon’s Integration of Europe* [London and New York: Routledge, 191], 177).
29. Naylor to Grenville, 7 February 1797, FO 79/15/94.

30. Drake to Grenville, 28 May, 1 June 1796, FO 28/15, unpaginated.

31. Acton, *Bourbons*, 297–98. Peace was signed on 10 October and ratified on 27 November, by which Naples agreed to pay an indemnity of 8 million francs (a secret clause inserted in the treaty). The Queen of Naples refused to accept that the treaty was really binding, writing to Lady Hamilton: “Nominally neutral, but never in our feelings, we shall give proof of this on every available opportunity.” Despite its military preparations, the monarchy of Naples had not been anxious for war. As the British resident minister, Sir William Hamilton, made clear in one of his dispatches to Grenville, it dreaded “the appearance of a party they know to exist in their kingdom, in favour of the French, as it would manifest itself as soon as there is a certainty of support” (Hamilton to Grenville 14 June 1796 FO 70/9.115). And the French commissioner Saliceti, on being informed that the king of Naples had ordered the arming of the whole population, replied: “That means nothing—how can you arm a people en masse in a country where there are 12,000 in prison for revolutionary opinions. [The number was in fact nearer twelve hundred.] Besides, we know from our informants that the Queen and Acton are obliged to yield to circumstances” (Trevor to Grenville 11 June 1796, FO 67/21.251).

32. Wyndham to Grenville, 12 July 1796, FO 79/14/191; Carlo Tivaroni, *L’Italia durante il Dominio Francese (1789–1815)*, 2 vols. (Roma, Torino, Napoli, 1889), Storia Critica del Risorgimento Italiano, Tom 2. 11. The British had occupied Porto Ferraio in Elba in reply to the French occupation of Livorno, on 9 July 1796. The Jacobin army commissioners Saliceti and Garrau wanted to extend the French occupation to the whole of Tuscany—an aim in which they were supported by the French consuls in Genoa and Livorno. In reply to the query of Delacroix as to whether there was a possibility of republicanizing Tuscany, they replied they considered it “ripe for liberty.” But the Directory was not interested in such a project while the Grand Duke remained a friend of France (he allowed no anti-French demonstrations), and Napoleon had other aims in view of pursuing the Austrians (Turi, “*Viva Maria*,” 117–18, 122).


34. Driault, *Napoléon*, 14. When Ferrara, Bologna, Modena and Reggio had all sent representatives to an assembly in Modena on 16 October 1796, the first time for many years Italian cities had been willing to subordinate local interests to the common good, they established a military Cispadane Confederation, with orders to raise an Italian Legion. The representatives met again in Reggio at the end of December 1796 and declared their confederation to be a republic (Blanning, *French Wars*, 174).


36. Ibid., 2.1099.


38. Melchiorre Roberti, *Milano Capitale Napoleonica. La Formazione di uno Stato Moderno 1796–1814*, 3 vols. (Milano: Antonio Cordani, 1946), 1.37. Napoleon had already told the Directory on 28 December 1796 that, as in Lombardy, so there were in the Cispadene Republic, three parties: the supporters of the previous régime, those who favored an independent and constitutional government of a fairly aristocratic nature and those who supported a French-style purely democratic government. “I suppress the first, support the second and moderate the third . . . [I do so] because the party of the second is that of rich landowners and priests which, in the long run, will end up winning over the masses of the people, which it is essential to rally to the French party” (*Corr.*, 2.1321). But by the spring of 1797
the Directors clearly thought Napoleon was giving too much encouragement to the third party, rather than the second.


40. Corr., 2.1258. In the monastic church of Varese patriots had insulted images of saints and had played the revolutionary tune, “Ça Ira” on the organ (Melzi, *Memorie*, 1.161).

41. Driault, *Napoléon*, 4; Trevor to Grenville, 1 June 1796, FO 67/21/222.


43. Naylor to Grenville, 14 March 1797, FO 70/15/154.

44. Corr., 2.1365.


46. Corr., 2.1509. Most of the treasure of the shrine of Loreto had already been removed to Terracina on the orders of the Pope, prior to its intended shipment to Sicily. Napoleon took possession of the rest, including the much venerated statue of the Virgin. As the latter was made of wood, the Directory had little use for it (Chadwick, *Popes*, 457).

47. d’Ivray, *Lombardy*, 252, 257–58. Napoleon preferred the term “Cisalpine” to “Transalpine” (the latter name had been requested by the Lombard delegate in Paris, Serbelloni) to emphasize that France was the true center of north Italy (Fugier, *Napoléon*, 76). The full Credo, copies of which were sold in Turin in 1801, ran: “I believe in the French Republic, one and indivisible, creator of equality, and in General Bonaparte its only son, our sole defender” (Michele Ruggiero, *La Rivolta dei Contadini Piemontesi* [Torino: Editrice Piemonte Biancherella, 1974], 219).


49. Ibid., 2.120; Candeloro, *Storia*, 229.


53. Candeloro, *Storia*, 231. It had only been a question of time before the Sardinian government had committed itself to an alliance with France. Trevor, the British envoy in Turin, had written only three months earlier: “This country is at present little better than a French province—its neutrality deserves more the name of passive nullity” (Trevor to Grenville, 18 January 1797, FO 67/24, unpaginated). Talleyrand wrote retrospectively in July 1799: “The Directory wished to remain neutral in all the unrest which took place” (Broers, *Napoleonic Imperialism*, 193).

54. Drake to Grenville, 3 July 1797, FO 28/17, unpaginated; Jackson to Grenville, 16 July 1797, FO 67/25, unpaginated. Genoa was forced to acquire the imperial fiefs within its borders at the cost of 15 million livres (francs), payable of course to the French Republic.


57. Thompson, *Napoleon*, 85–86.


61. Ibid., 34; Corr., 3.1836.
NOTES

64. Fugier, *Napoleón*, 69; Worsley to Grenville, 10 May 1797, FO 81/12/89; Watson to Grenville, 19 May 1797, FO 81/12/102, 104.
70. Ibid., 25.

CHAPTER 2. MELZI AND THE ITALIAN REPUBLIC

4. Michael Broers, “Revolution as Vendetta: Patriotism in Piedmont 1794–1821,” *HJ* 3.313 (1990): 584–86; Jackson to Grenville, 7 September 1799, FO 67/28, unpaginated; Roider, *Thugut*, 313. After the Russian defeat at Zürich and the deepening of mutual distrust between Austria and Russia that led to the latter leaving the war, Thugut explained his aims in Italy. These were to annex only part of Piedmont, but to be given the Legations. Grenville, the British secretary of state, expressed willingness for Austria to appropriate the whole of Piedmont in order to improve Austro-British relations (Roider, *Thugut*, 329–30); Ruggiero, *La Rivolta*, 100–101, 132, 180.
9. Ibid., 137–45, 224. Melzi was bitterly disappointed at the failure of Napoleon to allow the junction of the duchy of Parma to the new Italian Republic. He told Marescalchi at the end of 1803 that if it was not to be so joined, “No one (save me) would ever believe the word of the First Consul again” (Tivaroni, *L’Italia*, 1.206–7). The Duchy of Parma was administered by Moreau until 1806. He was replaced by Jean Cambacérés in the city of Parma and Georges Le Brun in Piacenza. From 1808 both cities were joined again, to be incorporated into the department of Taro.
10. Hearder, *Italy*, 71; Blanning, *French Wars*, 242–43. The reasons behind the Tuscan uprising were principally economic and social. The liberal economic policy pursued by the Archduke Peter Leopold, and supported by Tuscan Jacobins, had reduced the status of many peasants to that of impoverished laborers, produced
unemployment and lowered wages, while simultaneously resulting in a serious rise in the price of food. Foreign competition had also hit Tuscan manufactures very badly and an urban crisis had resulted. Discontent spread from town to country during the early 1790s and the French occupation made matters worse. Popular aversion to the laissez-faire attitude of the government was, in 1799, directed by a reactionary clergy against the French and the Tuscan republicans, and took the form of a religious crusade (Turi, “Viva Maria,” 289–90).

12. Ibid., 129; Driault, Napoléon, 139–43.
15. Ibid., 98.
17. Driault, Napoléon, 148–49.
19. Candeloro, Storia, 238.
20. Tivaroni, L’Italia, 2.167; Angelo Ottolini, Mila e la Seconda Repubblica Cisalpina (Milano: La Famiglia Mignellina, 1929), 34–35; Zagli, Napoleone, 119.
21. Zagli, Napoleone, 120–24. Sommariva bought the magnificent Villa Clerici on Lake Como, which he furnished with plundered works of art. Visconti was honest but very weak and connived at the corruption of his fellow ministers (Tivaroni, L’Italia, 2.168).
22. Pingaud, Domination, 1.113.
23. Ibid., 1.230, 236; Tivaroni, L’Italia, 2.173.
25. Fugier, Napoléon, 111–15.
27. Candeloro, Storia, 296.
29. Candeloro, Storia, 297.
33. Pingaud, Domination, 1.377; Candeloro, Storia, 298.
35. Pingaud, Domination, 2.36–46; Livio Antonielli, I Prefetti d’Italia Napoleonica (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1983), 122–49. The aims of the Bolognese patriots were also social and economic, directed against monopolists, and toward establishing a system of welfare for the benefit of the many poor and at the expense of the great landowners (M. Leonardi “Démocrates et masses populaires à Bologne 1796–1802,” Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française, vol. 230 (Paris: Université de Paris 1977), 538–39. The Bolognese revolt was the last attempt of the Italian Jacobins to influence the course of events in Italy. Its suppression marked the end of Jacobin opposition to Napoleonic rule and the end of the Society
of Rays (Woolf, “Storia politica,” 207–208). Though Melzi felt strong enough to dispense with the services of many republicans who had held posts under the Cisalpine Republic, this proved impossible for the government of Piedmont. Throughout the whole Napoleonic period the patriots remained in control of the most powerful branches of local administration (Broers, *Napoleonic Imperialism*, 233, 240).


44. Roberti, *Milano*. 1.88. The French military commanders in the Italian Republic resented the powers enjoyed by the prefects, having been accustomed for so long, under the Cisalpine Republics, to having their own way in administrative matters and being able to enrich themselves at the expense of public funds. They found a leader in General Murat (Antonielli, *I Prefetti*, 193–95).


46. Ibid., 261, 266.


49. Roberti, “Melzi,” 397–400. Jacob criticized Melzi’s rigidity and his inability to choose subordinates to whom he was willing to delegate power (Woolf, “Storia politica,” 209).


54. Driault, *Napoléon*, 203–4; Melzi, *Memorie*. 2.595. “Josephism” in Lombardy, as elsewhere in the Habsburg Empire, entailed state intervention on a major scale in matters affecting the Catholic Church. Dioceses were rearranged and new parishes created to accord with the distribution of the population; monastic property was seized to finance the program of church reform; priests were to be trained henceforth in a general seminary set up in Pavia. Detailed regulations were drawn up regarding the number and length of masses, church music and furnishings in churches. Anything savoring of superstition or popular religion was strictly forbidden. This included street processions, the kissing of relics (whose number was reduced), the use of rosaries, kneeling in public whenever the sacred host passed by and the clothing of statues of the Virgin. No fees were to be demanded for performing marriages, baptisms and burials, and every parish was to start a school, attendance at which was compulsory for children (Chadwick, *Popes*, 415–17).


59. Pingaud, *Domination*, 2.484–95. Landowners benefited by the return of their allodial lands and were the principal beneficiaries of the régime (Woolf, *History*, 203).


**Chapter 3. Napoleon’s Satellite Kingdom of Italy**


10. Ibid.


17. Corr., 19.15314. The prefects whom Eugène had appointed between 1805 and 1806 had been wealthy men of noble birth, but frequently less than competent as instruments of a central administration, lacking experience as bureaucrats (Antonielli, *I Prefetti*, 269–70, 297).


24. Pingaud, “Le Premier Royaume,” *RHD* (1926) 312–18, (1929) 179–181. On 20 May 1813 Eugène reported the loss of a convoy captured by British naval forces off Fano, and that the British had a powerful squadron operating off Ancona and Venice consisting of three battleships, two frigates, a corvette, two brigs and
several smaller vessels. On 20 June he reported the loss of twelve gunboats off the coast of Romagna, together with ten little vessels they were escorting, at the hands of two British frigates. On 29 June the British landed a force of between five and six hundred men in the neighborhood of Pula, sacked the public buildings and took prisoner several officials (Éug., 9.130–31, 170, 183).

25. Eug., 2.79, 96, 97, 108, 110. Eugène was given the title of “Prince of Venice” (ib.d, 2.259, n. 1).
26. Ibid., 2. 403, 414; Corr., 12. 10349.
29. Driault, Napoléon, 587–88; Pingaud, “Le Premier Royaume,” REN xxv 167; Corr., 15. 10661. The awards were as follows: Dalmatia (Soult); Istria (Bessières); Friuli (Duroc); Cadora (Champagny); Belluno (Victor); Conegliano (Moncey); Treviso (Mortier); Feltre (Clarke); Bassano (Maret); Vicenza (Coulaincourt); Padua (Arrighi); Rovigo (Savary)
31. Ibid., 1. 227; 2. 232.
32. Corr., 2. 10097.
41. Connelly, Satellite, 46–49.
44. Connelly, Satellite, 56.
45. Lemmi, L’Età, 421.
46. Fugier, Napoléon, 225.
48. Oman, Viceroy, 369, 374, 378, 386. The self-justification of Eugène in disobeying Napoleon’s orders is contained in his letter to Napoleon dated 18 February. Murat, he told Napoleon, had not committed himself and had told Eugène, two days before, that he did not intend to act against him. What, asked Eugène, would have been the result of obeying Napoleon’s order? Eugène’s army of 36,000 was made up of 24,000 French and 12,000 Italians, but more than half of the French were natives of the Roman departments, Genoa, Tuscany and Piedmont, and none of them would have crossed the Alps. The men belonging to the departments of Leman and Mont Blanc had already begun to desert and would soon have followed the example of the Italians. As a result Eugène would have found himself pursued through the defiles of the Alps by an Austro-Neapolitan force numbering seventy thousand men. The entire evacuation of Italy would have thrown into the ranks of Napoleon’s enemies a great number of soldiers who were still his subjects. To have obeyed Napoleon’s orders would therefore have been fatal to the success of his arms (Isaac Butt, The History of Italy, vol. 2 [London: Chapman and Hall, 1860], 82–84).
Chapter 4. The Challenge of Papal Authority


3. Ibid., 142.


9. Ibid., 19, 165.


15. Masson, *Napoléon*, 2.209–10; Driault, *Napoléon*, 262. Fesch’s hasty temper did not suit his position as a diplomat. When he resorted to threats, when he thought Pius might refuse to grant the demands made by Napoleon, he alienated Cardinal Consalvi and the two cardinals became bitter opponents (Latreille, *Napoléon*, 328–30).


19. Ibid. General Montrichard, commander of the Ancona garrison, demanded provisions for six months to supply 4,000 infantry, 800 cavalry and a hospital of 500 beds. When Rome refused, Montrichard decreed a levy of 100,000 scudi (1.5 million francs). Masséna was called in to mediate and said that Montrichard had exceeded his instructions. Montrichard was later replaced by the more conciliatory General Tisson (Latreille, *Napoléon*, 441–47, 455).


21. Fugier, *Napoléon*, 197. Additional reasons for rising tension between Napoleon and the Pope were the Pope’s refusal to nullify Jérôme Bonaparte’s morganatic marriage at the request of Napoleon, and his allowing Lucien Bonaparte, Napoleon’s non-cooperative brother, to take up residence in Rome (Chadwick, *Popes*, 509).


26. Hales, *Revolution*, 186–200; Lemmi, *L’Ètù*, 316. It was hoped the archives would reveal the crimes committed by previous popes and so furnish useful propaganda for abolishing the temporal power (Madelin, *Rome*, 229). Napoleon wrote: “My intention is to have brought to Paris not only the pontifical adornments, but even the tiara and other precious adornments used in papal ceremonies” (ibid., 247).


32. Attilio La Padula, *Roma e la Régime nell’Epoca Napoleonica* (Roma: Istituto Editoriale Publicazioni Internazionali, 1969), 105–6. It was intended to present the world, and not least the people of Rome itself, with a picture of imperial grandeur and French efficiency in town-planning, but also to provide much-needed employment for the very numerous impoverished people with which the city of Rome abounded. A Commission of Monuments was set up by an imperial decree on 27 July 1811, under the presidency of the prefect, who became the driving force behind the repair of Rome’s ancient monuments. Camille de Tournon, the prefect in question, proved an enthusiast for the work of reclaiming for Rome its former glory as a city of imposing and beautiful buildings. Despite a serious setback to the work resulting from a major earthquake on 22 March 1812, chronic lack of adequate funds, the jealous rivalry of other officials (notably the Baron Gerando, minister for the Interior and responsible for cultural affairs, and Martial Daru, the intendant for crown property in Rome) and the bureaucratic interference of Paris querying the use of funds, an enormous amount was achieved in four years: the clearance of huge amounts of earth from major archaeological sites, the buying out of the owners of houses, stores and stalls that so often encumbered or encroached upon the ancient buildings and the skilful repair work of Italian architects (Ronald T. Ridley, *The Eagle and the Spade: Archaeology in Rome during the Napoleonic Era* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992] 47, 51–53, 63–68, 71–79, 85–89, 121, 216, 238, 241–45). Eighteen hundred workmen were employed over four years in revealing and restoring the Roman Forum, the Coliseum, the Pantheon, the Forum of Trajan and a number of temples (notably the temple of Vesta) and the creation on the Pincio hill of the magnificent terrace and gardens. There were also plans for linking Rome with Civita Vecchia by canal, restoring the canal to Fiumicino and making the Tiber navigable between Rome and Perugia, but no funds were available for these projects. (Madelin, *Rome*, 541–47).

33. Nardi, *La Politica*, 153–56. This outburst of Napoleon was also prompted
by the plan of the Consulta to win popularity by the creation of a Roman senate on which Roman nobles were invited to serve. “All these plans are ridiculous,” he wrote, “it must not nominate a senate” (Madelin, Rome, 208).

34. Nardi, La Politica, 303; Madelin, Rome, 287.


37. Fugier, Napoléon, 297.


40. Broers, Europe, 148.

41. Madelin, Rome, 350, 353, 451. Napoleon’s chief of police, wrote of Zingarelli’s recalcitrance: “Put this mad fanatic in prison, without bread or water. His kind are not rational beings, they must be treated like animals” (Madelin, Rome, 452); Cantù, Corrispondenze, 404, 411.

42. Hales, Revolution, 194–95.

43. Fugier, Napoléon, 295–96.

44. Broers, Europe, 111–13, 208.


46. Caldora, Calabria, 109–12.


48. Ibid., 302–303, 305.

49. Ibid., 306.


52. Michele Milele, “Il Clero nel Regno di Napoli 1806–1815,” QS (1978): 284–313: 291, 296. To make matters worse, the funds designed for the regular upkeep of church buildings and church expenses were seized by the state and handed over to lay trustees who used them for secular, if charitable ends; and tithes, though still partially allowed by law, proved quite impossible to collect (Chadwick, Popes, 521).


54. Hales, Revolution, 225.

Chapter 5. Replacing the Bourbons in Naples and Tuscany


2. Ibid., 211; Corr., 11.924. A full account of the Anglo-Russian expedition to Naples that led to the replacement of the Bourbon monarchy by Napoleon’s brother Joseph is to be found in William Henry Flayhart III’s Counterpoint to Trafalgar:

3. Rambaud, Naples, 211 and n.4.
5. Rambaud, Naples, 228; Woolf, Integration, 71.
6. MRJ, 2.94–98.
7. Ibid., 2.274.
11. JM 7.3864, 3915, 4001.
21. JM, 6.3553, 3611, 3626.
22. Ibid., 7. 3788, 8. 4614.
23. Ibid., 8. 4875, 4985.
27. Ibid., 436.
28. MRJ, 2.89–90.
29. Ibid., 2.76.
30. Rambaud, Naples, 251–52.
32. MRJ, 2.89–90, 410.
33. Ibid., 2.365.
34. Ibid., 2.389.
35. Ibid., 4.41–42.
36. Ibid., 4.152–56.
37. Rambaud, Naples, 251, 252 and n. 1, 255.
39. Ibid., 219, 312; J. A. Davis “The Napoleonic Era in Southern Italy: An Am-

43. Ibid., 6.458, n. 1.
44. Ibid., 7.378, n. 1.
46. Ibid., 438–39; Umberto Caldora, *Calabria Napoleonica 1806–1815 Depu-
tazione per Storia Patria per la Calabria*, vol II (Napoli: Fausto Fiorentino, 1960), 328.
47. *MRJ*, 3.319.
52. Ibid., 3. 415.
tains that by 1814 Murat had two battleships launched and a further under con-
struction (R. Glover, “The French Fleet 1807–1814. Britain’s Problem and
56. Ibid., 139.
60. Lemmi, *L’Ètà*, 446.
62. Ibid., 69.
63. Ibid., 69–71.
64. Espitalier, *Napoléon*, 161–62, n.165, 167. Though the ministry for war was
occupied by a Frenchman (Daure) and another (Agar) was minister of Finance,
most of the Kingdom’s ministerial posts had been given to Neapolitans—Zurlo,
Ricciardi, Maghella and Pignatelli Strongoli, to name the most important.
18–60. (Firenze: R. Deputazione Toscana di Storia Patria, 1914) 41
Émille Paul, 1900), 37–38. The strength of the French garrison in Etruria was six
thousand. The amount of the military contribution was, from June 1802, reduced
from 400,000 francs a month to 180,000.
70. Driault, *Napoléon*, 139.
Ollendorff, 1896), 113–16.
73. Lemmi, *L’Ètà*, 291. Mozzi was a man of letters, a follower of Leopoldine
teaching, but no statesman and was aged seventy-five (ibid., 297).
NOTES

78. Ibid., 195.
82. Ibid., 239–54.

Chapter 6. Administrative, Legal, and Judicial Reform

effect, and in 1816 the graziers recovered all their former privileges (Candeloro, *Storia*, 333).


32. Ibid. 398–403; Davis, *Conflict*, 130.


34. Rambaud, *Naples*, 294–303. In 1806 in Calabria the Provincial Legions sold amnesties to many of the brigand bands and their members grew rich through such corrupt practice, as well as through other criminal methods (Davis, *Conflict*, 133).

35. Woolf, *Integration*, 120; Fugier, *Napoléon*, 223; Connelly, *Satellite*, 41; Pingaud, *Domination*, 2.310; Pingaud, “Le Premier Royaume,” *REN* 1923 Tom I 203–5. Napoleon had written on 24 June 1808: “I have not established the jury in Italy because I can see no political object in doing so and because the Italians are too emotional” (*Corr.*, 17.14127). Two years later he had changed his mind, though he never insisted on the jury system being adopted in the kingdom of Naples.


44. Palmarocchi, “Riforme,” 46–47.


**CHAPTER 7. THE ARMIES OF NAPOLEONIC ITALY**

NOTES 209

6. Melzi, *Memorie*, 2.182, 223. There were formidable obstacles in the way of smooth running of the system of conscription during the years of the Italian Republic. Apart from clerical opposition and poor cooperation by French commanders, the local authorities provided the principal obstacle to good organization. Being opposed from the start to the idea of conscription, they acted as slowly as possible in providing lists of eligible men. Eventually the prefects took over the job, but it was not until 1807 that the system could be said to be working efficiently (Antonelli, *I Prefetti*, 457–72).
8. Pingaud, *Domination*, 2.190–211. In September 1802 Napoleon ordered the establishment of colonies for military veterans (presumably French) who were badly wounded, single and under forty years of age. They were to be given land in Piedmont and encouraged to marry local girls. His aim was not only to recompense the soldiers but to establish ties between France and the newly annexed territory and introduce the language and spirit of France. The colonies were to be sited near the fortress of Alessandria, into which the families of the colonists could retreat if danger of invasion threatened (*Corr.*, 8.6334). Only one colony was in fact established and each veteran residing in it was (in 1808) allotted 237 hectares (585.6 acres) of national land, that is, confiscated from the Church. As the amount of land assigned to the colony was 2,370,450 hectares, one must assume that the number of veterans in the colony amounted to ten thousand in 1808 (Notario, *La Vendita*, [Milano: Banca Commerciale Italiana, 1980], 232, 234).
22. Ibid., 16–17.
41. Ibid., 175.
44. Fugier, *Napoléon*, 234.

**CHAPTER 8. THE ECONOMIC IMPACT**


4. Zaghi, *Napoleon*, 60. French manufacturers criticized the opening of the Simplon pass for making it easier for the Milanese to smuggle their goods into Switzerland. They much preferred the Mont Cenis route, which provided them with direct access to Piedmont and its producers of raw silk. As a result the Mont Cenis route carried four times more trade across the Alps than did the much-vaunted Simplon route. Things changed, however, in 1810 when the annexation of the Valais Canton made it easier for French customs officers to regulate the trade between Italy and Switzerland. In addition, the Mont Cenis route was becoming increasingly congested. By a decree, therefore, of 1811, the same customs rights were accorded the Simplon as were enjoyed by the Mont Cenis route (Jean Tulard, *Napoleon: The Myth of the Saviour*, trans. Teresa Waugh [London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1984]), 173–74.
34. Capra, *L’Ètà*, 194–99, 299. The attempt to persuade great landowners to breed merino sheep on their lands, by giving them free specimens, proved to be a total fiasco, the only landowners to make a success of it being Vincenzo Dandolo in Venetia and Michele Benso di Cavour in Piedmont (Woolf, “Impact,” 1103).
36. Rambaud, *Naples*, 425–27; Davis, *Conflict*, 46. J. A. Davis points out that the French, having inherited a situation where the cities prospered at the expense of the surrounding countryside, due to privileges and customs barriers, tried to correct the imbalance by freeing trade and abolishing privilege. But the Napoleonic centralization of administration worked against the success of this policy and helped to preserve the towns’ privileged status (Davis, *Conflict*, 96–97).
42. Woolf, “The Treatment of the Poor in Napoleonic Tuscany 1808–1814,”
AISI, vols. xxiii–xxiv (1971–72); 435–75: 441–45, 447–61, 474. The policy of limiting public assistance only to the “deserving” poor by setting up Case di Lavoro (akin to Benthamite workhouses) was applied not only in Tuscany but in all areas of Italy that had been annexed to France (Davis, Conflict, 36).

45. Ibid.
47. Zaghi, Napoleone, 89.
49. Notario, La Vendita, 255; Fugier, Napoléon, 259.
52. Woolf, Integration, 92.

Chapter 9. Reaction to Napoleonic Rule: Support, Acquiescence, Dissent, and Revolt

2. Woolf, History, 212; Broers, Napoleonic Imperialism, 436–38.
5. Ibid., 186–87, 192–93.
7. Woolf, Integration, 77; Broers, Europe, 252.
18. Ibid., 175–77, 209.
27. Capra, *L’Età*, 246–47; Woolf, “Storia politica,” 234–35. The Carbonarist secret society was founded by the Frenchman François Briot, when intendente of the Upper Abruzzi. He had been a member of the Council of 500 during the rule of the French Directory and in August 1799 had demanded that a republic be formed to embrace the whole of Italy. In 1810 he was promoted by Murat to become a councillor of state (Tulard *Le Grand Empire*, 299). Most Napoleonic officials were masons, affiliated to the lodge of the city in which they served. Masonic lodges were described by a nineteenth-century Italian historian as antechambers to the prefecture and to higher military commands. Freemasonry in Italy was no longer a secret society, and membership after 1805 ceased to have any real political significance (Antonielli, *I Prefetti*, 434–35, citing G. De Castro, *Il Mondo Segreto*, 9 vols. [Milano: Daello, 1864]), 6.47.
32. Ibid., 43–53.

46. Agnese Sinisi, “Anti-giacobinismo e Sanfedismo,” *SSI* 13 (1985): 219–52. Luigi Ruffo, archbishop of Naples, abandoned his see rather than swear loyalty to Joseph, but at the same time, with curious inconsistency, ordered the faithful to recognise Joseph as de facto King of Naples. Napoleon had already told Joseph he presumed he had summoned all the priests in the capital and held them responsible for any disorders that might occur (Latreille, *Napoléon*, 492, 499; *Corr.*, 12. 9936).

47. Latreille, *Napoléon*, 247–48. Francesco Pignatelli di Strongoli, sent to the province of Basilicata in June 1806, remarked with surprise at the speed with which the provincial guards were able to form, consisting for the most part of propertied bourgeois. In less than a month he found he could deploy no less than twenty-five companies and so police, fairly effectively, two thirds of the province of Matera and keep the rebellion under control, until the arrival of powerful French forces (Gaetano Cingari *Brigantaggio, proprietari e contadini nel Sud (1799–1900)* ([Reggio Calabria Editori meridionali Riuniti, 1976]), 103, 105.


52. Finley, *Monstrous Wars*, 120–25, 133–37. According to a report by the French consul in Ancona, referring to plans for an insurrection in the Abruzzi in 1806, priests had inserted in the liturgy of the mass a prayer against persecution of the Church. He also reported that Roman agents were distributing pamphlets that described demands being made on the Holy See: transfer of the Papacy to Avignon; partition of the Papal states between the kingdoms of Etruria, Naples and Italy; dissolution of all religious orders; universal abolition of the Inquisition; permission to divorce after three years of marriage, permission for priests to marry; and to award the kingdom of Naples/Sicily to a French prince (Latreille, *Napoléon*, 500).

53. Madelin, *Rome*, 309–14, 597. In May 1811 Norvins admitted that brigands controlled all the mountainous area, in other words, three quarters of the country (ibid., 458). Yves-Marie Berce, “Société et Police,” *AHRF* Jan–March 1975 235–28, 247. In the dioceses of Nocera and Orvieto the clergy’s refusal to swear the oath of loyalty to the régime was total. By 1812 the number of recusants had been reduced from five to one hundred, as a consequence of the prefect’s persuasions, but priests did not look on the oath as valid, as it was not sworn on a copy of the scriptures (ibid., 238).


56. Ibid., 74.

57. Ibid.

58. Ibid., 116.

59. Ibid., 117–18.


Chapter 10. The Awakening of National Sentiment

NOTES

7. Fugier, *Napoléon*, 333. Foscolo joined the Constitutional Society in Milan in January 1798 and spoke eloquently about freeing Italy. He fought for the Cisalpine army during the war of the Second Coalition, joined the army of the Italian Republic in 1804 and served with it at Boulogne until 1806. He rejoined the army in 1813 and worked secretly for Italian independence in the event of Napoleon’s downfall (Solmi, “L’idea,” 101–23).
14. Scheid, *Soldiers*, 2–3. Scheid is probably claiming too much, as the veterans who were to play significant roles in the emergence of the modern Italian state were only a handful of officers.
21. Ibid., 2.56.
25. Candeloro, *Storia*, 369–73. Many patriots hoped for British support and a British agent, Augusto Bozzi, was sent on a secret mission to Italy, where he arrived in 1814. He made contact with patriots through Masonic lodges and persuaded men like Confalonieri to hope for some form of independent state, either in the form of the kingdom of Italy, or of a union of Lombardy with Piedmont to the exclusion of Austria (Woolf, “Storia politica,” 235–36).
EPILOGUE: LEGACY AND AFTERMATH

5. Hearder, Italy, 5.
7. Ibid.
8. Hearder, Italy, 178.
9. Ibid., 72, 134; La Volpe, “Murat,” (1931); Woolf, Integration, 243.
12. Hearder, Italy, 53; Broers, Europe, 368.
13. Ellis, Napoleonic Empire, 87.
15. Ibid 102–3; Hales, Revolution, 250–52; Woolf, Integration, 243; Chadwick, Popes, 555–56. Though the authorities in Paris ordered the return of the Papal archives after Napoleon’s fall, for a variety of reasons only about two-thirds of those that had been removed to Paris were ever returned to Rome. (Owen Chadwick, Acton and History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 41.
16. Hearder, Italy, 135. As already mentioned in chapter 4, n.5, the Pope had refused to acknowledge the rights of those who had purchased sequestered Church property in Piedmont and Liguria, since both were annexed to France after the French Concordat was signed. Only in 1816 did he acknowledge the purchasers’ title to the property in question. (Notario, La Vendita, 180–81.)
17. Chadwick, Popes, 539. As already mentioned in chapter 5, in the Apulian Tavoliere the graziers were given back their privileges.
18. Hearder, Italy, 72–73.
19. Ibid., 75.
23. Mack Smith, Italy, 9.
24. Hearder, Italy, 135. The ending of the war caused a “catastrophic fall” in the price of agricultural produce.
27. Broers, Europe, 269; Woolf, “Impact” 1109.
28. Mack Smith, Italy, 8.
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Date and Month</th>
<th>Events</th>
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<td>1796</td>
<td>29 April</td>
<td>Piedmont signs armistice of Cherasco with Napoleon</td>
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<td>31 May</td>
<td>French conquest of Lombardy complete</td>
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<td>1797</td>
<td>2 February</td>
<td>Austrians surrender Mantua to French</td>
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<td>19 February</td>
<td>Napoleon forces Treaty of Tolentino on Pope</td>
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<td>French Directory annexes Piedmont</td>
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<td>18 April</td>
<td>Peace of Leoben</td>
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<td>14 May</td>
<td>French occupy Venice</td>
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<td>6 June</td>
<td>Ligurian Republic proclaimed</td>
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<td>29 June</td>
<td>Cisalpine Republic proclaimed</td>
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<td>27 July</td>
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<td>17 October</td>
<td>Treaty of Campo Formio signed</td>
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<td>29 November</td>
<td>Napoleon leaves Italy</td>
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<td>1798</td>
<td>15 February</td>
<td>Roman Republic proclaimed</td>
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<td>29 November</td>
<td>French evacuate Rome</td>
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<td>22 December</td>
<td>Neapolitan royal family flee to Sicily</td>
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<td>1799</td>
<td>11 January</td>
<td>Parthenopian Republic proclaimed in Naples</td>
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<td>28 April</td>
<td>Russian army enters Milan</td>
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<td>Anti-French riots in Arezzo</td>
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<td>26 May</td>
<td>Russian army enters Turin</td>
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<td>13 June</td>
<td>Cardinal Ruffo and Sanfedisti take Naples</td>
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<td>19–21 June</td>
<td>Russian victory on Trebbia</td>
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<td>28 July</td>
<td>French surrender Mantua</td>
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<td>25 September</td>
<td>Masséna’s victory at Zürich</td>
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<td>9–10 November</td>
<td>Coup of Brumaire</td>
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<td>1800</td>
<td>15 May</td>
<td>Napoleon’s army crosses St. Bernard into Italy</td>
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<td>2 June</td>
<td>French surrender Genoa to Austrians</td>
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<td>Battle of Marengo</td>
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<td>29 June</td>
<td>French reenter Genoa</td>
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<td>7 September</td>
<td>Province of Novara added to Cisalpine Republic</td>
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<tr>
<td>1801</td>
<td>9 February</td>
<td>Treaty of Lunéville signed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>21 March</td>
<td>Ludovico of Parma becomes King of Etruria</td>
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<td></td>
<td>22 March</td>
<td>Tsar Paul I assassinated</td>
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<td>29 March</td>
<td>Naples and France sign Treaty of Florence</td>
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<td></td>
<td>15 July</td>
<td>French Concordat concluded</td>
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<td>1802</td>
<td>26 January</td>
<td>Italian Republic proclaimed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1 April</td>
<td>Treaty of Amiens signed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>18 April</td>
<td>French Concordat and Organic Articles published</td>
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<td>Genoa given new constitution</td>
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<td>13 August</td>
<td>Conscription introduced into Italian Republic</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 September</td>
<td>Piedmont annexed to France</td>
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<td>1803</td>
<td>18 May War resumed between Britain and France</td>
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<tr>
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<td>27 May Maria Louisa becomes Regent of Tuscany</td>
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<td>16 September Italian Concordat signed</td>
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<tr>
<td>1804</td>
<td>2 December Napoleon crowned Emperor of the French</td>
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<td>1805</td>
<td>18 March Napoleon assumes title “King of Italy”</td>
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<td>26 May Coronation of Napoleon in Milan</td>
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<td>7 June Eugène Beauharnais appointed Viceroy of Kingdom of Italy</td>
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<td>21 June Elisa Bonaparte given Lucca principality to rule</td>
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<td>9 August Austria joins Third Coalition</td>
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<td>18 October French occupy Ancona</td>
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<td>20 November Anglo-Russian force lands in Bay of Naples</td>
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<td>2 December Battle of Austerlitz</td>
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<td>26 December Treaty of Pressburg. Napoleon declares Bourbons no longer rule in Naples</td>
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<td>1806</td>
<td>1 January Venice annexed to Kingdom of Italy</td>
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<td>19 January Anglo-Russian force leaves Naples</td>
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<td>14 February Masséna accepts surrender of Naples for King Joseph</td>
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<td>17 February British force lands in Sicily</td>
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<td></td>
<td>22 March Revolt breaks out in Calabria</td>
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<td>4 July British victory at Maida (Calabria)</td>
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<td>18 July Gaëta surrenders to French</td>
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<td>1807</td>
<td>28 May Neapolitan army defeated at Mileto (Calabria)</td>
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<td>3 August French occupy Ionian Islands</td>
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<td></td>
<td>29 October Treaty of Fontainebleau (giving France Tuscany)</td>
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<td>10 December French troops enter Florence and Regent leaves</td>
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<td>1808</td>
<td>2 February French troops occupy Rome</td>
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<td>2 April Ancona and Marches annexed to Kingdom of Italy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6 May Treaty of Bayonne</td>
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<td>6 September Murat enters Naples as King Joachim I</td>
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<td>18 October Murat accepts surrender of Capri</td>
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<td>1809</td>
<td>2 March Tuscan departments become Grand Duchy of Tuscany</td>
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<td>17 May Napoleon declares Papal states annexed to Empire</td>
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<td>25 June British capture Ischia (Bay of Naples)</td>
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<td>5 July Pope kidnapped and removed from Rome</td>
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<td>5–6 July Battle of Wagram</td>
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<td>14 October Treaty of Schönbrunn</td>
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<td>1810</td>
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<td>17–18 September Murat’s abortive invasion of Sicily</td>
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<td>1811</td>
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<td>23 February Napoleon declares Concordat ended</td>
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<td>23 June Grande Armée invades Russia</td>
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<td>5 December Napoleon abandons Grande Armée in retreat from Moscow</td>
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