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Service of Antoine-Henri Baron De Jomini in 1812-13: A New Retrospective View

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SERVICE OF ANTOINE-HENRI BARON DE JOMINI IN 1812-13:
A NEW RETROSPECTIVE VIEW

By

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My great passion for Napoleonic history really started some fifteen years ago. In 1989 a group of historians, buffs and aficionados of the then Soviet Union, for the first time, were invited to participate in the bicentennial anniversary of the French Revolution in Paris. Prior to that, we all had been studying the life and battles of the great Corsican in groups or in solo, but there it all came together. Dressed in Napoleonic uniforms as a part of the international “French” re-enactment group, we were allowed – for the first time in our history! – to visit Napoleon’s tomb in Les Invalides. There we started the “Empire” – a great fraternity destined to extend our knowledge and interest in one of European history’s most colorful periods.

Many positive moments have occurred since that memorable event. With the collapse of the communistic regime, there came a new mentality along with democratic movements. We increased in numbers and gained new experiences. As time went by, we were able to visit major battlefields of the Napoleonic Era and became a part of a “living history”, and pursue our interest academically. I am glad to continue my historical and Napoleonic studies at the Florida State University, the one-of-a-kind in the country, but I shall always remember our march in the streets of Paris, which eventually brought me here.

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I would like to thank both the staff of the Service Historique de la Défense (Archive de la Guerre at Vincennes) and Archives Nationales in Paris, for the opportunity to work in their invaluable collections. Merci de tout mon coeur. I must acknowledge Oswald Schwitter, my dear Swiss friend, who assisted me with much useful advice in preparation for my European trip. He has shown me his beloved Switzerland while deliberately taking time from his busy schedule; he drove me from Bern to Lausanne and to Avenches, thus allowing me to visit cities related to Jomini. Special thanks also goes to Mr. Daniel Bosshard, the Director of the permanent exhibition on Jomini, located in his hometown, Payerne. Mr. Bosshard spent several hours with me speaking about his precious collections, answering numerous questions, and at the end assuring me of further professional relationships.

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ABSTRACT

Antoine-Henri Baron de Jomini (1779-1869) has become one of the most influential military theorists of the modern age. His principles, which at some point formed the basis for military education, have influenced teaching in European and North American military academies through the nineteenth century.

A Swiss of the French extraction, Jomini received first-hand experience in the Napoleonic Wars by serving in various capacities as a staff officer beginning in 1805, first as a volunteer. He was quickly promoted, and by the end of 1810 Jomini had already become général de brigade, was awarded the Légion d’Honneur, and was given the title of Baron of the French Empire. At that time, he was also a renowned military theorist; his first editions of Treatise on Grand Military Operations published between 1805 and 1811 embraced the campaigns of Frederick the Great and Napoléon in Italy and compared eighteenth-century warfare with the new Revolutionary combat doctrine. After 1808 he considered his rewards and recognition in the French army rather inadequate to his proclaimed and self-developed talents, knowledge and experience. Influenced by his complex personality and interests, Jomini began to search strong patronage. Various contacts were made with him by the Russian representatives that in 1810 resulted in the Tsar Alexander I offering him service with a subsequent promotion.

Napoléon refused to accept his resignation and compelled Baron de Jomini to remain with the French army, while allowing him to accept an appointment from the Tsar. For a while Jomini held the rank of a general officer in both the French and Russian armies, with the consent of both sovereigns. However, in 1812 Jomini decided to continue his service for the French; he was assigned to the General Staff in its preparation for the war with Russia. He played an important role in heading various offices, such as the Commandant of the Imperial Headquarters and the Section of historical research. In the course of the Russian campaign of 1812, Jomini served on the line of communications: first as a military governor of Vilna, and then as commandant of Smolensk. During the retreat and the following crossing of the Berezina, he performed a series of reconnaissance missions, which allowed the Emperor Napoléon to save the remnants of his Grande Armée.
Jomini rejoined the newly resurrected Grande Armée as the Chief of Staff of maréchal Ney’s 3rd Corps in the spring of 1813. For his distinguished service at the Battle of Bautzen he was nominated for a promotion and decoration. However, being unable to produce an important report and answer certain demands of his superiors, Jomini was deprived of the long sought promotion; angry and frustrated, he joined the allied forces organizing against France.

In August 1813 the Tsar appointed him a Lieutenant General in the Russian army and an Adjutant of his own suite. Jomini’s old French comrades considered him treasonous, although Napoléon in retrospect excused him on the basis of his Swiss nationality. After taking part in the decisive battle of Leipzig in October 1813, he was decorated with several Russian orders. Nevertheless, he withdrew from the active Russian service in early-1814 when the allies violated Swiss neutrality.

Most references to Baron de Jomini during the time period of 1812-13 are extremely limited or distorted. However, presence of the recent archival material available in Russia, Switzerland and France, as well as newly discovered documentation allows reevaluation of Jomini, his career and his contribution during the most crucial periods in European history.
PREFACE

It is universally agreed upon, that no art or science is more difficult than that of war…

Henry Lloyd, *History of the Late War in Germany* (1766)

In the period when the Welsh author and general officer on the Russian service wrote this, students of every aspect of human knowledge had almost completed their slow emancipation from the authority of traditional beliefs and established suppositions. There were new thoughts, ideas and new laws, which created a pattern of uniform behavior throughout the European continent and by observing them, it was possible to deduce the principles that controlled the whole. This embraced all aspects of human life, including government institutions, culture, economics and, no less importantly, the art of war.

The eighteenth-century tradition of precise operational analysis, based on logistical needs and topographical limitations, was transmitted to the armies of Europe and North America by Antoine-Henri Baron de Jomini (1779-1869), a Swiss of French extraction. Influenced by the Enlightenment and his observation of and actual participation in the Napoleonic wars, he endeavored to reduce wars, campaigns and separate battles to theoretical systems that should govern their conduct. However, it is not the purpose of this thesis to attempt any definitive assessment of the contribution that Jomini has made to military history and theory or the chronological events of his own time. Just as in the modern age it is commonly accepted that the study of history should be more than a prosaic list of dates and facts, so to the same extent it applies to a biographical research of any value.

The central concern of this study is an endeavor, by using an analytical approach and comparative analyses, to consider and systemize all current material available related to Jomini’s career in 1812-13, one of the crucial periods of his long life. One of the goals of this study is to re-interpret anew some of the well-known facts, especially where the history traditionally seems to be complacent. War, military campaigns and battles are not an aberration of human life with a history all its own and alien to other kinds of history; they are an integral part of the
representation of human relationships. Along with “decisive factor” criterion, it attempts to
determine to what extent a factor or occurrence, being itself a part of “microhistory”, makes up
the process and events constituting the entire period.

Jomini’s military career was certainly unusual. His first service as a civilian volunteer on
the eve of the Ulm campaign of 1805 carried the young Swiss through successive promotions.
By 1812 at the age of thirty-two, Jomini already was chevalier of the Legion of Honor, and he
attained the rank of général de brigade and the title of Baron of the French Empire; in respect for
his obvious erudition in military history, Napoléon put Jomini in charge of historical and
administrative aspects at his Headquarters. To this extent, the efficiency of French military
system was not just limited to the manner in which it could employ its soldiers. More important,
the army also promoted a sense of comradeship and espirit de corps. What drove its individuals
was not only love of country but honor, pursuit of glory and, in the last resort, personal ambition.
Inevitably, because he was Swiss and somewhat of an outsider, Jomini’s peculiar professional
position – and it must be admitted, his temperament and idiosyncratic character – prevented him
from attaining the full recognition of his efforts.

Jomini was not, as it is sometimes noted, a career staff officer in the Napoleonic armies.
Although he possessed one of the most acute military minds of his time, his service as corps Chef
of Staff during 1808-09 and again in 1813 was dictated by personal preference and did not last
long enough for proper assessment. At the same time, being a student of classic military history,
Jomini had already achieved distinction as a writer. Surviving the disastrous Russian campaign
of 1812, he served in the following year until circumstances – rather disputable, as it will be
established below – compelled him to defect to the Allies. Here, welcomed, appointed the
Lieutenant General on the Russian service and admitted to the Tsar’s own suite, he continued his
services until his opposition to the invasion of France led him temporarily to withdraw from the
active list at the beginning of 1814.

All supporters and admirers of Jomini as well as his critics and competitors admit these
obvious facts. According to the latest calculations, the bibliographies include almost three
hundred entries on Jomini. Despite all these titles demonstrating Jomini as a person of
considerable military stature, there are many “gaps” yet to be discovered.

Jomini is mainly known to the world as a military writer and historian; it is, however,
quite wrong to think of him as an “arm-chair general”, a pure theorist, and an intellectual who did
not have direct concern with armies. He was, first of all, a general officer of the French, and later of the Russian armies, and his service for the period of 1812-13 was completed with grave responsibilities forcing him to make important decisions affecting human lives.

Although many authors portray Jomini quite effectively and provide important details, many gaps still remain. Describing his service on Napoleon’s General Staff in 1811-12, specialists usually refer to a few lines depicting Jomini’s problems in obtaining necessary documents while working on his historical writings. There is little information provided on the Napoleonic staff system and structure or on the positions that Jomini held, as well as his interaction with fellow officers. Regarding the Russian campaign of 1812, there is usually a general mention of his governorship of Vilna and Smolensk. However, there is no information relative to any actions of Jomini or the scope of his authority on these lines of communication of the Grande Armée. On the contrary, his role during the retreat and the Berezina crossing or at Bautzen was usually exaggerated. Finally, his defection to the allies in August of 1813 seemed simplified and mainly attributed to prejudice towards Jomini by the higher authorities.

This work is almost in its entirety based upon primary sources: Russian and French government documents, personal letters and various mémoires. It also includes a vast amount of specific material drawn from military archives, museums and special collections. Among the most important sources of information has been the Russian State Military Historical Archive (RGVIA) of Moscow, which contains Jomini’s personal file related to his Russian service. It is also the principal repository of archival material relating to the documents of the Grande Armée dealing with the occupation in 1812, including original reports, orders and letters. Copies of documents on Jomini’s presence in Lithuania, contemporary newspapers, and his orders issued in Vilna are partly to be found in the Russian State libraries of Moscow and St.-Petersburg. Jomini’s dossier at Château de Vincennes (Service Historique de la Défense, Département de l’Armée de Terre) in Paris mainly related to his French service; journals of operations for 1812-1813 as well as staff and operations reports. Numerous orders of the day, dealing with domestic and foreign affairs (Dècrets Ministère d’Intereur), nominations and promotions (Ministère de la Guerre) located in the Archives Nationales in Paris, also have been very helpful. Moreover, there is an abundance of printed French and Russian sources, including histories, memoirs and letters dealing with Jomini and general and specific aspects of the French and Russian history during the 1812-14 period.
It is noteworthy that intricate linguistics and the florid style of Napoleonic times would daunt all but the most dedicated of readers. Also, it is necessary to note an importance of auxiliary historical disciplines, such as uniformology and the art of bibliographical composition. In the case of Jomini, it helped to provide significant information in attribution of his several existing portraits. In most cases these artistic depictions were found inaccurately dated and, therefore, referred to incorrect historical periods. Knowledge of Jomini’s literary legacy, a proper provenance of his major works, also served to clarify certain events of his life at the studied period. Thus, when one used the approach of integral historical reconstruction, where applicable, these auxiliary disciplines assisted in obtaining additional information. Some of the data, which was thought to be traditionally stable, practically led to reconsideration of the once established facts and stereotypes and called for more thorough research.
INTRODUCTION

Despite the fact that Antoine-Henri Baron de Jomini created a good amount of epistolary legacy that is well known on both sides of the Atlantic, he did not leave any mémoires in the common meaning of his words. There are, however, a number of valuable collections of Jomini’s correspondence, notes and small pamphlets.\textsuperscript{1} But while all this does exist and is assembled in printed form, there is no single volume embracing his own life as narrated by himself. The Museum of the Swiss city of Payerne, which maintains a permanent exhibition on its famous countryman, possesses an original diary written by Jomini supposedly in 1824, but it is still carefully preserved as a display and therefore is not available to public.

It was a common tradition in the nineteenth century not to write, but rather to discourse on the events of one’s life, which later appears as mémoires.\textsuperscript{2} The bulk of the material consists of the great quantity written down by those who knew Jomini, and among the first is his pupil, personal friend and a great admirer, the Swiss Army officer, Ferdinand Lecomte. Although not deprived of constructive criticism, his \textit{Le général Jomini: sa vie et ses écrits} (1860), is generally written in an equitable temper and dedicated to Jomini’s eightieth birthday.\textsuperscript{3} The manner of presentation very much reflects on ethos of the mid-nineteenth century biographical genre, where the major emphasis is given to a main character without paying much attention to other actors and events of the period. Yet the material is based on long personal discussions, observation and correspondence and much of it, especially notes on Jomini’s difficult character, has the ring of truth.

Lecomte’s influence was so great, as well as the persona of Jomini, that the outline once established became practically a standard. The next publication was a small pamphlet of the Swiss Colonel Huber-Saladin, \textit{Le général Jomini, sa vie et ses écrits} (1861), which is generally a

\textsuperscript{1} See, e.g., \textit{Correspondance de général Jomini avec M. le Baron Monnier}. (Paris, 1821).

\textsuperscript{2} The Russian General Prince Peter Bagration did this among the others in Jakov Starkov, \textit{Rasskazi starogo voïna o Šyvorove} [Veteran’s tails of Suvorov], (Moscow, 1847), not to mention Napoléon himself; \textit{Napoléon Ier, Le Empereur des Français, Campagnes d’Italie, d’Egypte et de Syrie} (Paris, 1872).

brief synopsis of Lecomte’s. The book of French journalist and Stendhal’s friend, Charles Sainte-Beuve, *Le général Jomini* (1869), although containing actual correspondence and some critical analysis, was limited only to 1813. Almost all works on Jomini including even the Russian publications that appeared before the Great War of 1914, generally follow material from Lecomte’s first biographical version. But it should be noted that much of Lecomte’s work was written during Jomini’s lifetime and apparently from his own mouth, which is naturally uncritical. However, these first leading biographies constitute the primary source for many historians and still serve as a base for many past and present biographies written worldwide on Jomini.

The new era of studies on Jomini came with the name of Xavier de Courville, whose *Jomini ou le devin de Napoléon* (1935) became a real panegyric to the Swiss military theorist, historian and officer. In his work, Courville, himself Jomini’s distant relative, generally re-wrote Lecomte’s biography in a more thrilling way; he based his approach on the image of a “hero” prevailing at that time in French literature and culture of a nation preparing for a new global conflict. He furnished his research with several citations but unfortunately he became the pioneer of a “legendary Jomini”. However, the facts he claims to be extraordinary are in many instances suspicious and unreliable. The book was full of anecdotes and unverifiable or overemphasized events. He practically ignored the corpus of Russian and French sources available at his time, especially those related to Napoléon’s Russian campaign of 1812. Overall, Courville’s depiction of Jomini’s service on Napoléon’s General Staff in 1811-12 or in Saxony for the following year was inaccurate in dealing with facts that could be checked; consequently, it

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6 The Russian articles on Jomini were published in connection with his publications (mainly translations) appearing in military periodicals, such as *Voenny Sbornik* [Military Compendium] for 1863 and 1869 issues; commemorations on his various anniversaries, entries in encyclopedias, including famous *Voennaya Encyclopedia* [Military Encyclopedia] (Saint-Petersburg, 1911) and the like.


8 One of the best volumes on the subject is Gabriel Fabry’s *Campagne de Russie, 1812*, in 4 vols. (Paris, 1900-03). Being attached to the Historical Service of the French General Staff, lieutenant Fabry published in this treatise the biggest bulk of documents related to the Russian campaign of 1812 ever assembled. Working in the Russian archives in 1902, he included many trophy documents, such as the correspondence of Jomini shedding light on his Vilna’s activities. None of the previous Jomini’s biographers ever referred to the Fabry’s work.
was necessary to treat with some suspicion a number of the unverifiable stories, especially the alleged injustice toward Jomini by his superiors. But surprisingly enough, Courville’s version suddenly became highly popular; Courville tried, as he thought, to bring up what had been undeservedly forgotten and underestimated.

Biographical discourse on Jomini in the book by the Swiss historian Genrich Däniker *Antoine-Henry Jomini*, (1960) or several of Michael Howard’s essays on Jomini, which appeared in various collaborative works, like that of *The Theory and Practice of War* (1975) shows that authors are still under serious influence of Lecomte-Courville. Even an expositional book, *Général A.-H. Jomini 1779-1869* (1969), while providing a wide spectrum of newly presented 213 documents and artifacts, could offer nothing but a brief extraction from the old Lecomte’s publication of 1860.9

At the same time Jomini’s well-established “perfection” was put under the test by a military specialist of the Napoleonic history in the United States, Colonel John R. Elting. A historian of considerable stature, he correctly raised suspicion about certain inconsistencies and events surrounding Jomini’s biographies, especially the relationship with his superiors. Elting’s several articles, like the one describing the interaction between Jomini and Napoléon’s Chief of Staff maréchal Alexander Berthier, for the first time ever raised new doubt about Jomini’s activities in 1813.10 But Elting went toward another extreme. As a professor of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, he looked at Jomini through the prism of the contemporary American system of military education of his own time and created a very negative image of Jomini, simplifying his complicated military career to the insubordination of a poorly trained professional who was disloyal to the French cause.

There are several more publications that merit attention. After decades since Courville’s publication, the French historian Jean François Baqué published a new work on Jomini. His *Jomini* (1994) contained some footnotes and bibliography of the general works on Jomini and the Napoleonic period.11 Although written in a vivid and lively style, Baqué’s book could be described as more of a popular-science genre than a serious historical work. Following the major


trend, he overemphasized and idolized Jomini while ignoring the sufficient corpus of primary sources, including archival material. Generally, it was simply an extensive essay along the lines of Courville, whose basic structure he borrowed for his own work, even in the title.

For many years, the Russian part of Jomini’s life was hidden behind the “iron curtain” and therefore unavailable to a majority of researchers. Then in 1999, two Russian professors, Alexey and Lydmila Mertzalov, also direct descendants of Jomini, provided a significant contribution to the further development of biographical work on their distant forefather. Their collective work for the first time revealed Jomini’s life during his service in Russia, which lasted, with breaks, for nearly fifty-five years and usually underrepresented by Western scholars. They employed many contemporary mémoires and documents preserved in the Russian archives and provided a comprehensive analysis on Jomini’s military works. Unfortunately, in the biographical essay of the book, the Mertzalovs relied on the works of Lecomte and Courville. Also, the authors’ inability to comprehend specific military terminology, and extremely vague familiarity with the Napoleonic period, minimized their undertaking.

Finally, a very recent book on Jomini published by Jean-Jacques Langendorf Faire la guerre (2002) was a pleasant exception to the multitude of historical and semi-historical works on the subject. The author utilized the most recent information available such as primary archival sources, including Russians, catalogues and selected works preserved in various museums, a vast spectrum of mémoires, contemporary correspondence and eyewitness accounts. For the first time Langendorf performed a careful selection of events surrounding Jomini’s long life and eliminated disposes of obviously fabricated and outdated information. But yet again, there was no constructive analysis, or validation of Jomini’s manners et morales, just a mere list of events and facts put in chronological order, although in a very explicit and well

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12 Mertzalov, A.-A. Jomini, Osnovatel’ naychnoi voennoi teorii, 1779-1869 [A.-H. Jomini, a founder of a scientific military theory, 1779-1869] (Moscow, 1999). At the present moment the book is in the process of being edited and translated by the Zurich University Center on Jomini, Switzerland, under the supervision of Dr. Susanna Bliggenstorfer.


14 Regarding the Russian documents note that in 1998 the Russian State Archive on Military History prepared, on behalf of the Payerne’s museum, a catalogue of documents related to Jomini and preserved by the Archive (a total of 143 entries). In 1999 this catalogue, along with copies of the original documents, was presented to Daniel Bosshard, the Director of Jomini’s museum in Payerne. However, all but a few of these documents are dated after 1817 and, therefore lie beyond the scope of this research.
organized fashion. The influence of Lecomte and Saint-Beuve and even Courville’s have been marginalized and still present in many of Langendorf’s passages along with secondary and third-hand material.

There are many more works discussing general military questions published in France, Switzerland, Germany, Russia and English-speaking countries which, to a certain extent, deal with Jomini’s career. In summary, today, many periods in Jomini’s life still remain unexamined and his all-round activities have not been equally appraised. This is, partially, because of the competitive analysis in connection with his famous contemporary, the Prussian military theorist Carl Clausewitz. In addition, it is because of the rendition established by historians relying not on facts and/or archival documents, but generally rephrasing a version of his life as Jomini himself once conveyed it through his first biographers and historians.

In the study of Jomini, an important issue that still confronts the serious scholar is the proper distinction of Jomini as a participant of the events of 1812-13 and Jomini the historian, who actually wrote about same events some time afterwards. One of the books often cited is his *Précis politique et militaire des campagnes de 1812 à 1814* (1886). Here, Jomini discusses and analyzes the Napoleonic campaigns covering major operations in Russia, Saxony and France from the historical prospective. However, these are sections of Jomini’s previous work, *Vie politique et militaire de Napoléon* (1827)\(^\text{15}\), which were enlarged at the time of publication by Lecomte who edited a two-volume *Précis*, and who utilized his own commentaries concerning Jomini’s biographical and other supporting data.\(^\text{16}\)

Jomini’s accounts have certain faults, but they are the unavoidable faults of any and every writer of personal reminiscences. The writings of Jomini as a historian were subjective and have an exaggerated idea of his own importance, but at least he was absolutely sincere in reflecting his own opinion.\(^\text{17}\) Jomini’s talent as a military writer and historian in conjunction with his first-

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\(^{16}\) Criticism on that work, which long endured, suggested that *Life of Napoleon* was not only an atrocious biography, but “also a cunning autobiography – of Jomini.” John I. Alger, *A.-H. Jomini: a bibliographical survey* (Washington, D.C., n.d.), 17.

\(^{17}\) Much of this work was performed in collaboration with the Russian officer and “official” historian Dimity Bouturlin. By the order of the Tsar issued in November of 1816, he assisted Jomini in writing the history of the 1812-14 campaigns.
hand experience obtained in two of the most professional armies, that of France and Russia, provided a valuable account for the study and understanding of the Napoleonic wars that shaped Europe in 1812-13.
CHAPTER ONE
JOMINI'S EARLY LIFE: FROM BANKING TO THE MILITARY,
FROM WRITER TO WRITINGS

The eighteenth century was truly a time of incredible opportunities for many human destinies. In that old world of estates and customary traditions, which for generations was carefully measured by the level of hierarchic ladders, strict rules and regulation of the manners and morales, the order suddenly was disturbed. Certain people, lacking aristocratic family background, without connections or patronage of the mighty monarchical dynasties, rose to the top of society through economic success, and they acquired power with minds and hearts of their contemporaries and became rulers of thought for future generations to come.

The world at a glance seemed a motionless universe, while the power of the major ruling European monarchs seemed to be invulnerable and well established. But this was a deceptive vision; everything in this world was actually moving and creating a systematic connection between the new ideas for a better world and the appearance of new names that blazed with all aspects of talent and glory.

Despite theirs various paths of destiny, whether it be François-Marie Arouet (Voltaire) or Jean-Jacques Rousseau of France, Friderich von Shiller of Germany or Jonathan Swift of England, Thomas Jefferson of the American colonies, or Mikhail Lomonosov and Alexander Radishev of Russia, all these thinkers of the various national, social and intellectual backgrounds had something in common: they belonged to the new class of a dissatisfied. “We live in the best of all possible worlds,” was said by one of them; yet who could have doubted that this good intention actually mocked the old archaic order? In contrast, the main theme of the new ideas was the comparative analysis of the laws of nature and those created by human beings; it became a stepping stone for development of a new mentality, which later received the lofty name of the Age of Reason. Hence, the ideas of “natural law” and “natural rights” were unleashed as the dream of a “natural human”.

Stimulated by the spectacular successes in the natural sciences, the thinkers of the Enlightenment sought to bring everything under the persuasion of reason by creating orderly disciplines in all spheres of known human endeavor. And when the transforming experience of
the newly raised French nation, “united and indivisible”, became possible by the social energies unleashed by the Revolution, it forever changed the assessment of the once-established rules and laws. The world soon realized that these are the first winds of a great storm destined to crush the existing order of things and advance a new set of challenging ideas and principles.

Antoine-Henri Jomini was born on 6 March 1779 to a respected family in the town of Payerne, Canton Vaud, in French-speaking Switzerland. His father, Benjamin Jomini (1746-1818) held an important position in the “Council of Fifty”, heading a local militia and secretariat of the city. Former syndic and deputy of Payerne, he was happily married to Jeanne Marcuard (1757-1847), a daughter of a local government official.¹

Traditionally, the Swiss Confederation had close ties with France and in 1777 the two countries renewed their alliance. Thousands of Swiss soldiers served in the French army, including the famous Gardes Suisses (the Swiss Guard) as the Royal Bodyguard to kings.²

In July of 1789 Antoine-Henri was a ten-year-old when the first events of the French Revolution occurred in France. In this year he entered the College of Payerne, which prepared its pupils in general academic subjects, including religion, French grammar and arithmetic. The family had long-established military traditions, but his parents wanted him to be an advocate, a “man of robe”. Young Jomini refused and proclaimed his intention to become a soldier. In 1791, the future world-renowned military theorist and historian tried to enter the military school operated by the Prince of Württemberg, but in vain. Using connections, Benjamin Jomini attempted to obtain for Antoine-Henri a place as a cadet with one of the eleven Swiss regiments on the French service. However, this venture also proved unsuccessful; along with the final

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¹ Archives of the Musée de Payerne, Payerne, Switzerland [hereinafter Musée de Payerne], Switzerland. The Jominis had four surviving children: François-Jacob (1774-1837), Antoine-Henri (1779-1869), Julie-Catherine (1781-1831) and Louisa (1793-1871). Their original house by the rue Grand, 48 still exists today. Regarding Antoine-Henri, one of the major Russian sources indicates that he was born on 23 February 1773; it is incorrect and rather refers to the year of marriage of his parents. Peter Dolgoryki, Rossiskaya Rodoslovnaya Kniga [The Russian Genealogical Record Book] (Saint-Petersburg, 1856), IV, 342.

² The Swiss formations in the French army, dating in direct line to 1444 were finally extinguished with the massacre of the Swiss Guard at the Tuileries on 10 August 1792. Le général Susane, Histoire de l’infanterie française (Paris, 1876),III, 123-27. Although today Payerne is still part of the canton of Vaud, the most western of the twenty-two cantons that comprise the Swiss Confederation, back then the political fate of the city was a matter of frequent debate. Alexander Grab, Napoleon and the Transformation of Europe (New York, 2003), 112-15.
reorganization of the new army in 1793, the Revolutionary government dissolved the remnants of all foreign regiments.\textsuperscript{3}

Then, on the advice of his mother, Antoine-Henri decided to master the profession of commerce. In 1794 he became an apprentice at the German “school of commerce” in Aarau; his diligence and dedication were noted and at seventeen years of age he secured a place as a banking clerk with one of the prestigious brokerage houses of Mosselmann in Paris. The spring-early summer of 1796 was a time of new changes and progressive winds, brought by Napoléon Bonaparte’s army in his spectacular Italian campaign.\textsuperscript{4} Thunder of victories over the armies of a mighty Austria and triumphant bulletins of the 27-years old commander-in-chief forever determined the destiny of young Jomini, when he exchanged his ledger book for the sword of a soldier.

Willing to take part in challenges, which ignited old controversies between his native canton of Vaud and a separatist Berne government, Jomini left Paris in early 1798 for Switzerland. During the revolutionary movement in February-March, using the high position of his father in the local diet, Antoine-Henri was appointed to a petty command post in the local militia.\textsuperscript{5} His arrival to Payerne coincided with the commencement of the French intervention destined to put to an end the Swiss Confederation, which received ardent support from a prominent Swiss citizen who admired the French Revolution: Frédéric-César Laharpe, also a native of Vaud and advocate of the Enlightenment ideas. He served over a decade as a tutor of the future Russian Tsar Alexander I (1799-1825); many years afterwards he would play a prominent role in Jomini’s destiny. But for now Laharpe, an enthusiastic supporter of Vaudois independence from Berne, strongly encouraged the French government to assist his country and called for the establishment of the united Switzerland as a modern democratic state. The French invaded Switzerland in support of Vaud and in March of 1798, the commander and chief of the Italian army Guilhaume-Marie-Anne Brune occupied Berne. In April of 1798 Geneva was

\textsuperscript{3} Langendorf, \textit{Faire la guerre: Jomini}, 3-4. Note that in his monumental research, the author generalized and summarized all information regarding the career of Jomini, as it appeared in the earlier works, mainly of Lecomte and Saint-Beuve’s.

\textsuperscript{4} Ibid, 4-6.

\textsuperscript{5} France, Service Historique de la Défense, Département de l’armée de terre, Château de Vincennes (hereinafter refereed as Service historique). GB 8Y\textsuperscript{2} (\textit{Dossier personelles du généraux de brigades}) 1277 (Antoine-Henri Jomini).
annexed to France and became the capital of the new department of Leman. The concept of nationhood was in its infancy; thus in April of 1798 with the support of French troops, cantons proclaimed the Helvétic Republic, ratifying its new constitution copying the French pattern of 1795. The new constitution abolished all privileges and proclaimed legal equality, civil liberties and the right of private property. It established, for the first time, a common Swiss citizenship and universal male suffrage. Though initially dependent on the French Revolutionary government and subsequently closely allied with Napoleonic France, few Swiss counted themselves a part of the French nation, and Jomini never considered himself a French citizen, which would affect his actions and demeanor in the future.

Still having ties with the brokerage house of Mosselmann and traveling back and forth from Paris, Jomini encountered certain Augustine Keller there. Also a Swiss native in the French service and with a solid military background, Keller soon was appointed the War Minister of the new Helvétic Republic and he took Antoine-Henri as his aide-de-camp according to his request. Later, Jomini, recalling his actually lucrative position both as a commerce agent and an officer during his first weeks with Keller, admitted that this was a time when in his “head fundamental principles and brilliant applications first appeared, which supposedly would bring glory and fortune.” Of course, for a young man that suddenly cast in the a turmoil of the Revolution, new and progressive ideas combined with his dreams of success and talents might seem very serious but, nonetheless, should be distinguished from the bravado and exaggeration so common to all youth in all times.

Upon his arrival in Switzerland by the end of November 1798, Jomini was able to secure a provisional rank of a lieutenant in the Hélvétique militia. Like the Italian or Batavian Republics, the Helvétique Republic was also a French satellite. The French imposed heavy requisitions and levies to maintain the French troops garrisoned in Switzerland, which composed newly created the armée d’Helvète. With the appointment of Laharpe and other pro-French leaders to the Swiss government, France then compelled Switzerland to sign an alliance treaty on August of 1798; it guaranteed the Helvetic Republic its territorial integrity in return for financial support and free

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7 Langendorf, Faire la guerre: Jomini, 9, as quoted in Lettre du général Jomini à Capafigie sur sous Histoire d’Europe pendant le Consulat et l’Empire (Paris, 1841), 2-3. Written after over forty years of actual events, this statement should be treated with the precaution as every piece of epistolary documentation.

8 Service historique, dossier GB 8Y² 1277 (Jomini).
passage through its territory. In addition, according to the complementary convention signed in Lucerne on 19 December 1798, the Republic was supposed to furnish 18,000 men composed of six demi-brigades, three bataillons each.\footnote{Bernard Coppens, “Les demi-brigades auxiliaries helvétiques, 1798-1805.” \textit{Tradition}, 170 (September, 2001), 11. The new Revolutionary term “demi-brigade” (a three-bataillon mixed formation composed of two bataillons of volunteers and one of the former Royal regulars) replaced the Ancient Regime’s “regiment” since 12 August 1793.}

Since January of 1799 Jomini was attached to the War Ministry and along with other staff members energetically took responsibility for converting the militia-based forces into a professionally developed and modern equipped army. In March-April Lieutenant Jomini was sent on various missions to Aarau, Baden or Zurich. He showed multiple talents by helping to organize magazines, arsenals, hospitals and by assisting in the creation of further military administration.\footnote{Langendorf, \textit{Faire la guerre: Jomini}, 10-11.}

In the spring of 1799, Switzerland became a theater in the War of the Second Coalition. Britain and Austria with the help of Russian military manpower aimed to expel the French from Switzerland. Swiss aristocrats and conservatives supported the coalition, hoping that it would restore the old regime and bring back privilege. In early June, Austrian Archdukes Charles forced the French to evacuate Zurich and entered the city. At this time Jomini, in Berne, assisted the War Minister in raising more troops for the defense of the Helvetian Republic.\footnote{Ibid, 11. Note that on 17 June 1799, he was promoted to the grade of a captain. Service historique, \textit{dossier} GB 8Y\textsuperscript{2} 1277 (Jomini).}

Militarily, the campaign was decided in the decisive battles around Zurich, on 25 September through 5 October 1799, when the French \textit{armée d’Helvéte} under the command of André Masséna first cut to pieces the Austro-Russian forces under Rimskiy-Korsakov, then turned on a Russian relief army under Alexander Suvorov, defeating it in turn.\footnote{Sainte-Beuve, \textit{Le général Jomini}, 14; Louis Hennequin, \textit{Zurich. Masséna en Suisse, Messidor An VII-brumaire An VII, juillet-octobre 1799}. (Paris, 1911), 376-84.} The French victory over the Second Coalition saved the Helvétic Republic; the Directory restored its domination over Switzerland and prevented an allied invasion of France.

Soon, the news of Bonaparte’s \textit{coup d’état} of 18 Brumaire (9-10 November 1799) reached Switzerland. For his service, Jomini was promoted to the \textit{chef de bataillon} on 26 April
1800.\textsuperscript{13} In September of that year, an article signed “J*****, employé du gouvernement helvétique” was published in the *Helvétic Bulletin* (No.17). It was entitled “Peut-on espérer la paix?” and though very brief, just a few pages, indicated Jomini’s earliest interest in politics, a theme that often appeared in his later publications.\textsuperscript{14}

However, for Jomini, as well as for the entire country, this time became a period of growing political instability; Laharpe was forced to retire and the Directory in Switzerland was replaced with a provisional Executive Commission. In February of 1801, Jomini quit his service for the Helvétique Republic, while preserving his rank and Swiss uniform of the *chef de bataillon* and went to Paris. He further explained his motive by stating that it was done “on permission of the [War] minister, with the intention of proposal to the French government to levy a corps of the Swiss *carabiniers*, a project which will adjourn the conclusion of a general peace.”\textsuperscript{15} In the meanwhile, while his proposal was circulating throughout various military departments, Jomini accepted a position at the Delpont firm, a manufacturer specializing in military equipment. Perhaps, it was at that time, he became more interested in the study of military history.

The early stages in the development of Jomini’s ideas have remained largely obscure. Their studies involve certain difficulties since the sole evidence is Jomini’s own account, which, as noted is quite tendentious and at times contradictory.\textsuperscript{16}

In 1802 Jomini began reading extensively the works of the major military thinkers of the period of Enlightenment, such as Puységur’s *Art de la Guerre* and de Guilbert’s *Essai de tactique générale*.\textsuperscript{17} It was at that time his first literary works appeared. While in Paris, Jomini turned his attention to the writing of a didactic essay where he intended to outline “the fundamental principles upon which all the decisions concerning lines of operations and movements of an army are based.” But after reading von Bülow’s *Geist des neueren Kriegssystems*, where the latter

\textsuperscript{13} Service historique, *dossier* GB 8Y\textsuperscript{2} 1277 (Jomini). Note that along with dropping the old-regime term “regiment” as unacceptable and implying aristocratic privilege, the Revolution instituted the rank “*chef de bataillon*” which could be translated as “battalion commander.”


\textsuperscript{15} Langendorf, *Faire la guerre: Jomini*, 10-11.


\textsuperscript{17} See Jacques Puységur, *Art de la Guerre* (Paris, 1714); Jacques-Antoine Hippolite de Guilbert’s *Essai de tactique générale* (Paris, 1772).
approached military science with a mathematical formalism, Jomini decided that “dogmatic calculations convince no one” and cast his first manuscript to fire.\textsuperscript{18} Jomini then decided to substantiate his didactic essay by retelling the campaigns of the Seven Years’ War (1756-1763) and by contrasting them with the early campaigns of the French Revolution.

Subsequently, Jomini’s writing on warfare may be divided into two groups, those mainly historical and those mainly theoretical and analytical. In his histories he intended to cover the wars of Frederick the Great and the wars of the French Revolution, including Bonaparte’s Italian campaigns of 1796-97 and 1800. In the volumes on Frederick, he planned to follow the accounts of all available authors at his time, and in separate chapters and in a concluding volume, he planned to outline a theory for the military art.\textsuperscript{19}

In 1803 at the age of twenty-four Jomini left the Delpont firm, so he could concentrate on the writing of what he planned to be multi-volume study, which would combine the events of Frederick the Great’s wars with observations and discourses in order to form a body of military thought.\textsuperscript{20} It was an ambitious project for one so young, and even though he relied heavily on the published narratives of the Seven Years’ War by Henry Lloyd and his \textit{History of the Late War in Germany}, Jomini had shown progress towards interpreting war mechanics, when he combined history with theory in a series of single volumes. In this way he hoped to prove conclusively that the theory of war was based on sound facts and that the maxims of war could be stated simply and in a manner that made them universally applicable.\textsuperscript{21}

Late in 1804 Jomini had completed the first two of his volumes and he sought to find a sponsor to provide the money to have the work published. Experiencing financial difficulties, Jomini decided to direct his steps to the place where the most prominent military authorities of this time were gathered – the Camp of Boulogne. Here, Jomini appealed to his future patron and superior officer for many years to come, the \textit{maréchal} Michel Ney.\textsuperscript{22}

\begin{footnotes}
\item\textsuperscript{18} Heinrich von Bülow’s \textit{Geist des neueren} \textit{[The spirit of the new system of war]} (Berlin, 1797); see discussion in Alger, \textit{Jomini: a bibliographical survey}, 2.
\item\textsuperscript{19} Ibid, 2-3.
\item\textsuperscript{20} Langendorf, \textit{Faire la guerre: Jomini}, 15-16.
\item\textsuperscript{21} Alger, \textit{Jomini: a bibliographical survey}, 2-3.
\end{footnotes}
During Napoleon’s preparation for the invasion of England, maréchal Ney, in command of the 6th Corps of the Grande Armée, was quartered at Montreuil. It is possible that Jomini met him before, because Ney had served as a Plenipotentiary Minister on behalf of the First Consul Bonaparte in Switzerland from October of 1802 to January of 1804.\(^{23}\) At that time, and especially after signing a Mediation Act on 19 February 1803, which ended the Helvétic Republic and restored the federal system, the Swiss cantons were obligated to furnish four regiments of troops for service in the French army, and therefore, “military talk” was possible.

After a brief acquaintance with the work of the young Swiss officer, Ney, himself possessing an inquiring mind, was impressed with its contents. Apparently, Ney and Jomini met in Paris, where the maréchal promised to furnish the necessary funds for publication. Thus, the first two volumes of his work were printed and published in Paris; they appeared as the *Traité de grande tactique ou relation de la guerre de Sept ans, extraite de Templehoff commentée et comparée aux principes et opérations de la dernières guerres; avec un recueil des maximes les plus importantes de l’art militaire* (hereinafter referred as *Traité de grande tactique*)\(^{24}\) and three others followed until the completion of the first edition in 1809. It was signed “H\(^{ie}\) Jomini, chef de bataillon, attached to maréchal Ney”\(^{25}\). In the next letter Ney, while he still was in Paris, asked maréchal Berthier, then the War Minister, to appoint Jomini his aide-de-camp\(^{26}\).

The first two volumes of the *Traité de grande tactique* describing the first campaigns of Frederick the Great and the French Revolutionary wars appeared in seven parts. The first five parts dealt with the Seven Years’ War and the sixth with the French Revolution from 1792 through 1800. The seventh part was to deal with a theoretical observation on different orders of battles analyzed in the first six parts. But later in 1806 this plan was abandoned. On the

\(^{23}\) Henri Bonnal, *La vie militaire du maréchal Ney, duc d’Elchingen, prince de la Moscowa* (Paris, 1910), I, 244.


\(^{25}\) Note that with the Republican calendar still being in effect, An XIII corresponds to the period 22 September 1804 through 21 September 1805; therefore, the exact year is unknown. Alger, *Jomini, a bibliographical survey*, 4. But it is safe to assume that the publication could appear in earlier-1805, because at that time Jomini was attached to the staff of maréchal Ney.

\(^{26}\) Ney to Berthier, 13 February 1805. Service historique, dossier GB 8Y\(^2\) 1277 (Jomini).
publisher’s request, the volume on the first wars of the Revolution was to be the fifth volume to
next appear.\footnote{It was published under title Traité de grande tactique ou relation de la guerre de Sept ans, extraite de Templilhoff commentée et comparée auxopération de la dernières guerres; avec un recueil des maximes les plus importantes de l’art militaire. The fifth volume was also published under the title Relation critique des campagnes des Français contre coalisés depuis 1792 (Paris, 1806).}

Jomini was appointed volunteer aide-de-camp on 3 September 1805 and he accompanied Ney’s 6th Corps at the battles of Elchingen and Ulm in October 1805. There, the young Swiss chef de bataillon experienced a unique opportunity to observe the modern warfare that he had studied so intensely. He was introduced to his new duties by reading Ney’s own “Instructions” where he instructed the officers of his immediate staff:

> [t]he most important thing for a staff officer is to inure himself to fatigue from … campaign, by remaining constantly dressed and booted, in order that, on the very first shot fired, he may be able to proceed in all haste to the place of action and return and give information to his superior.\footnote{Military studies by maréchal Ney; written for the use of his officers. Translated from the original manuscripts by George Caunter (London, 1833), 57-58.}

According to the Emperor Napoléon’s plans, the 6th Corps was directed to occupy Innsbruck, so Jomini missed the Battle of Austerlitz, 2 December 1805. Sent to Napoléon’s Headquarters, Jomini managed to give a presentation copy of his Traité de grande tactique, along with important correspondence from Ney, to the French Emperor.\footnote{Lecomte, Le général Jomini, 28-29.} Also, in his cover letter to maréchal Alexander Berthier, Ney gave a strong recommendation of Jomini’s performance and recommended him for further “services at the staffs of the armies of His Majesty.”\footnote{Ney to Berthier, 12 December 1805. Service historique, dossier GB 8Y\(^2\) 1277 (Jomini).} As a result, by decree of Napoléon signed on 27 December 1805 in the Shönbrunn, chief de bataillon Antoine-Henri Jomini was promoted to the rank of the Adjudant-commandant.\footnote{Service historique, dossier GB 8Y\(^2\) 1277 (Jomini). Originally, the title of Adjudant-général was created by the Revolutionary government on 24 November 1790 and applied to specially designated staff officers bearing the grade of a Colonel or Lieutenant Colonel of the Royal Army. After abolition of these two grades on 21 February 1793 as implying aristocratic privilege, the title of Adjudant-général, nonetheless, remained, only to be transformed on 16 July 1800 to that of Adjudant-commandant. As previously, it meant “Colonel on staff duty” and applied to high-ranking staff officers and being, at the same time the rank, as well as title.} He was only
twenty-six years of age, one of the fourteen youngest officers of a total 246 who attained this rank during the First Empire before they reached the age of thirty.\(^{32}\)

How to explain such a rapid advancement? In the highly mobile structure of the French army, rapid promotion was very common, especially after such a victorious operations as campaign of Ulm-Austerlitz was. Another explanation, that the Emperor was genuinely impressed with Jomini’s theoretical works, after the obscure foreigner presented his work to him.\(^{33}\) Obviously, a position as a staff officer in maréchal Ney’s corps also elevated his career; if he had served as a regular company-grade officer, the consequences would have been different. It is, therefore, very plausible that the talented young man, whose skills for military analysis were new and challenging and who had just written a penetrating study of the art of operations, could present his thoughts to the highest authority at the right moment.

Appointed as the first aide-de-camp to maréchal Ney on 3 September 1806, Adjudant-commandant Jomini continued to serve under his patron.\(^{34}\) Being attached to the Napoléon’s État-major Impérial on the eve of the campaign against Prussia, Jomini saw actions with the Grande Armée at Saalfeld, Schleitz and Hoff, 9-10 October. During the battle at Jena, 14 October 1806, Jomini obtained the authorization to rejoin maréchal Ney in the ranks of the 25\(^{th}\) Légère, which was brought to the position towards the Prussian lines at the village of Isserstedt.\(^{35}\) After the decisive victory, the French arrived at Potsdam and on 27 October triumphantly entered Berlin.

During his stay in the Prussian capital, Jomini got acquainted with Frederick Wilhelm von Zastrow, a former ambassador to Paris. Being a partisan of an alliance with France, von Zastrow quickly found a common language with the young Swiss and admirer of Napoléon. On one

\(^{32}\) Danielle Quintin and Bernard Quintin, Dictionnaire des colonels de Napoléon (Paris, 1996), 18.

\(^{33}\) Lecomte, Le général Jomini, 29. Apparently, Jomini did not play as decisive a role in Ney’s staff as this biography would have reader believe; he was one of the five regular aide-de-camps at maréchal Ney’s HQ. See Service historique (Grande Armée, 1805) Carton C2 470. Ney, however, valued Jomini’s opinion as a military theorist and kept him close to himself.

\(^{34}\) Six, Dictionnaire, I, 603; Bonnal, La vie militaire du maréchal Ney, II, 258.

\(^{35}\) Ibid.
evening von Zastrow introduced Jomini to his daughter, Dorothea (1790-?), who soon would become his fiancée.\textsuperscript{36}

Despite his service in the Jena campaign, Jomini did not abandon his military and theoretical studies. The analysis of the campaigns of Frederick the Great and of the young Bonaparte had revealed to him, he believed, precisely those fundamental principles of strategy for which eighteenth-century theorists had searched. These principles were first summarized and composed in a small 35-page brochure written in December 1806, and later became the basis for the science of military art.\textsuperscript{37} In time, they would become “the principles of Jomini”:

- in directing the mass of one’s forces successively onto the decisive points in the theater of war, and so far as possible against the communications of the enemy without disrupting one’s own;
- in maneuvering so as to engage this concentration of forces only against fractions of the enemy’s strengths;
- on the battlefield, to concentrate the bulk of one’s forces at the decisive point, or against the section of the enemy line which one wished to overwhelm, and finally
- to ensure not only that one’s forces were concentrated at the decisive point, but that they were sent forward with vigor and concentration, so as to produce a simultaneous result.\textsuperscript{38}

Despite the great deal of solid research, which embraced much of his literary legacy, Jomini wrote before professional historical writing had fully established its canons of investigation and presentation. Thus, his early works are still without the modern \textit{apparatus criticus} of footnotes and bibliographies.\textsuperscript{39}

\textsuperscript{36} Langendorf, \textit{Faire la guerre: Jomini}, 45.

\textsuperscript{37} Jomini, Colonel employed at His Majesty the Emperor and King. \textit{L’art de la guerre} (Posen, 1806), 3-35. The Russian version appeared in the same year.

\textsuperscript{38} Baron de Jomini, \textit{Précis de l’art de la guerre, ou Nouveau traité analytique des principales combinaisons de la stratégie, de la grande tactique et de la politique militaire..}, new edition (Brussels, 1841), 53.

\textsuperscript{39} For the first time it appeared in one of his later major work, \textit{Histoire critique et militaire des guerres de la Révolution} (2\textsuperscript{nd} edition, reprinted in 1820-24) and contains a set of supporting documents, which today represent a rich fount of primary source material for any scholar. Alger, \textit{Jomini: a bibliographical survey}, 15.
In the middle of December 1806 at Warsaw, being attached to the Imperial Staff, Adjudant-commandant Jomini joined the Grande Armée for its march into the First Polish Campaign (1806-07) against the Russian army. He was present at the bloody Battle of Eylau, 7-8 February 1807 where for the first time he personally encountered the fury and determination of the Russian troops: one of their battalions broke through the French lines and appeared at the city’s cemetery, right next to the commanding post of the Emperor and his staff. Proven indecisive for both sides, the battle allowed the French and Russians to regroup and continue the struggle in the spring. At that time, “according to his health and Emperor’s wish, Colonel Jomini was granted four months of medical leave.” On 9 July the hostilities were over with the Peace of Tilsit. Jomini, interrupting his medical leave, re-joined the Imperial Headquarters in Berlin. There, he was recognized for his service and awarded the cross of légionnaire of the Legion of Honor.

Based on Ney’s requests, Jomini was named on 18 October 1807 a provisional chief of staff of the 6th Corps and on 5 November he was confirmed in this position. Frequently traveling between Paris and the German territories of Glogau and Berlin, he visited Dorothea and continued his writings. The first volumes of Jomini’s Traité de grande tactique must have enjoyed a moderate success, for he was able to continue with subsequent volumes. The third and fourth volumes on the last campaigns of Frederick the Great appeared in 1807 and 1809 respectively under the new main title Traité de grande opérations militaires by the same publishing house of Giguet et Michaud, Magimel. The first edition of Jomini’s masterpiece collectively referred to as Traité des grandes opérations and composed in five volumes, was

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40 Jomini, still bearing a title of maréchal Ney’s aide-de-camp, was attached to Napoléon’s Imperial Staff as a representative of his respective corps.

41 Saint-Beuve, Le général Jomini, 87.

42 There is no official document available to shed light on this award. However, two contemporary sources prove that Jomini was, in fact, nominated the légionnaire (since 1808 chevalier) of the Legion of Honor: his portrait presented in the Musée de Payerne with such a cross visible on the uniform and the Almanach Impérial (c. 1808), an official “book of the year” of the First Empire, which listed Adjudant-commandant Jomini as a cross awardee. For a complete coverage see Appendix A.

43 Service historique, dossier GB 8Y2 1277 (Jomini).
published and released between 1805-1809. 44 Napoléon appreciated Jomini’s obvious success, and on 27 July 1808 he created him Baron of the French Empire. 45

At the beginning of September 1808 maréchal Ney’s 6th Corps was summoned to join the Army of Spain, and on 15 October French troops led by the Emperor invaded the Peninsula. Jomini, as Ney’s Chief of Staff, was present at all major maneuvers and engagements on 5-25 November at Vitoria, Burgos and Soria. At this time the first tensions between the maréchal and his chief of staff began to develop. Thus, intrigues around Ney persuaded the maréchal that Jomini in fact was “manipulating” him instead of being grateful for his patronage, as reflected in their correspondence. Also, Jomini’s involvement with the daughter of a Prussian aristocrat made Ney suspicious. 46 Subsequently, when Napoléon’s Chief of Staff maréchal Berthier wrote to Ney that he was supposed to have a general officer in the position of the chief of staff for his 6th Corps, and added, if he [Ney] “wanted to keep Jomini in that position, he himself would have suggest to Napoléon Jomini’s name for promotion to général de brigade.” 47 This, however, did not happened. Although they continued serving together in the Spanish province of Galicia, Ney delicately got rid of Jomini. On 10 June 1809, Ney sent Jomini to Napoléon in Vienna with reports debriefing the Emperor on the internal situation in northwest Spain. Shortly after his departure, Ney sent another messenger from Spain with the request of Jomini’s reassignment to “another destination”. After the Battle of Wagram, 5-6 July 1809, Jomini returned with Napoléon’s Headquarters to Paris, where he met Ney. Hoping to return under maréchal Ney’s command, he broke an engagement with Dorothea. However, the Emperor had his own plans; on 18 November 1809, Jomini was sent under orders of maréchal Berthier to serve at the War Ministry. 48

But at that time he was busy with other arrangements. Already by the end of 1807 Jomini, aware of his status as the recognized theorist par excellence of modern warfare, had

45 Rossiiskiy Gossudarstvennyi Istoricheskyi Arkhiv [The Russian State Historical Archive, hereinafter referred as RGIA] (St.-Petersburg, Russia), folio 1343, op. 46, d. 1810, pages 66-67.
46 Lecomte, Le Général Jomini, 71-72; Bonnal, La vie militaire du maréchal Ney, III, 278.
47 Letter from Berthier to Ney, 5 November 1808, as quoted in Arthur Chuquet Ordres et apostiles de Napoléon, 1799-1815 (Paris, 1911), I, 262-63.
48 Order of the day, 18 November 1809, Ibid., 275; Langendorf, Faire la guerre: Jomini, 54.
begun to listen to overture from St.-Petersburg, setting his own price in secret negotiations. Jomini applied to the Tsar’s government several times prior to War of 1812 with a request to be admitted to the Russian service, according to the correspondence with Russian aristocrats. The first time he was invited to join the Russian army in 1808 by the Tsar’s General-Adjutant Prince Peter Volkonski during his stay at Berlin. In the spring of 1810, the Russian military attaché, Colonel Alexander Tchernishev, officially approached Jomini with a proposal of his transfer to the Russian service. In his letter to the Grand Chancellor and Foreign Minister of the Russian Empire Nicolay Roumiantsev, Tchernishev wrote that

Mr. de Jomini is considered to be one of the best-educated military specialists in France. In my opinion, obtaining such a man who so diligently learned general military principles, developed it and found a practical use shall be very precious for the service at His Majesty’s court.

While considering such propositions and enjoying the Tsar’s monetary grants, Jomini tendered his resignation, but instead was granted six months leave from the active service. At the end of June, 1810 he left for Switzerland and settled in the city of Aarau.

Seriously looking for the possibility of entering the Russian service (even while being on the French payroll, he was not a French citizen and, therefore, was not committed to France morally), Jomini decided to inform his French superiors of this, when he was suddenly recalled to Paris. There, on 7 December 1810, Jomini was made by Napoléon a général de brigade in the French service. At the beginning of January 1811, according to correspondence with his friend Charles Monnier, Jomini received a letter-patent assigning him to the rank of Major General in

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49 Rossiskii Gosydarstvenniy Arkhiv Drevnix Aktov [The Russian State Archie on Ancient Manuscripts, hereinafter referred as RGADA] (Moscow, Russia), Collection of autographs: fond 1278, op. 1, d. 11; fond 1477, op. 1, d.18.

50 Langendorf, Faire la guerre: Jomini, 56-57; see detailed discussion in Courville, Jomini, ou Devin de Napoléon, 132-36 and 148.

51 Mertzalov, Jomini: founder of a scientific military theory, 126.

52 Service historique, dossier GB 8Y2 1277 (Jomini). Six, Dictionnaire, 1, 603. Note that Jomini was one of the twenty-six general officers of Swiss descent serving under Napoléon.
Figure 1. Portrait of général de brigade Antoine-Henri Baron de Jomini, 1810s. Mansell Collection
the Russian service and appointing him to “the Tsar’s own suite.” But Jomini, thrilled by Napoléon’s personal attention, decided to remain on the French service. Moreover, he married Adélaïde Charlotte Rose (1786-1871) who soon was expecting a child.

Napoléon, of course, had known all along about the existence of the Russian offer. He reacted in the way that the threat against which Jomini’s status as a Swiss citizen meant nothing, and by sending him to perform administrative duties at the General Staff. Napoléon, therefore, refused to accept his resignation. Reportedly, after a conversation with the Emperor in March 1811, Jomini was assigned to special duty in Paris where he proceeded to write the history of the French Revolutionary wars.

It had been Jomini’s ambition to write a scientific analysis of Bonaparte’s early Italian campaigns of 1796-97 and 1800. And Napoleon had personally given orders that he should have access to the Archives de la Guerre of the French War Ministry. The progress of this undertaking, however, was much impeded in 1811 when Colonel Jacque Muriel, employee of the Dépôt général de la Guerre refused to permit him to examine any paper without a special requisition and order designating the particular document to be inspected. Jomini complained that he was given insignificant documentation, mainly listings of units, troop strength, rosters of hospitalized or detached combatants. Nonetheless, at that stage of his career as a historian, employing vast amounts of literature covering an up-to-date subject, Jomini achieved some progress. The printing house of Magimel was about to commence publishing the second edition of his Traité de grandes opérations militaires.

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54 There is practically no information on Adélaïde Jomini; overshadowed by her celebrated husband she was, no doubt, a good wife; together they had five children who proudly served, as their numerous descendants still do, to both France and Russia.

55 Lecomte, Le Général Jomini, 99-101. As in many similar instances, such a conversation (occurring on the day of birth of Napoléon’s son, 20 March 1811) was recorded from Jomini’s own mouth and not supported by many bystanders of such an important event.

56 Ibid., 99. Colonel Muriel served as the adjoint provisoire (temporary assistant); the chief of the Depot was général de division Nicholas Sanson. Almanach Impérial (Paris, 1811), 235. Later on he was transformed into “captain Salamon”, and attributed form book to book ever since. Courville, Jomini, ou Devin de Napoléon, 162; Peter B. Austin, The March on Moscow-1812 (London, 1993), 367.

57 It is by no means certain that here the Emperor was not playing a double game. Did Napoléon, whose whole Empire was a product of a self-made man and by its zenith was mythologized, really want to have Jomini studying original documents in the War Archives
The first six volumes of the second edition were published by the end of 1811 and the final two volumes were withheld by censors until 1816. The first four volumes were devoted to the campaigns of Frederick the Great and the second four dealt with the campaigns of the French Revolution through 1797. On the first four volumes, the title read *Traité des grandes opérations militaires*. But for the fifth through eight volumes, the title read *Histoire critique et militaire des campagnes de la Révolution*. As in his previous works, Jomini tried to simplify the complexities of war and he earnestly sought to encourage the study of military history. Thus his name firmly entered the cohort of prominent military writers. He would not probably know that one young Prussian officer on the Tsar’s service named Carl Clausewitz highly praised Jomini’s writings, noting that the progressive Russians were “well-versed in the recent literature in the field, the most recent ideas of all, those of Jomini.” Years would pass and controversy between military thoughts of Clausewitz and Jomini would cause additional conflicts and break many quills. But at this moment Jomini could be considered as a leading military authority in presenting his theory of war with its emphasis on concentrating power at a single decisive point.

But at this stage of his professional development Jomini had also received relatively adequate training as an officer. He did not take part in victorious charges that challenged the course of history, but he learned the routine and paperwork of staff procedures of no less importance, which also assisted troops in their pursuit of successful operations and battle performance. It is notable that his experience in staff work really began as a civilian volunteer aide-de-camp to *maréchal* Ney in 1805. He was effective in that role, but his short service as Ney’s corps Chief of staff during 1807-09 periods lacks primary documentation and still requires a special assessment. However, Jomini substituted the need for military education with his own reading, logic and detailed observation of Napoleonic warfare, as did many of his colleagues of that era. Finally, there was recognition of his talents as a historian – by the Emperor himself – that kept him away from that fatal decision in August of 1813, that deprived France and brought to Russia one of the greatest military minds of the nineteenth century.

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58 Without further reference to bibliographical details, which are so diligently examined by Alger, it is noteworthy that the final four volumes of the second edition of the *Traité des grandes opérations militaires*, which dealt with the wars of the French Revolution, were expanded and republished in fifteen volumes between 1820 and 1824. These volumes appeared as *Histoire critique et militaire des guerres de la Révolution* and they have been variously referred to as a first, second and third edition of the work. Alger, *A.-H. Jomini: a bibliographical survey*, 11-15.

Figure 2. The half-page and title page of volume five of the second edition of Jomini's *Treatise on great military operations*, 1811.
CHAPTE TWO
WITH THE ÉTAT-MAJOR GÉNÉRAL IN 1812

The beginning of the year 1812 brought happiness to the family of Antoine-Henri and Adélaïde Jomini; on 22 January they celebrated a baptism of their son, Charles-Henri.¹ In the meantime, the head of the family continued his service on Napoléon’s General Staff in its preparation for a probable war with Russia.

In order to follow Jomini’s career path in this capacity, it is profitable to examine briefly the characteristics of the General Staff’s numerous offices and functions.² In his Manuel des Adjudans-généraux, an experienced staff officer and participant in many campaigns of the French Revolution and First Empire, Paul Thiébault, defined État-major or Staff as “the totality or aggregate of officers and non-commissioned officers, who pursuant to the nature of their respective functions are appointed to transmit the orders addressed to them by the commander and chief, or to superintend the execution of the various branches of military service, that are respectively instructed to them.”³

It is notable that operational control requirements over the Grande Armée increased as Napoléon’s European Empire developed. Once established during his earlier campaigns, the Staff assisted on all levels of military, administrative and even civil service; it also reduced Napoléon’s workload while keeping the Emperor knowledgeable about the state of his army, which grew tremendously. According to Tableau général, on 1 November 1811, military forces of the First Empire had under arms 1,046,567 men in all branches of services.⁴

¹ Langendorf, Faire la guerre: Jomini, 64. Napoléon-Charles-Henri de Jomini (1811-1860) along with his famous father later served in the Russian army where he attained the rank of colonel.


⁴ Out of this monstrous number 396,345 men were occupied in various provinces of Spain and Portugal, nearly 250,000 were garrisoning at the various ends of Europe. Otetchestvennaya Voïna 1812 goda. Materiali Voennogo Uchenogo Arkhiva Glavnogo Shtaba [The Patriotic War of 1812. Documents from the Military-Scholarly Archive of the General Staff, hereinafter The Patriotic War of 1812. Materials of VUA] (St.-Petersburg, 1900-1914), 6:2-46.
The Staff helped to translate Napoléon’s thoughts into action by collecting, registering and transmitting his orders to major subordinate commanders and ministers of state. Moreover, the Staff provided the Emperor with a body of loyal, reliable and well-educated officers. Since 1796 its first organization was running under one of the most able man in his domain, indispensable Chef of Staff, maréchal Louis-Alexandre Berthier.\(^5\) By 1812 Berthier established a Staff that was responsive to the management of the vast Grande Armée while retaining the flexibility necessary to meet changing situations in the course of the upcoming campaign.

By 1812 the newly reorganized *Le Grand-Quartier-Général Impérial* (the Grand Imperial Headquarters) was more than just a complex of various offices, services and departments. It was composed of two major parts: *La Maison Militaire de l’Empereur* (Napoleon’s Household) and *Le Quartier-Général Imperial* (the Main Imperial Headquarter), which included *État-major général* (General Staff), secretariat, various bureau, topographical service, escort of troops – all headed by *maréchal* Berthier, who was appointed *Major-général de la Grande Armée* effective 1 February 1812\(^6\). To assist him in his workload of immense every-day tasks, down the ladder of the staff hierarchy, Berthier had several departments, including his private staff, *cabinet*, topographical and administrative sections.\(^7\) Therefore, Berthier headed a complex of departments on various levels, and his position as Napoléon’s Chief of Staff differs from the similar staffs employed on army corps or divisional levels.

Operating separately, but adjacent to *maréchal* Berthier’s numerous needs, these four parts were the nucleus of the complex machinery, generally referred to as the Emperor Napoléon’s General Staff. Each of these major components was headed by a senior officer bearing rather a complicated title of *aide-Major-général, Chef d’État-major général* (assistant to *Major-Général*, Chief of General Staff).


\(^6\) Napoléon to Berthier, 16 January 1812. *Correspondence de Napoléon 1er, publiée par ordre de l’Empereur Napoléon III* (Paris, 1858-69) No. 18442, XXIII, 210. Berthier’s title *Major-général* roughly means “general (main) head of staff for the entire army”, commonly referred as the Chief of Staff.

\(^7\) This practically meant that *maréchal* Berthier, as *Major-général* and Napoleon’s Chief of Staff had his “own staff” as part of *Le Quarter-Général Imperial*. To avoid confusion it will be noted further in the lowercase.
Figure 3. Scheme of the État-major général (General Staff) under overall supervision of the Napoleon’s Chief of Staff maréchal Alexander Berthier, January-June 1812.

Legend: GB – général de brigade; GD – général de division
Particularly, the administrative section was divided into three subdivisions, responsible for daily orders, lodging and substance and for government laws and decrees. Since 1809 it was led by général de brigade Count François-Gédéon Bailly de Monthyon. It was this exact general officer under whose orders Jomini continued his military career.

In the process of the further reorganization, the topographical bureau, and office of general administration conjoined together under the title of État-major as a part of État-major général, or General Staff. On 29 January 1812 Napoléon approved the composition and nomination for the État-major proposed to him by maréchal Berthier. By the new provision, Général de brigade Jomini was put by the Emperor in charge of history.

According to maréchal Berthier’s proposal, each general officer should be assisted with two aide-de-camps. As for Jomini, one of them became Captain and his brother-in-law François Fivaz and Lieutenant de Point-Béllanger, the other. However, in the same correspondence Napoléon suggested certain adjustments. According to the Emperor’s wishes, maréchal Berthier suggested certain replacements. In his February letter to the Emperor, he outlined his response to the changes concerning the position of the général commandant of the Imperial Headquarters:

Your Majesty decided that général Lecamus, who was in charge of this service in previous campaigns, should remain in Spain; therefore, it [the office of général commandant] is being transferred under command of Général de brigade Baron de Jomini who, at the same time, occupies historical service.

The functions of the général commandant, although semi-bureaucratic, nonetheless placed Jomini in charge of police, the necessity of providing security for the Emperor’s Household and conduct of inspections. With a certain degree of autonomy, it still placed him under direct orders of Major-général Berthier. But Jomini was more concerned about

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8 Attached to the General Staff, but functioning separately, there were a great number of intendants, financial, administrative, medical employees and other services. Alain Pigeard, L’armée Napoléonniene (Paris, 1993), 42-43.

9 Napoléon to Berthier, 29 January 1812. Quoted in Louis Margueron, Campagne en Russie, 1810-1812 (Paris, 1897), IV, 625.

10 État du personnel… du Grand Quarter général de la Grande Armée. Margueron, Campagne en Russie, IV, 474. Note that Samuel-François Fivaz was married to Jomini’s middle sister, Julie-Catherine (1781-1831). He joined his superior on May 9, 1812 en route to Dresden. Langendorf, Jomini, 71.

11 Berthier to Napoléon, 24 February 1812. France, Archives Nationales, Series AFIV (Secrétaire d’état impériale) 1642.

12 Alain Pigeard, Dictionnaire de la Grande Armée (Paris, 2002), 492.
continuing his military writing; being put by the Emperor in charge of the history, Jomini turned to the archives of the War Ministry and its historical department.  

Although Napoléon issued orders to open the library and archives of the Department for Jomini to continue military writings on the Italian campaigns of 1796-97 and 1800, there are claims that maréchal Berthier clearly blocked access for Jomini to the important information due to his jealousy of the talented Swiss.

This long-lived assertion should be reconsidered with several obvious factors. First and foremost among these was that maréchal Berthier’s General Staff and the Military Department were two different services, the latter under orders of the Minister of War and général de division Henry-Jacques-Guillaume Clarke, Duke of Feltre (from 1807 to 1814). Général Sanson, as head of the Military Depot, not Colonel Muriel, as usually mentioned, might, have some power over Jomini, but not since the latter was designated as an official historian at the General Staff after 29 January 1812. It is also confirmed by then the Napoléon’s Ministère de la Police générale René Savary who noted that “this general [Jomini] was considered in the army as the one having talent for historiography; being attached in this quality to the Emperor’s General Staff, for his work.”

As a result, this is why the Emperor appointed Jomini the général commandant of the Imperial Headquarters later in February to provide him with access in the corridors of a military and administrative bureaucracy.

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13 Known today as the Archive de la Guerre located in Château of Vincennes, its historical section originated in 1795-96, when Revolutionary government decided to build a historical library for the future military operations. In 1800 the library had over 8,000 volumes; by 1813 it enlarged up to 10,500 and contained many rare books and ancient manuscripts. Reorganized by Napoléon within the War Ministry, the library and archives were placed under supervision of its Eighth Division that handled Military Depot. By 1812 it was headed by général de division Sanson. Pierre Paul, “La Bibliothèque du Ministère de la Guerre”, Revue Historique de l’armée, 2 (1946), 120-22; Almanach Impérial (Paris, 1812), 237.

14 Lecomte, Le Général Jomini, 98-100; Courville, Jomini, ou Devin de Napoléon, 161; Hittle, The military Staff, 111; almost all past and recent works mention this statement, obviously having Jomini as a sole source.

15 Colonel Muriel was adjoint provisoire (temporary assistant) at the Military Dépôt. Almanach Impérial 1812, 237. Captain Salamon is also mentioned in this capacity, but although working under maréchal Berthier he had nothing to do with it and he was part of the Third Division at the Military Department heading the bureau of troop movement. Courville, Jomini, ou Devin de Napoléon, 161. In 1812, the Military Department consisted of nine divisions, each subdivided on various bureaus. Almanach Impérial 1812, 232-43.

Another reason is that the historical issue, the Mémorial, was published by the Dépôt in seven consecutive volumes (from 1802 to 1810) and was specifically designed to enlighten its readers on current orders and regulations and various issues of historical significance.17

Therefore, number of materials was produced long before Jomini has been officially assigned to his historical duties. Knowing that Jomini was working on Bonaparte’s Italian campaigns, maréchal Berthier could, for example, try to conceal from Jomini his Relation de la bataille de Marengo published in 180518. But there were other works available to any scholar, such as Petit’s Marengo ou campagne d’Italie by the independent company of Favre, and then Recueil de plans de batailles attaques et combat gagnés par Bonaparte, to name but a few.19

Finally, maréchal Berthier was one of the most recognized and distinguished men of the Napoleonic Empire, drawing nearly 1,254,945 francs annually based on dotations, not to mention his regular salary of 40,000 francs per year designated for the maréchaux de l’Empire. Perhaps, Jomini, with his modest annual compensation of 10,000 francs for the général de brigade and endowment of 15,000 Francs for his baron’s title was jealous of Berthier?20 It appears doubtful, that a controversy between maréchal Berthier and Jomini – at least at this stage, – had anything to do with professional achievement of either man or personal preferences.

Here is another opinion that merits attention and confirms various internal problems developing in the French high command. Thus, général de brigade of the Imperial Guard Pierre Berthèzene left his observation on Jomini with respect to the military hierarchy in the Grande Armée, potential favoritism, and grounds of alleged “jealousy”:

The Swiss [Jomini] did not have a chance for direct troop commands; perhaps because of this he was favorite of Berthier… Working in the various bureaus, he proved what a man can achieve if he was in a pursuit of knowledge.21


18 During the Second Italian campaign of 1800, Berthier officially commanded l’armée de Réserve and then until 1804 he headed the War Ministry. Note that Berthier’s Relation de la bataille de Marengo was both a work of historical significance and a piece of revisionist history intended to praise Napoléon.

19 Joseph Petit’s Marengo ou campagne d’Italie par l’armée de reserve (Paris, 1801); Anon., Recueil de plans de batailles attaques et combat gagnés par Bonaparte (Leipzig, 1805).


However, new duties soon called Jomini away from his historical endeavors. Along with troops of the Imperial Headquarters, all offices of maréchal Berthier and Napoleon’s General Staff were ordered to Mayence. The column was headed by général de brigade Guilleminot, assisted by généraux Jomini and Jean-Joseph Tarayre. Leaving Paris on 5 March, they arrived at the designated place on 14 March, where Guilleminot temporarily assumed the position of the général commandant of the Imperial Headquarter, which was nominally held by Jomini. There, they were immediately overloaded with organization, placement and lodging of its numerous personnel including staff officers, artillery parcs and wagons, engineers, military and civil administration of all levels. From Mayence Jomini’s route destined him further to Erfurt and Magdeburg, where the first marching column of the Grand Imperial Headquarter arrived on March 25.

By the spring of 1812 the war with Russia had become inevitable. Napoléon had already induced both Prussia (24 February) and Austria (14 March) to sign agreements providing auxiliary corps for the Grande Armée. But his peace offer to England in April of 1812, based on the restoration Portugal for the House of Braganza, Spain for his brother Joseph Bonaparte, and Sicily for King Ferdinand III was rebuffed. Public opinion in Sweden was reduced to desperation by the hardships of the Continental Blockade and the French occupation of Swedish Pomerania in January of 1812. The former maréchal de l’Empire, Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte, and now the hereditary prince Charles-Johan, brought Sweden to the Russian side by the April agreement in exchange for “Russian assistance in attaching Norway to Sweden.” At the end of May the Turks finally signed the Peace of Bucharest with Russia.

22 Berthier to Napoleon, 29 February and 5 March 1812. France, Archives Nationales, Series AFIV (Secrétaire d’état impériale) 1642.

23 Report of Guilleminot to Berthier, 14 March 1812, quoted in Margueron, Campagne de Russie, IV, 367-68. In no way should this appointment be considered as Berthier’s suppressing position over Jomini: Guilleminot was promoted to général de brigade on 19 July 1808, year and a half before Jomini, hence a priority (not to mention his actual combat experience). Six, Dictionnaire, II, 514.


Thus, Tsar Alexander I was relieved of anxiety of defending his northern and southern flanks, because he could concentrate his forces. He did not abandon his offensive plans to make a preventive strike that Russia had plotted since early 1811. According to correspondence with his close advisor, a Polish Prince Adam Czartoryski, the Tsar planned to strike into the Grand Duchy of Warsaw to make Poles “accept him as their liberator and restorer.” Additional instructions were sent to his accredited attachés in Prussia and Austria on this plan to initiate military actions against the French Empire. By the end of October, the five Russian army corps concentrated on the western borders and were issued a “monarchic order” to be prepared for the campaign. But it turned out to be otherwise; while the tsarist government made plans, Napoléon carried out the invasion.

On 9 May 1812 the Emperor Napoléon left his residence at Saint-Cloud to join his Grande Armée on its march through Germany. Assigned to the Imperial Headquarter, Baron de Jomini became a part of the mightiest military host the Continent of Europe had ever seen assembled under one command.


CHAPTER THREE
THE GOVERNOR OF VILNA, COMMANDANT OF SMOLENSK

On 22 June, riding ahead of the never-ending columns of his Grande Armée marching toward the Niemen River, Napoléon arrived at the little Polish town of Wyłkovyszki, near Kovno.¹ After passing the large encampments of the infantry and cavalry corps near Skrawdzeń, his carriage reached a small farm of Naugardiskiai, four miles off the Niemen. Here, on 23 June, working in the tent that had been pitched for him by the river, the Emperor issued his famous proclamation:

Soldiers! The Second Polish War has begun! The first ended at Friedland and Tilsit: at Tilsit Russia swore an eternal alliance with France and war on England. She is now violating her promises… Russia is tempting fate – and she will meet her destiny!.. Let us advance, let us cross the Niemen, let us take the war into her territory! The Second Polish War will be glorious for the French arms, as was the first. But the peace that we will conclude will be a lasting one. It will put an end to that destructive influence which Russia has been excreting on the affairs of Europe over the past fifty years.²

This proclamation would be greeted with cheering shouts of “Vive l’Empereur!” when it was read out the following morning to the enthusiastic troops assembled from all the ends of Europe. All day the infantry and cavalry corps, mighty pieces of ordnance, artillery parcs, wagons and innumerable droves of cattle pulled up to the bank of the river near a small village of Panemuné, where the Commandant en chef les équipages de pont (commander of the bridging train) général de division Jean-Baptiste Eblé built three new bridges in addition to the existing old one.³ In the early morning of 24 June 1812, Napoléon gave orders to commence the crossing.

Days and nights, from 24 to 27 June, in four endless torrents using all four bridges and crossing the Niemen right above Kovno, forces of the Grande Armée marched from the Polish to the Russian soil. The main group under Napoléon’s direct command consisted of the following

² Proclamation of 22 June 1812. Correspondance de Napoléon 1er, No. 18855, XXIII, 618-19.
³ Order of the day, 23 June 1812. Correspondance, de Napoléon 1er, No. 18857, XXIII, 622-26.
troops: the 1\textsuperscript{st} corps d’armée (Army Corps) under maréchal Louis-Nicholas Davout, the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Corps under maréchal Nicholas-Charles Oudinot, the 3\textsuperscript{rd} Corps under maréchal Michel Ney, 1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} Reserve Cavalry corps, led by généraux de division Étienne-Marie Nansouty and Louis-Pierre Montbrun, respectively, under general command of the King of Naples Joachim Murat. In the rear of this formidable march were the elite regiments of the Imperial Guard, commanded by selected maréchaux such as François-Joseph Lefebvre, Jean-Baptiste Bessières and Adolphe-Edouard Morthier. The total number amounted to nearly 220,000 men and 680 pieces of ordnance.\textsuperscript{4}

Napoléon took up his position on the hill of the western bank of the Niemen where he, along with Major-général Berthier, surveyed the scene of crossing. Not far behind was gathered the brilliant suite of the Emperor, the most famous general officers, maréchaux and administrators of his Empire, all blazing with laces of lavishly embroidered uniforms, gilded weapons, wearing sashes, orders and decorations of almost all the nations of Europe.

“The army was in full dress, and from the top of the hill on which the Emperor stood, one could see it file across the bridges on the Niemen in great condition,” noted Nicolas Planat de la Faye, an aide-de-camp to général de division Baston de La Riboisière.\textsuperscript{5} All the troops were excited about the upcoming war and shared a great deal of enthusiasm. “There was something gigantic in our enterprise which struck us all; it was said that, like Titans, we were going to scale the walls of Heaven”, wrote Jomini, who was standing among the Emperor’s entourage and observed the massive crossing.\textsuperscript{6}

Eagerness ran so high that two divisions of the vanguard along with their wagons, contending for the honor of crossing first, almost came to blows. The Emperor sent two of his

\textsuperscript{4} In the first wave of invasion there were a total 448,083 men crossing the Niemen at Kovno along with the other infantry and cavalry corps, which crossed near Grodno and Pilony for the period of 24 June – 1 July 1812. The 10\textsuperscript{th} Corps under maréchal Macdonald crossed the Niemen near Tilsit; the Austrian Auxiliary Corps entered the Russian territory by crossing the Bug near Droghichin. Pierre-Paul Denniée, Itinéraire de l’Empereur Napoléon pendant la campagne de 1812 (Paris, 1842), 13.

\textsuperscript{5} Planat de la Faye, Nicholas-Louis, Vie de Planat de la Faye (Paris, 1895), 71.

\textsuperscript{6} Jomini, Life of Napoleon, III, 346. His aide-de-camp Fivaz, however, was less eager: in a letter to his wife he complained of the uncomfortable situation in the course of war but believed that he is fulfilling his duty of a good father (he had eight children!) and an officer. Archives Musée de Payerne. General catalogue, JOY2002 No. 87.
staff officers, Guilleminot\(^7\) and Jomini, with grenadier bataillons of his Old Guard to maintain
the order. Jomini, however, accepted this task as something inferior to his position and rank.
“This burdensome job”, he recalled later, “could rather be assigned to the *vaguemestre généra*]
(column leading officer) along with gendarmerie.”\(^8\) At noon of 24 July, Napoléon crossed the
Niemen and positioned himself on the Russian side where soldiers of the marching columns
could clearly see him. At about 6:00 o’clock that evening, the Emperor moved on to Kovno, the
first major city in Russian territory and settled down in the spacious convent of Saint-Croix.\(^9\)

*“Vive l’Empereur! Malbrough s’en va-l-en guerre.”*

The Grande Armée marched into Lithuanian territory, which was a product of the Third
Partition of Poland in 1795 between Austria, Russia and Prussia. As Napoleon’s *Grand-
Quartier Général Impérial* was organizing its quarters in Kovno, the Russian armies prepared
their responsive movement. The news of the war came during the grand reception and ball for
Tsar Alexander, given by General-of-Cavalry Leontiy Bennigsen at his country house at Zakręt,
just outside of the ancient Lithuanian capital. The next day, 25 June, the Tsar and most of his
“advisors” left Vilna for the town of Sventciany, near the Drissa camp, the new position where
he planned to concentrate his troops. Michael Barclay de Tolly, the Minister of War and
commander and chief of the First Western Army, totaling 120,210 men and 580 cannon,
remained in Vilna for three more days. After gathering the information on the army of invasion,
he finally decided to use the plan of strategic retreat, first developed in May of 1812 and adopted
by the Tsar along with the Phull’s plan\(^10\). On 27 June, as senior in command, Barclay sent a
courier to the General of Infantry Count Peter Bagration, commander and chief of the Second
Western Army, totaling 49,423 men and 180 cannon, with a new directive to begin withdrawing

\(^7\) At the outset of the campaign, *Général de brigade* Guilleminot was transferred in to post of the *commandant le peti*]
*quet quarter-général de la Grande Armée*, Napoléon’s “little” (or battle ) HQ of hand-picked personnel.

\(^8\) Jomini, *Précis politique et militaire des campaigns de 1812 à 1814*, 57.

\(^9\) Napoléon to Berthier, 24 June 1812. *Correspondance de Napoléon 1er*, No. 18858, XXIII, 626-27.

Figure 4. Map of the European part of Russia, including Lithuania
(Author’s private collection)
Figure 5. Map of Vilna and surrounding area in 1812
(Chambray, *Histoire de l'expédition de Russie*)
Figure 6. Vilna in 1812, engraving after Andreolli
(Author's private collection)
to Minsk in order to unite with the First Western Army. On 28 June, when the French advance
guard already approached Vilna, Barclay de Tolly led his main forces out of the city.

Just an hour after the Russian rear-guard moved out of Vilna, the French advanced
columns appeared near the Ausros Vartai, the city Castle Gates. Napoléon honored the 8th
Regiment of Polish Lancers under command of Colonel Prince Dominick Radziwill by being the
first to enter the ancient capital of the Jagellos. Later on that Sunday afternoon, the Emperor
and members of his Headquarter, guarded by escort of the Chasseurs à Cheval of the Guard,
proceeded through the streets of Vilna.

Complaining of his poor health and, perhaps, considering himself, at least theoretically,
being admitted to the Tsar’s service, Jomini did not express wishes to fight against the Russians.
He approached Napoléon with the request to appoint him the commandant de la place (fortified
town commander); he was given one regiment of Davout’s 1st Corps to cover communications
and maintain the order of the numerous marching columns of the Grande Armée.

On 1 July Napoléon set up the Commission of Provisional Government of the Grand
Duchy of Lithuania. The territory of Lithuania now embraced the four gouvernements
(departments) of Vilna, Grodno, Minsk and Bielostock, each headed by an administrative
commission of three members with a presiding Intendant. Hugues Maret, duke de Bassano and
Napoleon’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, who arrived in Vilna on 2 July, who later would play an
important part in Jomini’s career, became more and more involved in the Lithuanian situation.

The new Vilna department consisted of eleven districts, each headed by a subprefect and
commandant. Vilna also had a local self-government, an administrative commission headed by
Ignace Tysenhaus, appointed by Napoléon. To provide assistance to such “commission” the

11 Ibid., 456. Documents regarding the number of troops are based on the actual reports of the Russian high
command. Moscow, RGVIA, fond 154, op. 1 d. 84, lists 3-6, Reports of Barclay de Tolly, 10 July 1812; fond 154,
op. 1, d. 84, lists 13-16, generalities: Reports of Bagration and Neverovsky, 13 July 1812.

12 Bronius Dundulis, Napoléon et la Lituanie en 1812 (Paris, 1940), 102-03. Note that Polish King Wladislaw V
(1377-92) was the first true ruler of the united Polish-Lithuanian State.

13 Lecomte, Le général Jomini, 104.

14 France, Archives Nationales, AF IV (Secrétairdé’état impériale) 671, pl. 5324, “Ordre de jour au quarter impérial
de Wilna, le 1er juillet 1812.”

15 Ibid., AF IV (Secrétairdé’état impériale) 671, pl. 5354.
Vilna’s municipal service was established with duties to maintain city property and run charitable organizations and municipal police. All activity of these organizations, composed of citizens of the Duchy of Lithuania by appointment, would be governed under the control of the Imperial Commissary and military governor. In particular, this organizational system not only was well received by the local population as a lawful government, but also attained an official recognition by the Warsaw Confederation, which expressed the desire of reuniting Lithuania with Poland.

The French Emperor was anxious to raise more troops and make Lithuania the main base of supplies and communications for his advancing Grande Armée. By decree of 5 July, the Duchy was ordered to create its own armed forces including the Third Regiment de Chevaux-légers lanciers to be attached to Napoléon’s Imperial Guard.

Using the first operative pause and following the reorganization of his Imperial Headquarters, Napoleon, while still in Vilna, appointed Baron de Jomini to the position of Directeur de la section historique à l’armée de Russie (head of the Historical Section of the army in Russia). Obviously, the French Emperor desired to produce a historical account of his victorious campaign from one his best military historians. Jomini’s other post, commandant du quarter général was transferred to his successor, général de division Auguste-Jean-Gabriel Count de Caulaincourt. But the Swiss historian did not even have a chance to set up the new office properly, because Napoléon revised his decision and appointed him military Governor of Vilna within a week. Also, on 8 July, the Emperor expressed his desire that général de division


18 Gabriel Fabry, Campagne de Russie (1812). Opérations militaire (Paris, 1900-1903), annex, IV, 252. Note that Auguste de Caulaincourt, a brother of Napoleon’s Grand-équyer (Master of the Horse) and diplomat Armand de Caulaincourt, was killed on 7 September 1812 during the charge at the battle of la Moscowa that captured the Raevsky Redoubt. Six, Dictionnaire, I, 205.

19 All nominations were made on July 1; letters on appointments were issued on 3 July. Dundulis, Napoléon et Lituanie, 279. But the official nomination of all four newly appointed governors, including Jomini, which was signed and delivered by Berthier, took effect only on 10 July. Ibid., 284.
Thierry von Hogendorp, his aide-de-camp, be appointed Governor for the entire Lithuanian region.20

The motive for Napoleon to change Jomini’s status could be found in the old controversy between him and certain military administrators led by maréchal Berthier. Since Jomini held the directorship of the historical section, it meant that he had come back under Berthier’s direct orders. The Emperor, knowing of Jomini’s attempts to enter the Russian service and his previous difficulties with Berthier, tried to solve the problem with such an arrangement. Perhaps in doing so, Napoléon, recalling Jomini’s earlier request, sought to insure the loyalty of his talented military theoretician and historian.

At the outset of the Russian campaign, Vilna could be described as a major city but deprived of any proper architectural design. Nice houses, almost mansions, neighbored ramshackle hovels; cobbled streets existed primarily at the city center but were made impassible, especially in the rainy days, by being littered with various sorts of garbage. There were approximately equal numbers of houses built of brick and woods; some were of the very impressive construction, especially residences at Poplawy and Zakręt on the outer side of the Vilia River. Nearly 35,000 inhabitants populated the city in 1812, including 22,000 Catholics, 11,000 Jews, along with a few thousand Orthodox, Protestants and Muslims. Vilna maintained its own “aristocratic salon” led by a son of the former French ambassador to Constantinople, Gouffier-Choiseul, two clubs and a performing stage.21

According to the Imperial Decree of 24 December 1811, “those towns surrounded by the defensive walls reinforced or not by a perimeter of forts were known as fortress, or fortified towns.”22 Each of these towns was under the authority of a senior officer, usually drawn from the General Staff, called in wartime Commandants d’armées (Military commandants). Administratively, they were subdivided in four classes, depending on the size and importance of the town, as follows: général de brigade, colonel, major and chef of a bataillon. Because of his general officer’s rank, Jomini held the title of the Military commandant of the 1st Class.

20 Napoléon to Berthier, 8 July 1812, Correspondance de Napoléon 1er, No. 18922, XXIV, 36. Official letter appointing von Hogendorp was prepared on 1 August 1812.


22 Service historique, État-major des places, Carton X^A 43, 44.
Figure 7. Organizational chart of the civil and military government in Lithuania (July-August, 1812)
However, the common title used was the *Gouverneur* (meaning “military Governor”), because this command was effective already at the outset of hostilities. A fortified town (as Vilna, in this instance) could be considered as being either in the state of peace, a state of war or in a besieged state. It was considered in a state of war as soon as a mobilization summons had been issued.23

A major mistake of Napoléon’s proclamation of 24 June was the notion that the army entered hostile territory, while here one could find many Poles sympathetic to the French Emperor and the ideas of Polish liberation and unification. On the contrary, it served a different meaning to the troops and led to the first episodes of marauding and mistreatment of the local population and became the first threatening signals of discipline failure and further demoralization.

According to the organizational system, all four new departments were considered as military districts having all the necessary establishments: artillery, engineers, administration (managing provisions and hospitals) and police. Because the Provisional Government was set up in Vilna, the city maintained a strong garrison.24 Jomini, as Governor of the newly re-established Lithuanian capital, always had at his disposal three mobile columns (90 infantrymen and 10 local mounted National guardsmen each), which patrolled and observed the movements of troops, major supply trains and everywhere else where it “deemed proper.”25 Depots of the 1st and 4th army corps were also located in Vilna.26

Despite all the new appointments and creation of the local government, Napoléon decided to assume the authority of Lithuanian Governor General himself. All correspondence, decisions and new nominations were supposed to go through the Emperor’s hands. One of the first letters from Jomini in his new post was dated 13 July and related to the administrative function: “I have the honor in asking Your Majesty’s approval to consider the proposition of

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23 By November 1812, on the line of communications there were eleven Military commandants of the 1st Class along with 194 of other the designated classes. Alain Pigeard, “Les adjudants-commandants et l’état-major des places (1800-15),” *Tradition* 137 (September 1998), 13-14.

24 By the roster on July 10 the garrison included: the 129th Line (Colonel Freytang); the Illyrian Regiment (Colonel Schmitz); the Mecklembourg-Schwerin Life-Regiment; the Hesse-Darmstadt Life-Regiment; a company of the Saxon *Chevau-légers*, gendarmes and two companies of artillery; a total of nearly 6,000 men and 12 cannon.


26 Napoléon to Berthier, 7 July 1812, *Correspondance de Napoléon 1er*, No. 18919, XXIV, 33-34.
appointment of Mr. Antoine Chrapowicky to the commander of the gendarmerie of the department of Vilna.”

However, the propositions and decisions made by Jomini were merely perfunctory, following orders from above. At the same time, the new Lithuanian leaders were mainly concerned with maintaining a normal mode of life and organizing proper harvests necessary for feeding the troops, which were of dominant importance. In fact, the Provisional Government never issued any official document appealing to the war for independence; the only proclamation in the spirit of uprising was the appeal to the Poles in the Russian service to desert; however, the author of this pamphlet was Napoléon himself.

The primary concerns of the new Lithuanian government and Jomini, as Vilna’s appointed military Governor, were military and administrative issues. The main problem was to provide supplies for the marching troops. All supply wagons of the Grande Armée corps were unloaded in Vilna where the city was supposed to organize the grinding of grain, baking of bread and delivering of its contents to the army. All of Vilna’s bakeries could only furnish 35,000 rations a day, but the Emperor demanded 50,000. However, it was only enough to sustain the needs of the Imperial Headquarters, the 4th Cops and the Imperial Guard; only a few of the line troops were receiving these rations. With assistance of the local administration and under direct orders of Jomini, the warehouses of Vilna would be systematically filled up, especially after harvest, and during the entire campaign they would collect enough of the provisions to be stored for the further needs. To achieve this, Napoléon demanded that all of his administrative levels work non-stop, regardless of their situation.

Such demands were often made without prior consent or attention to the local needs, and Vilna’s municipality many times protested against the violations of the native population’s rights. In one instance, when Jomini ordered that supply of all timber from the banks of the Vilia

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27 By existing correspondence to the Commissioner Bignon, Jomini signed his letters “le gouverneur général”. Dundulis, Napoléon et Lituanie, 281.

28 Arthur Chuquet, 1812. La Guerre de Russie: notes and documents (Paris, 1912), 37; The Patriotic War of 1812. Materials of VUA, 14:65. Note that even the Tsar’s close advisor and former Foreign Minister, a Pole, Prince Adam Czartoryski begged for his own dismissal in compliance with that proclamation; see, e.g., Russkii Arkhiv [The Russian Archive] (St.-Petersburg, 1871), I, 829-34.

29 Napoléon to Berthier, 7 July 1812. Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, No. 18913, XXIV, 29-30; Marian Kukel, Woina 1812 roku [The War of 1812] (Kraków, 1937), I, 363-64.
be made available for the military needs, the municipality reported to the Provisional Government that “this order is executed, but it is necessary to consider that common people are also in great need of the firewood. There are no forests near Vilna…How can the city inhabitants fulfill their obligations for army provisions, while they have need of wood? The locals are complaining in masses…” The municipality officials were asking, “whether it would be possible to equally accommodate both military and civil needs and divide the above mentioned woods in accordance with necessity.” Having very limited resources, Jomini was overwhelmed with responsibilities and often could not comply with various demands to maintain a proper order.

Another serious problem Jomini faced was the lack of discipline among the troops located in Vilna’s department or en route to the front line. The multinational Grande Armée showed early signs of dissolution even before the crossing of the Niemen, when men began to suffer from the shortage of food. Bands of isolated soldiers belonging to the 1st Corps under the “iron maréchal” Davout roamed around, pillaging and looting for several dozen miles off their route of march. The order of Davout’s chief of staff, général de brigade Jean-Louis Romeuf issued in Vilna on 29 June, clearly denounced the pillaging, seizure of property and unauthorized profiteering and demanded to use every method to prevent the decline of discipline. The maréchaux Ney and Oudinot, in disgust, sent to the Emperor continuous reports of indiscipline of their troops. Napoléon decided to organize in Vilna the Commission of Gendarmerie, under one of the prominent général de brigade de gendarmerie Jean Lauer, to hear cases concerning plundering and maraudering. Any soldier who was convicted by the evidence in such a crime would be condemned to death and executed in twenty-four hours by firing squad.

30 Voenskii, Acts and documents..., No. 91, 237.

31 Romeuf to Dessaix, 29 June 1812, Service historique, Mémoires et reconnaissances, Carton MR, 2360 (deuxième supplement).

32 Louis François Lejeune, Mémoires du Général Lejeune (Paris, 1895), I, 183-84. See also Ney’s report to Napoleon regarding behavior in the ranks of the 129th Line and the Illyrian regiments. Fabry, Campagne de Russie, annex, III, 22.

33 Napoléon to Berthier, 4 July 1812. Correspondance de Napoléon 1er, No. 18889, XXIV, 18-19; RGVIA, fond 846, op. 16, d. 3629. The first orders signed by Napoleon regarding the discipline matter and the following court-marshal were performed on 8, 9 and 11 July. Russia, St.-Petersburg, Otdelenie Instituta Istorii Rossii [The Institute on the Russian History, hereafter OIIR], fond 226, op. 1, d. 365, lists 1, 3; d. 366, lists 1, 2.
Municipalność Miasta Wilna.

Wskutek odebrany od JW. Generał-Gubernatora Barona de Jomini Rekwizycyi, Municipalność Miasta Wilna niniejsze Obwieszczenie podaie do publicznej wiadomości, Ogłoszeniem onego przez Druk i przylepieniem takowego w miejscach zwyczajnych, ażeby nikt z mieszkańców jakiejkolwiek bądź kondygnacji nie ważił się kupować od Woyżkowych żadnej rzeczy, ani mięsa, ani chleba, ani do ubioru lub umundurowania, czegokolwiek pochodzącego od Korpusów Woyżkowych, lub z Magazynów; inaczej każdy przestępujący ten zakaz, aresztowanym, przed Sąd Woyžkowy stawionym, i wedle surowości praw wojeskowych ukarany zostanie. Dnia 27. Lipca 1812. Roku.

Michał Römer Prezydent Miasta Wilna.

Figure 8. Proclamation of the municipality of Vilna confirming the order of its Military Governor Jomini, which forbids buying any items from garrisoning troops (Voensky, Acts and documents)
Governor Jomini tried to organize his department to maintain peace and order by all possible means. In an order dated on 16 July in Vilna and published in issue No. 56 of the local newspaper *Kurier Litowsky* [The Lithuanian Courier], he decreed:

1. The troops which are billeting in the city and in the outskirts of Vilna shall maintain and consume their own rations distributed from their supply stores;
2. When billeting, the troops shall have no rights to demand anything from its owners but places for lodging and facilities for food preparation, and
3. The troops shall not demand from the local inhabitants anything by the means of force… All insubordinates shall be dealt with according to the active military laws.  

Jomini also wanted to improve discipline by working with the local population. In another order, dated on 27 July and posted within the city, the Governor forbade inhabitants to purchase soldiers’ bread, meat and all “that was distributed in the orderly form from the Army corps bases or supply stores”. These actions reflected Jomini’s efforts to improve discipline and prevent aggravation among the population of the country while treating Lithuania as allies.

It was also politically important because, on the larger scale, a delegation of the Confederation of Poland led by Joseph Vibitski called on Napoléon earlier at Vilna (11 July) and informed him of the great plans for Poland and Lithuania. The French Emperor, however, in an evasive manner let the Polish lords know that he was ready to assist in the resurrection of Poland if all of its population would unite and fight for its own liberation. The Sixth Bulletin of the Grande Armée, which covered the meeting with representatives of the Confederation, announced the following notion:

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The people of Poland are excited on all sides. The White Eagle is hoisted everywhere. Priests, nobles, peasants and women, all call for the independence of their nation. The [Lithuanian] peasants are extremely jealous of the happiness of the peasants of the Grand Duchy [of Warsaw] who are free; for whatever may be said to the contrary, liberty is considered by the Lithuanians as the greatest blessing.\(^{36}\)

It is significant that, according to Jomini, he was present at the dinner given in honor of the Polish magnates. There, Napoléon outlined his plan to go as far as Smolensk and to enter into cantonments on the Dvina. The war, thereafter, should be resumed and finished in the next year. When asked of his opinion, Jomini, who, according to his own words was present at that dinner, seconded the plan adding that it would be wise to fortify Vilna and await necessary reserves from the Polish Galicia.\(^{37}\)

On 16 July Napoléon, after spending more than two weeks in the city, finally left Vilna, but Jomini remained in the city to ensure that the Emperor’s orders would be implemented. In the next few days, Napoléon was able to reach the equally humble town of Glubokoye.\(^{38}\) By this time, the vanguard of Barclay’s First Western Army was less than fifty miles from the Belarussian city of Vitebsk, whereas Murat’s undernourished cavalry and three infantry divisions of Vice-Roy Eugène’s 4\(^{th}\) Corps, marching from Vilna, were still seventy to eighty miles away.

The discouraged Emperor spent four days in Glubokoye, housed in a convent of Carmélites. The war did not proceed as he expected, because his elusive foe avoided a decisive battle and continued to retreat. Napoléon demanded an improvement in discipline and delayed his further movement waiting for additional troops and convoys with provisions. Armand de Caulaincourt recorded that “the prince of Neuchâtel [Berthier] was snapped at all day long, and overwhelmed with distasteful business in return for his freedom of speech, his inconceivable


\(^{37}\) Jomini, Précis des campaigns de 1812 à 1814, 71-73. This dialogue is surprisingly similar to another one, which took place in Dresden in May of 1812 between Clemens Metternich and Napoléon, when the French Emperor divulged to the Austrian Chancellor his plan for a long-drawn-out war. Chevalier de Metternich, Mémoires, documents et écrits… (Paris, 1880-84), I, 122. Moreover, Smolensk is located on the Dnieper, not the Dvina River; there is a 150 miles difference.

\(^{38}\) Denniére, Itinéraire l’Empereur Napoléon, 32-33.
activity and his unflagging devotion.”³⁹ The Emperor issued a torrent of orders to his numerous commanders along his supply route including his Vilna Governor. He ordered to Berthier:

Inform général Jomini that it is absurd to speak of the lack of bread when he receives 500 quintaux of flour every day; that instead of complaining, he should get up at four o’clock every morning and go in person to the mills … and see to it that 30,000 daily rations of bread are prepared…⁴⁰

The Emperor, who was always quick to pass judgment on any failure on the administrative operations, was never totally committed to improving logistical system. He preferred to concentrate his energies on strategically, rather than logistical issues. Perhaps, these heavy requirements of the campaign later led to Napoléon’s secretary, Baron Agathon Fain, making a statement that “the Governor of Vilna was crying every time when receiving Napoleon’s demands while trying to explain that he was not made suitable for such a burden.”⁴¹ However, this very distorted opinion contradicted existing correspondence of the Grande Armée issued in July, which shows a strain on work at every level of administration and military duties involving Baron de Jomini in the course of his short governorship.

Thus, in one of his orders, Major-général Berthier informed Jomini of the Emperor’s will to preserve navigational activities on the Vilia River. For that, the Vilna Governor was supposed to establish a system of defending points on the line of Kovno-Vilna, and to assist in strengthening garrisons with the local population (500 men for Vilna, 300 men for Kovno); he was also required to work together with the appointed Intendant-général.⁴² Another order, which Napoleon sent to Jomini via Berthier in the next four days, intended to establish several route d’étapes (postal stations) from Vilna through Nowi Troki to the town of Olitta, two hundred miles distant. Each of these stations should serve as a communication point and had to

³⁹ Caulaincourt, With Napoleon in Russia, 69-70.

⁴⁰ Napoléon to Berthier, 22 July 1812, Correspondance de Napoléon 1er, No. 18995, XXIV, 104. One quintal equals to 220 pounds.

⁴¹ Agathon Fain, Manuscript de 1812 (Paris, 1827), 266. Sainte-Beuve completely disproves such a notion in his Le général Jomini, 120-21.

⁴² Berthier to Jomini, 14 July 1812. Fabry, Campagne de Russie, II, 102. The important post of Intendant-général de la Grande Armée was entrusted to général de division Count Mathieu Dumas.
be protected as such. The same order asked to establish garrisons in the nearby towns and villages.\textsuperscript{43}

At the same time Napoléon issued a new order requesting the accelerated arrival of three Polish bataillons of the Vistula regiments from Koënigsberg and provisions for their continued march to the main army.\textsuperscript{44} All of these new burdens were again heaped upon Jomini as head of the local administration. Jomini’s response was laconically precise and, in military fashion, down to the last detail. In his reply to Berthier on July 20 he informed Napoléon’s Chef of Staff of the following:

I have the honor to render to Your Excellency the current information that not all previously arrived troops are ready for departure but:
Detachment of the voltigeurs de la Garde, totaling 250 men;
A squadron of chasseurs de la Garde and attached Mameluks, 96 men.
I also established garrisons in the towns of Oshmiana, Vilkomir and Troki; the local population was notified in advance and received troops accordingly.
Allow me also to call attention to Your Excellency that representatives of the Courlande Confederation are soon to be departed.
I include an instant report of a naval officer who examined navigation on the Vilia, and notified on various administrative activities in the area.\textsuperscript{45}

However, with very limited resources and practically with no assistance in a foreign country with a rather apathetic population toward the French presence, Jomini could achieve little. It was impossible to produce all goods expected as well as to create the national army. By the beginning of August only of 2,400 men were roughly organized, but mostly without uniforms and arms.\textsuperscript{46} Furthermore, Napoléon did not intend to abolish serfdom, as he did in Poland and the enthusiasm of the peasantry declined over time.

\textsuperscript{43} Berthier to Jomini, 18 July 1812. Fabry, \textit{Campagne de Russie}, II, 145.

\textsuperscript{44} Napoleon to Maret, 22 July 1812, \textit{Correspondance de Napoléon 1er}, No. 18994, XXIV, 102.

\textsuperscript{45} Jomini to Berthier, 20 July 1812. Fabry, \textit{Campagne de Russie}, II, 123.

\textsuperscript{46} Napoléon ordered the creation a military force of the Lithuanian Principality: five infantry regiments organized along the French lines, consisting of 3 battalions (6 companies each), numbered 18-22 and four cavalry regiments, consisting of 4 squadrons (2 company each), numbered 17-20. The total number should exceed 14,000 men. The original decree did not survive; therefore, the day of creation of the Lithuanian troops is officially noted as 5 July 1812, the day when Napoléon also decided the Third Regiment of the \textit{Chevaux-Légers lanciers} of the Imperial Guard would be composed of local citizens. Archives Nationales, AF\textsuperscript{IV} (Secrétaires d’état impériale) 674, pl. 5383.
On 29 July, issue No. 59 of The Lithuanian Courier announced the arrival in the capital of its new gouverneur-général de la Lithuanie (Lithuanian Governor General) général de division von Hogendorp.\textsuperscript{47} Dutch by birth, he spent most of his life in various administrative posts; he had served as an attaché of the Batavian Republic to St.-Petersburg in 1802-05, was appointed the War Minister of Holland in 1807, and took part in diplomatic missions to Vienna and Madrid. An aide-de-camp to the Emperor since May of 1811, at the outbreak of the war, he held the important position of the Governor General of Prussia.\textsuperscript{48}

The relationship between Jomini and the new Governor-general was strained from the very beginning, mainly due to the martinet personality of von Hogendorp and the personal ambitions of Jomini. As an example, the Dutchman was furious when Jomini delayed sending him horses. In “his quickly sent off and illegible note, which is totally inappropriate for a subordinate who is writing to his superior, – complained von Hogendorp – he [Jomini] offered apologies for [his] inability to send his own horses, because he already offered them to one beautiful lady.” During the period of their co-administration in Vilna, which lasted less than a month, Count von Hogendorp concluded his opinion on the “emptiness and presumptuousness of a miserable Jomini, who regarded himself very highly because of his book on tactics, while in reality, he did not possess enough knowledge to enable him to command a battalion. Never in my life have I seen a man more over-sensitive, self-confident and blinded by his own ambition…”\textsuperscript{49} Jomini replied by calling von Hogendorp “a corporal’s cane” and, according to correspondence found in Vilna, the Swiss “counted himself a military genius and more important, succeeded in persuading others of such a notion.”\textsuperscript{50}

But of course, neither comment served the main purpose of turning the Lithuanian territory into the solid organizational base for military needs. Maret noted that von Hogendorp’s difficult temper created a certain danger for a conflict and disagreement with the local Lithuanian administration. Unfortunately, in Napoléon’s opinion, no Pole was adequate for such an

\textsuperscript{47} Voenskii, Acts and documents..., No. 7, 261.

\textsuperscript{48} Fabry, Campagne de Russie, annex, IV, 254; Six, Dictionnaire, I, 756.

\textsuperscript{49} Mémoires du général Dirk van Hogendorp, comte de l’Empire, ed. Count D.C. A. van Hogendorp (Paris, 1887), 309.

\textsuperscript{50} Voenskii, Acts and documents..., No. 91, 13-15, 32, 39.
important mission as the Governor General of Lithuania. The Emperor never considered an idea of appointing anyone of the high Polish command, like Joseph Zayonchek (serving with Bonaparte since his Egyptian campaign, 1798-1801), Jan Dabrowski (founder of the Polish Legions in Italy in 1796-97) or Charles Kniazevich. Only général de brigade Nicolas Bronikowski was employed as a Governor of Minsk.\textsuperscript{51} Therefore, “the occupational power in Lithuania was given to a foreigner [von Hogendorp], a rude and quarrelsome man, a person who did not know either people or country. However, even though being resourceful and clever, the foreign general was incapable of getting anything out of the country, crushed by the iron foot of the war; except for bread, horses and hay, the Emperor wanted from the Lithuanians but one thing – an enthusiasm for his [emphasis added] war with Russia.”\textsuperscript{52}

At the same time, the relationship with Jomini became more than just an unpleasant squabble between two parties that included several instances of insubordination by the Vilna’s Governor, or at least that is how von Hogendorp reacted. On one instance, he referred to Jomini as acting over his, von Hogendorp’s head, when the Swiss wrote a letter to Director of engineers working in Vilna, Dominique-André Baron Chambarlhiac, ordering him to perform certain fortifying works.\textsuperscript{53} On another occasion, von Hogendorp ordered Jomini to arrest a Polish officer for violation of a lodging procedure and the ensuing assault and battery; when Jomini disobeyed, von Hogendorp ordered that Jomini himself be placed under house arrest.\textsuperscript{54}

Two the governors had more than administrative disputes. Following the order of the Emperor issued on 7 August, von Hogendorp was supposed to send out a sapper battalion to demolish what was left of the fortified Drissa camp.\textsuperscript{55} Despite Jomini’s warning that the Russian corps was scouting in the area, von Hogendorp insisted on the operation, which led to a mission

\textsuperscript{51} Note that Bronikowski was appointed by the same decree that appointed Jomini on 3 July and issued by Napoléon in Vilna. Dundulis, \textit{Lituanie}, 284.

\textsuperscript{52} Kukel, \textit{The War of 1812}, I, 366.

\textsuperscript{53} \textit{Mémoires du général van Hogendorp}, 310-11.

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 312. The accident is rather disputable, because Jomini himself issued an order requiring proper lodging; moreover, the Poles were considered as allies. Voenskii, \textit{Acts and documents...}, No. 6, 260-61. Note that all these episodes, however, are based on a sole source, van Hogendorp’s own mémoires.

\textsuperscript{55} Napoléon to Maret, 7 August 1812, \textit{Correspondance de Napoléon Ier}, No. 19054, XXIV, 154.
failure. On 3 September, a Russian cavalry detachment under Colonel Michael Rodionov II, sent beyond the Dvina, defeated the French troops, which consisted of a marching bataillon and a squadron of the 7th Chasseurs à Cheval, taking 50 prisoners.

The situation for the region dramatically changed when, by the end of August, von Hogendorp, constantly complaining of the impotence of the Lithuanian Government, was appointed by Napoléon the Président de la commission provisoire du gouvernement de la Lithuanie (the President of the Lithuanian Provisional government). Thereafter, and especially after the defeat at Drissa, the relationship between him and Jomini could be called no other than “violent conflict”, “insubordination” and “rebellious”, which certain historians attribute exclusively to “the arrogance” and “harassment of Hogendorp.”

However, the Duke de Bassano, who was at that time in the Lithuanian capital, intervened in favor of Jomini and advised the Emperor to appoint him to a position in Smolensk. Napoléon agreed, and while staying in Viasma, addressed to Maret a letter informing him that Berthier was ordered to transfer Jomini to this new post – the military Commandant of city of Smolensk.

Baron Jomini left the ancient Lithuanian capital without any visible regret. The foreign territory, the suffering local population under the yoke of “liberators”, and the cause of the entire war, were incompatible with his original talent and interest as military historian and writer. But Jomini was a soldier, and the first commandment of a soldier was to obey his Emperor. In his

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56 This episode was first discussed by Courville, who made out of this minor combat a scene of destruction of a 1,000-men detachment under Major Hell (?). Courville, Jomini, ou Devin de Napoléon, 166-67. He, however, did not cite any sources in support of his statement, but because of his authority as Jomini’s relative and expert, it led most historians repeat this event without any further considerations and consultation with archival data. See Baqué, L’homme qui devinait Napoléon, 193, Brian P. Austin, The March on Moscow, 242-43.

57 Popov, The Grande Armée in Russia, 109-10; Alexander Podmazo, Bol’shaya Evropeiskaya Voina, 1812-15: xronika sobití [The Big European War, 1812-15: a chronicle of events] (Moscow, 2003), 45, where the episode of the Drissa camp engagement was first questioned, revised and chronologically attributed.

58 Napoléon to Hogendorp, 24 August 1812, Correspondence de Napoléon 1er, No. 19133, XXIV, 202.

59 Sainte-Beuve, Le général Jomini, 123; Baqué, L’homme qui devinait Napoléon, 194; Langendorf, Faire la guerre: Jomini, 77.


61 Napoléon to Maret, 29 August 1812, Correspondance de Napoléon 1er, No. 19157, XXIV, 327. The newly-assigned Vilna governor, général de brigade Baron Roch Godart, assumed his post only on 4 October. Six, Dictionnaire, I, 509.
trip from Vilna to Smolensk Jomini, accompanied by his aide-de-camps Point-Bellanger and Fivaz under protection of Bavarian dragoons, arrived at the little town of Vesselovo. There, on the banks of the quiet Belarussian River, officers pointed out several possible fords for the army in case of necessity. When questioning the local peasants on the name of that river, they were informed that it was the Berezina.

At the end of August, Napoléon ordered the général de division Count Louis Baraguey d’Hilliers, who was appointed the Governor General of Smolensk “province”, to relocate to the city of Viasma, because the Emperor wanted him to be near the main army. Général de brigade of the Imperial Guard Pierre Lanusse, who was temporarily in command of the city of Smolensk, pending Jomini’s arrival from Vilna, was transferred to the orders of d’Hilliers’. On 30 and 31 August, two battalions of the 33rd Légère, 1,200 strong, led by général de brigade Baron Joseph Barbanègre moved from their encampment at Minsk to Smolensk, where he was appointed the new military Governor.

The city of Smolensk was almost completely burned out as a result of the heavy bombardment, which had supported the assaults of the Grande Armée on 16 and 17 August. Under the Russian Tsar Boris Godunov (1595-1604), the city was surrounded by five miles of walls, built of deep red stones and bricks, which stood twenty-five feet high and ten feet thick. They were flanked by seventeen old towers – some polygonal, others square, and a Royal citadel built by the Poles in the early-sixteenth century. But behind these mighty walls the city had predominantly wooden structures. During the two days of fierce storming, Smolensk was constantly on fire; out of 2,250 houses only 350 barely survived. The heroic resistance of the Russians cost Napoléon dearly: almost 12,000 soldiers and officers killed and wounded. At that time, since the Grande Armée had crossed the Niemen, its forces continued to dwindle.

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62 Courville, Jomini, ou Devin de Napoléon, 172.

63 Napoléon to Berthier, 27 August 1812, Correspondance de Napoléon 1er, No.19152, XXIV, 215. In the course of the Russian campaign Lanusse commanded the 2nd brigade of the 1st Division of the Imperial Guard. Fabry, Campagne de Russie, annex IV, 258; Six, Dictionnaire, II, 55-56

64 Napoléon to Berthier, 2 September 1812, Correspondance de Napoléon 1er, No. 19174, XXIV, 231-32; Six, Dictionnaire, I, 49; Alain Pigeard, Les étoiles de Napoléon (Paris, 1996), 207-08.

Figure 9. The theater of operation between Vilna and Smolensk. Little “flags” represent the places of Napoléon’s temporary halts (Caulaincourt, Mémoires)
Figure 10. The city of Smolensk, 1810s. (Tenichev’s collection, Moscow State Public Library)

Figure 11. The Smolensk’s Palace of the Governor. Originally a two-stories building, the third floor was added after WWII. Today, located on the Revolution street, No. 8, the building is occupied by the local School of Music (Author’s private collection)
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After Smolensk, the Emperor’s forces were estimated at only 160,175 men, including 23,697 cavalry. But the losses suffered after those battles were added to the many young conscripts, who failed to keep up with the marching pace. The first Russian “groups of the local self-defense” (partisans) often ambushed foragers and couriers. Units that had to remain behind to garrison towns and relay posts along an ever-lengthening line of communication had also further reduced the advancing army. According to the muster roll performed at Gzhatsk on 2-3 September, the main combat forces of the Grande Armée, without taking into account the escort troops assigned to the Imperial Headquarters and artillery park, consisted of 123,737 men and 563 cannon.

The exact date when Jomini and his subordinates arrived in Smolensk is unknown. Reappointment papers were issued on 29 August; assuming that it required covering 400 miles through hostile territory, the actual arrival date for Jomini might occur in early October. The picture that appeared to Jomini was far more depressing. In the surviving buildings, mostly local churches and warehouses, he found nearly 15,000 sick, wounded or dying soldiers without food, medical personnel, and the most basic resources. The native population almost entirely had left the devastated city, thus making it practically impossible to create a local administration along the Lithuanian lines.

In this regard it is imperative to identify two categories of cities and regions occupied by the troops of the Grande Armée. First, there were territories obtained by Russia in the course of the Third Partition of Poland with dominant Catholic Lithuanian and Polish populations, and second, there were long-standing territories with their pure Russian or mixed inhabitants.

“Before the town of Tolochin”, reported général de division Emmanuel de Grouchy, whose 3rd Reserve Cavalry Corps was attached to the maréchal Davout’s army group, “there is a great spirit around. All lords do show a good mood and respect. But beyond that place are the Russian people and they hate us.” So, for that second category, which along the communication
lines was electrified by the Tsar’s Manifesto and the Holy Orthodox Church, the invasion was a conquest, “a heavenly punishment” contrary to the former territories that hoped for the resurrection of “ancient Poland” from the Muscovites. From now on the courteous war turned into the total war.

In such a difficult situation Jomini arrived to perform his duties, mainly assisting Smolensk’s Governor Barbanègre in his endless administrative, military and managerial duties. According to the Emperor’s orders, the city was in the process of organizing a major military depot, a hospital with capacity for 8,000 people, warehouses to store nearly 250,000 artillery projectiles, and supplies of uniform and other provisions. Napoléon also left a garrison there with orders to re-build bridges across the Dnieper burned down by the retreating Russian army. Finally, on 27-28 September, the 9th Corps under maréchal Victor Claude-Perrin approached Smolensk from Kovno and by 10 October his 28th Infantry Division built a camp beneath the city walls, while the other troops were scattered out in the nearby towns and villages.

The main task of the Governor and général de brigade Jomini as his assistant were the same as that of their predecessor Lanusse: holding Cossacks and partisans on the line of communications, keeping up contacts with the military commandant in the nearby city of Orsha, and collecting supplies through trade and requisitions from the countryside. Most important, the new French administration was expected to reassure and calm the population and persuade them to return to the city. The issued proclamation declared:

Inhabitants of Smolensk! The French army and civil administration use all means to establish order and protection. Do come to the city where the new organization called “municipality” is opened! Here, various claims and complaints will be heard in the presence of you, the Russian people… Bring your goods for a fare trade to Smolensk where you could get a handsome profit and forget the previous losses. If you desire any protection, do tell us, and the French Emperor shall take you under his patronage.

Peasants, enhance your calm, go about you business and have no fear, as the French troops will not disturb you any longer. All arriving troops are strictly

70 Napoleon to Berthier, 2 September 1812, Correspondance de Napoléon 1er, No. 19174, XXIV, 232-33. The Smolensk garrison consisted of the following troops: 3 battalions of the “Vistula Legion” (2,500 men); 1 marching battalion of the “Vistula Legion” (1,103 men); the 1st Polish Chevau-légers lanciers Regiment (400 men); the company of the field artillery; total: nearly 4,200 men and 18 pieces of ordnance.

71 Popov, The Grande Armée in Russia, Ann. III, 347.
informed not to cause you any trouble… The French government awaits from you delivery of bread and other provisions for which you shall receive a decent pay from His Majesty himself; he is awaiting your submission and obedience.\textsuperscript{72}

However, even if the municipality of Vilna was organized not only by the orders of Napoléon but also by decrees of the Provisional Government, in Russian cities the members of such institutions were simply appointed by the occupying authorities.\textsuperscript{73} But nothing worked, since the new municipal “government” was forcibly obliged to perform their duties. The local Russian “commissar” Ivan Sherbakov, assigned by the French, repeatedly wrote to the Governor on various abuses caused by either regular troops or bands of roaming marauders pillaging and destroying all over the area; he further threatened to cease his activities and resign from the post.\textsuperscript{74}

The French quickly realized that the lack of discipline in the army and in the rear could turn into a disaster if not corrected in time. The governor and his assistant sent military detachments on all sides with the task of protecting the local population from marauders, accompanying peasants to villages and enabling the collection of requisition. For example, the peasants of the Sukhovo village complained to the Commandant Jomini about the mischief of Bavarians, and he sent Polish troops from the garrison to assist them.\textsuperscript{75} But the biggest problem for Barbanègre and Jomini was still the pressure to assemble all necessities for the main army.\textsuperscript{76}

Napoléon expected Smolensk to became a new major center of supplies for his Grande Armée. But the “Scythian tactics” of the Russian army, the growing hostility and total

\textsuperscript{72} Rysskii Arkhiv [The Russian Archive], issue No. 5 (Moscow, 1901), 8.
\textsuperscript{73} In Smolensk, it was put under order of Commissaire de guerre 2\textdegree classe (Commissar of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} class) Antoine de Villeblanche who was appointed the Intendant for the Smolensk province. France, Archives Nationales, AF\textsuperscript{IV} (Secrétariat d’état impériale), 685, pl. 5480, ”Ordre de jour au quarter impérial de Smolensk, le 18\textsuperscript{ème} Août 1812.”
\textsuperscript{74} Rysskaya Starina, [The Russian Antiquity], issue No. 4 (St.-Petersburg, 1902),133.
\textsuperscript{75} RGVIA, fond 846, op. 16, d. 3617, lists. 6, 11. The Poles were often chosen for such missions because many of them were proficient in the Russian language.
\textsuperscript{76} According to Napoleon’s decree on contributions issued on 1 September 1812, the entire province of Smolensk should supply the following provisions: 5,130,000 pounds of bread, 700 bulls, 7,500 oats, 22,000 pounds of both hay and straw. Food supplies and 1/3 of the indicated livestock should be stored in the warehouses no later than 1 December and the rest by March of 1813; for insubordination the locals were threatened with court-marshal. Article 3 of this decree specified that the summary of such contributions should be counted as tax revenue. Voenskii, 	extit{Acts and documents..}, No. 91, 157, 237-39.
unwillingness of the local population to cooperate with the French administartion made this task very difficult. Also, the first organized “people’s” partisan groups and military units constantly disturbed the much-extended French line of communications. Finally, the constant replacements of officials did not serve any good to the cause either.

On 8 October Barbanègre turned his leadership of Smolensk over to Jomini and left for Moscow where he expected to join the main army. On 10 October, the “political and military organization” of the Smolensk province was assigned by Napoléon to général de division Henry-François Charpentier, who was transferred their form the same post in the province of Vitebsk. Meanwhile, Jomini continued his efforts to collect provisions and send various marching columns of troops and trains with food supplies to Moscow. But it was a little too late; the Grande Armée left the ancient Russian capital in early morning on 19 October.

When he left Moscow, the actual armed forces at Napoléon’s disposal numbered 89,640 infantry, 14, 314 cavalry, and 12,000 non-combatants, sick and others; in total, it was 115,954 men of all ranks and 569 pieces ordinance. “The army was returning to Smolensk, but it was a march and not a retreat” – later explained Napoléon on the isle of St.-Helena. The Emperor ordered Jomini at Smolensk to collect in the city a stock of flour and bread in all the churches that survived a fire. On 31 October Jomini wanted to allocate part of the provisions to the Cathedral of Odigitria (the Assumption), but the local priest Nikolai Murzakevich begged him not to damage this old Orthodox temple and Jomini finally agreed.

On 9 November, after difficult marches, battles, inclement weather and first signs of demoralization in his once-victorious Grande Armée, Napoléon reached Smolensk. “At length the army came within sight of Smolensk,” wrote de Ségur. “The soldiers pointed it out to each

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77 Barbanègre to Baraguey d’Hilliers, 8 October 1812. RGVIA, fond 846, op. 16, d. 3617.

78 Six, Dictionnaire, I, 225; Fabry, Campagne de Russie, IV, 47.

79 For the period from 7 September to 6 October, fourteen big supply trains and marching columns were organized and sent from Smolensk to Moscow (some with the participation of Jomini), which shows a great undertaking performed on the line of communications. RGVIA, fond 846, op. 16, d. 3602 and d. 3618

80 Chambray, Histoire de l’expédition de Russie, II, 315.

81 Charles de Montholon, Mémoires de Sainte Hélène (Paris, 1823-1825), II, 104.

82 This account is based on the original dairy of the priest Murzakevich, quoted in Popov, The Grande Armée in Russia, 268.
other… Here was the end of their suffering, here was the land of promise where famine would be
changed to abundance and weariness would find rest…” Jomini and his French administration
managed to organize a vast stock of provisions, but due to the almost total disorganization within
the army, all attempts at maintaining order were nullified by bands of deserters and
insubordinates who raided the magazines. Most of precious stores at Smolensk went to waste,
for the Imperial Guard and the other leading troops consumed and scattered the supplies in three
days of looting which left maréchal Ney’s rearguard with nothing at all. Moreover, the
Imperial Guard was accused by other troops of having stolen the supplies, causing envy and
anger, especially because of their privileged status. With major difficulty in the growing
disorder, most of those still with their colors did receive partial distributions of rice, flour, spirits
and in some cases even beef. But besides the Imperial Guard and several other units, especially
from Davout’s 1st Corps, there was no way of controlling the famished horde that staggered into
Smolensk, taking the stores by storm and hungrily devouring many of the draft horses that had
been assembled in and around the town to help pull guns and wagons.

The bad news of losing Vitebsk, the retreat of Victor’s corps, and the advance of flanking
Russian armies compelled Napoléon to abandon Smolensk on 14 November. Assigned by the
order of Napoléon to his Imperial Headquarter with a rather vague title of attaché à l’État-Major
Général and without clear responsibilities, the unsuccessful governor and commandant of two
strategically important cities of the Russian Empire, général de brigade Baron de Jomini joined
the retreating army in its final destination of debacle.

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85 Table alphabetique et analytique… Service historique, Grande Armée, 1812, Carton C2 133.
CHAPTER FOUR
WHEN THE IMPOSSIBLE DOES HAPPEN – THE BEREZINA BRIDGES

It took five days to concentrate what was left of Napoléon’s Grande Armée in and around Smolensk. The loss of more than half of his troops, now reduced to 45,000 men and 220 pieces of ordnance, was only one of the several mishaps confronting the French Emperor. The general operative situation was anything but satisfactory. He was informed that the Third Western Army under Admiral Pavel Tcitchagov was moving towards Minsk. Then maréchal Victor’s aide-de-camp rode in with the disturbing news that other Russian troops, the Lieutenant General Peter Wittgenstein’s First Corps, taking advantage of their numerical superiority, had managed to seize Vitebsk on 7 November, with all the food supplies that had been stored there. Moreover, at Liakhovo (some thirty-five miles south-west of Smolensk), on 9 November, the Russian “army flying corps” and partisan groups surrounded the detachment of Victor’s 9th Corps under orders of général de brigade Jean-Pierre Augereau and, after a bitter struggle, compelled it to lay down its arms. At the same time Napoleon was informed that part of Prince Eugène’s 4th Corps was defeated on 11 November at the Vop River, near Dukhovshina town by the Cossack Corps under Ataman Platov. Moreover, it was known that Tcitchagov from the south, Wittgenstein from the north, and Field marshal Mikhail Kutusov’s main army from the east was approaching the Grande Armée from three sides and threaten to surround it.

Napoléon realized that his primary plan to remain in Smolensk for a winter-stay in the area between the Dnieper, Berezina and Western Dvina rivers on the Vitebsk – Orsha – Moghilev line of communication was now an impossibility. As far as can be judged from the Emperor’s written orders, it was not until 11 November, his third day in Smolensk, that the French Emperor

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1 Chambray, Histoire de l’expédition de Russie, II, 435; Denniée gives the number of vehicles accompanying the army as 40,000; in Itinéraire l’Emperor Napoléon, 107.

2 In the outset of the war Général de brigade J.-P. Augereau (brother of maréchal C.-P. F. Augereau) commanded the 1st brigade of the 1st Infantry Division in the 9th Army Corps. In this action he was taken prisoner along with his entire detachment of 62 officers and 1,650 men; RGVIA, fond 474, d. 3465, part 3; Denis Davidov, Voennie zapiski [Military notes] (Moscow: Voennoe izdatel’stvo, 1982), 305-08.

**Figure 12.** Sample of the analytical bulletin used by the Historical Section of the *Grande Armée*. It was used as a spare paper for various notes; ironically, this one, dated on 5 November 1812, informs the Emperor of Malet’s conspiracy.

(France, Archive de la Guerre)
became aware of this new menace. Now he would have to retreat farther, with the hope of holding in the area of Vilna and Minsk. Finally, news of the Malet Conspiracy, an extraordinary event in Paris, which shook “belief in the stability of his power”, induced Napoleon to think of personally leaving Russia as soon as possible. Ironically, this unpleasant news arrived being written on the letterhead of Jomini’s insolvent Historical Section.

Already by the end of August the Tsar and his close advisors developed a new plan, which included surrounding and destroying Napoléon’s Grande Armée at the Berezina. According to these instructions received by Kutusov on 20 September, his army “shall proceed farther towards Borisov where it shall join other troops. Accordingly, the main army shall hold the enemy nearer to Moscow, thus giving other armies time to concentrate in such place.”

Napoléon left Smolensk at the head of his Imperial Guard with 14,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry on 14 November at 5:00 a.m. On that day the temperature fell sharply, with a reading as low as –23.75°C (-10.75°F). In the meantime, the Russian army went south around Smolensk and approached Krasnoi, threatening to cut off the Smolensk-Orsha line of retreat for the Grande Armée. On the following day in his march to Krasnoi, Napoléon learned that the city was occupied by the strong army and partisan detachment (nearly 8,000 men and 6 pieces of ordnance) under Major General Sergey Ozharovsky. But on 16 November, by the impetuous attack of the division of his Jeune Garde (Young Guard) under command of général de division François Roguet, Napoléon dislodged the enemy corps from the city and cleared the Old Smolensk Road on his route to the town of Orsha via Liady and Dubrovna. It was at that time

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4 Chambray, Histoire de l’expédition de Russie, II, 192-94.

5 De Ségur, Histoire de Napoléon, II, 180. Napoleon received this news from Maret at the Mikhelevka village, on the night of 7 November. Note sent by duke de Bassano form Vilna, 5 November. Service historique, Correspondance: Grande Armée, 1812, Carton C2 133.

6 The primary plan developed by the tsarist government and Russian command by the end of August did foresee the encirclement and destruction of Napoleon’s Grande Armée at Smolensk; the operation included the main army and flank auxiliary corps. After this failed the new altered plan regarding the Berezina was dispatched to Kutusov during his stay at Krasnya Pahra, near Tarutino camp. Mikhail Kutusov. Sbornik dokumentov [Kutusov’s corpus of documents] (Moscow: Voennoe Izdatel’stvo, 1954), part 4, I, 244-46.

7 Chambray, Histoire de l’expédition de Russie, II, 195.

8 Troitskiy, 1812 Velikii god Rossii, 277.

9 De Ségur, Histoire de Napoléon, II, 236-41, 256.
when général de brigade Baron Jomini once again played an important role, in helping to save the remnants of Napoléon’s Grande Armée.

There was but few provision gathered by the local administration in Liady and Orsha. From 14 November in Orsha, besides commandant du place Jeanne Brosseau, Pedro d’Almeida marquis d’Alorna, the Governor of the Moghilev province, was also located there.10 D’Alorna reported to maréchal Berthier that he was trying to bring up the provisions from the nearby villages and to rally many isolated soldiers but in vain: “l’espirit de ces gens est malade”. Jomini arrived at Orsha on November 17; he had been sent from Smolensk to survey the terrain and to place some isolated soldiers at the passage across the Dnieper. From Krasnoi, Jomini moved with three companies of sappers, to make all necessary repairs to the bridges along the road. Later on that day he reported to Berthier:

I did not encounter any troops on the road towards Smolensk except for the detachment of gendarmerie d’élite, which I sent to Orsha. As much as it deems possible they shall hold all isolated men. But, because the Dnieper is frozen and it could be crossed anywhere, there is nothing to expect from such a measure. To assemble these men according to their corps d’armée, there must be at least one général officer present for each of these different corps.

I also found in Liady a small amount of food supplies, in particular a total of 30,000 rations of flour. According to the Commissaire des guerres Mauny, magazines here [in Orsha] are considerable and contain nearly 90,000 rations and it is possible to organize a proper distribution, especially if Moghilev can be guarded and the convoys protected to prevent a disorder of our soldiers.11

Napoléon, accompanied by the remnants of his Imperial Guard reached Liady by the evening of 17 November, eleven miles from Krasny. His paramount concern was to reorganize the army and reestablish its discipline. He ordered Berthier:

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10 Fabry, Campagne de Russie, Annex, IV, 254; Popov, The Grande Armée in Russia, 271. Note that the Portuguese general on the French service, marquis d’Alorna, joined the Grande Armée in August of 1812; he later died in Koënigsberg from exhaustion. Major Brosseau at the outset of the campaign served as aide-de-camp to maréchal Davout.

11 Jomini to Berthier, 17 November 1812. Service historique, Correspondance: Grande Armée, 1812, C2 133. The Gendarmerie d’élite of the Imperial Guard were organized by decree of 15 April 1806 and consisted of four mounted companies, 114 men each. They were mainly used to guard strategically important places, roads, convoy prisoners and the like. Marching from Vilna to Orsha, they were under orders of général de brigade Jean-Pierre Henry. Service historique, Gendarmes d’élite, Carton Xab 37.
We have to prevent disorder and chaos in provision distribution... In Dubrovna, which we shall reach tomorrow, we have a food store, a Polish commandant and sous-prefect; in Orsha we have 90,000 rations and lots of spirits; we also shall find flour in Tholochin, then 200,000 rations await us in Borisov. The best way to gather men under colors, prevent plundering and violence, is to distribute provisions accordingly. Généraux Jomini and d’Alorna already sent forward to establish order at the Dnieper crossing, but they have only a small detachment of gendarmerie. Send général de division Junot with the Westphalians, order the grouping of dispersed soldiers into the defile of Orsha for we shall return them to their respective corps. We shall organize proper distribution of the provisions and to create a police force in the city.\(^\text{12}\)

The approach to the town of Liady was down a steep, icy slope. It was utterly impossible to walk down, so the French Emperor, his Imperial Headquarter and his guardsmen had no option but to sit down and slide on their backsides.\(^\text{13}\) Curiously enough, the same report of Jomini to Berthier reminded him of this obstacle, but it reached the Imperial Headquarter on the next day. If it had come earlier, they would know the following:

The slope can be turned by a road to the left. There are two or three very steep slopes and very dangerous for the equipages. It seems to me that there is nothing to do about it, except descend at the entrance to Liady. I’ve told the commandant de place to promise to point it out to the whole train [movement].

The two slopes between Dubrovna and Orsha, of which one goes up and the other down, are no less bad and will cause a great delay on the march. Général Eblé has already taken precautions to ease our vehicles when they shall pass the ravine.\(^\text{14}\)

The eyes of the exhausted army now turned to Orsha, which the Emperor, like everyone else, regarded as an important base. However, to re-establish order and discipline became almost impossible. “In Liady”, recollected Guillaume Peyrusse, “all men grouped in big crowds; there was no order. One could not find any trace of discipline. It was difficult to demand anything of the soldier who was deprived of everything and for whom pillaging and destruction became a


\(^{14}\) Jomini to Berthier, 17 November 1812. Service historique, Correspondance: Grande Armée, 1812, C2 133.
necessary mode of life.” The same lack of discipline happened in Dubrovna, a small village lying twenty miles away from Orsha.

Near Dubrovna, on 18 November, Napoléon and his Imperial Headquarters were able to spent a night in Princess Lubomirská’s splendid country mansion. At this time the Emperor received devastating news that Minsk had just been captured by Admiral Tcitchagov two days earlier. The second report Jomini sent to Berthier from Orsha confirmed the same information and disclosed other important discoveries:

Monseigneur, I heard yesterday that the enemy has occupied Minsk with a corps of regular troops. Because of this I feel determined to remind Your Highness not to follow that route, because from Bobr to Minsk there are thirty-four lieues of continuous forests, forming a defile where a small infantry troop with cannon could hold up the march of the army. Throughout the whole extent of this road it is impossible to pass either to right or left of it.

There is also an error in the distances marked on the map. Semolevice is eleven lieues from Minsk and ten from Borisov; the map shows five to six lieues less. The road is bare of everything except woods and swamps.

Where did all this information come from? The distance from Orsha to Minsk is nearly 100 miles and it is doubtful that Jomini or any of his officers made trips specifically to examine the roadway. Information could be acquired during the constant troop movements in the area or discussion with officers of the Orsha garrison. Also, numerous refuges from Minsk might deliver the same news after its capture. But more likely, during his trip from Vilna to Smolensk earlier in August, he managed to obtain this information. Therefore, on this dramatically difficult

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15 Baron Guillaume-Joseph-Roux Peyrusse, Mémorial et archives du M. le Baron Peyrusse (Carcassonne, 1869), 121-22. In the course of the Russian campaign he held the important post of le payeur de la couronne (paymaster of Napoleon’s Household).


17 Jomini to Berthier, 18 November 1812. Service historique, Correspondance: Grande Armée, 1812, C2 133. The old French measure of length un lieue equals 3,898 km or roughly 2.5 miles.

18 Napoleon used a big 100-pages map prepared in Russia in 1808, which was acquired by his ambassador Armand Caulaincourt and brought to France in 1811. Diligently examined, all titles were carefully translated, although not always as accurate, and reflected its French version, which the French Emperor and his Headquarters took with them to Russia.

19 On 15 September, the garrison of Orsha consisted of 29 men of the 1st and 37 men of the 2nd Westphalian Hussar regiments and 100 men of the 24th Infantry Division. Service historique, Correspondance: Grande Armée, 1812 C2 133.
phase of the retreat, Napoléon’s choice to attach Jomini to his État-Major Générale rather then once again to appoint him a governor of any remote point proved valuable to the Grande Armée.

Now, that the best French supply base had been taken, Tcitchagov then moved on towards Borisov, where the 17th Infantry Polish division under command of the général de division Jan Dąbrowsky was guarding the only tête-de-pont (bridgehead) over the Berezina. A couple of days’ march to the north, Wittgenstein hovered threateningly with his troops over Napoleon’s line of retreat, about halfway between Orsha and Borisov.

This march was executed in far more difficult condition, with the temperature varying from –15°C (-5°F) to –25° C (-13°F) and with regular Russian forces harrying every step. On 19 November Napoleon arrived at Orsha. Here, the exhausted army found well-filled storehouses, but the undisciplined behavior of hungry and tired soldiers once again nullified the proper distribution of rations. “Disorder had by now acquired an organization of its own and enlisted in its ranks the majority of the army”, noted de Ségur. Two bridges in this city, lying along a bend in the Dnieper, were under protection of the Gendarmerie d’élite of the Imperial Guard, providently sent here earlier by Jomini, but it was all in vain: the crowds of starving and desperate soldiers, despite the threats of gendarmes to arrest any and all found out of order, crossed the river.

At the same time the remnants of the main army were reorganized. The 1st Corps was merged into three battalions and strengthened by the Orsha garrison; the 3rd Corps was also reformed into three battalions; the 4th and 5th Corps into two battalions each. The 8th Corps, back in Smolensk, was organized into three battalions, but by now counted no more than 400 men.

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20 The division under the command of a veteran of Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, généraux de division Jan Henry Dąbrowsky arrived to Ukraine on 23 August and besieged and captured Bobryisk. By the end of August he detached the 17th Polish Infantry and 15th Uhlan regiments under command of Colonel Casmir Malahovsky to carry on the siege, while with the rest of the division he moved to Borisov. Vladimir Kozanowsky, “Pol’skie i litovskie voiska v Napoleonovskix voinax” [Polish and Lithuanian troops in Napoleonic wars] (master’s thesis, Moscow University, 1988), 34.

21 Denniée, Itinéraire l’Empereur Napoléon, 141; Chambray, Histoire de l’expédition de Russie, II, 220.

22 De Ségur, Histoire de Napoléon, II, 260. Almost all survivors of the Russian campaign noted the same situation.

23 The French Emperor had in his possession 5,000 Guard Infantry, 1,400 Guard Cavalry and over 5,200 line troops distributed among newly reorganized corps. Along with approaching corps of maréchaux Oudinot (7,000 men) and Victor (10,800) the number of combatants totaled nearly 30,000 men. Chambray, Histoire de l’expédition de Russie, II, 300. Another account gives 7,000 Guard, 5,000 for the Davout and 4,000 for the Eugène’s corps; the 5th, 8th corps and all cavalry combined had nearly 2,000 men. Récits de Cesare de Laugier, officier de la Garde du
Thirty-six pieces of ordnance found in the town were distributed among the newly reorganized “corps” of the Grande Armée or l’armée de Moscou, as it later became known. But the Emperor then made what would turn out to be a near-fatal decision. In the course of acquiring mounts to pull new guns, he decided, along with civil vehicles blocking the road, to burn his pontoon train despite protests from its chief, général de brigade Eblé.

The Imperial Headquarters continued its movement via Kokhanov and on 22 November it arrived at the small town of Tolochin. Napoléon received there news that Tcitchagov had taken Borisov by surprising and defeating the detachment of Dąbrowsky’s division holding the bridgehead on the western bank of the Berezina. Therefore, Napoleon’s retreat was cut off, while the advance guard of the main Russian army under General of Infantry Michael Miloradovitch along with Platov’s Cossacks were in close pursuit. The situation became critical and inevitable encirclement became a reality.

But Napoléon reacted by ordering maréchal Nicholas-Charles Oudinot with his 2nd Corps concentrated at Loshnitsa to seize Borisov, while maréchal Victor should hold Wittgenstein. On the night of 23 November maréchal Oudinot successfully attacked Tcitchagov’s advance guard under the command of Major General Pavel Phalen in front of Borisov and burst into the city. However, even by occupying the city, Oudinot realized that he had incomplete victory – the Russians still controlled the left bank of the Berezina, thus blocking the possible route of retreat of to the Grande Armée. Searching for a place to cross, the maréchal took the initiative and chose the ford by the village of Studianka, ten miles upstream from Borisov, which was first

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Prince Eugène, translated by Henry Lionnet (Paris: A. Fayard, 1912), 156. Note that approximately 35,000 to 40,000 non-combatants also followed the army.

24 De Ségur, Histoire de Napoléon, II, 312.

25 Order of the day, 22 November 1812. Correspondance, de Napoléon 1er, No. 19346, XXIV, 364. After crossing the Niemen in June, this train had slowly followed the main army but evidently at that stage of the retreat, halted in Orsha.

26 Napoleon to Berthier, 23 November 1812. Correspondance, de Napoléon 1er, No. 19347, XXIV, 365; Berthier to Oudinot, 22 November 1812, as quoted in Chambray, Histoire de l’expédition de Russie, II, 268, 269.

discovered by a cavalry picket of the 8th Polish Uhlan Regiment. Later on that day Oudinot sent to Napoléon his commandant le génie (corps engineers’ commander) général de brigade Gillaume Dode de la Brunerie with the report, while he ordered the sappers under corps artillery’s commander général de division Claude-Charles Aubry to start making struts for the future bridge across the Berezina.  

At the same time Napoleon, receiving reports on Oudinot’s success, developed his escape strategy. He held a series of meetings with officers of various ranks and finally, turned again to Jomini for his assumed knowledge of the area. According to his own finding, Jomini suggested crossing above the town of Borisov. He then assured the Emperor that he knew of a road branching off to the right of the city, which crosses the swamps over a series of wooden bridges. Obviously, Jomini supported his statement with the fact that during his August-September trip to Smolensk, he discovered a road that was running through the little towns of Zembin and Molodeczno. This road would take the army safely to Vilna; however, if this road was blocked, there was a passage near Vileika across the Vilia River, which passed through a fertile country which had not yet been laid waste.

The detailed map which the Emperor had in has possession indicated the passage near Veselovo, but there was no guarantee that this pass is still open. For the purpose of moving via Veselovo it was necessary to turn from the main road from Borisov towards the left bank of the Berezina. It should be noted that after passing the swamps, this road reappeared near

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28 As a part of Général de brigade Baron Jean Corbineau’s 6th Brigade de cavalerie légère, Oudinot’s corps, this unit cleared the western bank of the Berezina during the previous week. Corbineau to Oudinot, 21 November 1812. Service historique, Correspondance: Grande Armée, 1812, C2 133. Corbineau reported on his finding personally to Napoleon. De Caulaincourt, Souvenirs, II, 175-76.

29 Chambray, Histoire de l’expédition de Russie, II, 290-91; Denniée, Itinéraire de l’Empereur Napoléon, 153-54.

30 Jomini to Berthier, 22 November 1812. Service historique, Correspondance: Grande Armée, 1812, C2 133. Here, Jomini informed the Chief of Staff of various roads from the village of Bobr and pointed out the pass near Veselovo, adding that it was practicable for artillery.

31 De Ségur, Histoire de Napoléon, II, 263-64; Jomini to Monnier, 17 June 1813. Correspondance de général Jomini avec M. le Baron Monnier (Paris, 1821), 34-35.

32 Chambray, Histoire de l’expédition de Russie, II, 280. Note that it was the same map, which Jomini criticized in his earlier report to Berthier.
Figure 13. Report of the général de brigade Jomini to maréchal Berthier sent from the town of Bobr on 22 November 1812; a fragment (France, Archive de la Guerre)
Molodeczno and merged into the main road from Minsk to Vilna. While discussing all possible actions, Berthier sent Oudinot a new order asking him to hold the ford near Vesselovo. Meanwhile, maréchal Victor, by occupying the road towards Lepel, was supposed to cover Oudinot’s flank from the Russian troops advancing under Wittgenstein. The French needed to hurry and save what was left of the army. On the next day, 23 November, the Emperor gave the order to destroy the archive of his entire campaign, part of the wagons blocking the road and the colors of nonexistent regiments.

On his arrival at 4:00 p.m. of 24 November in Bobr, Napoléon ordered to généraux Eblé, Commandant en chef le génie (Chief of engineers) François Chasseloup-Laubat and Jomini to be placed under command of maréchal Oudinot for further reconnaissance of the Berezina. They marched the entire day and night and approached Borisov on the early morning of 25 November. Napoléon was informed about the fords at Studianka and Vesselovo, but at the same time he considered the ford at Ukholodi, four miles downstream on the Berezina. However, general confusion, anxiety and also information that Oudinot already had commenced to build bridges, compelled the Emperor finally to chose Studianka as the place for the crossing. Information provided by Jomini earlier about possible roads in that area also served as an important motivation for this decision.

The first engineers arrived at Studianka ford the night before and started assembling bridge trestles using timbers from the nearby town of Studianka. By 5:00 p.m. of the 25 November, Jomini, who served as a guide, Eblé, and his pontooners finally arrived on the place of the future crossing. According to the plan, three bridges were to be constructed at the spot where the river was between four and five hundred feet in width. But because of the recent thaw,

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33 Ibid, 281-82.

34 France, Archives Nationales, AP (archives Daru), 138. Regarding the colors, only flags (mainly, by the personal initiative) were burned; all “Eagles” were removed from the staffs and given to officers for preservation. In 1813 restored Grande Armée regiments received new 1812-pattern colors. Pierre Charrie, Drapeaux et etendards de la Révolution et de l’Empire (Paris, Copernic, 1986), 141.

35 Napoléon to Berthier, 25 November 1812. Correspondance, de Napoléon 1er, No. 19352, XXIV, 368; Chambray, Histoire de l’expédition de Russie, II, 284.

36 Général de brigade Eblé had at his disposal eight companies of sappers: 1st, 7th and 9th companies of the 1st battalion, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th companies of the 2nd battalion and 11th (Dutch) company of pontooners attached from the 2nd Corps, total nearly 400 men. Fabry, Campagne de Russie, III, 544-45.
the level of the water rose from five to almost seven feet.\textsuperscript{37} If Napoléon had not burned his pontoon park in Orsha, the passage of the Berezina would have uneventful and the bridge would have been thrown up in an hour. However, Eblé wisely ordered two wagons of charcoal and six wagons of tools to be spared; he also assigned each of his men to carry a tool and some cramp irons.\textsuperscript{38} At the same time Napoléon received astonishing news that the Russian detachment had left its position near Veselovo and Zembin and was now moving downstream towards Borisov “inviting the French to cross”.\textsuperscript{39} The Emperor was delighted and the impossible turned out to be possible.

To put together solid trestles with the limited tools and nails proved to be an arduous job, but at dawn on 26 November the first trestles were placed in the river. Finally, for lack of nails and time to assemble logs and planks, sappers and pontooneers had to limit themselves to the construction of just two bridges. Built at a distance of about 380 feet from each other the right-hand bridge, or the upper bridge, destined for infantry and cavalry, was completed at 1:00 p.m.; the left bridge, larger and stronger for wagons and cannon (freight bridge), was completed at 4:00 p.m.\textsuperscript{40}

The Emperor arrived at Studianka at 7:00 a.m. He spoke with Eblé, rushing him with construction. Jomini, who already had developed a fever along with a strong cough, reminded near the constructing of the bridges.\textsuperscript{41} Sappers and pontooneers worked fiercely, standing in the cold waters up to the shoulders for several hours but they completed their task.


\textsuperscript{38} Cramp iron [noun]: a strip of metal with ends bent at right angles; it was used to hold masonry or wood together.

\textsuperscript{39} Without proper assessment of the situation and ignoring intelligence data, General-of-Infantry Langeron, being a superior in that area, ordered Lieutenant General Čzaplíć on the morning of 26 November to move his corps to Borisov. Vasiliev, \textit{Operations on the Berezina River}, 188-89.

\textsuperscript{40} Rélation du passage du Bérézina. Service historique, Grande Armée, 1812, C2 133.

\textsuperscript{41} Lecomte, \textit{Le General Jomini}, 111-12.
Figure 14. Map of the Berezina River near the town of Borisov (Caulaincourt, Mémoires)
Figure 15. The Berezina near the village of Studenka (Author’s private collection)

Figure 16. Eblé’s construction of the Berezina bridges; on 25 November, nearly 400 pontooneers and sappers constructed two bridges for further crossing (Tranié, *La Campagne de Russie, 1812*)
On the same day, 26 November, at 1:00 p.m., Oudinot’s corps passed over the upper bridge. The crossing of artillery and wagons followed using the lower bridge, as soon as it was ready, but it collapsed several times under the wagons and ordnance. On the morning of 27 November the Imperial Guard was followed by the Emperor and his staff, then all the troops and remnants of the artillery commanded by maréchaux Davout, Ney and Prince Eugène crossed to the right bank of the Berezina. Order at the crossing was ensured and protected by the Gendarmerie d’élite of the Imperial Guard, the same unit that Jomini met in Orsha and sent to the Headquarters of the main army. In the evening, when the crossing of the combat troops was nearly complete, the mass of stragglers, horses and all sorts of vehicles and wagons that followed the army reached the bridges. Victor’s corps remained on the left side of the river with the task to cover the crossing and to await the 12th Infantry Division under command of général de division Louis Partouneaux with nearly 4,000 men, which was left in Borisov to serve as a rear guard.

On the night of 27 November, Jomini, still suffering from bronchial fever, managed to squeeze himself with his aide-de-camps, and Liébart, his servant, into one of the Studianka’s three remaining timber cottages (izba), occupied by Eblé and his staff. But in the morning of 28 November, the Russian artillery fired shells on the area in and around the bridges. On both banks the sound of battle could clearly be heard as Victor’s soldiers, nearly 6,600 men and 14 pieces of ordnance, tried to fight off the Wittgenstein’s advance guard to the east. The main army including the Imperial Guard and corps of maréchaux Oudinot and Ney, nearly 20,000 men, including artillerymen, horseless “cavalrymen”, administration and the like, encountered more Russians under direct orders of Tcitchagov, pushing up the west bank from the south. A

42 Chambray, Histoire de l’expédition de Russie, II, 296-97; de Caulaincourt, Souvenirs, II, 180. The first echelon was composed of nearly 9,300 combatants including the Dąbrowsky’s division, light cavalry under Corbineau and Castex (including Marbot’s 23rd Chasseur à Cheval), the divisions under généraux Legrand, Maison and Merle. Major General B.-R.-F. van Vlijmen, Vers la Bérésina 1812 (Paris, 1908), 186-87.

43 Chambray, Histoire de l’expédition de Russie, II, 299-302. Partouneaux’s division, taking the wrong way, was surrounded at Staryi Borisov town by the main forces of Wittgenstein’s corps and after several unsuccessful attempts to break through, laid down their arms. This incident provided a negative impact on Napoléon and was reflected in his 29th Bulletin. Oeuvres de Napoléon Bonaparte, V, 83.

44 Courville, Jomini, ou Devin de Napoléon, 182.

detachment of the Imperial Guard was also sent to seize and control the small passes at the nearby Gaina River, towards the village of Brilli. The combined Russian armies of Tcitchagov and Wittgenstein amassed nearly 70,000 men but they were not concentrated at the decisive points, and only 40,000 Russian troops took immediate part in the final battle of the Russian campaign. Field marshal Kutusov’s main army was not even close.

An immense and savage battle took place on both banks of the river until 5:00 p.m., when firing on both sides ended at dusk. The Russian artillery batteries sent a rain of shells into the defenders’ position. One of the projectiles hit the house where Jomini and his comrades were placed and set it on fire. Escaping the flames and sustained by his aids, Fivaz and Liébart, Jomini reached for the bridge. He saw chaos everywhere as the army was trying to cross the river; no ranks and titles were no longer recognized and he was pushed off onto an ice floe. He finally managed to clamber up onto the ramp and then saw some Baden infantry crossing. He called out to them – in French and in German – but was ignored, until an officer he had known during his governorship in Smolensk, extended his musket to Jomini and hoisted him up on an abandoned horse, enabling Liébart to guide him over to the opposite bank near the village of Brilli. On that evening he joined Berthier and officers of the Imperial Headquarters, which were slowly gathering in the small town of Zaniwki, just a few miles from the crossing.

On 29 November, one hour past midnight, Victor’s 9th Corps, which with marvelous consistency kept back the Russians, finally crossed the Berezina slowly and in good order. The bridges had remained unoccupied until then, but mass of stragglers did not use this opportunity, despite the assurance that bridges would soon be burned; those left behind made no movement. They could have crossed during the night but the enemy’s fire had ceased; they relapsed in apathy and indifference, and lay down by the bivouac fire. Victor’s rear-guard, the Saxon and Polish infantry, were the last combat troops to cross the river using the wagon bridge; however, they were forced to leave twelve pieces of ordnance on the left bank because the bridge had finally collapsed.

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48 Rélation du passage du Bérézina. Service historique, Grande Armée, 1812, C2 133.

Figure 17. Map of the battle for the Berezina's crossing, 26-28 November 1812
(Austin, *The Retreat*)
It was around 8:30 a.m., after the last appeal to the stragglers to cross the bridge, that Eblé gave order to the *commandant d’artillerie* of the 2nd Corps of the Reserve Cavalry Colonel Jean Séruzier for the bridges to be destroyed. Many stragglers, including women, wounded soldiers, non-combatant elements and civilians tried to get through the flames; others threw themselves into the water in order to swim across the river. The pressure of those behind pushed hundreds of others into water, producing the most heart-breaking scenes of the entire Russian campaign. However, many prominent memoirists, such as Séguir and others who did not witness the worst moments, ignored the horrors, which led others to belittle their accounts and dismiss much of the writing on the subject as melodramatic.50

This crossing of the Berezina was, by any standards, a magnificent feat of arms. It is hard to comprehend Kutusov’s lack of initiative before 26 November, as anything else than a deliberate dereliction of duty, which allowed for Napoléon’s escape. His confusing orders to his subordinates, especially Tcitchagov, were largely responsible for the loss of an inevitable and complete success. Napoléon had risen to the occasion and proven himself worthy of his reputation and ability to use his tactical talent and find a solution despite the impossibility of the situation. Certain credit should also be given to Jomini, whose knowledge of a possible crossing saved valuable time for the French Emperor. His reconnaissance on the first phase of retreat from Smolensk, diligent reports form Orsha, obvious knowledge of the terrain and finally his intuition as a professional military man helped to save the remnants of the Grande Armée. It is true, that while retreating Napoléon sustained heavy loses of nearly 25,000 killed, wounded, and taken prisoner, but the greatest part of them fell among non-combatants, stragglers and numerous civilians following the army. However, Napoléon managed to achieve the maximum result possible. Not only did Napoléon saved the flower of his officer corps, all his ten *maréchaux d’Empire*51 and the nucleus of his Guard, but also he inflicted heavy loses upon pursuing Russian forces. His soldiers had fought like lions. But it was above all the triumph of Napoleonic Europe

50 De Ségur, *Histoire de Napoléon*, II, 351-53. For example, Baron Gaspard Gourgaud, who was a captain, serving as an *officer d’ordonnance de l’Empereur* (Napoleon’s orderly officer) in his book *Napoléon et la Grande Armée en Russie, ou Examen Critique de l’ouvrage de M. le Comte de Ségur* (Paris, 1825) accused de Ségur of a slander. He sought satisfaction in a duel, where de Ségur was wounded.

51 Sokolov, *L’Armée de Napoléon*, 414. Although being a part of the Grande Armée destined to participate in the campaign, the 11th Corps under *maréchal* Charles-Pierre Augereau never entered Russian territory and its commander never left his château in Berlin.
and its ability to create a multinational army, which was in every way superior to their opponents and which fought intelligently, as well as loyally and performed bravely and selflessly in a three-day battle. The Swiss military theoretician and historian, as well as general officer entrusted with important responsibilities, Jomini, also deserved a credit for performing useful reconnaissance of the area of potential retreat.

The Borisov-Molodeczno road via Zembin, the same area that Jomini described to the Emperor a few days earlier lay ahead of exhausted people. Generally, it was not the Grande Armée anymore; it was not even an army. Only the Imperial Guard and the Headquarters personnel were grouped together. The next two days were, according to some, among the worst of the entire retreat, as the temperature dramatically dropped to −30°C (or −22°F)\(^{52}\).

Somewhere towards the rear of this Dantesque procession and across the swamps, the former governor of Vilna and Smolensk was struggling along. Jomini lost all of his precious campaign notes at the Berezina’s waters and awoke, coughing and spitting blood. Later in that day Jomini and his loyal aide-de-camp Fivaz found themselves in one of the three remaining huts of a village of Zaniwki, ten miles beyond the Berezina. Here they met maréchal Victor’s first aide-de-camp and brother-in-law Colonel Louis Huguet-Chataux.\(^{53}\) After sharing some pâté de foie gras with him and washing it down with the bottle of Bordeaux wine, Huguet-Chataux placed Jomini in one of Victor’s carriages.

For a while this was fairly comfortable; but when threatened by approaching Cossacks, Jomini had to bundle out again into the icy north wind, trusting his Astrakhan fur would serve him against it. After a while, again, he dragged himself over and sat on one of the rearguard’s gun-carriages, as it jolted along the log causeway. But then the cannon had to be placed in battery limber and Jomini had to move over to an ammunition wagon’s canvas cover. The cold was getting worse and this compelled him to get down and walk, despite his pleurisy.\(^{54}\)


\(^{53}\) Six, *Dictionnaire*, I, 581. All writers, however, refer to the “Chief of Staff général Château” who appeared in one of the first Jomini biographies in Lecomte, *Le général Jomini*, 113. Chief of Staff of the 9\(^{th}\) Corps at that time was Adjutant-commandant Passinges de Prechams.

Figure 18. Map of the retreat: Orsha-the Berezina-Molodeczno towards Vilna; November-December, 1812 (Chambray, *Histoire de l'expédition de Russie*)
The preceding adventure of Jomini seemed more like a legend as told by survivors of the Russian campaign many years afterwards. Because of this, his precise action and other events are impossible to narrate and estimate with proper exactitude. But for now, the exhausted people, without regard for rank or even visible attempts of subordination, were having visions in their eyes – all hopes are on Vilna!

Moving from the small village of Plestchewitzi to Molodeczno, a distance of nearly sixty miles, and further down to Smorgoni, another forty miles, Jomini could witness the departure of the Emperor on 5 December, who was leaving the army for Paris. Before arriving to the village of Oshmiana, intense cold forced him to halt and bivouac for a while. He bought a sledge from a soldier with a little Russian horse to drag it; Jomini stipulated as a condition that soldier should take him as far as Vilna, a distance of another thirty-five miles. His journey did not last very long; he dozed off in the sledge and woke up abruptly in the ditch, where the soldier had simply dumped him. Fortunately, a drum-major of the 2nd Swiss Regiment, under orders of Colonel Nicolas Antoine-Xavier Castella, recognized Jomini wearing a general officer’s hat and assisted him on to Oshmiana. Here they found a fine house intact at the entrance to the town occupied by many general officers of the once mighty Grande Armée. Ironically, Jomini’s colleague and predecessor in Smolensk, général de brigade Barbanègre, opened the door. The next morning, along the road marked only by rigid frozen corpses, Smolensk’s two ex-governors pursued their way in the Barbanègre’s carriage.

The retreating strugglers of the former Grande Armée reached Vilna on 7-8 December and began to trickle into town. The shops and cafes were opened as usual, and the tattered men could hardly believe their eyes. Every village, town, and city they had seen over the past six months had been a ravaged, burnet-out and deserted shell, and Jomini and his fellow officers were amazed to find the appearance of a normal bustling city untouched by war. The city was

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55 Denniée, Itinéraire de l’Empereur Napoléon, 167-168. Napoleon arrived in Paris on the morning of 19 December 1812; see Le Moniteur, December 20, 1812. Langendorf in Faire la guerre: Jomini, 83, erroneously claims that Napoleon arrived at the Tuileries on 7 December, but it is either an obvious mistake or a gross typographical error. It showed again the general unfamiliarity with the subject beyond the scope of the main actor.

56 Lecomte, Le Général Jomini, 114. Four Swiss regiments participated in the Russian campaign as a part of maréchal Oudinot’s 2nd Army Corps; they attained most their fame at the battle of Berezina, preserving the best order and discipline.

57 Lecomte, Le Général Jomini, 115.
full of provisions and raw materials; several monasteries were designated for the lodging of the arriving army. Perhaps here Jomini once again met his former superior, “the impossible Dutchman” von Hogendorp, who himself went out to greet the incoming army.58

As more and more men drifted into the city, the shops and eating establishments began to close as the inhabitants of Vilna realized that the rumors of devastation that had been circulating over the past week were true. “At first they looked at us with surprise, then with horror,” wrote one of the early arrivals with the debris of the 4th Corps. “All inhabitants rushed home to their houses and began to barricade doors and windows.”59 There was obviously something to fear; along with thousands of ill soldiers, the army brought up the disease. Moreover, there was a total lack of any discipline and violence spread.

With assistance from his former colleague Guilleminot, who now became the Chef of Staff for Prince Eugène’s 4th Corps, Jomini and his aide-de-camp Fivaz obtained a good sledge and a horse. But at the foot of Ponari Hill’s fatal slope, just ten miles west of Vilna, Jomini, who was still very sick, lost his new sledge together with its coachman. On 12 December Jomini, barely seated on horseback, arrived in Kovno and once again crossed the Niemen. It was “the bravest of the braves”, maréchal Ney, whose rear-guard took up defensive positions outside the city to allow as many stragglers as possible to pass through it, secure supplies, and cross the river, which now was frozen hard. Jomini continued his trip westbound to Warsaw then Danzig.60

Based on Jomini’s recollection, he arrived in Danzig in the second half of December. The city was designated as the assembly point and its General governor, général de division Count Jean Rapp tried to deal with the masses of the multinational Grande Armée, its sick and wounded soldiers, its permanent lack of medicaments, provisions and discipline.61 Here, Jomini

58 Hogendorp, Mémoires, 338. In spite of being, perhaps, a rough officer, von Hogendorp was, nonetheless, a talented administrator; technically, Jomini and many others owed their lives to the Lithuanian General governor who took every precaution in dealing with the disastrous outcome.

59 Laugier, Récits de Césare de Laugier, 182.

60 Lecomte, Le Général Jomini, 116.

left his aide-de-camp Fivaz in the local hospital where, unattended after a severe amputation, he died six months later. Later Rapp gave Jomini orders to continue to Stettin.\textsuperscript{62}

On 27 December, what was left from the Imperial Headquarters and General Staff assembled in Koënigsberg where King of Naples Murat, the first lieutenant of the Emperor was placed in charge to hold the line of defense along the Niemen. But the French military and administrative machine was still in operation. The War Minister sent the request to Berthier that \textit{général de brigade} Jomini, pending his convalescence, and \textit{directeur général du park d’artillerie} Colonel Gabriel Neigre, both ordered in Paris.\textsuperscript{63}

The horrors of the Russian campaign were finally over for Jomini. The march from Smolensk to the Berezina where he rendered the important service to the Grande Armée confirmed his position not only as a theorist but as a combatant officer as well. As a military man, he performed his duties as ordered and there is no visible indication of jealousy or professional efforts to undermine him from his superiors, even including \textit{maréchal} Berthier. During the difficult time of retreat, all his alleged arrogance and temperament was put aside; his reports were precise, right to the point, and loaded with information. The problem was in the much higher echelons of hierarchy and command, including logistics, operative decisions, such as burning the pontoon bridge, and the obvious loss of the entire campaign.

In the middle of January 1813 Baron de Jomini returned home and embraced his so worried wife and son. But he could not possibly imagine, that in just eight months Russia would become his new home, a second fatherland where he would spend most of his life.


\textsuperscript{63} Sainte-Beuve, \textit{Le général Jomini}, 126. Note that Colonel Neigre was promoted to \textit{général de brigade} on 10 January 1813. Six, \textit{Dictionnaire}, II, 254. Lecomte speculates that only two general officers were sent to Paris; the others were not allowed to cross the Rhine. This sounds obviously exaggerated as an attempt by Jomini to show his own exclusiveness along with another “obscure” officer, supposedly underestimated by the high command but “finally” recognized by the Emperor. Lecomte, \textit{Le Général Jomini}, 117. Note that the pool of general officers was assigned to their new duties, as the War Department seemed it proper.
CHAPTER FIVE

1813: THE RUBICON CROSSED

Even when the full extent of the catastrophe to the Grande Armée was known to Europe, few could have predicted that the year 1813 would see the beginning of collapse of the Napoleonic Empire. The Russian army had suffered nearly as much as the French, and arrived at the Niemen with barely forty thousand effectives. However, the Russian Tsar Alexander received unexpected encouragement when General Hans David von Yorck, commander of the Prussian corps, signed on his own initiative a convention of neutrality at Taurroggen on December 30, and Carl von Schwarzenberg withdrew his Austrian contingent from the Grande Armée. Yielding to his patrons, the Prussian king Fredrick William III signed a treaty of alliance with Russia at Kalish on 28 February 1813 and authorized the calling out of the Landwehr. By the beginning of March, the remnants of the French army left in command of Prince Eugène had to retire behind the Elbe, waiting reinforcements raised by the Emperor Napoléon against the amassing forces of the Sixth Coalition.

Already on 29 January 1813 Jomini had sent a letter to the War Ministry asking its head Henri Clarke, Duke de Feltre, for a new assignment, specifying that he hoped to find a “fair employment under the orders of His Highness the Prince Eugène, or maréchal duc d’Elchingen (Ney).” However, the poor health of Jomini delayed his new appointment for three months. Only on 21 March was he required to arrive at Frankfurt-on-Maine where he was assigned to a post at the General Staff of the resurrected Grande Armée.

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1 This relates only to the main army led by Kutusov; at the end of October, at the camp of Tarutino, his army totaled nearly 120 men and 622 pieces of ordnance, and equally sustained the hardships of war. Kutusov to Tsar Alexander, 13, 14 and 21 December 1812, quoted in Corpus of documents, IV, 551-52.

2 Convention between Russia and Prussia, 28 February 1813. Russian foreign policy from nineteenth to twentieth centuries, first série, VII, 63-66.

3 Saint-Beuve, Le général Jomini, 126-127.

4 Ministère de la Guerre, minute de la lettre écrite, 21 March 1813. Service historique, Dossier GB 8Y 1277 (Jomini).
Once out of Russia, the French army quickly began rebuilding itself around the cadres of veterans who survived the invasion supplemented with numerous depot battalions. Napoléon drew troops from Italy and Spain, transferred the National Guard to the active army, and scrapped the depots in France as well as the garrisons of Germany for every soldier who could carry a musket. The men drawn from the depots were quickly organized into provisional companies, which marched to the frontiers and, while en route, were issued arms and uniforms. Their training was completed on their way to the frontier, where they were reorganized into provisional bataillons and squadrons, which soon were formed into corps and armies led by the most prominent commanders.

The Emperor began the task of reorganizing the field armies with the establishment of the Corps d’Observation de l’Elbe. Its 1st Corps was formed under orders of maréchal Ney around Mainz in March and consisted of four divisions totaling sixty bataillons. The 2nd Corps under maréchal Marmont began by concentrating three divisions around Mainz between late-May and early-April. Additional corps’ were formed from French allies; the 7th Corps consisted of Saxons, the Imperial Guard was reconstructed around the survivors of the Russian campaign, the new draftees, and veterans transferred from Spanish Peninsula.

By the end of April Prince Eugène held the line between Dresden and Hamburg. Along with the Imperial Guard and the troops that survived the Russian campaign led by général de division François Roguet, Eugène’s force numbered 73,000 men but its quality was mixed. The second major force was under maréchal Davout, located on the lower Elbe. A third army was forming and consisted of the 1st and 2nd Corps d’Observation under maréchaux Ney and Marmont, respectively, the Corps d’Observation d’Italie under général de division Henri-Gatien Count Bertrand, and finally, the Imperial Guard. These corps’ were reorganized, equipped and

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5 According to the decree of reorganization of the army issued on 18 February 1808, each infantry regiment was supposed to have four bataillons de guerre and one bataillon de dépôt. See Correspondance de Napoléon 1er, No. 13574, XVI, 398-99; the same provision followed for the cavalry in 1810.

6 Loraine Petre, Napoleon’s Last Campaign in Germany 1813 (London, 1912), 12-15; George F. Nafziger, Napoléon’s Spring Campaign of 1813 (Chicago, 1992), 43-48.

7 Napoléon to Ney, 13 March 1813. Correspondance de Napoléon 1er, No. 19714, XXV, 90-91. In late April, Napoléon abolished the various old corps designations and eventually reassigned them as follows: 1st Corps – maréchal Louis-Nicolas Davout, 2nd Corps – Victor, Claude-Perrin 3rd Corps – Michael Ney, 4th Corps – général de division Henri-Gatien Bertrand, 5th Corps – général de division Jacques-Alexandre Lauriston, 6th Corps – maréchal Auguste de Marmont, 7th Corps – général de division Jean-Louis Reynier, 8th Corps – Prince Joseph Poniatowski, 9th
assigned new commanders and staff personnel. On 25 April 1813 Maréchal Ney 1st Corps d’Observation was transformed into the new 3rd Corps. In total, Ney’s corps consisted of 48,658 infantry, 1,767 cavalry and 39 pieces of ordnance. He slowly moved his force through south Germany, imposing French will on the populations of Franconia and Thuringia; it served to menace France’s wavering allies in Bavaria and Saxony.

All of Napoléon’s plans evolved in the following terms: if, at the moment of the resumption of operations, the French were still masters of the Elbe, they would cross at Magdeburg and march to the north towards Küstrin, Stettin and Danzig. If the Allies were to cross the Elbe at Dresden, it would be necessary that they first be pushed back across the Elbe, but only after the Grande Armée contemplated a march on Dantzig. Furthermore, at the beginning of May, the French Emperor expected from Ney’s 3rd Corps to cover area at Würtzburg, Erfurt and Leipzig. Napoléon presumed that at the same time the allied army would be still to the east of the Elbe, stretching between Danzig and Glogau. But the retreat of the Prince Eugène to the Elbe forced the Emperor to alter his plan until the Vice-roy’s troops could join the main army. “I think the first point is to reach Leipzig… and the main thing at this moment is to form a junction,” wrote Napoléon to maréchal Ney. Hopefully, this junction would finally take place at the beginning of May at the triangle south and west of Leipzig, between the cities of Lützen and Altenberg.

The Allies were under orders of the Russian General of Cavalry Count Wittgenstein who took overall command after the death of Field marshal Kutusov on 13 April 1813. The Tsar Alexander closely supervised his commander-in-chief and constantly interfered with his decisions. As a result, in the Battle at Lützen on 2 May, Napoléon defeated the Russo-Prussian army and compelled it to retreat. The major pressure was launched upon maréchal Ney’s

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8 Captain Jean-Baptiste Koch, *Journal des opérations des 3rd and 5th corps en 1813* (Paris, 1909), 105-08. Arriving from Spain, Koch was assigned the aide-de-camp to Jomini.

9 Napoléon to Eugène, 11 March 1813. *Correspondance de Napoléon 1er*, No. 19697, XXV, 71-73.


troops who held out, counterattacking vigorously, until Napoléon arrived with reinforcements. Ney’s corps alone lost nearly 12,000 men including his Chief of staff, général de brigade Louis-Anne-Marie Gouré.\(^{12}\)

On 4 May by the order of the Emperor to Minister of War, Clarke, général de brigade Jomini was appointed the new Chief of staff of the 3\(^{rd}\) Corps under maréchal Ney.\(^{13}\) He joined Ney at Leipzig; neither of them showed much pleasure to see each other, especially Ney, remembering how he “delicately” got rid of Jomini in Spain. Jomini was still considered a foreigner, a “mercenary”, even though he was in the French service and wore the French uniform for seven years. But now, for the sake of the Empire and new glory, both Ney and Jomini dismissed their previous disagreements and Jomini assumed his new post. Marching from Leipzig to Torgau, maréchal Ney’s corps crossed the Elbe on 11 May. The famous flanking maneuver that Napoléon performed by means of Ney’s troops and the following Battle of Bautzen, 20-21 May 1813, merits attention because it shows in detail the performance of Jomini as corps’ Chief of staff, which is usually omitted.

Each army corps of the Grande Armée of 1813 was, in effect, a miniature army and as such capable of engaging independently based on the Emperor’s needs and strategic decisions. It consisted of various numbers of infantry divisions, one division of cavalry (or occasionally, only a brigade), artillery batteries, supporting services and staff.\(^{14}\) Jomini, as maréchal Ney’s Chief of staff headed the general bureau, which consisted of military-administrative, troop movements, police and topographical departments. In his care were also civil administration (postal services, paymasters, hospitals etc.), gendarmerie, train and orderly officers. Finally, he was also responsible for the proper functioning of artillery and engineering parcs and materiel.\(^{15}\) Serving as Ney’s Chief of staff in Spain in 1808, Jomini performed some of these functions,

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\(^{12}\) Gouré served under Ney since 1810 and took part in the Russian campaign. Six, Dictionnaire, I, 515.

\(^{13}\) Service historique, Ministère de la Guerre. Copy of the letter, 4 May 1813. Dossier GB 8Y\(^2\) 1277 (Jomini).

\(^{14}\) Thus, maréchal Ney’s 3\(^{rd}\) Army Corps was composed of five divisions: the 8\(^{th}\), 9\(^{th}\), 10\(^{th}\) and 11\(^{th}\) of mobilized National guardsmen and 28 bataillons of conscripts formed around cadres taken from the regiments serving in Spain. The 39\(^{th}\) Infantry Division under général de division Jean Gabriel Marchand included contingents of the Confederation of the Rhine: Baden, Hesse-Darmstadt and Frankfurt. The Corps also included eight squadrons of light cavalry, artillery and military train; by the muster roll on 5 May 1813 the Corps numbered nearly 34,000 men and 120 pieces of ordnance. Koch, Journal des opérations, 108.

\(^{15}\) Service historique, Livrets de situation, 3\(^{e}\) et 4\(^{e}\) corps d’armée, 1813, Carton C2 539; Sokolov, L’Armée de Napoléon, 254-55.
Figure 19. Letter from the War Ministry appointing général de brigade Baron de Jomini the Chief of Staff of the 3rd Army Corps, 4 May 1813 (France, Archive de la Guerre)
although not for a long. True, he never commanded troops in battle, but his service at the Imperial Headquarters, and later on the line of communications in Russia following his successful reconnaissance missions during the Berezina crossing gave Jomini practical knowledge of warfare and administrative experience. Now, however, the scale and character of the war were quite different.

The exact composition of Napoléon’s General Staff has changed from time to time, but the Staff as it existed during the spring of 1813 is considered indicative of the Imperial Headquarters during the First Empire. Maréchal Berthier had little influence in shaping the strategical or tactical decisions of the Emperor, but he still continued to control the staff personnel of the various corps. To that extend, the position of général de brigade Jomini, as maréchal Ney’s 3rd Corps Chief of staff, in some way, reflected the situation of that of the Imperial Headquarters. Generally, duties of the corps’ chief of staff were “to copy his superior instructions, to give movement-orders and those concerning the administration, to superintend the muster-rolls, the organization, the staff personnel and finally, to carry out the active duties of war near the commander.”

It also required coordinating all staff activities and directing routine affairs via numerous correspondence, and massive paperwork. With the further development and mobility of warfare, chief of staff of a corps expedited the decisions of the commander. Thus, Jomini assisted Ney in executing the responsibilities of command in preparing of orders based upon the maréchal decisions, which were based on the orders issued from the Imperial Headquarters and sent by maréchal Berthier. Coping Napoléon’s orders verbatim, Berthier only added the typical preamble “The Emperor orders you…” before orders were sent in all directions to maréchaux or their respective staffs.

In almost all biographical works on Jomini, it is usually stated that he played a crucial role in the forthcoming maneuver. His first biographer, Lecomte, wrote that Jomini “perceiving the Emperor’s intention, persuaded Ney not to move on Berlin” as previously intended, but to stop and concentrate his troops; further, it appears that Jomini advised Ney on a decisive tactical

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16 Berthier to Napoleon, 19 April 1813, as quoted in Jean B. Vachée, Napoléon et campagne (Paris, 1913), 26.

17 See Order of movement, 14 May 1813, signed by Ney and co-signed by Jomini; various orders from Jomini to Reynier dated on 6, 7 and 16 May 1813 in preparation for Ney’s maneuvers in the course of the Bautzen operation. Paul-Jean Foucart, Bautzen, 20-21 mai 1813 (Paris, 1897), 76, 91, 192, 230.

18 Denniére, Itinéraire de l’Empereur Napoléon, 5-6.
move in the course of battle. It sounds profound, but Lecomte did not supply any facts to support his statement. By the time this was written in the 1860s, Jomini’s influence as military theorist was uncontested; so Lecomte’s claim became an immutable truth for numerous publications. It appeared in most Russian pre-revolutionary books and encyclopedias on 1813 campaign. The new biographies on Jomini written by Courville and Baqué along with David Chandler’s monumental work also seem to accept it. In our days, the Russian historians and distant relatives of Jomini, the Mertzalovs, gave it greater emphasis once again. However, a diligent examination of primary sources on Napoléon’s flanking maneuver and role of Jomini as maréchal Ney’s Chief of staff both suggest a revision of this statement.

Only on 15 May did the Emperor obtain the reliable information that the Allies were retreating in two parallel columns towards Breslau: the Prussians to the north through Colditz, Dobelin and Meissen, the Russians to the south. The two armies had converged at Bautzen, where they had stopped, concentrating for the battle. Now that communications were opened, Napoléon began moving both flanks towards Bautzen. The maréchal Ney had at his disposal his own 3rd Corps, nearly 52,000 strong. He was given overall command over the 5th Corps under général de division Lauriston, 22,000 men; 7th Corps under général de division Reynier, 10,000 men; 2nd Corps under maréchal Victor, 12,000 men and 2nd Cavalry Corps under général de division Horace-François Sébastiani, 3,150 men.

Moving with the main forces from Dresden to Bautzen, on 16 May, the Emperor decided not to send Ney to Bautzen via the shortest route, but to move his troops on Hoyerswerda. It would appear that Napoléon feared that Ney’s appearance on the main road would chase the Allies back and prevent the decisive battle.


20 See Voennyi Shornik [Military Compendium], 29, No.2, 553 (Saint-Petersburg, 1863); Voennaya Encyklopedia [Military Encyclopaedia], ed. Vladimir Novitzky, s.v. “Bautzen” (Saint-Petersburg, 1911); Courville, Jomini, ou Devin de Napoléon, 191-95; Baqué, L’homme qui devinait Napoléon, 136; David G. Chandler, The Campaigns of Napoleon (New York, 1966), 895.


22 Bogdanovich, History of 1813 War, 2:266.

23 Foucart, Bautzen, 20-21 mai 1813, x. On the strength of the French army see Service historique, Livrets de situation, 2e, 3e, 5e and 4e corps d’armée, 1813, Carton C2 540-41, 543, 544.

24 Napoléon to Ney, 16 May 1813, as quoted in Foucart, Bautzen, 214-16.
Figure 20. Map of Saxony, part of Prussia and Poland, 1813
(Jomini, *Life of Napoleon*)
Chief of staff Jomini and his capitaines-adjoints (aide-de-camps staff assistants) immediately were overwhelmed with work – masses of troops, horses, endless trains and carriages, artillery batteries – were all on the move. However, his staff did not receive the aforementioned Emperor’s order to Ney until 19 May. Establishing his Headquarters at Luckau, Ney received the second order that directed him to move with Lauriston’s corps on Hoyerswerda, which now approached Luckau by a parallel road and to send Victor with Reynier and Sébastiani towards Berlin, covered by Prussians under General Frederick-Wilhelm von Bülow. Ney reacted immediately and via Jomini sent appropriate directions to Victor and ordering Reynier to stop at Luckau. His corps was last in the echelon of the concentrating troops.25

Already by the morning of 17 May, Napoléon seems to have reconsidered Ney’s original movements and redirected him to use the corps of Victor and Reynier and cavalry corps of Sébastiani as seemed most appropriate. He did, however, clearly indicate to Ney that he anticipated a Battle at Bautzen.26 Ney ordered Jomini to change marching instructions to Reynier and Victor once again and to direct these two corps’ via Khalau and Hoyerswerda.27 Even though his aides-de-camp set off with new orders immediately, enough time was lost to prevent arrival of these forces on the battlefield to take a decisive part in the coming battle.

Napoléon, following instructions given to Ney, ordered him to move directly towards the main army rather than to make an additional maneuver. As a result, his 3rd Corps was to swing to the left across the Spree into a flanking position on the Allied right at the last possible moment. It was not until noon on 19 May, when Jomini’s staff received the Emperor’s orders to Ney, issued at 10:00 a.m. on 18 May, that the true positions of the Allies was on the east bank of the Spree.28

The city of Bautzen is situated on the right bank of the Spree River. At that time, it contained from 7,000 to 8,000 inhabitants and was surrounded by a crenellated wall. The Spree flowed at the foot of the walls of the city but was not particularly deep or wide and presented no

25 Jomini to Reynier, 16 May 1813, as quoted in Foucart, Bautzen, 20-21 mai , 229-30.
26 Ibid., 232.
27 Ney to Berthier, 17 May 1813, Ibid., 242-43.
28 Position de l’enemi, 18 May 1813, Ibid., 259.
Napoléon’s plan was to have a battle in two stages; the first day would be given to the capture of the advance line of the Allied position at Bautzen. Then a direct onslaught on the second line was to be combined simultaneously with a flank attack by maréchal Ney who, coming up the Spree, would strike at the end of the line and attempt to turn it. For this purpose Ney with 60,000 troops of combined corps had been engaged in the wide covering movement on Hoyerswerda town, some twenty miles down the river. The total strength of the French forces was nearly 200,000 and they were facing about 110,000 Russians and Prussians.30

After engagements at Klix on mid-day of 19 May with the corps under Lauriston, the Allied advance guard, realizing the size of the advancing main French forces, fell back to the main army. The Russian commander General of Infantry Barclay de Tolly took up a position in the meadow beyond the Prussian army on the extreme right flank of the defense line facing the approaching Ney.31 Ney’s next aim was the town of Königswartha; halting for the night in the small village of Markendorf, Ney instructed Jomini to send orders to all the corps of his army, and especially to Reynier’s, to rush to that point of concentration.32

On the next day, 20 May Napoléon launched his attack on the front line. Although the Russians offered strong resistance at Bautzen itself, by evening the city and the whole line was in the hands of the French. With the approaching corps of Ney and Lauriston, the real battle was still to be fought the next day on the second line, fortified by the Allies with redoubts and powerful artillery. Arriving at Brehmen, Ney and his staff found divisions of his 3rd Corps on a plateau with a magnificent view of the battlefield. Establishing their Headquarters in Klix, the

29 Nafziger, Napoléon’s Spring Campaign of 1813, 208; Camon, La guerre Napoléonniene, 411.

30 Petre, Napoleon’s last campaign, 119; Bogdanovich, History of 1813 War, I, 264; Foucart, Bautzen, 20-21mai 1813, x. On the strength of the French army see Service historique, Livrets de situation, 2e, 3e, 5e and 4e corps d’armée, 1813, C2 540-41, 543, 544.

31 Camon, La guerre Napoléonniene, 413; Bogdanovich, History of 1813 War, I, 264-65.

32 Jomini to Reynier, 20 May 1813, as quoted in Foucart, Bautzen, 20-21mai, 302.
French slept around the town, or bivouacking in the open. Ney’s chief of staff Baron de Jomini and his aide-de-camps obviously worked all night preparing maps, troop dispositions and sending the last orders for tomorrow’s battle. From his previous service under Ney in 1805 and further in 1807-09, Jomini should have remembered the maréchal instructions for the day of battle when “all major orders and instructions [from the Emperor Napoléon] shall be given to commander-in-chief [maréchal Ney] via aides-de-camp of his own staff.”

Overall, Napoléon’s plans were simple. He wished to continue his overt attempt to turn the Allied left while his center remained stationary, holding them in place. As this happened, Ney and Lauriston were to attempt a sweeping flanking maneuver from the north and turn Barclay’s right flank. Ney was in an admirable position to make his way from Klix and by reaching Hochkirch, a village situated directly in behind the Prussian sector, would separate their troops under command of Gebhard von Blücher from the Russians. By pushing across the Spree with his troops, Napoléon intended cutting Blücher off from the rest of the Allied army and destroying him in detail.

Ney opened the battle at dawn on 21 May by crossing the Spree at Klix and advancing on the rear of Blücher. At the same time Napoléon waited until the sound of canon would indicate that Ney had progressed near the villages of Preititz and Klein-Bautzen. Then he would deliver the smashing blow of a frontal attack on Blücher, synchronizing with Ney’s movement. Ney, started his march on time with his first main objective the Galina windmill, located in the heart of the valley of the Blöser-Wasser. Prior to the major attack, the Russians withdrew their forces on Preititz and prepared to meet four French divisions.

It was approximately 10:00 a.m. when Ney’s aide-de-camp returned from the Imperial Headquarter with the following order (marked by 8:00 a.m.) from Berthier:

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The intention of the Emperor is that you always follow the movements of the enemy. His Majesty had advised your officier d'état-major [staff officer] of the enemy’s position protected by redoubts. The intention of the Emperor is that you be in the village of Preititz at 11:00 a.m. Move on the extreme right of the enemy. Once the Emperor would see you engaged at Preititz, we should attack the enemy at all points.37

It was the only one of two confirmed orders that the Emperor sent to Ney during the entire course of the battle. Chief of staff Jomini was, or should have been nearby the maréchal; a two-hours gap between Napoléon’s issuance of the order and its actual delivery gave Jomini the flexibility to provide his own interpretation of the maneuver, that is “to the direct march [of Ney’s troops] on the spires of Hochkirch.”38 To support his claim, Jomini further stated that “instructions did not reach [Ney] on time and were of rather too general a character. The officer [Ney’s aide-de-camp] who carried this [Napoléon’s] note made a long detour by Klix in the hopes of finding the maréchal there.”39 This statement by Jomini seems questionable, because Ney started his attack at 4:30 a.m. and by 10:00 a.m. had passed Klix.40 Perhaps, the plan of pressing on Hochkirch appeared to Jomini to be reminiscent of the Seven Years’ War he so eloquently wrote about in his Traité de grandes opérations militaires; in the same area, on 14 October 1758, Frederick the Great sustained a defeat from the Austrian army.

By 10:00 a.m. Ney already had reached Preititz. The Russians were retreating and taking up position on the height of the right bank of the Blöser-Wasser stream. There, Barclay de Tolly effectively stopped the advance of two divisions of Lauriston’s corps under Ney’s command, which had moved in that directions. About this time, reinforcements sent by Blücher arrived and

37 Berthier to Ney, 21 May 1813, as quoted in Registre d'orders de maréchal Berthier pendant la campagne de 1813 (Paris, 1900), II, 125; Petre, Napoleon’s last campaign, 126.

38 Jomini, The Life of Napoleon, IV, 101. As noted before, it was first written in 1827 in French. This version of the battle by Jomini himself appeared in his biographies, so many aforementioned authors and historians repeated it. It also could be speculated that Jomini, being a general officer, disliked the fact that the direct order was given to maréchal Ney by merely a staff officer, an aide-de-camp, while bypassing Jomini as Chief of staff.

39 Ibid.

40 Moreover, Adjudant-commandant Christophe Stoffel of the Imperial Headquarters also duplicated this order, the fact that left omitted by almost everyone who wrote on Bautzen, with exception of Foucart, Bautzen, mai 21-22, 315.
were moved to block the French advance at Preititz; the Prussians attacked and recaptured the village.\footnote{Bogdanovich, \textit{History of 1813 War}, I, 265-66; Koch, \textit{Journal des opérations}, 26; Nafziger, \textit{Napoléon’s Spring Campaign of 1813}, 230-31; Petre, \textit{Napoleon’s last campaign}, 132.}

Upon hearing the firing at Preititz, Napoléon gave the signal for the main frontal attack. Three divisions under orders of \textit{général de division} Henri-Gatien Count Bertrand fell upon Blücher; one of those divisions reached the village of Kreckwitz on the Blöser-Wasser and was thus able to support Ney.\footnote{Camon, \textit{La guerre Napoléonniene}, 425; Bogdanovich, \textit{History of 1813 War}, I, 269.} At that moment, around 1:00 p.m., the Emperor sent his \textit{officier d’ordonnance} (orderly officer) Désiré Chalpowski with an oral order: “go to Ney and tell him to hurry up and attack with everything he has got.”\footnote{Désiré Chalpowski, \textit{Memoirs of the Polish Lancer}, translated by Tim Simmons (Chicago, 1992), 141-42.}

Chalpowski found the \textit{maréchal} “in the thick of the firing, among his infantry columns that had been repulsed and were reforming to try again. I repeated [to Ney] the Emperor’s message.”\footnote{Ibid., 142.} It is noteworthy that Chalpowski transmitted the order directly to Ney and not to his Chief of staff, Jomini. Moreover, he did not even notice presence of any of \textit{maréchal} Ney’s suite. Everything appeared as the Emperor and his Chief of Staff Berthier once had planned: orders were sent directly to the commander-in-chief for an initial execution. However, it is very plausible that Jomini was somewhere nearby and could overhear the order; furthermore he could advise Ney to press on Hochkirch to complete the maneuver, but there is no factual evidence to support this statement except for Jomini’s own statement.

Blücher, having exhausted his reserves, could not hold any longer; with the Russians on the other side of the valley and Ney between them, he was left unsupported. \textit{Maréchal} Ney was in the position to strike at the flank of the Blücher retreating columns, but for some unknown reason “the bravest of the brave” relented and stopped at Preititz; he decided not to advance beyond the Blöser-Wasser stream. Perhaps he was concerned about the sufficient masses of the Allied cavalry and artillery batteries that he saw on the far bank. Analyzing the battle \textit{postfactum} as a historian, Jomini noted that as Ney had only 600 light cavalry, it is possible to
assume that this might have been the principal reason for his hesitation. Finally, there was also some confusion that appears to have confounded the French ranks when Ney and Bertrand’s troops converged. However, Ney’s report to the Emperor indicates that the maréchal understood the general intention and his own mission quite well.

Nonetheless the battle was won. Activities for Jomini ended at Klein-Bautzen; from there, at 4:00 p.m. he sent maréchal Ney’s last battle order to Reynier, to direct his corps towards the town of Würschen. At 7:00 p.m. Ney, Reynier and Lauriston all met there. Jomini and his staff immediately began paperwork on the battle outcome, which lasted all evening and most of the night. According to the roster, the 3rd Corps lost 4,362 killed, 5,841 wounded and 136 taken prisoner. On the next day, 22 May, in accordance with the Emperor’s order, Jomini issued a general direction to all of Ney’s troops to march on Reichembach. Pleased with Jomini’s performance, Ney asked the Emperor to promote him to the grade of the général de division.

At 7:00 a.m. 7th Corps under Reynier and the 1st Cavalry Corps under général de division Latour-Maubourg had begun their movement on Reichembach. Lauriston’s 5th Corps was on their left, the Imperial Guard and 6th Corps under maréchal Auguste de Marmont followed Reynier, while maréchal Ney moved his 3rd Corps and staff to Weissenberg. The Allies fell back towards Gorlitz in two columns in which they had fought – Blücher and Barclay along one road, the Tsar, his Guards and the rest of the troops along the other, with the main direction on Breslau.

45 Jomini, The Life of Napoleon, IV, 104; Bogdanovich, History of 1813 War, I, 270; Petre, Napoleon’s last campaign, 133-34. Note, that by the 1860s, when most accounts of the 1813 War were written, Jomini was still alive, while his numerous colleagues and superiors were long deceased. Moreover, he was on the service of Russia, attaining her highest military rank and title as the Tsar’s General Adjutant. Therefore, the version of Jomini’s determination and Ney’s irresolution became quite convenient for an official historiography and widely disseminated. However, there are no specific facts to rebut Jomini’s claim.

46 Ney to Napoléon, 21 May 1813, as quoted in Foucart, Bautzen ,mai 21-22, 328; Camon, La guerre Napoléonienne, 442.


49 Lecomte, Le général Jomini, 137-38.

50 Movement order, 22 May 1813, as quoted in Paul-Jean Foucart, de Bautzen a Pläswitz (Paris, 1897), 1-2; Koch, Journal des opérations, 28.

51 Bogdanovich, History of 1813 War, I, 271-72.
Figure 21. Second day of the Battle of Bautzen, 21 May 1813 – attack of the Ney's forces towards Preititz (Jomini, *Life of Napoleon*)
The last three months of Jomini’s career under French banners seems rather vague and appears in bits and pieces, but using reports, general troops movements and archival documents, it is possible to reconstruct its general chronological trend. Following his commander-in-chief maréchal Ney, Jomini and his staff appeared in the ranks of the 3rd Corps performing routine tasks, completing paperwork, and issuing marching orders. On May 26, he could probably witness the clash of personalities between maréchaux Ney and Marmont over subordination and marching direction. Then, during the ensuing Battle of Hainau, one of Ney’s units, Lauriston’s 5th Corps, inadvertently fell into a trap laid by the Allied cavalry where the maréchal himself along with his chief of staff were nearly captured. On 29 May the 3rd Corps moved to Liegnitz and then was directed towards Breslau. Maréchal Ney instructed Jomini to send certain marching orders to Reynier, not knowing that the Emperor had his own disposition for Reynier’s 5th Corps. When this order of Ney’s chief of staff was countered by Berthier and redirected, Ney’s tender sensibilities were wounded by Berthier’s oversight in not communicating it to him. In this fit of childish rage, Jomini, as Ney’s Chief of staff, also shared the burden of guilt. Thus, mainly from this episode (and not earlier) comes the real source of displeasure of Berthier towards Jomini.

The spring campaign was coming to an end. On the 1-2 June maréchal Ney moved his Headquarters from the Breslau area back to Liegnitz. While en route, Jomini met his old superior, former General governor of Lithuania, von Hogendorp. Describing in his mémoires the meeting with Ney, von Hogendorp, with a bit of surprise, pointed towards Jomini. “What do you expect?”, Ney responded. “My chief of staff was killed, so I should have taken whoever was available.” Obviously, the friction between Ney and Jomini grew, mainly, because of correspondence between the Imperial Headquarters and Ney’s staff toward Reynier’s corps.

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52 Petre, *Napoleon’s last campaign*, 146; Nafziger, *Napoléon’s Spring campaign of 1813*, 257.


54 Jomini to Reynier, 31 May 1813, as quoted in Foucart, *de Bautzen a Pläswitz*, 220-21.


56 *Mémoires du général van Hogendorp*, 369. As noted above, *Général de brigade* Gouré served as Ney’s chief of staff during the Russian campaign until that fatal moment at Lutzen, 2 May 1813.
Finally on 4 June 1813 the Armistice of Plasswitz was signed between France, Russia and Prussia giving both sides a breathing space.\textsuperscript{57} Maréchal Ney and his staff were at that time in Liegnitz; from there, on 14 June Jomini sent a letter to the Minister of War, Clarke, requesting a lost letter officially appointing him as Ney’s chief of staff.\textsuperscript{58} Jomini and his assistants continued their everyday duties of which the priority was to supply the Emperor with the most recent \textit{Situation sommaire des troup} (summary of troop dispositions).\textsuperscript{59}

Maréchal Berthier and his staff proper had routine responsibilities of personnel administration while in the field. Based on muster reports received from the corps staffs’, this information updated both the Emperor and his General Staff on the state of each unit’s manpower during any week. Based on a circular, issued on 29 November 1806 and directed to all corps’ chiefs of staffs, Berthier demanded that during “operations the situation on the troops shall be submitted every five days; two general reports, issued on the first and fifteenth of each month in two copies, should be also completed.”\textsuperscript{60}

To that extend, it is strange to read Jomini’s letter to his friend Monnier, sent on 17 June from Liegnitz where he complains that Berthier began his “miserable cavils”:

\begin{quote}
I was a little late in sending the fifteenth-days report on the state of troops. But \textit{it is just a mere formality, which is not of a major importance} [emphases added]. It happened because I did not receive on time the report from Souham’s division, composed of various provisional regiments… Another incrimination against me is that I sent one officer back to Dresden, who did not deserve the honor of belonging to the staff. A great crime, do you think not?

How could I expect that after all these squabbles the Emperor could yet think of me … and he agreed to confirm \textit{maréchal} [Ney’s] recommendation for promotion? If, instead of an award I am being insulted, that is way too much; it requires lots of selflessness to overcome all this.\textsuperscript{61}
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[57] Armistice of Plasswitz, 4 June 1813. \textit{Russian foreign policy}, first série, VII, 231.
\item[58] Jomini to Clark, 14 June 1813. The response, sent by 12 July, will arrive by the end of month. Service historique, \textit{Dossier} GB 8Y\textsuperscript{2} 1277 (Jomini).
\item[59] Service historique, Série, Livrets de situation, 3\textsuperscript{e} et 4\textsuperscript{e} corps d’armée, 1813, Carton C2 539.
\item[60] De Philip, \textit{Étude sur le service d’État-major}, 67.
\item[61] Jomini to Monnier, 17 June 1813. \textit{Correspondance du général Jomini avec M. le baron Monnier}, 41-42.
\end{footnotes}
The prediction of Jomini came true when on 20 June he received a letter from Berthier demanding the report on the general situation regarding the 3rd Corps. It was further added that “the Emperor ordered … to put this information in the order of the army; he also expressed his displeasure on such negligence by which you carry out your duties”. No doubt this caused Jomini great stress and hurt his pride.

Based on Napoléon’s own recollection during his exile on St.-Hélène as depicted by Emmanuel-Augustin Las Cases, “[an] order of the day was issued to arrest Jomini on the charge of not having sent certain information on the 3rd Corps in time”. However, the arrest did not occur, but such an incident gave life to the long-lived legend of Berthier’s persecution of Jomini who, at this instant, simply expedited orders issued by the Emperor Napoléon himself. As a result of this, Jomini was deprived of his long-desired promotion to the rank of the général de division, recommended by maréchal Ney to reward the most distinguished personnel of his Corps. Nonetheless, another of Ney’s requests for the Legion of Honor for his staff went through; on 10 August 1813 in Dresden, Napoléon signed a decree awarding Jomini an officier de la Légion d’honneur, along with seven other staff officers.

By surprising coincidence, none of the distinguished biographers and historians ever mentioned this award. Most of them emphasized the unworthiness of Jomini’s promotion thus fueling more tension in the relationship between Jomini and Berthier, which as established above, was mere a professional in nature. But it is also due to the fact that Napoléon’s four-page decree of 10 August 1813 with the names of awardees of those promoted was (and still is) misfiled in the Archives Nationales in Paris; by an accident, a group of decrees and minutes related to August of 1813 was attached together with those of August of 1812.

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62 Berthier to Jomini, 18 June 1813, Musée de Payerne.

63 Emmanuel Augustin Las Cases, comte de, Le Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène (Paris, 1957), 1082. Note that the Emperor had said many various things at various times during his long exile.

64 Emperor Napoléon’s decree, 10 August 1813. Archives Nationales, Series AFIV (Secrétaire d’état impériale) 794. Established in 1802 and finalized in 1805, the Order of the Légion d’Honneur had five ascending grades: légionnaire, officier, commandant, Grand officier and Grand Aigle. Since 1807 Jomini already was a légionnaire of the Légion (c. 1808 chevalier), hence is the next degree in the Order’s hierarchal status.

65 See, Courville, Jomini, ou Devin de Napoléon, 205; Saint-Beuve Le général Jomini, 146-47; Baqué, L’homme qui devinait Napoléon, 146. The Mertzalovs even talk about the “baseness” of maréchal Berthier in A.-H.Jomini, 29. It appeared for the first time in Langendorf’s book where the author refers to the Musée of Payerne catalogue entry in his Faire la guerre: Jomini, 89 (which is still inaccessible to the public).
Figure 22. Decree signed by the Emperor Napoléon nominating général de brigade Jomini an officier of the Légion d'Honneur (France, Archive Nationales)
But, apparently, unaware on his decoration, getting more upset, especially when he was reprimanded for neglecting his duties, Jomini decided on a final step. In a letter to Monnier dated 13 August, Jomini explained his further motive:

Finally, I reached the limit of my endurance. Just now a courier arrived bringing up the list of confirmed promotions; no less than six hundred men from our [3rd] Corps received signs of satisfaction and glory. Only he who, by his own maréchal admittance was, more than anyone promoting the victory, left aside! Tomorrow, alas! I will abandon these ungrateful banners where I found so much humiliation, which in no way I deserve for my part!66

On the morning of 14 August 1813, général de brigade Antoine-Henri Baron de Jomini appeared on the lines of the Prussian positions where he asked to be directed to Prague, the Headquarters of Tsar Alexander I.67 It is difficult to analyze with precise exactitude Jomini’s motives; deprivation of deserved promotion, order of arrest (if ever issued), and general displeasure with his superiors all merit consideration. But mainly, Jomini saw the negative outcome of events; earlier, on 8 August the Allies delivered an announcement ending the Plasswitz Armistice; on 10 August Austria declared war against France.68 Also for Jomini, the military theorist and historian, one thing was imperative: in 1813 both Napoléon and his army paid the price for the major miscalculation of the 1812 campaign; all that occurred in 1813 was sequential to the prior major mistake. Of course, Lutzen and Bautzen were victorious for the French, but now each defeat only embittered the Allies more; they were ready to fight until the end. Jomini position was complex; he was a Swiss in the French service and he also carried an official letter-patent of the Lieutenant General in the Russian army since 1810. He also had tendered his letter of resignation to Napoléon several times. Yet, Jomini did not leave the French army in the middle of wartime but during the armistice, and even though he abandoned one army in favor of the other, it was dictated by his personal ambition rather than dissatisfaction over a non-received promotion. It is neither that he had “no real sense of loyalty to anyone but Jomini”69 nor that “Jomini’s main purpose was always to serve military science, no matter

66 Jomini to Monnier, 13 August 1813. Correspondance du général Jomini avec M. le baron Monnier, 46-47.
68 Russian foreign policy, first série, VII, 341, 346-47.
where.”“70 The truth lies somewhere in between, in Jomini’s own mind. 71 By Napoléon’s assessments, which might be found quite neutral, he noted that

[It was] certain, from what had occurred in 1810, that I would not accept his resignation, he was determined to join the ruler who promised him a distinguished reception.

However violent this step [the desertion] the attenuating circumstances are excusable. It was the result of a very natural feeling, such as unwillingness to be humiliated. This officer [Jomini] was not Frenchmen, and was bound to our flag by no feelings of patriotism; the only feeling that can enable one to submit to ill treatment.72

Jomini arrived at the Tsar’s Headquarters in Prague on 16 August, along with another French military celebrity, republican General Jean-Victor Moreau, where both requested to enter the Russian service. Jomini was accepted and officially given rank of a Lieutenant General in the Russian service.73 Moreau, who coveted the position of Commander-and-chief of the Allied forces, was merely attached to the Headquarters of the combined armies in a private capacity as a military expert (he would be mortally wounded at the Battle of Dresden, 27 August 1813).

The Main Headquarters of the Allies was quite different from that Spartan establishment of the ever-moving Napoléon’s Headquarters led by tireless maréchal Berthier. At this period all major European monarchs joined together – Grand Prince Constantine, Friedrich-Wilhelm III, Francis I, the Crown Prince of Sweden. They brought along numerous aide-de-camps, “golden youths” and high court nobility.74 Headquarters of Army of Bohemia (the Main army) under the command of the Austrian General Field marshal Count Karl Philipp Schwarzenberg reminded one rather of an aristocratic salon populated with all sorts of “hunters” seeking grades and decorations and competing with each others in the art of intrigue and flattery.


71 The different perspectives taken of Jomini’s conduct by his apologists and critics are too numerous to be listed here. Also, in author’s opinion it is politically incorrect to transfer views of a modern era to principally different historical conditions.

72 Las Cases, Le Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène, 1085.

73 RGVIA, fond 489 (Jomini’s personal file) op. 1, d. 7062.

General Lieutenant Jomini took an active part during the finale of the 1813 campaign. Jomini did not secure any command or particular appointment; his record indicates that he was “present at His Majesty the Tsar and on his order at Count Schwarzenberg’s Headquarters”. Along with another Russian Quartermaster General Karl Toll, Jomini was appointed Tsar’s “representative” to influence the Austrian command. However, it never really succeeded, mainly due to the numerous conflicts between the allies. Also, the temper of Jomini produced additional tension. Thus, while the planning maneuvers at Dresden, 25-26 August, Jomini, became so disagreeable that the British minister Lord William S. Cathcart took him aside and suggested to moderate his views or new colleagues could became enemies. Jomini apologized stating, “When the destiny of Europe is decided, the honor of three great monarchs and my own reputation, I can say what I please” but the tension remained.

During the following Battle of Kulm, 30 August 1813, against the French 1st Corps under Dominique Vandamme, Jomini was sent with the important mission to bring reserves to the main army fighting near the village of Teplitz. During the conversation with Prince Metternich, Jomini persuaded him on the necessity to direct the Austrian Corps under Count Hieronimus von Colloredo to the decisive point, although Schwarzenberg ordered otherwise. Nonetheless, the advise of Jomini was approved by the Tsar and allies managed to defeat the enemy before arrival of other French corps. Vandamme was surrounded, lost all his artillery and finally was taken prisoner along with 6 more general officers and nearly 7,000 men. Jomini was awarded his first Russian decoration, the Order of St.-Anne, 2nd Class. However, he was not satisfied with such a reward and planned to abandon service, but only on advise of Adélaïde, who arrived to meet her husband in Vienna, Jomini agreed to stay. But at that time he lost his practical interest in the upcoming events and returned to stay at Tsar Alexander’s Headquarters. In the meantime, the French military court judging Jomini in absentia, condemned him to death;

75 RGVIA, fond 489 (Jomini’s personal file) op. 1, d. 7062.
76 Courville, Jomini, ou Devin de Napoléon, 218.
77 Jomini, Précis politique et militaire des campaigns de 1812 à 1814, as edited by F. Lecomte, II, 65.
78 Bogdanovich, History of 1813 War, II, 218; Podmazo, The Big European War, 1812-15, 119.
79 RGVIA, fond 489 (Jomini’s personal file) op. 1, d. 7062.
Jomini’s former aide-de-camps, Koch and de Pont-Bellanger were placed under police surveillance.\footnote{Ibid.}

Jomini returned to the active service in the mid-October 1813, during the “Battle of the Nations” at Leipzig. There, on 16 October, on the first day of this three-days struggle, Jomini tried to convince Schwarzenberg to abandon his preliminary plan to maneuver on the left bank of the Pleisse, which might led the Allies to a separate defeat. After personal observation and reconnaissance conducted from the bell-tower, Jomini again pressed Schwarzenberg to move on the right bank; he also sent his aide-de-camp to the Tsar asking for reserves. At the same time Jomini once again had a clash with various staff officers, arrogantly pointing towards Schwarzenberg’s clumsy leadership: “you’ll will see how one can lose the battle”.\footnote{Bogdanovich, \textit{History of 1813 War}, 2:451-52. Lecomte, \textit{Le général Jomini}, 209-10.}

On 21 October Jomini received the Order of St.-Anne of the 1\textsuperscript{st} Class, but he decided not to continue his military service.\footnote{RGVIA, \textit{fond} 489 (Jomini’s personal file) \textit{op. 1, d. 7062.}} Perhaps, he considered his own participation against France unacceptable. Furthermore, after disagreement regarding the intervention in France and of the Austrian violation of the Swiss neutrality, General Lieutenant Antoine-Henri Baron de Jomini left the Russian service at the beginning of 1814. He would soon return to spend more than fifty fruitful years in the service of Russia. As for 1813 campaign, the Tsar recognized his service and ordered to engrave his name on the Wall of Military Fame of the Russian Orthodox Cathedral of Christ the Savor in Moscow. His portrait was hung in the Winter Palace in St.-Petersburg, in the Gallery of heroes of 1812-14 campaigns.

The 1813 campaign became a turning point for Jomini. He assumed the position as the Ney’s chief of staff at the period when a local war turned out into a national war. Performing his duties as best he could, Jomini, nonetheless, became a simple executor of Napoléon’s orders. His suggestions at the Battle of Bautzen were tactically justified and theoretically achievable. But his contribution seem to be less significant than it was previously thought, because the hierarchal system of the French army required the simple process of following orders, which at the end restricted Jomini’s initiative. Tsar Alexander had the wisdom, once he obtained Jomini’s service, to make good use of his vast knowledge. The extent to which Jomini helped form Alexander’s policy following Napoleon’s defeat was of considerable importance in shaping
European events in the post-war period. Mention of Jomini’s role as an influential advisor to Alexander does serve to indicate that maréchal Ney’s former Chief of staff attained a position of trust and respect in his relationship with the Tsar, a position Jomini could not secure under the Emperor Napoléon. Furthermore, Jomini was able to play a dominant role in effecting major improvement in the Russian staff system by assisting in creating the Academy of General Staff in St.-Petersburg and educating generations of young officers by his profound historical writings.
Figure 23. Name of Baron de Jomini engraved on the Wall of the Military Fame (sixth row from the top, left side). Cathedral of the Christ the Savor, Moscow
CONCLUSION

“It is equally difficult to satisfy readers when one is either writing on a subject of little importance or one that presents too much of an interest” – once noted Stendhal. By the same reason, to write about Jomini, “a Swiss for the French, a Frenchman for the Russians” is an interesting and difficult task. As time went by, an appearance and employment of voluminous amounts of old and newly discovered primary sources of the Napoleonic epoch – documents, letters, mémoires and contemporary accounts – made research even more challenging. Such advantages, thanks to the increasing amount of literature on principal actors of the period, however, turned out to be disadvantageous, as well. And it applies to Jomini and his career in 1812-13. Legends, so-called “generally accepted opinions”, firmed stereotypes, and even dogmas do overlap upon each other, creating artificial obstacles, which slow down the true historical process. To become quite independent and original in his judgment, a researcher should re-examine and re-evaluate once established conceptions and schemes. In other words, it would be necessary to start all over again.

To a distinguished officer such as Antoine-Henri Baron de Jomini, the career of Napoléon, novel though he knew it to be, in a sense seemed a perfectly explicable outgrowth of the warfare and politics of the eighteenth century. As a writer of exceptional talent, Jomini made his own contribution to the innovations of the age. He began, not indeed the study of war, but the characteristically modern, systematic study of the subject in the form it has retained ever since.

But Jomini also served at the General Staff and participated in the ill-carried Russian campaign as a Military Governor, first of Vilna and then commandant of Smolensk. During the retreat he rendered to the Grande Armée a great deal of service by his reconnaissance across the Berezina. In the spring of 1813 Jomini rejoined maréchal Ney for the campaign in Saxony as his Chief of staff. He performed to the best ability, but he lacked professional knowledge as a staff officer. Furthermore, there were certain contradictions in the higher echelons of Napoléon’s new Grande Armée that belittled his efforts. Also, a series of personal conflicts that characterized Jomini’s entire military service led to his defection to the camp of the allies under patronage of the Russian Tsar Alexander I. He took part in several actions in his new capacity as a Russian general officer and Tsar’s advisor at Kulm and Leipzig. Opposing to the invasion
in France, he returned to Switzerland early in 1814 but later took a part in the Congress of Vienna, while proposing changes for his native country.

Both Napoléon and Alexander I admired Jomini’s military writings and expended a good deal of time and effort trying to find their author a position where he could be of some practical use. At the end of the Napoleonic wars, since Jomini devoted the rest of a long life to enhancing his image for posterity, retelling how his advice saved the remnants of the French army at the Berezina crossing, or how his prediction at Bautzen or Leipzig might have lead to success, it is difficult to distinguish truth from an auto-hagiography. Direct archival materials, especially those concerning Jomini’s actions, are very limited and do not provide sufficient information to prove various claims. However, with the help of integral and “microhistory” there is enough data in additional primary and secondary sources, which shed light on the most questionable or long-stereotyped issues. Note, however, that the main intention of this work was not to criticize the cohort of authors and Jomini’s biographers or take sides, but to access well-known old and newly discovered information impartially, in accordance with the highest standards of a historical science of the twenty-first century.

Despite his various achievements and professional military development, even the most respectful accounts of Jomini’s career cannot conceal his weaknesses; his success was sometimes counterbalanced by his inability to cooperate with his colleagues and superiors, who would have made his presence at a busy headquarters very difficult.

According to many biographers, Jomini attributed the coolness, which increasingly surrounded him, and his failure to achieve more brilliant success to the personal malice of Napoleon’s Chief of Staff, maréchal Berthier. But even if such an element was present, it occurred during the last stage of his career in the French army, which was, by all standards, quite remarkable. As discussed above, their relationships were strictly professional according to the structure of the Imperial Headquarters and most obviously was not based on personal sympathy or antipathy. Finally, Jomini’s decision to defect from one army in favor of another was dictated by his personal preference and did not reflect any political color. Jomini received more recognition while in the service of the Russian army where, awarded with the most prestigious orders and attaining high rank in its military hierarchy, he spent the rest of his long life.

Serving during the most crucial and dramatic moments of European history in 1812-13, Jomini experienced opportunities for observing Napoleonic warfare at first hand for both, France
and Russia that were almost unrivaled, and he was able in his subsequent writings to express them effectively and with precise clarity. A man of principle and an officer of honor, Antoine-Henri Baron de Jomini has proved to be one of the most influential military theorists of the modern age, as reflected by the intensity with which he is studied at military academies throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
APPENDIX: Attribution of several early portraits Baron de Jomini

Figure 24 represents one of the lesser-known earlier portraits of Jomini (a small miniature, gravure by Quenedey), preserved in the museum of Payerne. The inscription on the nearby plate incorrectly reads: “Portrait of Jomini wearing the uniform of the Russian general officer”. There is no date, which allows estimating the time frame when it was made; however, a diligent analysis of the uniform and insignia wearing by the young officer provides additional information and helps to solve the puzzle.

On this miniature Jomini is depicted in bust, wearing a uniform richly embroidered with ornament of oak lives. Epaulettes with the thick bullion fringes suggest the higher rank of the officer. The embroidery on the collar and shape of the epaulettes both are quite similar to those wore by the Russian high command in 1812-13.1 And only characteristic embroidery on the chest of his uniform proves the fact that here Jomini is still in his French uniform of Adjudant-commandant (c. 27 December 1805).2 The cross of the legionnaire (since 1808 renamed as chevalier) of the Légion d’Honneur, awarded to Jomini in the summer of 1807, allows narrowing down the time period. Although there is no official document found, the Almanach Impérial, an official “book of the year” of the First Empire, lists in its subsection all active Adjudant-commandants (including Jomini) along with 117 other cross awardees in its 1808-year issue.3 Perhaps, the miniature was done soon afterwards, because many young officers rushed to order their portraits for their family galleries.

Figure 25 represents Baron de Jomini’s coat of arms of the French Empire (c.1808).

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1 Orders of 26 January 1808 and 8 June 1809, as quoted in Alexander Viscovatov, Istоричeskoe opisanie odezdi i booryzeniya rossisskix voisk [Historical Description of the Clothing and Arms of the Russian army] (St.-Petersburg, 1841-62), part 6, XVII, 21-22.

2 The Regulation of 1 Vendémiaire An XII (24 September 1803), as quoted in Henri Berriat, Législation Militaire, part 2, (Alexandrie, 1812), III, 182-83.

Figure 24. Portrait of *Adjutant-commandant* Jomini (Gravure of M. Quenedy)

Figure 25. Coat of Arms of Baron de Jomini (c. 1808) (Rev. Albert, *Album des armories...*)

Figure 26. Portrait of *général de brigade* Baron de Jomini (a fragment; Mansell Collection)
Figure 26 shows the fragment of a Jomini portrait from the so-called Mansell Collection. Although it is also not dated, it is much easier to identify. On this painting Baron de Jomini is depicted wearing the général de brigade uniform (c. 7 December 1810) of the French army as outlined by the same Regulation of 1 Vendémiaire An XII. The general officer of this rank is prescribed to have on the chest of his coat gilded embroidery representing a branch of the oak lives; the same embroidery of one row appeared on the stand-up collar identifying rank (one row on the collar for the général de brigade).\(^4\) On the left side one can detect counters of the cross of the chevalier of Légion d’Honneur, while the Bavarian cross of Maximilian-Joseph hangs from the neck identifying that the recipient wears commandeur decorations.\(^5\) Once again, there is no reference to the nature of such decoration found in archives.\(^6\) However, a factual analysis of this decoration helps to approximate the period of an award. As noted, in 1811-12 général de brigade Baron de Jomini served at the Imperial Headquarters, being assigned at one point to maréchal Berthier’s staff. Since March 1808, Berthier was officially married to the niece of the Bavarian king, Marie-Elisabeth, the Princess of Bavaria (1784-1849). Bavaria was a part of the Confederation of the Rhine, a state created by the Emperor Napoléon as true ally of France. It was a common tradition at that time to decorate military men of allied countries to cement long-term relationships in peace and war. The information on général de division Sanson who also served under Berthier in 1809-12 reveals that Sanson received the award of the same commandeur cross of the Maximilian-Joseph in 1810.\(^7\) Therefore it is safe to assume, that Jomini could have been decorated at approximately the same time. It also proves that list of Berthier’s persecutions of Jomini is overestimated.

Next in chronological order presented on Figure 27 is the portrait of Lieutenant General Jomini in the Russian service (also anonymous and undated), which could be attributed to the end of 1813. One can see the obvious resemblance from the previous Figure 26: the same

\(^4\) Législation Militaire, part 2, III, 181.

\(^5\) Established in 1797 and renewed by 1 January 1806 by King Maximilian Joseph of Bavaria. Robert Werlich, Orders and decorations of all nations (London, 1965), 117.

\(^6\) An early personal file of Jomini completed in 1817 although listing all his non-Russian decorations does not provide any references as to their factual issuance. RGVIA, fond 489 (Jomini’s personal file) op. 1, d. 7062.

\(^7\) Six, Dictionnaire, II, 423. Sanson was taken prisoner during the retreat from Russia, he returned back to France only in 1814.
haircut, background and similarities of the Russian and French shape of epaulettes and collar (according to the decree of 1 February 1812 the open collar for the Russian general officers was changed to low one closed in front with small hooks and eyes). However, Jomini appears in double-breasted coat analogical for all general officers on the Russian service at that time. On the right side is the star of the Order of St. Anne of the 1st Class for Leipzig, on the left – St. Anne of the 2nd Class for Kulm. The uniform also has an aiguillette – a specially designed cord of golden threads attached to the right shoulder to distinguish Adjutants’ (aide-de-camps) to the Tsar. The Bavarian cross still hangs from the neck; no cross of the chevalier of the Légion d’Honneur. Apparently, Jomini never wore his highest French decoration.

The last portrait, Figure 28 (unanimous and undated), depicts Jomini around 1817 and is also preserved in the Payerne museum. Here, Baron de Jomini wears a new uniform of the Lieutenant General and Adjutant to the Tsar, established in 1817. By this regulation, the coat of a new uniform is one-breasted with nine gilded buttons and aiguillette; epaulettes have “A.I” marking (monogram for Alexander I), the collar has special distinctive embroidery for Tsar’s Adjutants. Here, Jomini is decorated with the star of the Order of St. Anne of the 1st Class on the right site, the star of the Order of St.-Vladimir, 2nd Class on the left and Bavarian cross on the neck; over his right shoulder is the red sash of the Order of St.-Anne piped yellow.

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8 Viskovatov, *Historical Description*, part 6, XVII, 23.

9 Jomini was appointed Adjutant to the Tsar on 28 December 1813. RGVIA, *fond* 489 (Jomini’s personal file) *op. 1, d. 7062.

9 Order of 7 May 1817, as quoted in Viskovatov, *Historical Description*, part 15, XII, 66.

10 Jomini received Order of the St. Vladimir of the 2nd Class on 29 May 1817. RGVIA, *fond* 395 (Jomini’s personal file, 1854) *op. 160, d. 395.*
Figure 27. Portrait of Lieutenant General Jomini, c. 1813
(A. Pigeard, *Campagnes de Napoléon*)

Figure 28. Portrait of Lieutenant General Jomini, Adjutant to the Tsar Alexander I
(*Musée de Payerne*, Switzerland)
Figure 29. Monument to Antoine-Henri Baron de Jomini (1779-1869) In his hometown of Payerne, Switzerland
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A Note on Russian Archival Materials

This work would not have been possible without extensive access to archival material in the Russian State Military Historical Archive (RGVIA). This principal repository of documents relating to the Russian Army in the nineteenth century also contains boxes of official Napoleonic correspondence seized in the course of the retreat of the Grande Armée in 1812. The basic documents are grouped in *fond* (collection) with the subsequent subdivision of each collection to *opis* (index) and *dela* (items). Most of this *fondov* is grouped together and are assembled under the umbrella of Military-Scholarly Archive (VUA, or *Voennno-Uchenyi Arkhiv*).

All major Russian archives preserve a similar organization in their own filing system.

**Russian Archives**

Roosiskii Gossudarstvennyi Voeno-Istoricheskii Arkhiv (RGVIA) [The Russian State Military Historical Archive], Moscow.

*Fond* 154 (The Russian Imperial army, 1811-12), *op. 1 d.* 84, 93.

*Fond* 846 (VUA) *op. 16, d.* 3602, 3617, 3618, 3629.

*Fond* 474 (Patriotic War of 1812 and Campaign of 1813) *d.* 3465, part 3.

*Fond* 489 (Jomini’s personal file, 1817) *op. 1, d.* 7062.

*Fond* 395 (Jomini’s personal file, 1854) *op. 160, d.* 395.

Rossisskii Gossydarstvennyi Arkhiv Drevnix Aktov (RGADA) [The Russian State Archie on Ancient Manuscripts], Moscow.

*Fond* 1278 (collection of autographs), *op. 1, d.* 11; *fond* 1477, *op. 1, d.* 18.

Otdelenie Instituta Istorii Rossii [The Institute on Russian History], Moscow

*Fond* 226 (Patriotic War of 1812) *op. 1, d.* 365, lists 1, 3; *d.* 366, lists 1, 2.
Rossiiskii Gossudarstvennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv (RGIA) [The Russian State Historical Archive], St.-Petersburg.

Fond 1343 (dossier of A.-H. Jomini) op. 46, d. 1810, pages 66-67.

French Archives

Service Historique de la Défense, Département de l’armée de terre (SHD/DAT, formerly SHAT), Château de Vincennes, Paris

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Originally from Riga, Latvia, Eman M. Vovsi graduated from the Latvian State University with a Bachelor’s Degree in teaching History and Sociology. Parallel to his academic curricula he was one of the founders of Baltic Historical Club and Napoleonic re-enactment unit, which was and still is taking part in various events in Russia and Europe, such as “Waterloo-90”, “Camp de Boulogne-92”, “Borodino-92”, “Austerlitz-2005” and many others.

He arrived to the United States in September 1992. After receiving a post-baccalaureate degree in Paralegal Studies at the New York University in 1997, he worked at the several major law firms throughout the New York City. He persisted in his self-studies in Napoleonic history and succeeded in publishing a number of articles in specialized presses and two small books, “An extraordinary Army of the Orient, 1798-1801” (On Military Matters, 1998) and “Tactics of the French Infantry, 1792-1815” (Samara, 2005). His primary interest lies in the internal organization of the French and Russian armies of the 1715-1815 period including development of the administration, hierarchy and questions of the command structure.

In August 2004 he was admitted to the Graduate Program of the History Department at the Florida State University where he continues his higher education at the Institute on Napoléon and the French Revolution. He took an active part in the Consortium on Revolutionary Europe in 2005-06; he also presented papers at the International Napoleonic Society’s conference in July 2005 in Dinard, France and “Napoleon, Europe, Empire” conference at the St.-Petersburg University, Russia in October 2005 (by proxy).