

Potpourri

A Novel Approach to the Evaluation of Documents

Editor's note: *An eighteen page manuscript apparently signed, inter alios, by Napoleon, Josephine, Talleyrand, Grimaldi, Karl Theodor von Dalberg, and Emmerich Joseph, duc de Dalberg, in 1808 has recently surfaced on the international market. It would seem that the agent for the sale of the document has sent letters to various prospective buyers and publicists. The agent is prepared to entertain replies from interested parties through a Buenos Aires post office box: Casilla de Correo 39, 1429-Buenos Aires, Republica Argentina. Our attention has been attracted particularly by the financial evaluation which accompanies the agent's description of the document. Despite some relatively minor difficulties with English, which is obviously not the agent's mother tongue, the document is reprinted here with some slight technical changes in the belief that it is remarkable enough for archivists to cherish in these financially straitened times. The covering letter has been omitted, but includes one paragraph which should be noted: "The price mentioned in the enclosed valuation is only a minimum level and if you are interested in buying it I expect you shall surpass it. If your offer (tax free) will be the larger the document will be given to you where you choose. The minimum price is U\$S 760,000."*

IMPORTANT HISTORICAL DOCUMENT, PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN,
PERTAINING TO THE NAPOLEONIC AGE, CONCERNING THE
FRENCH, GERMAN AND ITALIAN GOVERNMENTS, SIGNED BY
NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

This manuscript was signed at the TUILERIES PALACE on the 27th of February of 1808. It is 18-page-long and it comprises twelve articles and colophon.

It has the following features:

1)—WILL-DONATION of all belongings and real properties owned by the ArchChancellor of the Germanic Empire CHARLES THEODORE DALBERG, Prince Primat of the Rhin Confederation, Archbishop of Tarso, Constanz and Ratisbonne, sovereign prince of Ratisbonne, Aschaffenburg and Frankfort. DALBERG was the main German statesman from 1802 to 1814. He promulgated the German Constitution on the 10th of October of 1806 and was invited by Catherine II of Russia to write a code for his monarchy.

2)—MARRIAGE CONTRACT, where it is established the separation of all worldly possessions for the forthcoming married couple between the daughter of the late DUKE of GENOA Brignolé Salé and the Baron EMMERIC JOSEPH DALBERG, appointed Duke and State Councillor of France by NAPOLEON BONAPARTE, whose marriage to Marie Louise he spon-



Cou. Napoleon,

C'est avec que l'on a été vu le Concordat entre vous
longtemps pourvu en collation --

Il est apparu à Paris pour les parties et leur...
amis ad salus de l'univers l'usage 'du régime' occupé par...
Le vingt-septième jour du mois de Mars 1802...
au Palais de l'Assemblée le 17 Mars 1802 du même mois de Mars...
le lecture faite les parties ont signé avec leurs...
Régimes leurs projets, les v. l'un des autres (le v. l'un des autres).

Le...
le...
le...

Chy
M. de L...
P. E. P. B. S. L.
[Signature]

Napole
[Signature]

ARCHICANCELLOR
ARLES THÉODORE DALBERG

Charles Prince primate de la Confédération du Rhin Donateur.

A. M. G. D. l'un des v. l'un des autres

M. P. E. P. B. S. L.

E. L. H. D. Baron de Dalberg.

MINISTER
ERIC BARON DE DALBERG

Antoine Marie Brignole

S. Sophie Countess of Schoenborn
AND PRINCESS OF LA LEVEN

Philip Prince of La Leven
PHILIP PRINCE OF LA LEVEN

Abbayes	3
Communités	5
Diocèses	3
Prévôtés	1000 10 50
Paroisses	1500 03 76
Total	1356 25
	1356 25
	1356 25
	1356 25

[Signatures and stamps]

St. de la République
Charles Maurice Talleyrand

CHARLES MAURICE TALLEVRAND

Joseph Bonaparte de Monaco

[Signatures]

M. de L...

sored. He was one of the four members of the Government organized by TALLEYRAND in France in 1814 after the NAPOLEON's fall. When NAPOLEON came back for his one hundred days, DALBERG was one of the twelve personages exiled but later he signed in 1815 the order for the exile of NAPOLEON to St. Helene. He was appointed State Minister and Peer of France by LOUIS XVIII.

3)—Description of Minister Baron DALBERG's properties.

4)—Determination of odd compensations for travelling; monthly and yearly pensions and ways of increasing properties and interests.

5)—A mortgage applied to all properties owned by the Minister Baron DALBERG, written accordingly to the mixed French system, determined by the NAPOLEON Code.

In the third page the manuscript supposedly acknowledges it will be signed in the presence and with the agreement of their majesties:

NAPOLEON, EMPEROR OF FRANCE, KING OF ITALY AND PROTECTOR OF THE RHIN CONFEDERATION, and. . .

JOSEPHINE, EMPRESS OF FRANCE AND QUEEN OF ITALY.

[list of signatories has been omitted -Ed.]

If the document is extremely valuable because of the signature belonging to the GERMANIC ARCHCHANCELLOR, PRINCE PRIMAT and ARCHBISHOP CHARLES THEODORE DALBERG, it is superlatively valuable because of the NAPOLEON agreement and signature. Added to that, the JOSEPHINE's signature is found and, even more, the signature of the man who also signed the exile of NAPOLEON, Minister BARON DALBERG. Besides, the signature belonging to JOSEPH GRIMALDI of MONACO and several more personages of the time. But as if all this were not enough, the strange attendance and signature in the year (1808) of the PRINCE of BENEVENT CHARLES MAURICE TALLEYRAND-PÉRIGORD, when he was widely considered a traitor to the regime.

All signatures are clear and easily readable, including those corresponding to the Notary M. Cabal and his colleague, both Imperial notaries. The manuscript belonged to the MARQUIS of SALYGNAC, later to his daughter and then to his grandson, and has been since almost a century ago in Argentine without ever having been publicly known. It is in perfect condition, without any damages of any kind whatsoever. All sheets of paper bear the big watermark (filigrane) reading "TIMBRE IMPERIAL" as well as both the Imperial Seal (75 centimes each) and Imperial Stamp (in the sense of "Stamp: mark made by instrument for stamping pattern or mark").

Facing page: *An annotated duplicate of the last two pages of the document being offered for sale. The editors regret that a better copy of the manuscript was not available. According to the agent, "the owner. . . is travelling now and won't be back for some time".*

VALUATION OF THE NAPOLEONIC DOCUMENT

*It has been considered prices, conditions
and an analytical research of the market.*

The research only dealt with several plain, private documents, corresponding to every one of the personages signing the document, classifying them in three categories, as follows: A, B and C.

In the first group are comprised all those personages with preëminence, top rate influence and international encumbrance in a given moment; those whose name is enough to define an age, a policy or a period. For example: JOSEPHINE, TALLEYRAND and NAPOLEON. We also include within this category the two DALBERG (uncle and nephew), one of them GERMANIC ARCHCHANCELLOR and the other NAPOLEON's Minister.

In the next, B, category, we include personages who, even without having had influence and fame in the same level as those listed in A, have nonetheless been active during the Napoleonic period. The first of them is PHILIP (Prince of LA LEYEN), later Prince Sovereign and member of the RHIN CONFEDERATION; also SOPHIE (Countess of Schoenborn and Princess of LA LEYEN), ANTHONY MARIO BRIGNOLÉ SALÉ (Advocate of the State Council of France) and JOSEPH GRIMALDI of MONACO.

In the C category we include personages which without having been as important as those listed in B category are also historically known: Baron D'ELERSTEIN, JOSEPH MARIE DURAZZO and the two ladies, daughter and widow of the late DUKE of GENOA: MARY BRIGNOLÉ SALÉ AND ANN MARY PIERI BRIGNOLÉ SALÉ who as from then belonged to the DALBERG family.

VALUES AND ESTIMATIONS

A plain private billet signed by Empress JOSEPHINE has fetched U\$S 2,500 at present constant prices. When a similar document was official it reached as a minimum twice the previous price; that is to say, U\$S 5,000.

Identical prices reached plain documents signed by TALLEYRAND (private billets and letters) but prices went up to far more than double that amount in official documents excepting those related to espionage. Prices go up steeply nearing 1808, when TALLEYRAND left NAPOLEON. However, we have taken into account only the same price as for the JOSEPHINE's signature, it is to say, U\$S 5,000 at present constant prices.

The documents signed by NAPOLEON in 1808, whether official or private, are in the price range of U\$S 10,000 at present constant prices.

Those documents signed by either CHARLES THEODORE DALBERG or his nephew EMMERIC DALBERG (appointed duke by NAPOLEON) would fetch about U\$S 2,000 at present constant prices.

Accordingly to the previous stated information, two official documents bearing one of them TALLEYRAND's signature and the other JOSEPHINE's signature would be worth U\$S 10,000 when sold together (U\$S 5,000 + U\$S 5,000). However, when a document has two or more of these important signatures the final price is reached by multiplying, not adding, tens of thousands.

EXAMPLE: If a document bearing GEORGE WASHINGTON's signature would fetch U\$S 10,000 and another bearing NAPOLEON BONAPARTE's signature (at the height

of their encumbrance) would also fetch that amount, then a document having GEORGE WASHINGTON's signature (deceased 1799) together with BONAPARTE's signature (deceased 1821) would be worth not less than U\$S 100,000 (10 X 10).

Taking this into account, the previously mentioned document bearing together TALLEYRAND's and JOSEPHINE's signatures (rare indeed) would be worth U\$S 25,000 (5 X 5).

A document featuring simultaneously NAPOLEON's, TALLEYRAND's and JOSEPHINE's signatures would then be worth U\$S 250,000 (10 X 5 X 5). Such a document is unknown to the market.

When specifically dealing with our document which belongs to the restricted category described in the previous paragraph, we should increase its price because of the existence also of signatures belonging to either GRIMALDI of MONACO or to the less valuable of the signatures belonging to either DALBERG. If we ascribe a value of only U\$S 1,500 to such a signature then the previous amount is raised to U\$S 375,000 (250 X 1,5).

The next step is increasing the price because of the existence of the signature corresponding to the other DALBERG; in this case, the more valuable one, worth U\$S 2,000. The price now reaches the level of U\$S 750,000 (350 X 2).

There still remain as many as eight signatures to be taken into account. To begin with, either the one corresponding to GRIMALDI of MONACO or to the unaccounted DALBERG, and later those belonging to the PRINCE of LA LEYEN (PHILIP), his wife Countess of Schoenborn and Princess of LA LEYEN (SOPHIE), the Baron D'ELERSTEIN, ANTHONY MARIO BRIGNOLÉ SALÉ (Marquis of GROPPOLI), JOSEPH MARIE DURAZZO (belonging to the Venetian Royal Family), the DUKE of GENOA's widow and their daughter (DALBERG's wife) MARY BRIGNOLÉ SALÉ. Even allocating to ALL of their signatures the exiguous amount of U\$S 10,000 and ONLY adding this small amount to the previous acknowledged total of U\$S 750,000 we reach a final grand total of U\$S 760,000.



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