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The Sister Republics, or the Ephemeral Invention of a French Republican Commonwealth

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Introduction: the sister republics, a topic to revisit in global history

The question of the ‘sister republics’ cannot be reduced to an ephemeral political experiment that lasted from the creation of the Batavian Republic in January 1795 until the collapse of the Neapolitan Republic in June 1799. During these years new regimes, republics, appeared on Europe’s increasingly unstable diplomatic map, created under the tutelage of a quarrelsome and bellicose ‘mother-republic’ – the First French Republic – at war first against Austria, then against the eternal enemy, England. 1 Not satisfied with causing chaos within its own national boundaries, France had invented the genesis of a world revolution that would cause lasting upheaval in the European order and bring permanent discord to the continent through the invention of democratic warfare engaging the mass of citizens. 2

Indeed, in the aftermath of World War II, against a background of European unification and Cold War tensions, some historians presented the Directory and its sister republics either as precursors of the military occupations where the victors, Nazis or Communists, had imposed their ideological system on the conquered countries; or, what was only marginally better, as a prehistory of the democratic republics of Eastern Europe, a glacis of docile states protecting Russia, that other freedom-curtailing mother republic, at the head of the Warsaw Pact. 3 In other cases, a slightly shameful episode was obscured by national traditions. In Holland, for example, the failure of the Batavian Republic, followed by the Napoleonic interlude, preceded a renaissance of the monarchy that it became important not to undermine by reviving memories of a classical republic with a two-hundred-year history. 4 Further to the south, the abuses committed by the armies of Gaul and France’s rapacious self-interest marred
the first experience of Italian unity and were to be invoked there throughout the
nineteenth century in an anti-French, pro-Italian slogan – _Italia fara da se_, literally
‘Italy will do it by itself’ – a reminder of the ignominious failure to emancipate the
peoples of the peninsula using outside forces. In other cases, forgetfulness was delib-
erately cultivated as a collective therapy of negation by French republicanism. Who
would lay claim to the diminutive Irish republic set up in Connaught in summer
1798? Who would commemorate the experiment of a Helvetic Republic created by
the force of French bayonets, only to be dragged into the chaos of civil and foreign
wars a year later?

It must also be noted that French historiography did little to promote a dispas-
sonate and intelligible history of the sister republics. The Directory was long caught
up in purely French polemics in which the republic of the Directors was the ‘bad’
bourgeois republic. Its history was blighted by the dominating presence of two great
figures – Robespierre at one end, Bonaparte at the other – whereas no single homme
fort (that enduring fantasy of modern French history) stood out clearly between 1795
and 1799; and it was handicapped by a black legend of five years of endemic unrest
and corruption. The Directory found no serious advocate among French historians
of the Revolution, while its foreign policy was more often than not misread as being
an expression of the regime’s internal difficulties.5

Eventually, in 1959, Jacques Godechot fundamentally altered this point of view
and at the same time brought about a shift of focus that is today problematical.6 This
change can be traced to the paper he presented jointly with Robert Palmer in 1955
to the Congress of Historical Sciences in Rome, arguing for the notion of an Atlantic
Revolution. According to the new synthesis, a revolutionary movement had ignited
on both sides of the Atlantic, causing societies to rise against their legitimate rulers
and conquer their sovereignty in the name of a dual demand – on the one hand,
rights for each individual, and on the other, the exercise of sovereign power as an act
of nations, embodied in written constitutions. Modern history was invented with
these representative republics. Jacques Godechot argued that post-Terror France was
largely responsible for spreading this dual ideal, individual and societal, across Europe
after 1795. Driven by an energy that its military victories reinforced, republican
France exported its model and became, in the words of the poet Chénier, ‘une grande
Nation, à vaincre accoutumée’ (‘a great nation, used to winning’), accepting its role of
protective power for the new republics that sprang up like mushrooms – as counter-
revolutionary caricature denounced them at the time – across the diplomatic chess-
board of the former monarchies. When the Patriarch of Corfú addressed Bonaparte
in summer 1797 he used the respectful title of ‘general of the great nation’; when
Jacques Godechot took up that phrase he gave French historiography a major change
of direction, and made the _exception française_ (‘French exception’) the norm for a
republicanized Europe. The republics modelled on the constitution of the Year III
flourished because they were either welcomed by emancipated patriots or imposed
on regions still plunged into obscurantist darkness by counter-revolutionary religious
forces. France gave its constitution, laws, political clubs and press, its system for recruiting
a citizen-soldiery, and its rational administration, and offered its protection, even
if there was a heavy price to pay for this, given that France remained at war and faced
the strain of endemic economic crisis.
The debate had not evolved greatly by the time of the bicentenary of 1789. But since then we have seen a multiplicity of changes, both political and historiographical: the fall of the Berlin Wall, the international crisis, the rise of emerging countries and of global history, the new focus on colonial history (henceforth omnipresent in the conceptual questions raised by the French Revolution), the Skinnerian turn in the analysis of modern republicanism, the rediscovery of the Directory and its interpretational potentialities that are decisive for grasping the inner logic of the Revolution. It is surely time for a reinterpretation of the experiment of the sister republics, one that treats them apart from the French Revolution, as a phenomenon beyond France’s frontiers that united fraternal peoples in a common republican moment. The term ‘sister republics’ may itself be seen as something of an anachronism.

The Atlantic Revolution continued on an original, new course, driven by the dynamics specific to local cultures that were steeped in classical republican culture and transformed by the revolutionary shock wave that swept not just France but Europe as a whole after 1775. This history can no longer be written as a standard monolithic account, whether using the falsely euphoric concept of the Great Nation or the simplistic concept of military occupation. Between 1780 and 1820, Europe developed as an interconnected space in which news was disseminated, received, commented upon, criticized, appropriated or rejected. This new space became the setting for intense movements of information, books, words and images, but also and more importantly of travellers, militants, exiles, soldiers, scientists, diplomats and patriot activists. The result was a profound change in the identity of Europe, in representations of the Other, modifying the idea of frontiers by making their permeability a reality, by multiplying exchanges and the means for political experiences to be combined and disseminated and thus to become interlinked and interdependent. The republican voyage invented an alternative way of exporting model regimes, which were adopted differently depending on local traditions. The sister republics did of course appear at a time of armed conflicts; and that violence necessarily impinged upon the birth conditions of the new regimes, marked from the outset by the logics of civil war and the presence of French armed forces. But it is no longer tenable, and certainly not historically accurate, to imagine the Dutch, Swiss, Italians, Irish, Germans (of Mainz) and Greeks (of Corfu) accepting the French, patiently and passively, and looking to them for political solutions to end the crisis they had experienced since well before 1789. By 1795, Europeans had ideas of their own about politics, and about resistance and revolt against authority, with all due respect to those national historians who have found it convenient to cast the French as troublemakers. The peoples of European countries other than France had heard about liberty and sovereignty, constitution and representation, revolution and rights, of taking up arms and forming militias. So we need to rethink the history of the sister republics as an interaction, which, though certainly distorted by French military power, was continually fashioned by the republican inventiveness of the countries experimenting with the foundation of new regimes. Writing a new history of the sister republics means imagining an original history of the individual republican experiments created in each specific environment, according to that environment’s particular historical relationship with the republican phenomenon – the antique tradition in Italy, for instance, or the glorious past of the United Provinces – and also to the shared
horizon of expectation that the revolutions of the rights of man had established since
the founding of the United States in 1776.

A full reappraisal of the sister republics would take on a dimension that we will
only hint at here. The history of the sister republics began long before 1795 and
most definitely did not end with the Directory. The sister republics were not polit-
ical mushrooms, accidental phenomena created at will by Bonaparte, the victorious
general of 1796 who used Lombardy to try out the position of head of state. Rather
they represented a response to a long-standing question that originated in the age-
old conflict between France and Britain. Specifically, could a French-led federation
of Europe be a match for the British seaborne or thalassocratic hegemony? In this
sense, the question of the sister republics relates to a geopolitical problem that had
been clearly articulated from the early eighteenth century: how to construct a Euro-
pean entity bound by a supranational law with the capacity to ensure peace across a
territory sharing the same civilization? What should this European proto-union take
as its guiding values, and was this a mission or responsibility that could or should be
undertaken by one country rather than another?

It is a question that underpins many essays on an imagined peace written as the two
European powers were embarking on a merciless war that lasted a ‘long’ eighteenth
century from 1693 to 1815. Viewed in this perspective the question of the sister
republics cannot be treated as a side issue to the Revolution or indeed as a circumstan-
tial phenomenon linked to the war started in 1792. Rather it deserves the full attention
of historians, since it marks the point where the eighteenth century first embraced
the general politics of global strategy and international competition. At the level of
diplomacy, this corresponded to a reconfiguring of the forms of domination and alli-
ance in ways that determined the capacity of France and England to create models for
destroying an enemy, not through military force alone, but by political models with
the power to draw the greatest number of countries, nations or states around them
as colonies, vassal states, allies, as systems for mutual attack and defence, in the form
of separate commercial empires and commonwealths organized on different lines. If
this research hypothesis is accepted as pertinent, the question of the sister republics
touches upon central issues in eighteenth-century European political science, and has
ramifications that extend to the revolutions for independence in Latin America.

The republic as European federation and world family?

To understand the intellectual and diplomatic origins of the sister republic phenome-
non it is necessary to go back to the systems of eighteenth-century thought. During
the Enlightenment, a civilization of manners based on the idea of sociability between
individuals and between peoples progressed to the point where the violence of warfare
and the brutal means used to achieve decisive shocks became contradictions whose
resolution required a renewed theory of peace – one that was neither the utopia of
the Abbé Saint Pierre nor a Hobbesian acceptance of obedience to a single ruler to
secure peace for all. At the level of theory, the problem was given its clearest statement
by Montesquieu, who argued that freedom in a great nation comes from uniting the
separate self-governing communities into a federal republic. 10 The different parts are
linked by a defensive pact adopted by a sovereign power, issued in this case from a
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representation of the citizens. To be effective the federal union must associate bodies politic that are comparable in nature and that aspire to peace and abjure conquest, conditions exhibited at that time by the diplomacy of Switzerland, Venice, and the United Provinces. In 1776, less than thirty years after the publication of *De l’esprit des lois*, the United States of America supplied a practical realization of this model of a federal republic. Difficulties were encountered when defining each entity’s powers, the modes of representation of individual states, the prerogatives of the federal power, and the controlled autonomy of the states. But the demonstration that states could be federated to form a republic became a powerful point of reference at the end of the century.

Because of its alliance commitments the French monarchy could not remain indifferent to events on the other side of the Atlantic, and the colonial question contains in outline the roots of the debate over the sister republics. A memoir on the subject by Turgot was eventually published in 1790 but had earlier circulated privately and in all probability been read by Louis XVI. With lucidity Turgot identified the historical dynamic that the American colonists had set in motion. Care would be needed in preparing for the near future, otherwise the New World colonies would reject their subordinate position to metropolitan France and become its most dangerous competitors or even enemies. The way to prevent this from happening was to abandon the logic of empire and instead construct a community of closely allied entities committed to working to the same end. Turgot was a visionary – and like most visionaries was largely unheeded – who imagined a sort of federal pact straddling the Atlantic, which would necessitate a genuine revolution in thinking in metropolitan France, including shedding feelings of superiority towards the colonies and developing mature altruistic conceptions that were little in evidence among his contemporaries. On the contrary, the dominant representation of the French colonial empire was the model of the maternal homeland, the motherland and the child colonies. This mode of representation was important since it bestowed an organicist legitimacy on the colonial empire, attributing it the naturalness of the parent–child relationship, the mother country giving birth to the colonies and then nourishing them with its maternal milk – that this was the complete opposite of the reality shows how much the process owed to ideology! Use of family and sexual metaphors did not decline as a result of the changes initiated by the revolutionary movement, which introduced the idea of the regeneration of the great fraternal family of men and women. It was in these terms that the deputy for Saint-Domingue, Gouy d’Arsy, along with Dubuisson and Dubuc, legitimated Saint-Domingue’s representation to the Estates-General of the kingdom as an integral part of the empire. These men claimed membership of ‘a whole family. The American Islands [French West Indies] were the SISTERS of Corsica that had a right to be represented. Also, Saint Domingue was the eldest child and the CAPITAL of the colonies.’ This comment is valuable since it shows that the notion of sisterhood between Saint-Domingue and Corsica had been adopted by some of the protagonists as a key argument in their demand to share in the political sovereignty that the political revolution of 1789 was in the process of founding. In fact, the notion of fraternity quickly established itself in the register of the union of citizens, then in the idea of a European brotherhood of peoples, which Desmoulins presented as linking the fate of the Liège and Brabant populations to that of the French.
these conditions, the Declaration of Peace to the World of May 1790, voted by the
deputies when drafting the diplomatic principles of the first French Constitution,
confirmed this wish to transcribe the premise of fraternity between peoples as the
official foundation of relations between nations and as the political objective to pursue
in order to establish peace between peoples through the operation of supranational
rules. The fraternal bond between nations offered a double alternative to interna-
tional relations in the forms imposed either by a British power concerned solely with
its trading interests, as seen in an armed domination of the world’s seas, or by the old
interplay of dynastic interests, that encouraged war between peoples simply to satisfy
the appetite of princes for conquest. A few weeks later, the Fête de la Fédération
and the parade of a universal delegation organized by Baron Clootz embodied these
principles of fraternal union and of regenerating an old world through the creation of
a new federation of peoples, united in the same political family of the human race.
The secular procession held on 19 June 1790, the day chosen to commemorate the
founding of the National Assembly, was attended by British, German, Dutch, Italian,
American, Persian, Arabian and Turkish representatives. At the National Assembly,
Clootz, in his role as orator of the committee of foreigners, proclaimed the Festival of
the Human Race:

These foreigners from all the countries of the world are asking to take up
position on the Champ de Mars, and the liberty cap they so rapturously raise
is the guarantee of the imminent liberation of their unhappy fellow citizens.

For Clootz, the ‘ambassador of the human race’ should in practice signify a different
way of representing the nations: ‘In your procession of free men you will see some
whose fatherland is in shackles, whose fatherland will one day be freed through the
influence of your unshakeable courage and your philosophical laws.’ Menou, the pres-
ident, responded adroitly, urging the foreigners to return to their own countries and
ask their rulers to follow the example of Louis XVI. The delegation included Dutch
patriots, the banker Abbema, Comte de Boetzelae, Van Staphorst, de Wacker, Van Zol,
Baron Van de Pol; others came from the Austrian Netherlands, from Liège, Geneva
and Italy, among them Io, first secretary at the Naples Embassy. Others present were
orientalists from the Bibliothèque du Roi, and Zalkind Hourwitz, a Polish Jew who
did much to further the cause of Judaism in France. Also to be noted is a coincidence
that gives this theatrical set piece a particular political significance: on 19 June 1790,
the National Assembly decreed the abolition of hereditary nobility, titles, military
orders, coats of arms, livery, and all forms of distinctions that divided the French from
each other. There is certainly a strong political link between the construction of civil
equality within a delimited territory – France – by abolishing an inequality but also
an entire history, and the logical consequence of seeking equality for all the other
territories – foreign nations – that looked forward to a future full of optimism. The
abolition of the nobility had immediate consequences for the foreign policy of the
Revolution. Of the Old Regime social orders, the nobility was the most cosmopoli-
tan, the most ‘European’ thanks to patterns of aristocratic intermarriage and lifestyle.
To abolish it was to destroy this representation of a European Order and replace it
immediately by that of an egalitarian cortège of nations advancing in unison. In fact,
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questions soon arose over the recognition of the geopolitical entity, over the units asking France for recognition, and over annexation and alliance, monitored autonomy, satellite independence and respect for neutrality. These themes were central to the reflections that prepared for the creation of the sister republics, but had in fact been addressed by the Constituents over the delicate cases of Corsica, Alsace and, above all, Avignon, well before the outbreak of war in April 1792 raised another set of problems.

The case of Avignon is worth examining in more detail since it contains some of the seeds of the debate over the sister republics in 1795–99. From 1789 the Comtat Venaissin was split between advocates and opponents of union with France. The debate in Paris went on for two years, against a local background of violence and virtual civil war that spread as far as Nîmes and Arles. Finally, in September 1791, in a fast-deteriorating European context, the deputies voted for annexation, though the protracted discussions that preceded the vote are evidence that it was not a foregone conclusion. Furthermore, the division was not a clear-cut one between supporters of the king, opposed to all interference and revolutionary contagion and committed to preserving the European balance and the papal possessions, on the one hand; and the patriots, favourable to annexation in the name of universal principles, on the other. The fault line on the left wing of this discussion is of interest, running as it does between the partisans of a standardizing incorporation in the name of the superiority of the egalitarian principles of 1789, and the advocates of Avignon’s freedom to remain independent in the name of the selfsame freedom laid down in the declaration of August 1790. The point was given a carefully reasoned formulation by a radical left-winger, Dufourney de Villiers, in his pamphlet entitled Du Droit des Avignonnais à la plus entière Liberté et Déclaration des Droits des Nations (The Right of Avignon to complete Freedom and Declaration of the Rights of Nations), in which he raises a key question. According to de Villiers the problem had so far been posed incorrectly. From the point when the people of Avignon proclaimed their sovereignty, they were politically constituted and by that fact independent. They had to choose a constitution, such as the French one, for example, but without becoming part of France. Otherwise, the incorporation, annexation or aggregation – whatever the term used – of such a prosperous territory would inevitably create a precedent for all future conquests. It was important not to pose as the protectors of other peoples, for there was a danger of behaving in the same way with Geneva and the Rhineland. Faced with these divisions, the inhabitants of Avignon defined a different strategy, deciding to constitute themselves into the États-Unis d’Avignon et du Comtat and calling officially for a constituent assembly to be convened in the name of the free sovereignty of Avignon. The incorporation to France was not voted until 12 and 13 September 1791. The case of Avignon illustrates the elements of the debate played out again in different circumstances after 1795. It shows the depth of the divisions in France between patriots and counter-revolutionaries but also reveals a complex fault line among the patriots themselves, while exposing the subtlety of a debate that was not between Frenchmen and foreigners but depended on the groups and political conceptions present in local contexts.

The experience of revolutionary war à l’outrance gave added force to these different positions and to the new questions confronting republican diplomacy. The treaties of Basel and The Hague in 1795 formalized the French military victory. There was no let-up in the spread of revolutionary ideals, and the patriots – Italians, Belgians,
Batavians, Swiss, Irish – remained as active as ever. Exiled republicans returning to their war-torn countries called on the French to intervene and establish the principles of the revolution laid out in the decree of 19 November 1792 that had promised ‘fraternity and help to all peoples wishing to recover their liberty’. That decree was modified by the Convention on 15 December to allow generals to set up new constitutions, and on 8 January 1793 it was completed by instructions to the national commissioners in the occupied countries. The principles of self-determination and emancipation for peoples ‘in accordance with the principles of equality and liberty’ that were now decreed in fact provided the founding act of the sister republics, even though this did not become practical reality until 1795 with the Batavian Republic. More importantly, the resumption of the conflict against England and Austria, the archenemies, radically transformed the situation in Europe by creating the sister republic bloc, at once a defensive glacis for the republic within France’s natural frontiers and an original entity born of an unprecedented political experiment. This contradiction, based on the double standard that was constitutive of the republics – dependent and autonomous, dominated and independent, free and overseen – cannot be accepted as the full story. The matrix for a European federation of republics needs to be examined in a fresh light, as a new response to the German Empire intended to reorganize the European territorial balance, and as an original position vis-à-vis British seaborne hegemony and a project for freedom of the seas under French protection. For the Thermidorian diplomats, this was after all merely a variant of the new diplomatic order proposed by Robespierre in November 1793, in which a victorious republican France, far from being a threat to Europe, would on the contrary be the sole recourse available to medium-sized and small powers for building an alliance capable of resisting the appetite of Austria for territorial expansion and of Britain for control of the seas. The prospect of a new European balance based on gradual republicanizing was of direct concern to Switzerland, the United Provinces, and the historic Italian republics. In this perspective, the priority for the French was to invest the republican model with dignity and respect, rather than imposing republics in a hasty or aggressive way. Everyone understood the importance of the ‘Thermidorian moment’, when a victorious peace needed to be transformed into a diplomatic reality through a new system of alliances, open to the world and extending well beyond Europe. Would France be satisfied with her natural frontiers, or would she become a new Rome, building a republican empire by transforming her weak allies into satellite states? Or could she invent the United States of Europe? It was not until after the victory at Fleurus in June 1794 and the stabilization of the northern front, followed by the conquest of northern Flanders that opened the way to the United Provinces in winter 1794, that the Thermidorians had to confront a dual challenge. They had to construct a country along the natural frontiers that had been established by Belgium’s annexation on 1 October 1795 and its transformation into seven départements. And by the Treaty of The Hague on 16 May 1795 they recognized the first allied republic, the Batavian Republic, which, as a product of revolutionary war, was immediately required to pay 100 million florins to maintain a corps of 25,000 soldiers. It was a large sum, and John Quincy Adams, the U.S. ambassador to the Netherlands in 1794, expressed surprise that the Dutch made no protest, so eager were they to be liberated by the French. Liberty when supported by French bayonets bore a price tag, yet it
to be said that this did not deter the Swiss, the Irish, and especially not the Italians, who were fully aware of the fact when they urged the French to come to their aid. Before providing this aid the French insisted that the objective conditions existed for the start of a revolution, tangible proof that part of the population wanted to overthrow the old regimes.

**European republics: Rebellious sisters? Liberated sisters?**

France’s expansionist ambitions formed the background to the birth of the Batavian Republic, the first of the sister republics and the most symbolically charged. Its complex internal history cannot be related here, but we can note the pertinence of recent research by Annie Jourdan, notably in highlighting the initiative and political skill shown by the Dutch in coping with the French presence, while at the same time subtly imposing their own version of the Constitution of the Year III – extensively modified to reflect the Netherlands’ republican and democratic tradition and culture, and taking inspiration from the best political practices and the constitutions of the United States and France. The Assembly that met on 1 March 1796 to draw up the constitution had a broad representation of one deputy for 15,000 inhabitants. Voting was open to all Dutch males aged twenty or older who had sworn an oath to uphold the sovereignty of the people and to oppose hereditary offices. A split emerged between a minority favourable to a unitary republic and federalists who wanted to preserve local autonomy. A stream of petitions, texts and pamphlets served to mobilize and politicize the population of Holland and Frisia. The debate explored the three options available: modify the former constitution, or adopt a new one based on either the American or French models. The American model was rejected as being the constitution of a single country and leaving too much scope for federalism. Once the principle of a unitary Batavian Republic was accepted, it became necessary to limit Holland’s hegemony and constitute an authentic people without referring constantly to nine different cultures. This involved looking back to a unitary history constructed around the Batavians, a Germanic tribe that put up a strong resistance to the Romans in antiquity. But the advocates of a unitary republic could not sweep away every trace of the old federalism. To begin with, the constitutional commission tried to mix Dutch federalism with the principles of the French Constitution. There were no moves to abolish the guilds and corporations. The principle of the indivisibility and sovereignty of the people was recognized but only in the sphere of foreign policy while the provinces kept their prerogatives for the conduct of internal matters. The provinces were to survive in the form of departments, and also kept their prerogatives over taxation. Legislative power was split between two chambers, the Great Chamber and the Council of Elders. Executive power lay with the State Council of seven members (chosen by the Batavian electors from a double list supplied by the Council of Elders). The project was judged overly federalist by France’s local representatives, and by the unitary democrats through the voice of their leader Vaelcknaer, who wanted a stronger legislative power and an executive power subordinated to two or three consuls. Schimmelpenninck, for the moderate unitarians, defended the compatibility between the rule of law and leaving the communes responsible for their internal affairs and giving a lawmaking role to the provinces. The debates produced
a compromise that included a division into fifteen departments. On 8 August 1797, however, the project was rejected in a referendum in which more than 80 per cent voted no. This result was the fruit of the alliance between the unitarians and the federalists, both opposed to the project though for different reasons. This need to elect a second assembly reveals the indecision of the Dutch over their own affairs, and provides proof that France had so far not intervened, despite the urgent need to stabilize the situation. In late 1797, the unitarians published the Declaration of the 43, a manifesto in which they outlined their project for setting up a representative democracy that reflected the changed mood of summer 1797 and the course taken by the democratic republicans in France to save the Republic following the coup of 18 Fructidor: equality before the law, the meritocratic recruitment of deputies and their answerability to electors, the right to popular initiative and referendum on legislative matters, responsible executive power and education made central to the republic. The project was too democratic for the French envoy, Delacroix, who tried to water it down with elements taken from the Constitution of the Year III. The unitarians again displayed their independence and firmness of purpose, arguing that Batavians were different from the French, being more used to democratic forms, and invoking the Cisalpine and Ligurian examples to support their demands to be allowed a degree of political manoeuvre. This is evidence that the patriots were observing those projects and defending their particularity, a form of solidarity with which to resist the pressure coming from the French diplomatic agents. After modifications, this project was presented to the National Assembly on 17 March 1798, put to a referendum and proclaimed on 23 April. Among the radical democrats, Ockerse and Konijnenburg have been studied by Annie Jourdan. The project they defended gave the people the possibility of overseeing government through a People’s Committee of surveillance, replaced the upper and lower chambers by a single chamber and, above all, accorded a central place to the national schools system.

On 23 April 1798, the new constitution was approved by 93 per cent of the voters. A lengthy presentation of the general principles placed the emphasis on guaranteeing the preservation of persons, property, honour, culture and customs. All religions were tolerated but their practice was confined to the private sphere. There was recognition for social rights, and the former institutional frameworks of economic activity — jurades, guilds, corporations, masterships — were abolished. All that remained of the referendum on popular initiative was the possibility of a revision every five years if requested by 15,000 citizens or proposed by one of the chambers. From this point on, however, the formation of the Second Coalition and subsequent war brought a return to insecurity and instability for the Batavian Republic, the helpless victim of conditions on the international stage and the vicissitudes of the French model, no longer tolerant of Dutch hesitations and imposing its allies by force through the intermediary of General Joubert. The events of 1799 and the Anglo-Russian invasion, marked by the landing of General Abercromby at Den Helder on 27 August 1799 and the surrender without a fight of the Batavian fleet anchored at Texel, represented a serious threat to the young republic. However, Brune’s defence of Amsterdam led to the evacuation of the Anglo-Russian forces. On 19 December 1799, after Bonaparte’s coup d’état of 18 Brumaire had reassured the Dutch moderates, a fête was held in support of the republic.
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The Italian experience was very different, indeed diametrically so, from the Dutch example. The Italian republics – six in number – came into existence by the decision of one man, the victorious General Bonaparte, who was learning the art of statecraft under laboratory conditions in Lombardy and in particular Milan, which he would make the second capital of his empire. Three different historical narratives were interwoven in the conquest of northern Italy (and the push down to Rome in 1798 and Naples in 1799 obeyed two further and separate logics). The first concerned the absence of any plan on the part of the Directory to construct republics. For Carnot, the strategist, the Italian campaign of spring 1796 was to have merely the diversionary function of weakening the Austrians, under attack from Jourdan and Moreau in the northern theatre, on the Main and the Danube. But at this juncture two new factors – and two further narratives – came into play. The first was the political genius of Bonaparte; he seized the opportunity to reorganize the administration and constitution of Lombardy as a republic of order with the support of enlightened and reforming notables. The second factor was the patriotism of the Italians, zealous defenders of a republican regeneration of Italy and advocates of a republic, either unitary or federal provided that it would bind together north, centre and south for the peninsula’s renaissance. The Italian historian Antonino de Francesco has thoroughly revised and modernized a historiography dominated by outdated interpretations inherited from the Risorgimento, fascism and the class struggles and virtual civil war that raged in Italy in 1943–45. He sees Bonaparte not as a vector of French warmongering but as contributing a political modernity that the Italians seemed unable to formulate and would have been incapable of implementing. The Italian Triennio of 1796–99, a revolution without terror, laid the framework of the modern state, a representative and constitutional republic, a political culture based on the construction of a space for public debate and the sovereignty of the nation as the foundation of the fatherland, and established the relationship between defending the frontiers and training an armed citizenry – this being of particular importance in Milan, where a citizens’ army was created about which too little is known. Of course, it was by imposing heavy indemnities on the Italian states, expropriating hundreds of works of art, and requisitioning thousands of soldiers for France, that General Bonaparte bought the silence of the Directors, for whom his personal initiatives were a fait accompli, undertaken without any proper authority, including the peace ‘he’ concluded at Campo-Formio in October 1797. Note in passing that the main consideration in this treaty was the consolidation of Napoleon’s Cisalpine (originally Cispadane) Republic, rather than the selling out of Venice that angered Italian patriots, whose eyes were opened as to Bonaparte’s real goals and his commitment to bring about Italian unity against the wishes of Austria.

For an idea of the aura attaching to the republican general, saviour of France and creator of a republicanized Europe between 1796 and 1798 based on the Italian peninsula, we can turn to that talented observer, Mercier:

His is the powerful mind that creates, shapes and distributes republics, that makes them grow on the oppressed soil of kings and oligarchs; his is the arm for carrying out the boldest of projects, that will create a bridge from the Seine to the Thames. He has already changed the feudal face of Europe, and
As happened in the case of Holland, however, no amount of drive, brutality and arrogance on the part of a few tough old generals who came after Bonaparte – men like Massena – was enough to silence or even to calm the giacobini, as the partisans of Italian unity styled themselves. This is clear from the rich inventiveness of the solutions dreamt up to devise the best constitution for the future ‘Italian Republic’. With Bonaparte’s approval, the Lombardy administration held a competition on 27 September 1796 on the question: ‘Quale dei Governi liberi meglio convenga a la Felicita d’Italia?’ (Which form of free government is most conducive to the happiness of Italy?) The jury chosen by the Milan society of public instruction received fifty-seven essays, of which thirty-seven have survived, seven by French authors. Eight of the essays (and four of the seven French entries) argued clearly for a united Italy. On 26 June 1797, by a unanimous decision, the jury awarded the prize to Melchiore Gioja, at that time in prison at Plaisance for political opposition. Gioja took a unitary approach. Unity presented an advantage as regards history and in terms of speedy territorial defence. It also gave meaning to the Revolution, through the suppression of private interests and narrow particularisms. Seen in this perspective, Italian unity could connect with a distant past, that of the Roman republic – austere but where virtue was the dominant quality – while also founding a modern social pact. Melchiore Gioja copied the Constitution of the Year III but gave it a broader electoral base and placed the legislative branch above the executive rather than merely separating them as in France.

Other essayists, such as Michele Laurora, called for Italy to be free, united and independent, while rejecting the Pope’s temporal power and influence in a country deeply marked by its Catholic identity. Italy would be administered as a republic, divided into eighty departments. At the head of the republic, a five-hundred-member Senate would meet at the Vatican and elect a president. The same model includes a proposal for the other European countries to organize a federation and form a universal republic, evidence that the Italian patriots saw a necessary link between the founding of republics and federation with other republics. Matteo Galdi was another key figure in spreading the idea of a united and free Italy. As a southerner he argued for a united Italy’s role in the Mediterranean world, notably in his book Necessita di stabilire una Republicca in Italia (The Necessity of Establishing a Republic in Italy). Naturally the Directory did not support this unitary movement, which it saw as leading to the creation of a republic that could eventually become too large and, more importantly, under the control, so it was thought in Paris, of so-called anarchists, a reference to those accused of a role in the Babeuf conspiracy.

A different strand in republican thought – overtly federalist and no less democratic in its aspirations – was illustrated by the dissertation of Giovanni Ranza entitled ‘Vera Idea del Federalismo italiano’ (‘The True Idea of Italian Federalism’). Ranza was a schoolteacher from Piedmont who took refuge in Nice in 1793. Now back in Italy, he proposed setting up eleven republics federated together by a government based at Pisa and ruling on the most important matters. This idea originated in a mixture of observations on the Swiss and American models. But Ranza’s federalism was quite different from the other experiments: he proposed sharing a single political culture
in order to increase the Italianness of his project, and above all made it possible to avoid any form of centralization that, paradoxically, would have been an obstacle to generalized resistance. This idea was astute given the geography of Italy. Ranza envisaged a possible resistance to the Directory that, if it held the centre, would hold the rest of the republic. In short, what emerges from Ranza’s thinking is a democratic federation that recalls the projects from the start of the French Revolution, during the debates in the National Assembly on the division of France into departments, or in the period immediately prior to the Fête de la Fédération. The competition’s French entrants also recommended a federal solution. Charles Théremin, a diplomat close to Louvet, set out the idea of a binding defensive and offensive pact between each entity in the confederation. This variety of federalism had nothing to do with protecting regional particularisms, but highlights the link between the federation of political subjects and the unity of the nation, within an openly republican and democratic political culture. In the event, however, the instability consequent on the formation of the Second Coalition in late 1798, the avidity of the Directory’s commissioners, the negative impact of a French political life marked by turmoil and successive coups, and the abrupt policy reversals following changes of majority in Paris – for all these reasons the experiment of the Italian sister republics failed to realize its potential as a new political construction. It faced a double handicap: first, from the French military forces, but also from the forces of counter-revolution, intent on destroying republicanism in Italy, supported in this by a clergy deeply opposed to all forms of change, and by the population that was indifferent to the republican model and downright hostile, for obvious reasons, to the French soldiery living off the inhabitants. Opposition was to take the same forms in Switzerland.

Here, however, the writings of Frédéric-César de La Harpe, a Swiss patriot exiled in France, had created the impression of a genuine demand for intervention by the French army. As early as 28 December 1797 France had offered its protection to the Vaudois, who had asked for it. When French troops crossed the frontier, on 25 January 1798, the aim was to dispatch the thousand royalist émigrés who had found refuge at Berne, but also to control the Alpine passes by which the road routes entered the Cisalpine, to constitute a new sister republic, and finally to find funding for the Egyptian expedition currently being prepared by Bonaparte. On 29 January the French army occupied Lausanne and imposed harsh terms. The Vaudois, initially enthusiastic, became alarmed. The French forces entered Berne on 5 March 1798. The decision of Geneva to join France was taken on 19 March 1798 and the unification treaty was signed in Geneva on 26 April 1798. The representatives met at Aarau around this time, but insurrections broke out in the Valais, culminating in the defeat of the rebels at Morgarten on 2 May 1798. The uprising of highlanders from the Valais was defeated at Morge on 17 May. The rebels of Stans in the Nidwald were brutally put down in September. After the aristocratic cantons of Fribourg and Soleure capitulated on 4 March 1798, Berne alone was left to stand against what was seen as an invasion. The Swiss were clearly not all hostile to the principles that the French armies brought with them – the Helvetic territories had strong traditions of autonomy – and in spring 1798 a string of republics were proclaimed in the Bas-Valais, the Toggenburg, Argovia, Lucerne, the Tessin and the Appenzell. Liberty trees now appeared across a land known for its bailiffs and for rebellions by its subjects. On 4 April 1798, the status of
servile subject was abolished in Switzerland; there came into being a confederation of forty states committed to perpetuating, as republics with equal rights, the pact concluded by the confederation members. The French took charge of bringing this group together, and they wanted to see it governed by a single constitution. The Swiss were to vote for representatives to a Council and Senate. The new Helvetic Republic, ‘one and indivisible’, was proclaimed on 12 April 1798, at Aarau, where the former Federal Diet used to meet. In his capacity as president of the Helvetic Senate, Peter Ochs, originally from Bale and one of the most fervent partisans of France, proclaimed the foundation of the new republic: ‘Long live those who today have had the courage to proclaim their independence.’

Despite some original features of the new constitution, notably concerning the rights and recognition of minorities, the population in the east of the country rejected the French presence, which was seen as a plundering occupation, and by its rebellion gave support to the forces of the Second Coalition put together by Britain late in 1798.

The last case to consider, that of Naples, encapsulates the hopes and the failure of the Italian sister republics. Following the signing of the Treaty of Campo Formio, Bonaparte’s star had risen a little too fast for the taste of the Directors in Paris, and he was sent off to Egypt to busy himself with another enterprise. The Directory was free to fall upon the Papal States, where it created the only Italian republic, in Rome, actually to have been planned by Paris. The constitution, drawn up by Daunou and Merlin, would influence that for the Consulate in 1800. A year later General Championnet, noted for his sympathies on the radical left of the French political spectrum, took Naples by a mixture of force and ruse and, despite orders to the contrary from Paris, helped the Neapolitan patriots to set up the most democratic of all the Italian republics. The Neapolitan Constitution, the work of Mario Pagano, was a more democratic version of the French institutions of Year III. A regime of censors was to oversee democratic morality in the cantons. More original was the ephores, a thirty-strong council elected annually to check that the laws voted during the past year conformed to the constitution, which would also be verified by a constitutional jury, thus solving – at least in theory, since in practice the republic did not have time to function – the problem caused by institutional deadlock in France after each election. The attack on the feudal regime got under way in the provinces, while in the city the young republicans recognized the urgency of winning over the Lazzaronis – the unruly and turbulent Neapolitan populace whose ferocity made them feared by all in authority. Various measures were introduced, notably on the price of basic foodstuffs. But the ‘Neapolitan Spring’ ended tragically. In March, the Directory refused to receive the ambassadorial delegation of the new republic, thus signalling its lack of recognition for this daughter, viewed as a bastard republic, and condemning it, in fact, to face counter-revolutionary violence unaided. After landing in Calabria, the forces of Cardinal Ruffo put together an army of the holy faith that waged a Catholic crusade against the demonized republic. A fierce repression targeted republicans throughout summer 1799. The heavy toll included the massacre of 4,000 people, with more than 120 republicans and government officials hanged or beheaded, including Mario Pagano, Eleonora Pimentel Fonseca, and Vincenzo Russo. A further 222 were sentenced to life imprisonment, 322 received heavy punishments, and 3,400 were driven from the kingdom. In a famous text Vincenzo Cuoco attributed the failure of the republican
The sister republics experiment to the passivity of the majority and to the lack of bonds between the elites and the common people, the vital factor for transforming a revolution into a stable republic which was to prove a recurring nightmare for nineteenth-century revolutionaries.\textsuperscript{33}

In the meantime, summer 1799 saw the forces of the Second Coalition achieve a series of early successes across Europe, in Holland, Switzerland and Italy, at the expense of the French armies and their supporters, with dramatic consequences for the sister republics. In September the Great Nation was again safe behind its frontiers, but most of the republics that had been lost were at war. Not until after Bonaparte’s return from Egypt and the Second Italian campaign did the experiment of the sister republics, like the republican interlude in France, come to a close, and with it the sequence of attempts to install democratic regimes over a good half of continental Europe.

Must we then conclude with the failure of this republican revolution that had touched Europe from north to south? Not if we go back to the formulation of the problem as presented in the introduction to this essay and reflect, in a broader geographical and chronological perspective, upon the alternative (\textit{altermondial}) model imagined by democratic republicans in Europe for the purpose of resisting the commercial – one might have said capitalist, or nowadays ultraliberal – hegemony of the English model.

The impossible alternative model to the English commonwealth, or the failure of a French republican federation

It would be quite misleading to approach the history of the sister republics solely in terms of relations between the Great Nation and its individual vassal states, or of the bipolarity of relations between the mother republic and her daughters. What should be envisaged instead is a triangular relationship over which loomed, as a constant presence, France’s oldest adversary, Britain. In Napoleon’s eyes, Britain was the enemy to be counter-attacked and defeated. But if he was to accomplish this it would be necessary to invent a pluri-national system, looking beyond France and encompassing the high seas and the other continents. This reflection forms the core of Barère’s work, \textit{La liberté des mers}, published in 1798, a further sign of the lively debate during the second Directory about the possibility of constructing new geopolitical models and a republican form of governance for Europe.\textsuperscript{34} In the purest tradition of the pre-1789 neutrals, the author advocates creating a right to freedom of trade as a unifying element for Europeans. The right to self-determination became the foundation upon which to invent a European sovereignty as a new political system. The European republic would be founded first of all on a trade freed from the English thalassocracy. In the true style of Enlightenment utopias, but informed by his experience in the Convention, Barère even imagined a tribunal for judging the crimes of the British government:

Could it not one day be subjected to decrees prepared in a great European assembly, meeting in the centre to which each people, state, power and government would send deputies? Why should we not see an assembly of Europe’s representatives, in the same way that we see the assembly of
deputies for the German Empire or the assembly of representatives of France? It is there that all the continental governments and peoples would solemnly pledge their hatred of the maritime tyranny and loyalty to freedom of trade and the seas.\footnote{35}

Later, temporarily setting aside his anti-British fury, Barère reflected upon the more constructive possibility of extending constitutional government to the entire continent:

A problem to solve in Europe once the maritime despotism of the English is ended will be to find a form of general association that defends and ensures for each nation, through the strength of the individual maritime laws, a strict observance of the law of nations and a strict application of treaties... Lack- ing is a general navigation act based on natural law, on the law of nations, and on public law in Europe... In it would be inscribed the freedom of the seas, the emancipation of commerce and industry, the universal abolition of the trade in and holding of human slaves, the outlawing of privateering, repression of piracy, and public maritime law would finally be written and uniform and accepted by the nations together. This declaration of the law of nations would need to be based on a European pact, which would organize the defence and maintenance of these rights by military means on land and on sea, for defending and upholding these rights.\footnote{36}

Here in outline is a European federation of natural laws translated into positive laws, by the drawing up of consensual constitutions, asserting the principles of social justice at state level, conceived as the fair division of trade associated with the abolition of slavery, and as part of a system of self-defence whose strength lay in the fact that it was freely accepted and shared by all parties to a pact for mutual protection. In fact, more than an outline, this is the blueprint for an entity resembling the genesis of the United States of Europe as imagined by Barlow a few months later.\footnote{37} A plan for the common freedom of trade leads to an evocation of common defence, and then logically to the possibility of a federation that would bind together all the French republican entities on an equal footing, an option the leaders of the Directory never really accepted but that the democratic republicans of Years VI and VII defended as offering a lifeline to the republic in France whose fate was necessarily bound up with that of the sister republics. It is with this in mind that we should read the intelligent speech by the deputy Briot to the Assembly of the Five-Hundred on 12 Fructidor Year VII:

Fellow citizens, the first and most important measure to adopt is a manifesto to the European powers, in which the French government spells out its thinking and presents the conditions for peace by showing the aim and length of the war and the bases of its negotiations... Italy can no longer be organized as it was before the war. You founded republics there and you made alliances with them, and your solemn vows will not have been made in vain. The blood spilt in Naples cries out for vengeance, and from high on the antique capitol, the shadow of Brutus summons our cohorts. Italy should not belong to Austria, but in addition she should be free and republican. Let
us guarantee Italians their freedom and independence; then they will forget their unhappiness and come over to your side.\(^{38}\)

A few weeks later, on 14 October, Antonelle, editor-in-chief of the *Journal des Hommes Libres* that had since 1795 taken up the defence of all European democrats, wrote the following lucid commentary that reversed the hitherto accepted priorities:

> Not only is Italy, by its geographical position, the most important and most necessary country for us to see constituted as a republic, it is also currently the easiest to republicanize, due to the similarity in customs and character, the familiarity with our principles and our laws, and also the Austro-Russian vexations that have erased from memory those committed by a few unworthy Frenchmen . . . We believe that in the eyes of those who judge the question based on principles and circumstances, it is in our interest and also our duty to republicanize Italy, and that without an Italian republic there will be no French republic.\(^{39}\)

In these conditions the European patriots, despite support from many Frenchmen aware of the Directory’s policy of pillage, were under assault on two fronts – from the avidity of France’s official representatives and from the British-led coalition against the republican bloc. Indeed, it was surely for this reason, too, that the new republics gave themselves names from pre-Roman antiquity, a period when the populations were fighting against the expansion of Roman imperialism. By calling themselves Batavians, Helvetians, Ligurians, Cisalpines and Parthenopeans, the republican patriots were signalling their will to resist both the political imperialism of France and the commercial imperialism of England, through a reaffirmation of the principle of reconstructing the freedom of peoples.\(^{40}\)

And yet, by an ambiguity specific to periods as historically rich as the late-eighteenth-century revolutions, Paris remained the beacon of a nascent republican civilization. Upon it converged, at times with irritation, at times with calculated self-interest, but always in secret hope, a will to found a new order based on a federation of republics of which Paris could claim to be the capital, since it was Paris that had saved ‘all of Europe from the hateful system of oppression and slavery conceived by kings against peoples. They are honoured as much by their republican concord as by their victories.’\(^{41}\) Paris had become the beacon of a republican civilization and was accepted as such, claimed and construed as a centre upon which Europe’s men of learning, savants and scientists would converge, making the city a European capital of enlightenment with its art museum, natural history museum, zoo, lycées and institute.\(^{42}\) Once again, however, what pervaded the following two hundred years was the sense of the ultimate failure of the republican experiment and all it had created.

Our final research hypothesis on the legacy of the Revolution to the idea of sister republics concerns the pertinence of limiting this political configuration to the countries that participated in the experiment alongside France during the Directory. A history in global context demands a different perspective on the embryonic geopolitical system created by the Directory in emergency conditions and with no long-term future. It is no coincidence that, concurrent with the republican assimilation attempted in the French West Indies by the law of 1 January 1798, the expedition to Egypt in
the spring of the same year sought not to subjugate but to regenerate the country, by initiating reforms based on republican principles that would lift the country from its lethargy. The career of General Menou, who was reborn as Abdallah Jacques Menou, illustrates the reciprocity that could accompany integration, by his conversion to Islam, his commitment to modernizing Egypt and promoting a sense of Egyptian nationalism, and the introduction of fiscal and legal reform based on a republican ethic. On 18 Fructidor Year VIII (5 September 1800), the divan, the Egyptian council that worked with the French military authorities, wrote praising ‘the trust and unity between the two peoples’: ‘The French and the Egyptians now form a single people united by a close and sincere friendship. This union has grown stronger each day, under the careful guidance of our friend, illustrious Abdallah Menou.’ In their different but complementary ways, these three experiments – accession of the colonies to department status, formation of the sister republics and administration of postinvasion Egypt – are confirmation of the early initiatives towards a sort of republican empire that could be glimpsed in the idea of the fusion of peoples. So it was that Mercier, an expert on neologisms, could write on 12 October 1798 of France being supported by ‘its sister-republics’, proof that the expression was in use at the time and had a basis in reality for contemporaries.

In these conditions, it is impossible not to see post-1798 Saint-Domingue as a sort of sister republic. Toussaint Louverture sought and accepted exactly this status, to the point where he proclaimed a quasi-federation of the two republics in the Constitution of 1801, presenting France with a fait accompli, while not rejecting – indeed, on the contrary asserting – the existence of an unbreakable bond between the two republics. But this possibility was brutally shattered, by the ending of general liberty voted in February 1794, by the law of 30 Floréal Year X, and finally by the sending of a military expedition whose murderous violence altered the course of the history of the French West Indies. Thus Bonaparte, after dispensing military discipline to Italy and Switzerland, signalled the end of the sister republic experiment. A republican empire that was authoritarian, antidemocratic and racialist replaced the confused attempt to create a confederation of allied republics, the prehistory of a United States of Europe that two hundred years later is still in limbo.

Epilogue

Yet the idea lived on. In 1810, when the Spanish colonies of Grenada, Colombia and Venezuela obtained their independence and founded republics, the earlier experiment was remembered and the example cited of ‘the history of the revolution in North America, in France, in Holland, and the recent republics of Italy, in order to establish a number of republics in the two Americas.’ And so the failure of the sister republics became a source of hope for the republics of the New World.

Notes

1 For the history of the sister republics presented as the destabilizing of Europe see A. Sorel, L’Europe et la Révolution française, Paris: Plon, 1903, pt. 5, ‘Bonaparte et le Directoire, 1795–1799’.
11 Turgot, Mémoire sur la manière dont la France et l’Espagne doivent envisager les suites de la querelle entre la Grande Bretagne et ses colonies, n.p., [1791]. This report, commissioned by the king, circulated at Versailles and was published in 1791.
13 BNF Arsenal 8 h 14342, ‘Requête présentée aux États généraux du royaume, le 8 juin 1789 par les députés de la colonie de Saint Domingue’.
15 C. Desmoulins, Journal des Révolutions de France et du Brabant, 1 November 1789, p. 11.
16 AP (Archives Parlementaires),tome 15, séance du 21 avril au 30 mai 1790, 22 mai 1790, pp. 651–60.
19 Ibid.
20 Virginie Martin has strongly qualified the practical value of this decree for diplomats who distanced themselves from it, but its political effect on the foreign courts and on public opinion remained important. V. Martin, ‘La diplomatie en Révolution: Structures, agents, pratiques et renseignements diplomatiques: l’exemple des diplomates français en Italie (1789–1796)’, thèse de doctorat, 3 vols, Université Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne, 2011.
23 ‘It is to me a new thing under the sun to see a people anxious to be conquered, and praying for the success of their enemies’ (vol. 1, p. 226), and ‘the arrival of the French is expected much more ardently and more devoutly wished than the Messiah by the children of Abraham’ (vol. 1, pp. 241–42), quoted by A. Jourdan, La révolution batave: entre la France et l’Amérique (1795–1806), Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2008.

25 The Bolognese Constitution in December 1796, the Cisapadane Constitution in March 1797, the Ligurian Constitution of December 1797, the Cisalpine Constitution of Autumn 1798, revised in spring 1798, the Roman Constitution of 1798, and the Neapolitan Constitution of January 1799.


33 V. Cuoco, Saggio Storico sulla Rivoluzione Napoletana del 1799, Milan, 1801.

34 B. Barère, La liberté des mers ou le gouvernement anglais dévoilé, Paris, Ventôse Year VI of the Republic (1798).


37 J. Barlow, Two Letters to the Citizens of the United States, and One to General Washington, Written from Paris in the Year 1799, on Our Political and Commercial Relations, New Haven, CT: 1806.


39 Journal des Hommes Libres, article signed ‘Bonnefoi’ (pseudonym of Antonelle) and written on 22 Vendémiaire Year VIII (14 October 1799).


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45 *Le bien informé*, 390, 21 Vendémiaire Year VII (12 October 1798), p. 3. ‘A letter from Lucien Bonaparte about the latest Cisalpine revolution caused a stir in Paris today; the enemies of the fatherland saw it as the seed of new internal divisions. No, traitors, no! Now hear already the answer from all the sister republics, and from Lucien himself, and from all the friends of liberty:

> “When summoned to combat for the common cause
> Rome extinguishes all quarrels among its sons;
> Their differences overcome, they march united,
> Kings, we recognize only you as enemies.”’

This passage was discovered by Enzo Bossetti in the course of his research for Mercier, *Journaliste*, master thesis, University of Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne, 2014, directed by Pierre Serna.

46 The Constitution of 1801, drawn up by Toussaint Louverture and his confidants, asserts, in the chapter ‘Du Territoire’, art. 1, ‘Saint-Domingue, in its full extent, and Samana la Tortue, la Gonâve, les Cayemites, l’île-à-Vache, la Saône, and other adjacent islands, form the territory of a single colony, which is part of the French empire but is subject to specific laws [my italics].’
