



**Barry Lawrence Ruderman
Antique Maps Inc.**

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

**[Napoleonic Survey of the Lagoon of Venice] Croquis de la Reconnaissance faite entre
Le Po et le Lizonzo Par Le Colonel Sorbier**

Stock#: 25277
Map Maker: Sorbier
Date: 1806 circa
Place: Venice
Color: Pen & Ink with Wash Color
Condition: VG
Size: 114.5 x 48.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Napoleon's Survey of Venice After The Fall of the Venetian Republic

Extraordinary manuscript reconnaissance map of the area around Venice, extending from San Canzian d'Isonzo and the mouth of the Isonzo River to Isola di Polensine and the mouth of the Po River.

This remarkable reconnaissance map covers an area of approximately 100 miles along the Upper Gulf of Venice, showing the topographical features of the region, along with military and civilian details, during the period immediately after the Treaty of Pressberg (December 26, 1805) transferred control of the Venetian States from Austria to Napoleon's Empire. The map includes a detailed key, identifying approximately 50 key military locations.

The map was drawn by or under the direction of Colonel Jean Joseph Augustin Sorbier (1774-1809), Aide-de-Camp to Eugene de Beauharnais, Prince of the Empire and step-son of Napoleon Bonaparte, and commander of Napoleon's forces in Italy. The map was almost certainly drawn in 1806, prior to Sorbier's being dispatched by Napoleon and Beauharnais on a mission to Constantinople in the Spring of 1807, during which time Sorbier met with Sultan Selim III, (Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, 1789-1807) and Hilmi Ibrahim Pasha (Ottoman Grand Vizier (1806 -1807), in an attempt to persuade the Ottoman Empire to align with Napoleon and against Russia and England.

Based upon evidence on the map and biographical information regarding Beauharnais and Sorbier, it would appear that the map was drawn in or about May 1806, during the period when Sorbier was serving as Aide-de-Campe for Beauharnais (1804-1807), subsequent to the Treaty of Pressberg (December 26, 1805) and prior to Sorbier's embassy to Constantinople in the Spring of 1807. Correspondence between Beauharnais, Napoleon and Sorbier in May 1806 suggests that Sorbier may have been engaged in a



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reconnaissance of the Venetian Coastline during this time period and at least one Austrian fort, constructed in 1804, is identified by date. Sorbier is identified as "Le colonel aide de camp de S. A. I. . . ." S.A.I. is the abbreviation for Son Altesse Imperial. Napoleon was crowned Emperor on December 2, 1804.

Eugène de Beauharnais (1781-1824) was Napoleon's step-son, who spent much of his career as Viceroy of Italy. He was the son of General Alexandre de Beauharnais and Josephine Tascher de la Pagerie, the future Empress Josephine. His father had briefly commanded the Army of the Rhine during the revolution, but in June 1794 he was guillotined for failing to raise the siege of Mainz.

Beauharnais first met Napoleon in the following year when requesting the return of his father's sword. In 1796, Napoleon married Josephine. At first, Beauharnais was opposed to the marriage, but was soon won over and his career would greatly benefit from his connection to Napoleon. Napoléon took a strong liking to Beauharnais, and tried to be a father for him. Beauharnais's active military career began with Napoleon's invasion of Egypt of 1798, where he served as one of Napoleon's aides, and was wounded during the siege of Acre.

On November 9, 1799, Napoleon took power of France after the military coup of Brumaire. Beauharnais was promoted to command a brigade of the Guards, fighting with distinction at the Battle of Marengo on June 6, 1800, where Napoleon defeated the Austrian Army in Alessandria (Piedmonte), Italy. Beauharnais was made a Colonel in 1802. When Napoleon became Emperor in 1804, Beauharnais was promoted to General and made Arch-Chancellor of State, prince of the Empire with style of Most Serene Highness. On June 7, 1805, Beauharnais was made Viceroy of the Kingdom of Italy, a position which he held until the end of Napoleon's Kingdom in 1814.

Jean Joseph Augustin Sorbier (1774-1809), served with distinction in the French Army for a number of years, before his death in May, 1809. He was named Chef de Brigade on January 6, 1801, Officer of the Legion d'Honneur on June 14, 1804 and General de Brigade on December 19, 1807. Sorbier was still signing his correspondence as "aide-de-camp" in May of 1807, as reflected in correspondence from Sorbier to Beauharnais, during which time Sorbier was sent on a mission to Constantinople in the Spring of 1807 on behalf of Napoleon, wherein Sorbier sought to strengthen France's relationship with Sultan Selim III and his Grand Vizier as a French ally against Russia and England and to encourage the Ottoman Empire to attack Russia (May 6, 1807 letter from Sorbier to Beauharnais from Travnik). During this same time period, French engineers were dispatched to strengthen the shore defenses around Constantinople against possible attacks by the English, led by Admiral Duckworth.

Colonel Sorbier apparently served as aide-de-camp and commander of artillery for Beauharnais from



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1804 until his dispatch on his mission to Constantinople and was shortly thereafter promoted to General. Sorbier died of wounds suffered in battle in 1809.

For additional images, please see the following links:

Upper Left: {{ inventory_enlarge_link('25277a') }}

Upper Center: {{ inventory_enlarge_link('25277b') }}

Upper Right: {{ inventory_enlarge_link('25277c') }}

Lower Left: {{ inventory_enlarge_link('25277d') }}

Lower Center: {{ inventory_enlarge_link('25277e') }}

Lower Right: {{ inventory_enlarge_link('25277f') }}

Detailed Condition:

Pen and ink on drafting cloth. The overall sheet has been stitched together from a series of smaller sheets. Some foxing and soiling, as shown. Housed in original chemise and slip case with printed title on spine.