

= Dermide Leclerc =

Dermide Louis Napoléon Leclerc (20 April 1798 ? 14 August 1804) was the only child of Pauline Bonaparte (later suo jure Duchess of Guastalla) and her husband , French Army general Charles Leclerc . Through his mother , Dermide was a nephew of the future Emperor Napoleon I.

In 1802 , during the Haitian Revolution , Dermide arrived on the island @-@ colony of Saint @-@ Domingue with his parents , as part of the Saint @-@ Domingue expedition . After his father 's death of yellow fever later during the year , Dermide and Pauline were brought back to France . In 1803 , Pauline remarried , this time to Italian nobleman Camillo Borghese , and she took up residence , along with her husband and son , in Rome . Always a frail child , Dermide died of a fever at the age of six , three months after his uncle became Emperor and two years before his mother 's proclamation as Duchess of Guastalla .

= = Biography = =

= = = Early life = = =

Dermide was born on 20 April 1798 , in Milan , which was then part of the Cisalpine Republic , a puppet state of the First French Republic . He was the first and only child of his parents , Maria Paola di Buonaparte (known as Pauline) and Charles Victoire Emmanuel Leclerc , a general in the French Army . Dermide 's birth was a difficult one , and its effects would be visible in Pauline 's health for many years . He was christened Dermide Louis Napoléon , after a character in the epic Gaelic poems of Ossian , at the request of his uncle , general Napoleon Bonaparte , who greatly admired Ossian 's works .

He was the eldest surviving son born to one of the Bonaparte siblings (Joseph , Napoleon , Lucien , Elisa , Louis , Pauline , Caroline and Jérôme , most of which would later receive ruling positions in their brother 's client states) . Six weeks after his birth , on 29 May 1798 , Dermide was baptised " with imperial ceremony " at a Capuchin church in Milan . Charles Louis Huguot , marquis de Sémonville stood as witness and Napoleon served as godfather . The baptism was welcomed by the Milanese people with gun salutes , ringing of church bells , music and shouting , just as had been done at the births of Austrian archdukes during the Austrian Rule . Following a quarrel with officials of the Cisalpine Republic , Leclerc took his wife and son to Paris , where they established themselves at No. 1 , Rue de la Victoire . Napoleon resided on the same street , albeit at No. 6 . Meanwhile , after a coup d 'état in 1799 , the French Consulate was established and Napoleon installed himself as First Consul .

In 1791 , the Haitian Revolution had begun in Saint @-@ Domingue (present @-@ day Haiti) , which had been a French colony since 1697 . Wanting to restore French authority on the island , Napoleon organised the Saint @-@ Domingue expedition , placing Leclerc in charge and bestowing upon him the title of Governor @-@ General of Saint @-@ Domingue . Consequently , on 14 December 1801 , Leclerc embarked on the flagship L 'Océan at Brest with his wife and son , and sailed for Saint @-@ Domingue , which they eventually reached on 28 January 1802 . While Leclerc quickly left the ship , Pauline and Dermide remained on board . Although Dermide was initially healthy and Leclerc had assured Napoleon that his son had " survived the crossing from France better than anyone " , both mother and son suffered episodes of yellow fever while they were at Le Cap , nonetheless recovering quickly . Dermide was apportioned to a grenadier at Port @-@ au @-@ Prince and spent much of his time playing . On 2 November , Leclerc , who had been ill with yellow fever , died at Tortuga . Preparations for Pauline and Dermide 's departure from Saint @-@ Domingue were completed quickly , and they left the colony aboard the HMS Swiftsure , arriving at Toulon on New Year 's Day 1803 .

= = = Later life = = =

Pauline found a temporary place to live for her and Dermide at her brother Joseph 's hotel in the Rue du Faubourg Saint @-@ Honoré . Eventually , they settled in the Château de Montgobert , her husband 's former estate , which was Dermide 's inheritance from his father . Napoleon did not wish for Pauline to remain without a husband and , as such , Roman nobleman Camillo Borghese , 6th Prince of Sulmona was selected with the help of Pope Pius VII . Thus , on 14 November 1803 , Pauline , Camillo and Dermide set out on a journey towards Rome . Dermide had his own carriage , drawn by six horses , which he shared with his governess , Madame Ducluzel , and with his mother 's lectrice (reader) , Jenny Saint @-@ Maur . In one of the cities through which they passed , a gendarme asked the family who they were , upon which Dermide replied , " Messieurs , it is the son of General Leclerc traveling with his suite . " Saint @-@ Maur swiftly corrected him , albeit " admiring his spirit " . The family took up residence at the Palazzo Borghese in Rome .

Pauline , being " family minded " , welcomed her brother Lucien , who had been living in exile at the Villa Rufinella in Frascati , during his visits in Rome and valued his children , Charlotte (b . 1795) , Christine (b . 1798) and Charles Lucien (b . 1803) , as Dermide 's playmates . Dermide captivated Lucien and his wife , Alexandrine de Bleschamp , and the couple observed that Borghese was not very affectionate towards Pauline 's son . Lucien even considered Dermide as a possible future husband for his daughter Christine . In hopes of restoring her health , Pauline and Borghese agreed that they should travel to Florence in the summer of 1804 , and from there to the thermal baths of Pisa , which were hoped to have better effect than the ones at Frascati . Pauline wanted to take Dermide with them , but Borghese advised against it , instead proposing to leave Dermide with his brother Francesco in Frascati , near Lucien 's Villa Rufinella . Thus , Dermide , Madame Ducluzel and his tutor , Monsieur de la Ronde , were moved to Francesco 's Villa Mondragone .

= = = Death = = =

By August , Lucien , his children and Dermide had all suffered from bouts of fever . Doctors saw no cause for alarm and Lucien quickly recovered , as did his children . Despite the doctors ' best efforts , Dermide died on 14 August , at the age of six . Pauline later came to believe her son 's blood had been thinned by the recurrent spells of yellow fever they had suffered in Saint @-@ Domingue . Borghese decided to conceal Dermide 's death from his wife until her health improved . Thus , Francesco returned to Frascati and wrote three letters addressed to Pauline : one which announced the onset of Dermide 's illness , the second announcing that the illness worsened and the third announcing Dermide 's demise . Immediately after receiving the first letter , Pauline began making preparations for her departure from Pisa , in order to reach her son at Frascati . Before this was possible , she became aware of the truth and her suspicions were confirmed by de la Ronde .

Pauline was grief @-@ stricken and later said " My poor little boy . If only I had been with him ... I would have nursed him as I nursed his father " . She came to blame Borghese for his decision to send Dermide to Frascati and called him " the butcher of my son " , believing that , had it not been for her husband , her son " would still be alive " . Leclerc 's parents accused Pauline of having neglected Dermide , leaving him to die under the care of servants , when she could have left him in France , to live with them . Nonetheless , Pauline had her son buried at the Château de Montgobert , next to General Leclerc . Dermide 's inheritance reverted to his father 's family and , in spite of her wishes to be buried beside her son and first husband at Montgobert , Pauline was buried at the Saint Mary Major Basilica in Rome upon her death in 1825 .

= = Ancestry = =

= = = Endnotes = = =