



Duchies of Parma, Piacenza and Guastalla

Status: Minor nation.

Description: Small Italian duchy ruled by Napoleon's wife.

Monarch: Her Majesty the Empress Marie Louise (left).

Delegate: Adam Albert, Count von Neipperg (right).

Background

When the allied forces entered Paris in 1814, they negotiated a treaty which was surprisingly lenient on the defeated France, and in particular, its Emperor. Napoleon was allowed to maintain his imperial title, and rule 'in all sovereignty' the Tuscan island of Elba. Napoleon's wife – the Austrian princess Marie-Louise – received a near-identical deal, with the Italian duchies of Parma, Piacenza and Guastalla.

Before the wars, Parma and Piacenza had been ruled by the *House of Bourbon-Parma*, a branch of the same family that ruled Spain and France. French troops invaded in 1796, and made a confusing deal in which they 'compensated' the ducal family by giving them Tuscany. Parma and Piacenza were annexed into France, with Guastalla following suit shortly thereafter¹.

Shortly after Napoleon's defeat, the Austrian government ordered a certain Count Adam Albert von Neipperg to escort Marie-Louise to the French spa town of *Aix-le-Bains*. This trip, originally intended to stop Marie-Louise from linking up with her husband in Elba, had the unintended consequence of causing the two to fall in love. Despite the misgivings of the Austrians and the French, Neipperg became her chamberlain and her representative at the Congress of Vienna.

Objectives

Marie-Louise's goals were to secure her possession of the duchies granted to her by the 1814 Treaty of Fontainebleau, and the succession rights of her 3-year-old son Napoleon Jr.

¹ Napoleon originally gave Guastalla to his sister Pauline, but apparently she didn't like it so she sold it back to Parma after less than 6 months.