

## DISASTER AT ABOUKIR: BRUEYS' OR NAPOLEON'S FAULT?

Virgil Medlin

Department of History, Oklahoma City University, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Evidence is presented and discussed concerning the disposition of the French fleet in Egyptian waters, prior to its destruction in one of the major naval victories in the Wars of the French Revolution. An attempt is made to assess the responsibility for the disposition and, hence, destruction of the French fleet by analyzing the roles played by Napoleon Bonaparte, commander of the Egyptian campaign, and Francois Paul Brueys, admiral of the destroyed fleet. This study, the first attempt by an "unofficial" historian to search the archives for the answer to this long debated question, is also the first corroborative investigation of the "official" history which appeared nearly 70 years ago.

On 1 August 1798, Rear Admiral Horatio Nelson with a 1,012 gun force, destroyed at Aboukir Bay, Egypt, a 1,182 gun fleet under the command of the French admiral Francois Paul Brueys. Crane Brinton (1) has written of the event, "Disaster struck upon the sea. The French admiral Brueys, unable to get his biggest ships over the bar into Alexandria, and prevented by Bonaparte from following the Directors' order to seek safety in the Ionian Islands, drew up his fleet along the curving shore of Aboukir Bay, in a position he seems to have regarded as safe. Here on August 1, 1798, Nelson . . . at last found his enemy." The isolation of Napoleon Bonaparte and his army in the Near East, the deliverance of control of the Mediterranean Sea to the British, the formation of the Second Coalition against France, the psychological effect of the victory on the English, the French, and the decrepit monarchies of Italy, and the military importance of Aboukir as a great naval battle are reasons enough to question how the French fleet came to be at Aboukir and who made the decision to station the fleet there. The answers to these two questions are not as clear-cut as Brinton writes of them (2).

On 3 July, 1798, Brueys received orders from General Berthier that Napoleon wished the fleet anchored in the Old Port of Alexandria (3). Bonaparte signed an order that same date for Brueys to station the fleet in the Old Port if he had time and if the depth of the passage into the port was sufficient to allow ships to enter. If no passage were found, artillery and other materials

were to be unloaded at Aboukir. The admiral was ordered to report to Napoleon whether he 1) had entered the Old Port, or finding this impossible, 2) had found it possible to defend himself in Aboukir Bay against a superior force, or finding neither of these possible of execution, 3) had decided to depart for Corfu in the French-held Ionian Islands (4). Brueys wrote to Napoleon at this time that thus far he had been unable to find a channel into the Old Port through which his heavier ships could pass without danger of running aground. Brueys also states in the dispatch that he could see no other place at present for the fleet to anchor than Aboukir Bay (5).

Napoleon certainly wanted the fleet in the Old Port, for the day before he left Alexandria he wrote to the Executive Directory, "The fleet will be at Aboukir today finishing landing our artillery. The Old Port of Alexandria can contain a fleet of any size. But there is one point in the passage with only five fathoms of water, which makes the sailors think it impossible for the 74s to enter. This fact seriously interferes with my plans" (6).

On 6 July, Brueys wrote to Napoleon that he was going to set sail from Alexandria in order to anchor at Aboukir. He stated that he was trying his best to find an entrance into the Old Port, but, as the loss of a ship was too considerable, that the work would require time and care (7). Brueys again wrote Napoleon the following day and in this letter argued against stationing the fleet in the Old Port, stating that even if it were possible to get the fleet in the port,

a single enemy ship of the line could bottle it up there (8).

The report of Ensign Lachadenède, who was attached to Brueys' staff on the *L'Orient*, confirms both the Old Port and Aboukir Bay as places considered for anchoring the French fleet. According to Lachadenède, the admiral and Napoleon met and discussed the problem, prior to the removal of the fleet to Aboukir, and decided that if the fleet was unable to enter at Alexandria, it should anchor at Aboukir. Napoleon, however, not satisfied with having the fleet exposed while waiting to see if the soundings of the Old Port would allow the fleet to enter there, sent engineer and artillery officers to see if the fleet could be protected from the land at Aboukir Bay (10). On 7 July, while undersail to Aboukir, Brueys, in a letter to Napoleon, expressed the hope that the engineers would be able to find land fortifications that would "protect the two heads of my line" which would make the fleet's position, in Brueys' words, impregnable (11). On that same date Casimir Poitevin, chief of the corps of engineers, reported that land fortifications would be of little help in protecting the fleet (12).

Supposedly on receiving Poitevin's findings, Napoleon ordered Brueys to enter the Old Port in twenty-four hours, or, failing that, to set sail for Corfu. The only indication as to the contents of that dispatch are contained in a report Bonaparte made to the Executive Directory 19 August:

I wrote to the admiral to enter the port within twenty-four hours, or, if his fleet could not enter, to unload all the artillery and stores of the land army at once and go to Corfu.

The admiral did not think he could complete unloading where he was, since he was moored among the rocks before the port of Alexandria and several ships had already lost their anchors. He moved to Aboukir which offered a good anchorage. I sent engineer and artillery officers who agreed with the admiral that he could be given no protection from the land and that, if the English appeared during the two or three days he would have to remain there in order to land our artillery and to sound and mark the passage at Alexandria, he could (do) nothing but cut his cables and that it was important to stay at Aboukir as short a time as possible. I thus left Alexandria in the firm belief that within three days the fleet

would be in the port or would have set sail for Corfu (13).

The order to Brueys must have been written just before Napoleon left Alexandria, as he mentions Poitevin's findings of 7 July. He left on 7 July thinking the fleet would soon be in the port or on its way to Corfu. Why Brueys did not "obey" these orders is discussed later.

Brueys seemed earnest in trying to comply with the orders of Bonaparte to enter the Old Port. He wrote the Minister of Marine and Colonies 12 July, "To gratify the wishes of the Commander in Chief, I have offered a reward of ten thousand livres to any pilot of the country who will undertake to carry the squadron in: but none of them will venture to take charge of a single vessel that draws more than twenty feet." (14) During this time soundings for a channel into the Old Port continued, and on 13 July, Captain Barré of the frigate *Alceste* reported, ". . . and my judgement, is that ships of the line can enter" the port provided the necessary precautions are taken (15). That same date Brueys wrote to Napoleon that he was strengthening his position at Aboukir and that a passage had been found into the Old Port through which the fleet could enter "with a favorable wind and a calm sea," though the entrance would be difficult and dangerous (16). Brueys was not satisfied that the fleet could enter and continued soundings until 20 July and on 26 July wrote Napoleon that the findings would be sent to him so that the commander in chief could decide which ships should enter the Old Port (17).

Ensign Lachadenède in his report claimed it was not so much a question of whether the fleet could enter the Old Port, but of the time it would take to get it inside. Even the 120-gun *L'Orient* could enter, but, at most, only two of the heavier ships could be moved into the port each day and, with part of the fleet in the port and part out, the French would be exposed if the English suddenly appeared (18). As it would have taken 26 days to place the 13 ships of 74, 80, and 120 guns in the Old Port, the continued consideration of entering the Old Port seems strange for Nelson was know-

to be in the vicinity. Napoleon, when he left Alexandria on 7 July, was certainly not immediately aware of Brueys' position, especially since Brueys' letter of 13 July, according to Napoleon (19), did not reach him at Cairo until 30 July.

Napoleon, on 27 July, in his first dispatch to Brueys since leaving Alexandria wrote that he had received intelligence from Alexandria that an adequate passage into the Old Port had been found, and that he did not doubt that the fleet was presently in the port. Two sentences later, in the same dispatch, Bonaparte wrote that, as soon as he received a letter from Brueys telling him what had been done and where he was, further orders would be issued to the admiral (20). The two sentences are not contradictory, as Napoleon had apparently not heard from Brueys since leaving Alexandria, and had only "received intelligence" that a passage had been found and not that the fleet was actually removed to the Old Port. As Napoleon now thought that Brueys was either in the Old Port or soon to be, it is understandable that he would not write in the dispatch of his objection to the fleet remaining at Aboukir, nor of the fleet not being on its way to Corfu. What is questionable is why Napoleon was still entertaining the idea as late as 27 July that Brueys would move his fleet into the Old Port when he had ordered Brueys as early as 7 July to move the fleet into the Old Port in twenty-four hours or be on its way to Corfu.

On 30 July, Napoleon wrote to Brueys that he had received the admiral's letters from 13 July to 26 July [probably 21 July (3 thermidor) not 26 July (8 thermidor) the 3 becoming an 8 in copying] and "What I hear from Alexandria on the success of the soundings leads me to hope by now you have entered the port." Bonaparte adds, "However, you must either at once enter the port of Alexandria or else provision yourself quickly with rice and corn I am sending you and proceed to Corfu . . ." This dispatch did not reach Brueys before the 1 August disaster. In his report to the Executive Directory, 19 August, Napoleon wrote that Brueys' position at Aboukir was of "strange resolve" which caused him the greatest

alarm. "It appears to me that Admiral Brueys did not wish to go to Corfu until he was certain he could not enter the port of Alexandria and that the army, of which he for long had no news, was in a position to have no need for a retreat. If in the course of these disastrous events he had made mistakes he expiated them by a glorious death" (22).

The story of the events leading up to 1 August, as constructed from the original source materials, tends to have some inconsistencies. From Napoleon's dispatches it appears that the fleet could at one time have anchored in one of three places, the Old Port, Aboukir Bay, or Corfu. From these same dispatches it appears that Napoleon dismissed Aboukir Bay as a possible choice after receiving the report of Poitevin that land batteries would not give the fleet protection at Aboukir Bay. From the dispatches of Brueys, only Aboukir Bay and the Old Port are mentioned and never Corfu. It can only be assumed, if all the dispatches are taken at face value, that Brueys either ignored Bonaparte's orders of 7 July to be in the Old Port in twenty-four hours or sail for Corfu, or that Brueys was dilatory. If the dispatches are not accepted at face value, then considerable speculation is possible (23).

Why Brueys did not want to enter the Old Port has already been explained. Why Brueys, however, continued until 20 July to search for an entrance and then waited six days more to ask Napoleon to decide which ships should enter the Old Port is surely being dilatory, as Nelson was known to be searching for the French fleet. Brueys did not want to be bottled up in the Old Port but wished to be in a fighting position. On 7 July, he wrote Napoleon, "My firm desire is to be useful to you in every possible way: and, as I have already said, every port will suit me well, *provided that you place me there in an active way (Italics mine)*" (24). Further, Damas mentions in his *Journal* the report of Chef de Brigade Laugier that although Brueys had been ordered to put into the Old Port, the admiral opposed it desiring to be in a fighting position (25). Yet, Brueys also knew that land batteries

at Aboukir were of little value to his fleet and reported to Napoleon that, as Aboukir Bay was too open, the French fleet could not be protected from a superior fleet while anchored there (26). Knowing these things, it is worth questioning: Why did not Bruceys query about Corfu? Why did he have to wait in silence for Napoleon to issue him a specific order to sail for Corfu, especially since Napoleon had left it open as a third option which circumstances certainly allowed him to take? (Even if Napoleon had never mentioned Corfu, Bruceys' action is strange) (27). Rear-Admiral Venice's letter to the French Minister of Marine has been quoted to mean that Bruceys wanted to sail for Corfu: "After the conversations we had with Admiral Bruceys, I would have thought that he would not have remained twenty-four hours after the landing was completed." (28) As Jonquiere points out, this only reflects Bruceys' thinking before leaving for Egypt and, in fact, makes it even more a question as to why Bruceys did not bring up Corfu in his dispatches (29). Also of interest is a letter from Commissary to the Fleet, Jaubert, to the Minister of Marine, Bruix, 9 July: "The English are in our neighborhood . . . We are in expectation of them. The general opinion (but this might be influenced in some degree by personal considerations) was, that as soon as the debarkation was effected, we should have sailed for Corfu . . . The General has decided it otherwise" (30). Of interest in this letter is that Jaubert was in expectation of the English 9 July and he says "we." The "we" certainly cannot refer to Bruceys who wrote the Minister of Marine 12 July, "I have heard nothing from the English . . . and do not think it quite so prudent (that they want) to try their strength with us" (31). As for Napoleon deciding it otherwise, no order exists from Bonaparte saying that Bruceys should not sail for Corfu (32). Jonquiere, in discussing this letter, notes that it appears only in the 1798 publication of dispatches intercepted by Nelson's squadron and has qualified merit (33). Herold has written that Bruceys did not have the provisions necessary to make the considerable trip to Corfu (34). While Bruceys was

poorly provisioned, as was the entire expedition, (and remained at Aboukir eating up his stores), he nevertheless makes no mention of Corfu in any of his dispatches.

If Bruceys was dilatory, so was Napoleon. As late as 27 and 30 July, in dispatches of those dates, Napoleon was still desirous of seeing the fleet in the Old Port! This is difficult to accept if Napoleon's order of 7 July is to be believed and his 19 August statement to the Directory, both of which stress the urgency of stationing the fleet in the Old Port or at Corfu. At no time did Bruceys attempt to impress on Napoleon the extreme amount of time, 26 days, needed to place the fleet in the Old Port. It would appear from Napoleon's dispatches of late July that he thought, once an adequate channel was found, Bruceys simply had to sail the fleet in a matter of hours and was, therefore, even at that late date, insistent on it if Bruceys had found such a passage. Continuing to question Napoleon's anxiety to remove the fleet from Aboukir, Herold has written, "The letter in which Bruceys did announce his intention to make a stand at Aboukir, if attacked, is dated July 13 and must have reached Bonaparte no more than ten days later, thus giving him time to order the fleet to leave for Corfu before August 1 if he so chose" (35). Napoleon, in other words, should have sent on 23 July his instructions of 30 July to enter the Old Port or sail for Corfu and thereby have saved the fleet. Bonaparte, however, claims not to have received any dispatches from Bruceys until 30 July, nor did he receive any from General Kleber who was at Alexandria until 27 July (36). In any event, Napoleon had issued such an order supposedly on 7 July.

On the basis of the available material, both Napoleon and Bruceys appear negligent in their handling of the positioning of the fleet. Why did the Old Port remain a possible place of anchoring once Bruceys understood it would require too much time to enter and would be too dangerous to try to enter? Bruceys clearly failed to impress the former on Bonaparte. As for Aboukir Bay, why, once Poitevin's report was received, did Bruceys remain at Aboukir Bay any longer than necessary to ascertain whe-

ther it would be possible to enter the Old Port? Napoleon had ordered Bruceys not to stay at Aboukir unless he found it possible to defend against a superior force. Whether Napoleon wrote this to Bruceys or not, Bruceys reports the position untenable against a superior force and then was lax in his defense preparations. Bruceys appears even to have been overconfident with regard to the English: "My opinion is that they have not so many as fourteen sail of the line, and, not being superior in number, have not thought fit to try conclusions with us" (37). No matter how confident Bruceys was, once a decision was made concerning the Old Port, the fleet should have removed from Aboukir Bay. The problem was that no decision was ever made concerning the Old Port. As for Corfu, Bruceys failed to take the option before him or at least request it. (But how could he do so when he could not even make a decision concerning the Old Port?). Then too, Napoleon became so involved in land operations, and too interested in keeping the fleet in complete security to make this choice a reality. Worst of all, Bruceys failed to make his position at Aboukir as strong as possible. Admiral Nelson, as a result, found and destroyed the French fleet at Aboukir Bay and achieved a striking victory.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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#### REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. C. BRINTON, *A Decade of Revolution, 1789-1799*, Harper, New York, 1963, p. 229. This writer has been unable to find in the archives an order from the Executive Directory commanding the fleet to seek safety in the Ionian Islands.
2. Archival material available on these two questions include *Archives Nationales: Campagnes 1798/6*, BB<sup>1</sup> Marine 124, BB<sup>1</sup> Marine 125, BB<sup>1</sup> Marine 126; *Expédition d'Égypte - Le vice amiral Bruceys - renseignements généraux correspondance du l'amiral Bruceys - Bataille d'Aboukir - Le commandant des armes à Toulon* (hereafter cited, Arch. Nat: BB<sup>1</sup> Marine 124); *Archives de l'armée, Les Collections du Prince Napoleon. Copies of*

*the Original Letters from the Army of General Bonaparte in Egypt Intercepted by the Fleet under the command of Admiral Lord Nelson* (2 vols; London: J. Wright, 1798, 1799) is an additional source, but of qualified merit (hereafter cited, *Original Letters*). Another source, but to be used with caution, is Louis Antoine Fauvelet de Bourrienne, *Memoirs* (5 vols; Paris, n.d.). Reproducing most of Napoleon's correspondence on the subject is *Correspondance de Napoleon Ier* (32 vols; Paris, 1858-1870). Better is Traffanel de la Jonquière, *L'Expédition d'Égypte, 1798-1801* (5 vols; Paris, 1899-1907) which comments on and evaluates the material in *Correspondance* and reproduces, with considerable accuracy and but slight editing, most of the archival material available on the battle and the expedition. An early article on the subject is A. T. Mahan, *Nelson in the Battle of the Nile*, *Century Magazine* LIII, No. 3 (Jan. 1897), 435-47 ("Battle of the Nile" being a misnomer), which indicts Bruceys for the disaster. M. Maurice Loir, "Bruceys à Aboukir," *Revue maritime* (avril 1900) reasons why Bruceys remained at Aboukir. Oliver Warner, *The Battle of the Nile* (London, 1960) deals briefly with the two questions at hand, indicting Bruceys. J. Christopher Herold in *Bonaparte in Egypt* (New York: Harper, 1962) delivers a bitter indictment of Napoleon for the disaster at Aboukir. A recent article, Richard A. Cahill, *The Significance of Aboukir Bay*, *U. S. Naval Institute Proceedings* (July, 1967) deals with the significance of Aboukir for Nelson's career and cavalierly dismisses the question of responsibility for the disaster. Of the biographies of Napoleon and Nelson, Friedrich M. Kirschstein discusses briefly the subject of this paper in *Napoleon I* (Munich, 1912) and *Nelson: Man and Admiral* (New York, 1931). Almost all published material on the subject in question has been based on Jonquière, *L'Expédition d'Égypte* or *Correspondance*, either directly or indirectly. As already stated, Jonquière's work is a scholarly performance; the *Correspondance*, however, must be used with some caution. Napoleon wrote little with his own hand after 1793 and quite often only copies remain of the original correspondence. As the professional military staff had not been invented nor perfected by the Prussians yet, mistakes were not only possible, but probable. Jonquière, II, 83 n. 2, points out, however, that Napoleon had the dossier of *L'Expédition d'Égypte* burned. Some documents nonetheless remain in the original in the archives. Concerning what the historian can or cannot use John Eldred Howard's judgment is perhaps best: "Some conjecture is perhaps legitimate, but most scholarly opinion holds

- that all but a small amount of the material can be safely regarded as Napoleon's work." (*Letters and Documents of Napoleon* (London, 1960) I, xxii). Finally, though Napoleon III ordered the publication of the *Correspondance*, the material concerning the questions at hand was edited and published by the first commission (though not without error), not by the far less reliable Prince Jerome Napoleon Commission.
3. Berthier, 15 messidor an VI (3 July 1798), à l'amiral Bruceys, le registre de Berthier, Service Historique de l'Armée. The *Correspondance*, IV, No. 2727, 194-95, rather than showing the dispatch signed by "Berthier" gives "par ordre du general en chef," which is typical of the handling of such letters.
  4. Napoleon, 15 messidor an VI (3 July 1798) à l'amiral Bruceys, *Les Collections du Prince Napoléon; Correspondance*, IV, No. 2728, 195-96.
  5. Arch. Nat: BB<sup>1</sup> Marine 124, 79-80; Jonquièrre, II, 84-86. As Jonquièrre points out the copy of this letter is incorrectly dated 2 July and should be at least 3 July in order to respond to orders of 3 July.
  6. Napoleon, 18 messidor an VI (6 July 1798) au Directoire Executif, *Service Historique de l'Armée; Correspondance*, IV, No. 2765, 215-18; Howard, I, No. 320,251.
  7. Arch. Nat: BB<sup>1</sup> Marine 124, 81-82; Jonquièrre, II, 93.
  8. Arch. Nat: BB<sup>1</sup> Marine 124, 83-84, Jonquièrre, II, 94-95.
  9. Arch. Nat: BB<sup>1</sup> Marine 124, 117-44; Jonquièrre, II, 90-91.
  10. *Correspondance*, IV, No. 2771, 220.
  11. Arch. Nat: BB<sup>1</sup> Marine 124, 83-84; Jonquièrre, II, 94.
  12. Arch. Nat: BB<sup>1</sup> Marine 124, d'Aboukir 19 messidor an VI (7 July 1798) à Caffarelli; Jonquièrre, II, 96.
  13. Napoleon, 2 fructidor an VI (19 August 1798), au Directoire Executif Service Historique de l'Armée; *Correspondance*, IV, No. 3045, 357-61; Howard, I, 266-68. Napoleon's statement concerning the necessity of the fleet for a retreat of the army is seconded by Gauteaume's letter to Napoleon of 7 November 1798, Jonquièrre, II, 425. Jonquièrre questions, II, 96, whether or not Bonaparte could have had time to receive Poitevin's findings at Alexandria in order to issue orders to Bruceys on 7 July to move to the Old Port or to Corfu. The post-script to Poitevin's dispatch mentions that as he finished the letter the fleet had come to anchor. As the fleet anchored on the afternoon of 7 July, this would have left Poitevin only until 5 p.m. to reach Napoleon before the latter left Alexandria.
  14. *Original Letters*, I, 43. A report of Léonce Trullet, captain of the *Timoléon*, to Vence, shortly after the disaster of 1 August (Arch. Nat: BB<sup>1</sup> Marine 125, 289) states that Bonaparte offered the reward, not Bruceys. Trullet reports that Bruceys found Aboukir "more convenient to place the fleet, conciliating by this means his intention with that of the general-in-chief". Bruceys, according to Trullet, feared being in the Old Port. The captain also points out in his report that Bruceys "dared publicly to state in my presence that perhaps the fleet would not return to France" and that Bruceys maintained such a loose contact with his captains it was as if the thirteen ships of the French fleet were commanded by captains from thirteen different nations. [The copy in the archives is without date and carries the notation that the copy was made 16 July 1866, the date in Napoleon III's reign making the document perhaps of qualified merit. Jonquièrre, II, 90, only reproduces a portion of the entire letter to Vence].
  15. Arch. Nat: BB<sup>1</sup> Marine 124; Jonquièrre, II, 246.
  16. Arch. Nat: BB<sup>1</sup> Marine 124, 85; Jonquièrre, II, 248.
  17. Arch. Nat: BB<sup>1</sup> Marine 124, 92; Jonquièrre, II, 255-56. Jonquièrre incorrectly notes this as the last dispatch of Bruceys to Napoleon. Arch. Nat: BB<sup>1</sup> Marine 124, 95, gives a letter II thermidor an VI (29 July 1798) advising Napoleon that the fleet had received from Rosetta ten djermes (lateen sailing ships of the Nile).
  18. Arch. Nat: BB<sup>1</sup> Marine 124, 117-44; Jonquièrre, II, 90-91. Three months after the disaster admiral Gauteaume wrote to Napoleon more or less confirming Lachadenède's statement, de Boulak, 17 brumaire an VII (7 November 1798), Jonquièrre, II, 425. Of interest is a statement from A. T. Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire, 1793-1812* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1918), I, 262: "In a chart of the old port of Alexandria, made in 1802 by Major Bruce of the Royal Engineers, attached to Abercromby's expedition, it is said that not less than five fathoms will be found throughout the middle passage. The directions add that heavy ships cannot get out unless with good weather for warping." Mahan notes that the heavier ships of that time required five fathoms of water. Kirschschon, *Nelson*, 76, writes, "In addition, Nelson, on his arrival at Alexandria, had found a Turkish line-of-battle ship in the harbour. If the latter could enter the harbour, the French fleet could surely do so, too."
  19. Napoleon, 12 thermidor an VI (30 July 1798) à l'amiral Bruceys, *Correspondance*, IV, No. 2878, 275-76; Howard, I, 261-62; Jonquièrre, II, 315-16. See footnote No. 21 for discussion.

20. Napoleon, 9 thermidor an VI (27 July 1798) à l'amiral Brueys, *Les Collections du Prince Napoléon*; *Correspondance*, IV, No. 2851, 262; *Original Letters*, 58-60; Jonquière, II, 309-09 compares both the version found in *Original Letters* and *Correspondance* with the notation that the former is best referred to. Herold, 104, repeating Jonquière's findings, discredits the latter, not the former.
21. *Correspondance*, IV, No. 2878, 275-76. This letter was sent by Napoleon's aide-de-camp, Jullien, who was ambushed and killed on his way to Aboukir by some Arabs. Jullien carried several other dispatches, all of which, except the one to Brueys, exist in duplicate in the archives (the original being lost with Jullien). As for the letter to Brueys, the *Correspondance* cites incorrectly *Archives de la marine* as the source of deposit. A copy in the hand of Bourrienne or de Duroc and signed by Napoleon existed at the *Archives de la guerre*, but Jonquière states that it was withdrawn without doubt in order to be destroyed by Napoleon. On the copy that served the *Correspondance* is found: "Certificat conforme à la copie faite sur l'original au depot de la guerre, par M. le colonel Prétet," signed, "Chassériau."
22. *Correspondance*, IV, 3045, 357-61.
23. Such speculation can become bitter as in Herold's Bonaparte in Egypt, 102-09.
24. *Arch. Nat: BB<sup>1</sup> Marine* 124, 83-84; Jonquière, II, 95.
25. Jonquière, II, 425 n.1.
26. *Arch. Nat: BB<sup>1</sup> Marine* 123, 85; Jonquière, II, 248.
27. According to a letter from admiral Ganteaume to the French Minister of Marine and Colonies, Brueys did not think himself justified in quitting the Egyptian coast without a formal order from Napoleon. Jonquière, II, 255 n. 1, indicates a phrase in Brueys letter of 26 July to Napoleon which, according to Jonquière, shows Brueys did not feel authorized to quit the coast without a formal order from Bonaparte. The phrase, however, is not so exact and simply refers to the time when the fleet will eventually leave Aboukir. The point has been raised that Napoleon never really wanted the fleet to sail for Corfu. Loir in "Brueys à Aboukir," *Revue maritime* (avril 1900) reasons that until Napoleon captured Cairo, he had to have a retreat open for his army; therefore the presence of the fleet was necessary. Bonaparte mentions this in his report of 19 August to the Executive Directory, stating that this could have been Brueys' reasoning for keeping the fleet at Aboukir. Admiral Ganteaume in a letter to the Minister of Marine and Colonies 23 August 1798 writes that Napoleon's "army naturally derived a great degree of confidence from the presence of the squadron" being at Aboukir. (*Original Letters*, 221). As Herold, 108, points out Napoleon had little to fear from any land armies he might meet in Egypt; therefore this reasoning seems unlikely. Nor does it seem likely that Napoleon would have kept the fleet in order to return to France that autumn, as indicated he might return in a letter 25 July 1798 to his brother Joseph (Jonquière, II, 89). Bourrienne, I, 175, however, presents this: "... Bonaparte communicated ... his object was, having once secured the possession of Egypt, to return to Toulon with the fleet; then to send troops and provisions of every kind to Egypt; and next to combine with the fleet all the forces that could be supplies ... for the purpose of attacking England." In a report 16 April Napoleon laid such a plan before the Directory (*Arch. Nat: A. F. III*, 206; Jonquière, II, 88-89). If this is accepted, Napoleon had good reason to want the fleet in a place of safety; if possible the Old Port, and if not, Corfu, but not Aboukir (especially after Poitevin's findings of 7 July). If this is not accepted, no known reason exists for Napoleon not wanting the fleet to leave for Corfu.
28. *Arch. Nat: BB<sup>1</sup> Marine* 124, 240, de Toulon, 25 fructidor an VI (11 September 1798); Jonquière, II, 86. Written entirely in the hand of Vence.
29. Jonquière, II, 86 n.2.
30. *Original Letters*, 33.
31. *Original Letters*, 44.
32. Jaubert may have been writing about Brueys as admirals were commonly addressed as general.
33. Jonquière, II, 87n.
34. Herold, 106-07.
35. Herold, 105.
36. *Correspondance*, IV, No. 2853, 263-64. Reprinted from *Original Letters*.
37. Herold, 105, notes correctly that Napoleon in his 19 August report to the Directory mistakenly reports that Brueys letter of 20 July informed him that the admiral was strengthening his defenses at Aboukir and was ready for an enemy. As already seen, Brueys informed Napoleon of this in his 13 July dispatch, not 20 July. Rather than being a deliberate misrepresentation by Napoleon, more likely it was an error, for in that same dispatch Napoleon states that he left Alexandria 6 July, when he actually left 7 July. Thus it appears more likely he was suffering from the lack of a professional military staff or could not keep his dates straight (or for that matter perhaps his secretary could not).