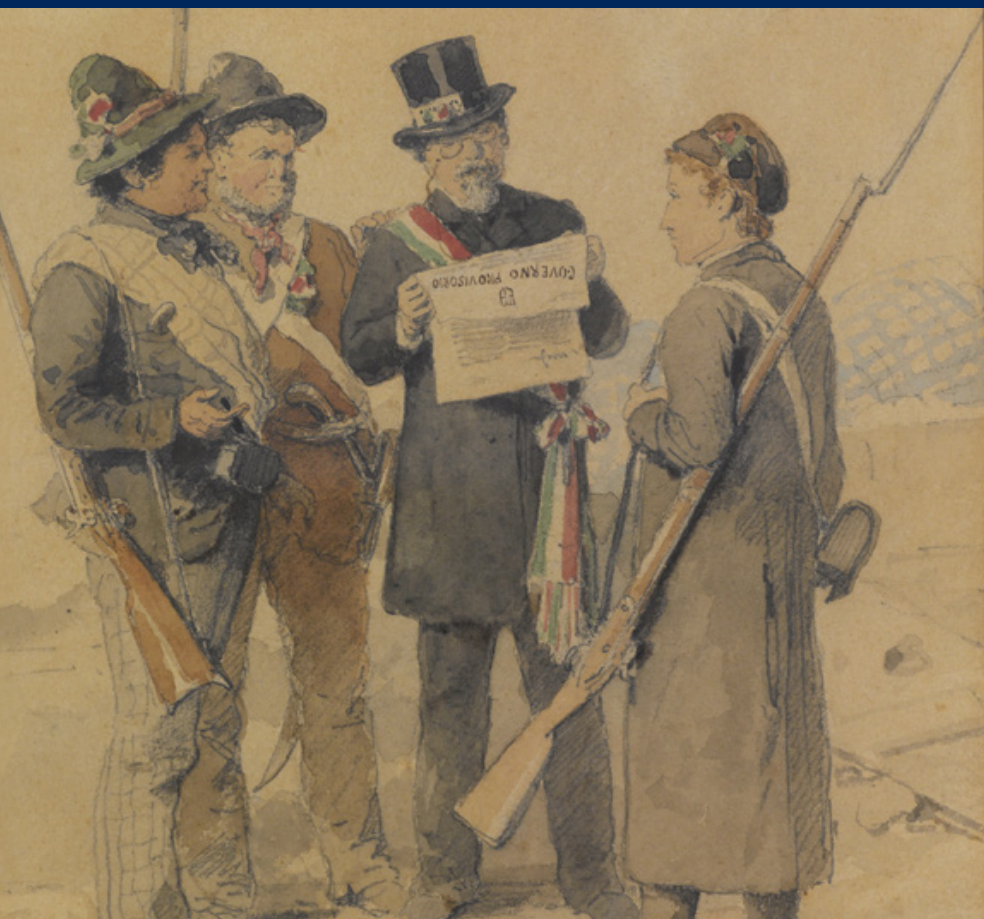


Giulia Delogu, Alessandro Bonvini,
Cecilia Carnino, Daniele Di Bartolomeo (eds.)

Governing Consensus

The Political Use of Knowledge in Italy



VIELLA

Governing Consensus

The Political Use of Knowledge in Italy

edited by

*Giulia Delogu, Alessandro Bonvini,
Cecilia Carnino and Daniele Di Bartolomeo*

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PAOLO CONTE

Knowledge Beyond Borders: The Case of Italian Doctors in Napoleonic France*

1. *Introduction*

In March 1816, the Minister of the Interior, Vincent-Marie de Vaublanc, wrote to his colleague in the Office of Foreign Affairs, Armand-Emmanuel de Richelieu, urging him to approach the government in Rome to request payment for expenses incurred by the veterinary school in Lyon for two citizens of the Papal States, Carocci and Menicucci. Exactly five years earlier, these two individuals had attended lectures at the French school, received their degrees and returned home. Their stay in Lyon was part of a scientific exchange program promoted by the previous imperial government to foster the dissemination of new medical skills throughout the départements of the peninsula. Their studies had been made possible through the financial support of the prefectures of their home regions: “one was funded by the former département of Rome and the other by the former département of Trasimène”.¹ However, at the time, particularly for areas as geographically distant as the southern départements of the peninsula, the payment process was prone to delays. As a result, it was only in January 1814 that the prefects of Rome, Camille de Tournon, and Trasimène, Antoine Roederer, were instructed “to transfer these funds to the school’s account”. Nevertheless, shortly afterward, “unfolding events” (that is, the collapse of the Empire and the subsequent dismantling of the prefectures throughout the peninsula, which ceased to be French départements) prevented the payment from being made. As a result, the veterinary school’s accountant never received the money owed, neither that spring nor at any later time.

For this very reason, the newly restored Bourbon government in France asked the reinstated papal government in Rome to take responsibility for the outstanding debt - especially considering that the two students had since returned home, allowing those territories to benefit from the medical expertise they had acquired abroad. However, Rome’s reaction was far from positive. Just a few weeks later, the French chargé d’affaires, Pierre Blacas, relayed the reply he had

* We wish to recognise Manuel Romero for his translation of this essay.

1. Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères (henceforth AMAE), Affaires diverses politiques, Rome, cart. 1, Letter from Minister Viénot de Vaublanc to Minister Richelieu (Paris, 18 March 1816).

received from Cardinal Ercole Consalvi, emphasising that it was so “terse and unhelpful” that there was little hope of resolving the issue favourably:²

The undersigned, having presented Your Excellency’s note to His Holiness, has been instructed to respond that the Papal Government has no obligation to pay such a debt. It has not succeeded the former French government, which occupied Rome, but has instead regained possession of its territories, which had been taken from it. Consequently, it does not assume any financial obligations incurred by the government that had invaded it. If Carocci and Menicucci received an education, that is a personal benefit to them, but this does not impose any duty on the Papal Government to cover the costs of their training, especially since it was not the one that sent them to Lyon in the first place.³

Although a relatively minor incident in and of itself, it reveals the profound impact that the institutional changes brought about by the fall of the Empire had on scientific exchanges between France and the various states of the “Italian sphere”. By 1816, the governments of the Restoration were no longer interested in sponsoring periods of study abroad that had been designed to train scientific personnel for work back home, nor were they willing to seek mediated solutions to address issues they had inherited from the previous administration. Earlier, Napoleonic policy exhibited altogether different aims. In fact, for the first fifteen years of the century, the French administrative and military presence on the peninsula had fostered a spirit of exchange on both sides of the Alps – a trend that was evident not only in the political and commercial sphere but also in the realm of scientific knowledge.

In this regard, medicine, in particular, was one of the most affected disciplines. On one hand – as illustrated by the example already mentioned – the French authorities actively welcomed young Italian students to France, aiming to enhance their training at the country’s top local schools and, in turn, to spread the modern techniques they had acquired during their studies abroad. On the other hand – and this is the case that we will mainly focus on in this essay – France had, from the very start of the century, become home to men who were forced into exile for political reasons but who soon proved invaluable to their new communities thanks to their scientific expertise. Although this expertise sometimes sparked conflict and feelings of jealousy, it eventually played a crucial role in helping these exiles integrate into their new country.⁴ In fact, since the Consular Period, several exiled physicians in southeastern French cities had managed to win the support of the local population, even laying the groundwork for an important national law in 1803 that reorganised the practice of medicine by making use of foreign professionals. Meanwhile, in Paris, the younger exiles continued their education by attending lectures at the most prestigious medical schools of the time, while the more experienced physicians advanced their careers by introducing innovative

2. AMAE, Affaires diverses politiques, Rome, cart. 1, Letter from Ambassador Blacas to Minister Richelieu (Rome, 2 May 1816).

3. AMAE, Affaires diverses politiques, Rome, cart. 1, Letter from Cardinal Consalvi to Ambassador Blacas (Rome, 27 April 1816).

4. For information about political exile during that period, see Anna Maria Rao, *Esuli. L'emigrazione politica italiana in Francia (1792-1802)*, Naples, Guida, 1992.

healthcare techniques. As Fabio D'Angelo has noted, political exile thus came to be seen “not only as a time of hardship and separation from one's homeland, but also as an opportunity for education and professional growth”.⁵

By analysing documents related to Italian doctors kept in the F/8 (*Police sanitaire*) collection at the Archives Nationales de France, this study delves into the nature and impact of a cross-Alpine exchange of knowledge that was driven by political factors. These factors were not only imposed “from above”, that is, through the cultural strategies elaborated during the Napoleonic period, but they were also generated “from below” through the forced exile of individuals following their participation in the revolutionary events of the Three-Year Republican Period (1796-1799). Therefore, this research seeks to explore how, first under the Consulate and later during the Empire, this circulation of knowledge reshaped the concept of the “Italian sphere”, which especially during the years of its contact with Napoleonic France, took on characteristics and boundaries that were markedly different – and much broader – than those rigidly defined by national borders.⁶ In short, this relocation allowed many men from the peninsula to showcase their medical expertise in a new national context, and the subsequent scientific exchanges ultimately influenced the spread of knowledge on both sides of the Alps.

2. *Exiles in Bourg-en-Bresse at the dawn of the century*

As is well known, beginning in the spring of 1800 many of the Italian refugees who had fled to France following the collapse of the “Sister Republics” the previous year were directed to Bourg-en-Bresse, where a recruitment centre was established for the Italian Legion, a unit meant to support renewed military operations on the southern front.⁷ Less widely known, however, is that even after France's victorious return to the Italian peninsula, confirmed following the battle of Marengo on 14 June, several of these men prolonged their stay in the département of Ain. Many were doctors who had originally travelled to Bourg-en-Bresse with the intention of joining the Italian Legion as medical inspectors. However, when their qualifications were not recognised within the corps, they chose to stay in France rather than cross the Alps as ordinary soldiers. This group was largely composed of southerners, many of whom had studied medicine in Naples in the early 1790s. There, they attended the lectures of Domenico Cirillo, a prominent figure who inspired the

5. Fabio D'Angelo, *Dal Regno di Napoli alla Francia. Viaggi ed esilio tra Sette e Ottocento*, Naples, Libreria Dante & Descartes, 2018, pp. 32-33.

6. On the regulation of science in Napoleonic Italy (particularly in the Kingdom of Italy), cf. *Istituzioni e cultura in età napoleonica*, ed. by Elena Brambilla, Carlo Capra and Aurora Scotti, Milan, FrancoAngeli, 2008, pp. 253-340.

7. Katia Visconti, “A Patriotic School: The Recruitment of the Italian Legion in France, 1799-1800”, in *Republics at War, 1776-1840: Revolutions, Conflicts and Geopolitics in Europe and in the Atlantic World*, ed. by Pierre Serna, Antonino De Francesco and Judith Miller, New York, Palgrave, 2013, pp. 149-164.

kingdom's youngest generation of scholars to engage in politics – before he was sent to the gallows by the Bourbons for his role in the Republic of 1799.⁸ These medical professionals soon found economic independence in southeastern France, allowing them to forgo governmental assistance and evade consular orders instructing them to leave. While they faced considerable hostility from French doctors, who immediately saw them as unwelcome competitors, local residents took a far more favourable view, pleased to have access to medical professionals who were proving their worth in the community.

Thus, even the local prefect could not deny that the accusations levelled against these Italian doctors were not backed up by evidence and were driven, for the most part, by the jealousy of the local doctors. On the one hand, he acknowledged that “the health officers of the city of Bourg are strongly advocating for the removal of these doctors, whom they accuse of ignorance and quackery”. On the other, he also noted that “a great number of patients treated by these foreign doctors praise their skills and are demanding that they be allowed to remain in France”. In his view, between the two opposing accounts, the only reasonable choice was to accept the latter, which he believed carried “greater weight in the scales of justice than the claims of the health officers, whose protest, it is fair to suspect, was driven by jealousy and professional rivalry”.⁹

These cases are incredibly important because they demonstrate how, thanks to the scientific expertise they had acquired years earlier at home, those who emigrated to France for political reasons were not only frequently invited to stay by the local population but were also a valuable asset to their host country – far, in fact, from being merely a source of disorder, as some claimed.

A similar situation also unfolded in the neighbouring département of Mont-Blanc, where the Neapolitan Matteo Vasta had settled with his compatriot Agostino Pecchia – like him, a republican exile, but a professor of mathematics by profession. The two had taken refuge in the small town of La Chambre in the spring of 1800 after health issues prevented them from reaching Bourg-en-Bresse to enlist in the Italian Legion. In the summer of 1801, when the subprefecture of the département was tasked with evaluating their conduct in response to their request for residency, officials gathered the necessary information and could only speak highly of them, recognising the positive contributions they had made to the area. Vasta, in particular, received glowing praise. Authorities reported that “his extensive knowledge in the field of medicine has made him widely sought

8. On the presence of Neapolitan doctors in France during the first two decades of the century, see Fabio D'Angelo, “Les hommes de science napolitains en exil en France, des passeurs scientifiques et politiques (1799-1820)”, *Revue d'histoire du XIX^e siècle*, 53 (2016), pp. 39-57; Fabio D'Angelo, “Ingegneri napoletani a Parigi”, in *La circolazione dei saperi scientifici tra Napoli e l'Europa nel XVIII secolo*, ed. by Roberto Mazzola, Naples, Diogene, 2013, pp. 57-77. On Cirillo's role in Naples during the revolutionary years, cf. Roberto Zaugg, Andrea Graf, “Guerres napoléoniennes, savoirs médicaux, anthropologie raciale. Le médecin militaire Antonio Savaresi entre Égypte, Caraïbes et Italie”, *Histoire, médecine et santé*, 10 (2016), pp. 17-43.

9. Archives Nationales de France (henceforth ANF), F/7, cart. 7809, dr. 5, Report from the Prefect of Ain to Minister Fouché (Bourg-en-Bresse, n.d.).

after, and not a day goes by without humanity benefiting from the care he so generously provides". They further noted that "even the most serious illnesses yield to his treatments, and both the poor and the wealthy benefit from his aid". Thus, his activities in the region were considered not only formally permissible, given that the order to leave, which he evaded, had not been issued on the basis of his political views (in fact, they were described as being fully "in favour of the government"), but also practically essential. Removing him would deprive the local community of the medical expertise and care that only a professional of his calibre could provide. So, the author of the report did not hide his hope of "keeping in the *arrondissement* a man who has become indispensable due to his knowledge," emphasising that "the continuation of his stay in this region [...] is being urgently requested by all the inhabitants of his canton".¹⁰

Among the physicians working in the *département* of Ain was the Apulian Francesco Pavoni. Born in Noci in 1770, he earned his medical degree from the University of Naples, where he practised medicine throughout the latter half of the 1790s, including during the republican period of 1799. According to one of his later accounts, during those turbulent months, he provided "the services that humanity compelled him to give to the French sick or wounded".¹¹ It was precisely his medical work during this violent republican period that forced him to flee to France when the Bourbon monarchy was restored in Naples. Once in France, he was sent to Dijon upon the formation of the Italian Legion. However, his prolonged stay across the Alps was far from profitless, as he managed to earn widespread recognition in civilian life and achieve a degree of financial stability. For this reason, with a sense of satisfaction, he applied for residency, emphasising that he had long since "settled in Bourg, where his work and challenging surgeries had earned him the trust [of the community] and secured his livelihood without becoming a burden on the government".¹²

Thus, despite some initial difficulties and a hostile reception from local doctors, Pavoni's experience working in France was far from unpleasant. On the contrary, it immediately offered him a promising new future. Especially for someone like him – coming from the Kingdom of Naples, where Bourbon repression in the early years of the century made returning home impossible – living in a country that provided political and economic stability naturally led him to consider making his stay permanent. In fact, by 1801, he had already taken the civic oath before the Municipality of Bourg-en-Bresse, formally declaring his intention to "acquire the status of a French citizen". The following year, he finally attained the long-awaited reunion with his family, successfully bringing his wife and children to France – loved ones he had been forced to leave behind in Naples during his hurried escape in the summer of 1799. Then, in 1803, he formally petitioned the consular government to recognise the degree he had earned in Italy so he could continue practising

10. ANF, F/7, cart. 7809, dr. 5, Letter from the Secretary of the Prefecture to the Prefect of Mont-Blanc (Chambéry, 7 Thermidor, Year IX: 26 August 1801).

11. ANF, F/8, cart. 162, dr. Pavoni.

12. ANF, F/7, cart. 7809, dr. 5, Letter from Pavoni to Minister Fouché (Bourg-en-Bresse, n.d.).

medicine, given that a new law passed that March required him to “be affiliated with one of the three existing medical schools in order to hold the title of doctor, as the one he obtained from the University of Naples was not valid in France”.¹³

At this point, it behooves us to examine this law more closely, as it had a significant impact on the fates of those who, like Pavoni and others, were relying entirely on their scientific expertise to turn what had begun as exile into a stable and fulfilling professional career.

3. *The law of 1803 and its impact on Italian healthcare professionals*

On 19 Ventôse, Year XI (10 March 1803), at the initiative of the First Consul, Paris officially approved the *Loi relative à l'exercice de la médecine*, a law aimed at regulating the practice of medicine in France. To this end, the law also addressed the more specific issue of foreign healthcare professionals – men who had indeed proven themselves to be useful and qualified in those early years of the century but who had obtained their credentials abroad. This fact alone would lead to heated disputes with local doctors. The law stipulated that, starting in September of that year, “no one may enter the profession of physician, surgeon or health officer without undergoing an examination and being formally admitted as prescribed by this law”. At the same time, Article 4 allowed the government, after due evaluation of credentials submitted by petitioners, “to grant a foreign-trained physician or surgeon who graduated from a foreign university the right to practice medicine or surgery within the Republic”.¹⁴

As part of Napoleon’s broader policy to establish a more structured regulation of the medical profession, a decision was made – in consideration of both the growing number of foreign practitioners and the skills they had demonstrated – to allow foreign doctors to enter the French healthcare system. This was to be done by granting government institutions the authority to recognise medical qualifications obtained abroad.¹⁵ This approach offered a dual advantage: it maintained state control over who could enter the profession while also preventing potential conflicts with local practitioners, whose objections would be rendered meaningless in the face of official authorisation. Napoleon’s administration aimed to make the presence of foreign doctors beneficial, both by acknowledging their expertise and by ensuring oversight of their qualifications and professional conduct in France. More broadly, this reflected Napoleon’s ongoing policy of welcoming skilled and potentially valuable foreign professionals, but always on the condition that their residency in France was tied to their work.¹⁶

13. ANF, F/8, cart. 162, dr. Pavoni.

14. *Bulletin des Lois*, n. 156, “Loi relative à l’exercice de la médecine”, 19 Ventôse, Year XI (10 March 1803).

15. For the medium- to long-term consequences of that law in France, see Jacques Léonard, *Les médecins de l'Ouest au XIX^e siècle*, Paris, Champion, 1978.

16. Pierre Moulinier, *Les étudiants étrangers à Paris au XIX^e siècle. Migrations et formation des élites*, Rennes, Pur, 2012.

In practice, this regulation allowed Italian physicians to establish their careers in France. At this point, those who did not wish to take the necessary medical exams at French universities in order to practice in their new country of residence had to secure prior government authorisation. This authorisation certified the validity and equivalency of their foreign medical degree, enabling them to continue practising medicine. As a result, particularly in the final months of the Consulate, the Ministry of the Interior was inundated with requests for the recognition of foreign degrees – which at this point had become indispensable for practising medicine in France.

It should be noted that while medical qualifications and university credentials were certainly the primary concern in these applications, one's recent political history could also work to an applicant's advantage. For instance, in February 1804 the Neapolitan Pasquale Fasini successfully had his degree from the Naples School of Medicine recognised in Strasbourg, partly due to the fact that he had "taken refuge in France after the Revolution of 1799". In the summer of the following year – when the Empire had already been declared – the Piedmontese Gioacchino Selicorni sought exemption from the required exams, deliberately mentioning that "as a surgeon, since the first arrival of the French in Piedmont, I have treated and cared for a great number of soldiers of all ranks who fell ill while travelling, particularly during the time of the Battle of Marengo".¹⁷ A similar case was that of the Calabrian Giovanni Bianchi: originally from Catanzaro but a graduate of the Salerno School of Medicine, he applied for the authorisation to practice medicine from the city of Tours, arguing that he had "particular rights to this privilege due to his extensive knowledge and experience in the field of medicine, [...] which he had successfully applied in the service of the French armies in Italy".¹⁸

Another Calabrian doctor who had studied in Salerno before arriving in France as part of the 1799 wave of exiles was Antonio Pitaro. After initially staying in Marseille and Lyon, he eventually settled in Paris. Though it took a few more years, in October 1808 he was granted the right to "practice medicine within the territory of the French Empire" by a decree issued by Napoleon from Erfurt, where he was then meeting with Tsar Alexander I of Russia. In this case, several factors played a key role in securing the decision: Pitaro's publication on galvanism, which had been printed in Paris three years earlier,¹⁹ his numerous affiliations with French scientific societies²⁰ and, perhaps most importantly, his connections within political and military circles. It was no coincidence that the application of Antonio Pitaro, a member of the Masonic lodge *Les élèves de*

17. ANF, F/8, cart. 155, dr. Pascal Fasini; cart. 165, dr. Joachim Selicorni.

18. ANF, F/8, cart. 150, dr. Bianchi.

19. Antonio Pitaro, *Parallèle physico-chimique entre le calorique, la lumière, l'électricité, le magnétisme, le galvanisme animal et le galvanisme métallique, ou Introduction à la théorie galvanique*, Paris, Giguet-Michaud, 1805.

20. According to the title page of his work, Pitaro was a "Member of the [following] Societies: Galvanique, Recherches physiques, Médicale d'Emulation, Médecine pratique, the Société Impériale d'Agriculture de la Seine, and other learned societies".

Minerve since 1803,²¹ was backed by influential figures in French public life, such as General André Masséna and Senator Louis Rigal, who both took a keen interest in his professional future and spoke highly of him.²²

In short, the political activities that years ago had forced these men into exile in France were still, in many ways, seen as credentials in their favour. Of course, by the early years of the new century, these past activities needed to be accompanied – if not outright replaced – first and foremost by official documentation proving their scientific qualifications, as well as by evidence of their integration into local society, demonstrating their acceptance of the new Napoleonic order. Nevertheless, the fact is that for both the individual refugees who had successfully established medical careers in France and the local institutions eager to benefit from the skilled professionals in their midst, this past political militancy was hardly seen as an obstacle to their medical practice. If anything, it remained a valuable asset.

Beyond the civilian sphere, Italian doctors also had a strong presence in the military. Apart from serving in various campaigns across Europe, they were primarily stationed in frontier regions and coastal cities where military headquarters and field hospitals were gradually established. In fact, a career as a military doctor offered several advantages. On one hand, it allowed them to work within French institutions, effectively resolving any salary-related issues from the outset. On the other, it provided an opportunity to serve in the army, not as ordinary soldiers, but in positions of greater responsibility – roles that, among other things, allowed them to put their years of study and hands-on experience to meaningful use.

This was the case for the Piedmontese pharmacist Domenico Pittarelli and the surgeon Giuseppe Salvaggio from the Kingdom of Italy. Pittarelli, with the support of his compatriot in Paris Roata – who, in 1809, wrote to the Minister of War, Henri-Jacques Clarke, recommending him as “infinitely more useful to the Army as a pharmacist than as a mere soldier” – successfully leveraged his credentials and was assigned to the hospital in La Rochelle, where three years later he applied for and obtained “the position of apothecaire in a military hospital of the Empire”.²³ Salvaggio, stationed in Châlons-sur-Marne, was granted the right to practice surgery in July 1813, thanks largely to his military background. In his application, he highlighted that “during the Spanish Revolution, he served that power as a senior surgeon”.²⁴

In short, the 1803 law – designed to reform the practice of medicine without precluding the contributions of foreign professionals already working in France – further solidified the presence of Italian doctors in the country. This was especially true for those who had also demonstrated political alignment with France.

21. D'Angelo, *Dal Regno di Napoli alla Francia*, p. 147.

22. ANF, F/8, cart. 162, dr. Pitaro.

23. Archives du Ministère de la Guerre, Shat, 3/YG, dr. 27476.

24. ANF, F/8, cart. 165, dr. Joseph Salvaggio.

4. *From training in Paris to the proposal of new medical techniques*

While Italian doctors in France were primarily active in the provincial areas of the country, Paris nevertheless played a central role in this context. Indeed, at the time, the city had become the undisputed epicentre of continental Europe – not only politically, but also culturally and scientifically.²⁵ In the early years of the century, many Italian refugees who had initially settled in southeastern cities like Marseille, Grenoble and Chambéry eventually gravitated toward the capital. During the Napoleonic era, Paris continued to attract a steady influx of Italians eager to take advantage of the city's professional opportunities and vibrant scientific scene.

Thus, the most prestigious institutions in Paris served a dual purpose. On one hand, they were known as places where one could advance one's medical education by learning the most cutting-edge techniques of the time. On the other, they provided a stage where emigrants could showcase the expertise they had acquired in their home countries. For instance, as early as the spring of 1800, the Piedmontese exile Michele Buniva became fully integrated into French society in Paris after first establishing himself in the country's border areas. After being "hired by the Lycée de Grenoble" and later recognised as a member of Lyon's "Sociétés Savantes", he secured a teaching position at the prestigious veterinary school of Maison d'Alfort, where he was granted "permission to teach courses".²⁶ At another renowned scientific institution, the Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle, the Apulian scholar Matteo Tondi secured a position as an assistant naturalist. This role, which he later carried out working alongside some of the era's most prominent mineralogists, such as Déodat de Dolomieu and René Just Haüy, would allow him to legally remain in Paris.²⁷ A similar path was taken by the Neapolitan Nicola Basti, one of the republican exiles of 1799. Quick to take advantage of his stay in Paris, he pursued scientific endeavours, attending lectures at the institute for deaf-mutes led by Abbé Cucurron Sicard. There, he applied and was granted admission "with the hope of spreading this method in Italy, where it is still largely unknown".²⁸

At the same time, building on the positive contributions of exiles who had arrived at the turn of the century, a less politically-driven wave of emigration was also taking shape in Paris. In the years that followed, individuals crossed the Alps with the specific goal of refining their skills. For instance, Ignazio Cristini from Cuneo, after earning his license to practice surgery at the University of Turin, decided to move to the French capital, where he "resumed his surgical studies". Over the next two years he attended "all the courses offered by the medical school,

25. Philip Mansel, *Paris, capitale de l'Europe, 1814-1852*, Paris, Perrin, 2013; Bruno Belhoste, *Paris savant: parcours et rencontres au temps des Lumières*, Paris, Armand Colin, 2011; Antoine Lilti, *Le Monde des salons. Sociabilité et mondanité à Paris au XVIII siècle*, Paris, Fayard, 2005.

26. ANF, F/7, cart. 10843/D, dr. Michel Buniva.

27. ANF, F/7, cart. 3327, dr. Tondy.

28. ANF, F/7, cart. 10843/A, dr. Nicolas Basti.

as well as several private lessons, including those taught by citizens Boyer and Tillage, professors at the same institution, along with courses on childbirth, women's diseases and paediatric illnesses".²⁹ A similar story can be told of Domenico Gagliardi from Naples. Although his family had supported the Republican cause in 1799, he arrived in Paris only in 1804 to "complete his studies".³⁰ Likewise, Gianni Bigeschi from Pistoia was "sent to Paris by his government in the autumn of 1807 to improve his skills in the practices of childbirth".³¹

This case is particularly noteworthy because it illustrates how the institutional changes of that period continued to impact, for better or for worse, the careers of these individuals. Bigeschi had arrived in Paris with a scholarship funded by the Kingdom of Etruria, aimed at enabling younger generations to learn new medical practices. However, in a sudden – and somewhat paradoxical – turn of events, his funding was suspended during his stay in Paris following Tuscany's annexation to the French Empire in the spring of 1808. Despite now technically being a "new French citizen", Bigeschi was forced to relinquish the funds he needed to continue his studies in Paris. Aware of the Empire's interest in promoting the circulation of new scientific knowledge within its peninsular départements, he quickly petitioned the Minister of the Interior, Emmanuel Crétet. Writing in the third person, he urged the reinstatement of his funding so that he could continue his education in what had now, at least formally, become his new homeland.

The former Tuscan government had allocated him 88 francs per month to cover the costs of his stay in France, which was intended to last two years. However, following the political changes in Tuscany, these payments were suspended. In this situation, the petitioner humbly appeals to Your Excellency to issue the necessary orders to resume the payment of the allocated sum, without which he will be forced to abandon his studies – causing his homeland to lose the benefits of expertise in an art that remains largely unknown in Tuscany. He dares to hope all the more that Your Excellency will grant him this favour, given that Tuscany has now come under the fortunate rule of His Majesty the Emperor, whose unwavering commitment is to the advancement of useful sciences and the betterment of humanity.³²

Moreover, in Paris, the youngest doctors who attended courses taught by the era's leading scientists had the opportunity to interact with both senior colleagues – who had arrived in France years before to receive medical training and had since established themselves through their professional expertise – and other emigrants specialising in the sciences who were in the capital only temporarily to protect their professional interests in the Italian départements. Among the latter was the Turinese pharmacist Giambattista Farinassi, who, in the summer of 1810, spent a few weeks at the Parisian home of his compatriot Roata while advocating before the Ministry of the Interior. His petition, submitted on behalf of pharmacists from the Po département who were dissatisfied with the French government's partial

29. ANF, F/8, cart. 151, dr. Ignace Christini.

30. ANF, F/7, cart. 6474, Information about the Neapolitan refugees.

31. ANF, F/8, cart. 150, dr. Jean Bigeschi.

32. ANF, F/8, cart. 150, dr. Jean Bigeschi, Bigeschi's Petition to Minister Crétet (Paris, 14 April 1808).

liberalisation of the means of entry into the profession, formally requested the “reinstatement of the exclusive right to practice pharmacy, limited to a specific number of pharmacists proportional to the population of each city”.³³ Among those who had settled in France more permanently was Antonio Adamucci from Apulia. His training in France had taken place decades earlier, between 1786 and 1792, when he travelled to Paris at the expense of the Neapolitan government “to further advance his studies in medicine and surgery”. After a brief return to his country, he later worked for the Bourbon government in Toulon, where, “having been of service to the French at that time, he did not return to his country and instead committed himself to France”.³⁴ In the 1780s, Giuseppe Nicolò Forlenza from Basilicata also travelled to Paris for educational purposes. He soon specialised in ophthalmology and became one of the most successful Italian doctors in Napoleonic France, where he remained until his death in 1833.³⁵

However, Forlenza struggled to consolidate his position during the consular period, when resistance to his innovative techniques impeded the progress of his career. A clear example of this was the negative evaluation he received in September 1800 from the directors of the *École de Médecine* in Paris, when he submitted a proposal to establish a “facility dedicated exclusively to the treatment of eye diseases”. In his proposal, he requested to be named the facility’s director and argued that such an institution would avoid “the shortcomings of other hospitals where various illnesses are indiscriminately grouped together”. At stake was a new conception of the field of ophthalmology, because while Forlenza advocated for a specialised approach to treatment in this field, the scientists of the *École de Médecine* considered it unnecessary, believing that it would be better to dedicate new medical facilities “to the study of diseases that were less well-known than those affecting the eyes”. In their view, a facility like the one proposed by the Italian physician “would have no real practical value”.³⁶ As a result, the Italian ophthalmologist had no choice but to go out into the communities of northern France to provide care. This, however, provided him with the opportunity not only to test his scientific techniques, but also to offer direct assistance to patients who could not afford medical treatment.

5. In conclusion

The fact that individuals like Forlenza chose to extend their stay in France even during the period of the Restoration highlights the continued presence of a medical community that had long since established itself in the country. This trend, however, is not particularly surprising, as it involved professionals who, thanks to

33. ANF, F/8, cart. 155, dr. Jean Philippe Farinassi.

34. ANF, F/7, cart. 6474, Information about the Neapolitan refugees.

35. ANF, MC/ET/LXII, cart. 902, *Inventaire après décès de Joseph-Nicolas-Léonard-Blaise Forlenze* (12 August 1833).

36. ANF, F/15, cart. 150, Excerpt from the records of the deliberations of the Paris School of Medicine (Paris, 29 Fructidor, Year VIII: 17 September 1800).

their work in their “new” country of residence, had already attained a certain level of professional stability. After 1815, while the end of Napoleon’s rule in Italy did little to boost scientific exchange between France and the various Italian states (as seen in the case of Carocci and Menicucci explored at the beginning of this essay), a significant number of medical practitioners already in France further cemented their presence there, aided by the substantial naturalisation efforts carried out by the Paris government.³⁷

A particularly revealing case is that of the exiled physician Giuseppe Pennesi from Le Marche. After graduating from the University of Rome and aiding the French with the republicanisation of the city in 1798 as a health officer, he worked as a doctor in Nice during the Napoleonic era. In 1815, not only was he granted the right to continue practising medicine – thanks to the 1803 law that allowed the French government to accept foreign medical degrees –, but he also chose to relocate to Marseilles rather than remain in Nice, which had just been restored to the House of Savoy.³⁸ In Marseille, where he had built a “good reputation”, he was officially granted French citizenship in 1817.³⁹

In short, for Pennesi and many other Italian doctors, as well as for France’s new ruling class, previous collaboration with the republican army was something they could finally put behind them. It was now far more important to showcase the scientific and professional expertise they had consistently displayed over the previous fifteen years. In other words, it was much better, for the men who had been working for many years in the territories of the hexagon, to secure their right to continue residing in the land beyond the Alps, and, for the restored institutions of the monarchy navigating a new geopolitical order after the fall of the Empire, to retain these medical professionals who were technically considered “foreign” once again, but who had long proved themselves to be well-integrated and valuable members of society.

37. For further information, see Paolo Conte, *Da esuli a francesi. Gli italiani in Francia durante l'età napoleonica (e oltre)*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2024, pp. 327-363.

38. ANF, F/8, cart. 162, dr. Joseph Pennesi.

39. ANF, BB/11, cart. 128/A, dr. 8663.

VIELLA HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Giulia Delogu, Alessandro Bonvini,
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