

Using your understanding of the historical context, assess the value of these three sources to an historian studying the Consulate in the period from 1799 to 1804.

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General context of the period

- The Directory had come into existence as a consequence of the Constitution of 1795, which marked an end to the extreme Jacobin phase of the French revolution and a reversion to a situation where the bourgeoisie were once again in the ascendancy.
- Executive power in the new Constitution invested in five Directors who were chosen by the upper chamber (the Ancients) and voted on by the lower chamber (Council of Five Hundred). The five Directors would hold office for five years, although one was chosen by lot and had to retire each year. This created a measure of political instability and uncertainty.
- Over the course of the Directory, the re-emergence of support for Jacobinism and Royalism presented the executive with challenges, which they countered by resorting to undemocratic means such as purging political opponents (both Jacobin and Royalist). To suppress popular protest in 1795 – the Vendémiaire uprising, they employed the services of a young General – Napoleon Bonaparte, who trained his cannon on the crowd giving them a ‘Whiff of grapeshot’, in order to disperse them.
- Bonaparte had first come into prominence during his role in raising the siege of Toulon in 1793 where he commanded an artillery battery. He was promoted to the rank of General in recognition of his action. After the Vendémiaire uprising, Napoleon was rewarded with further promotion, and in 1796 he assumed command of the Army of Italy.
- The revival of support for the monarchy in the elections of 1797 when Monarchist won 180 of the 260 seats being contested caused alarm among the pro-Republican Directors. They responded by ordering the army to arrest two Directors who were sympathetic to royalists along with 56 Deputies. This event known as the Coup of Fructidor showed the lengths to which the Republican Directors were prepared to go to maintain their power.
- Napoleon played a role in the coup and sent one of his generals to support the Republican Directors.
- Assuming command of a demoralised army in March 1796, Napoleon transformed its fortunes and, in the process, became the most famous and powerful of the Republics Generals. He succeeded in defeating the Austrians in northern Italy and negotiated in the process the highly favourable treaty of Campo Formio. The Italian campaign marked Napoleon’s emergence as a political general, a soldier not merely content to follow orders but to act independently in pursuit of his own goals as well as those of his country.
- After his success in Italy he was urged by the government to secure the defeat of Britain. To achieve this, Napoleon planned to disrupt Britain’s trade in the eastern Mediterranean and the routes to India. He was given command of an expedition to Egypt in 1798.
- Despite initial success, the length of his supply lines and stubborn resistance from the Ottoman Empire led to a longer campaign than anticipated. Matters were made much worse when the French fleet was destroyed by Admiral Nelson at the battle of Aboukir Bay (1 August 1798), effectively trapping Napoleon and his army in Egypt.
- On 23 August 1799 amid great secrecy to avoid the British navy, Napoleon abandoned his army in Egypt and returned to France.
- The Directory was overthrown during the Coup of Brumaire when Sieyes, Ducos and Napoleon seized power with the aid of the army. The Constitution of 1799 (Year VIII) created a three-man executive – Consulate and a new structure which restricted the level of democracy gave power to a small, privileged group. In the new structure Napoleon as First Consul exercised the most power.

Key:	Values Limitations Other points of note
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Summary of points, including:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notes on the sources and their attributions/provenances • notes on the specific context of the sources.
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Source A [General Boulart, a French soldier, writing in a letter to a friend about Napoleon’s return to France from Egypt (October 1799)].

The crowd was enormous. At the sight of the great man, the air echoed with acclamations and shouts of, ‘Vive Bonaparte!’ and that crowd shout accompanied him right up to the hotel where he put up. It was an electrifying scene. It is the first time that I have seen that extraordinary being.

I contemplated him with great concentration; I was in an ecstatic state. I do not think he resembles the portraits I have seen of him. I am overjoyed that he is being called back from Egypt to save France from the crisis which the pitiful Directory and the setbacks suffered by our armies have thrown us into.

- From a private letter written by a French General to one of his friends.
- Note the date Napoleon had just landed in France after abandoning his army to its fate in Egypt.
- The author highlights the large, vociferous and a very enthusiastic crowd. And stresses the shouts of, ‘Vive Bonaparte’.
- This is the first time that Boulart has seen Napoleon and he is clearly overwhelmed by the encounter: ‘I was in an ecstatic state’.
- As this is a private letter it is likely to contain an honest account of the experience Boulart felt on encountering Napoleon for the first time.
- Boulart in the letter alludes to ‘...the crisis which the pitiful Directory and the setbacks suffered by our armies have thrown us into’. It is evident that since his departure for Egypt, events in France have gone somewhat awry.
- However, Boulart is clearly mistaken or misinformed or is speculating as to the reason behind Napoleons arrival back in France. He tells his friend that Napoleon was called back from Egypt, although in reality, he left of his own volition, abandoning his army in the process. This was possibly an act of opportunism on his part.
- The tone of the source is very supportive of Napoleon and Boulart clearly views him as a saviour to deliver France from the chaotic and unloved Directory – as undoubtedly do the ecstatic crowd who thronged his route.

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Source B [General Lacuée, a Councillor of State, outlines the religious situation in Departments under his control in a secret report to the First Consul (April 1801)].

The practices of the people as regards religion, fully ten years after the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, seem at the moment to be limited, both in the town and the countryside, to vain spectacles and ceremonies. Attendance at Mass, listening to the sermon, going to Vespers, that's regular enough; but submitting to confession, taking communion, abstinence from meat, or fasting is nowhere commonplace, and practiced by only a tiny number. In those parts of the countryside where there are no priests, a lay official officiates and everyone is content. In the towns there is indifference to be found, but it is less marked than in the countryside. Some prefer the Constitutional Clergy, but only a few; those priests who have sworn the oath of loyalty have more adherents; however, it is those who have declined to swear any oath who are most ardently followed. The non-jurors who operate clandestinely are very active and their support is very committed and growing.

- From a secret report by General Lacuée, one of Napoleon's Councillors of State. Members of the Council of State which varied from 30 to 40 members, were responsible for nominating central and local officials.
- Note the date (April 1801) which is shortly before the passing of the Concordat on 15 July 1801.
- The Concordat sought to resolve the deep tensions between the French state and the Papacy which had dogged the Revolution since the abolition of tithes (4 August) and the nationalisation of Church land (2 November) in 1789.
- The Report highlights the deep divisions in France that flowed on from the Civil Constitution of the Clergy between town and countryside.
- Lacuée notes that in towns there is a measure of support for the Constitutional Clergy, but that it is somewhat lukewarm. In the countryside however he notes that, 'The non-jurors who operate clandestinely are very active and their support is very committed and growing'.
- While there is support in the countryside for Constitutional Clergy, Lacuée, inserts a note of disappointment in his report by writing: 'Some prefer the Constitutional Clergy, but only a few...'
- The tone of the source is one which highlights a deep concern in that one of the key reforms undertaken during the revolution - the Civil Constitution of the Clergy is not working and that old loyalties to the Catholic Church of the *ancient regime* are still deeply entrenched particularly in the countryside.
- There is a marked preference for those priests who have declined to swear any oath they are the ones '...who are most ardently followed'.
- Lacuée's disappointment is barely concealed by the language he uses in his report: 'indifference', 'nowhere commonplace', 'limited' and 'vain spectacles'.

Source C [Louis de Bourrienne, Napoleon's former private secretary, writing in his private notes at the time of the coronation (December 1804)].

There has arisen above the ruins of the Directory of government more absolute than ever was Louis XIV's. Bonaparte's aim is to legitimise his usurpations by institutions. The Concordat has reconciled him with the Court of Rome and the Legion of Honour has become a general object of ambition. Peace has helped to consolidate the First Consul's power by affording him leisure to engage in measures of internal prosperity.

I saw the First Consul send Councillors of State on missions to each of the military areas. He directed them to examine all the branches of the administration, so that their reports when collected and compared together presented a perfect description of the state of France. However, this measure will, I suspect, prove fatal to the State since the reports will never convey the truth to the First Consul. The Councillors know that the best way to gain favour with Bonaparte is not to describe public feeling as it really is, but as he wishes it to be and as such are only likely to furnish fresh arguments in favour of his ambition.

I have also noticed during discussions in the Council of State, that Bonaparte allows free expression of opinion. Indeed, he encourages it; for although he fully resolves to do only what he pleases, he wishes to gain information. I think it scarcely conceivable how, in a relatively short space of time, he has adapted his mind so completely to civil and religious affairs.

- From private notes compiled by Napoleon's former private secretary, a particularly important official who would have had unparalleled access to Napoleon during the Consulate (c.1795 -1802).
- The opening of the source is a very pointed observation of the nature of Napoleon's government which Bourrienne notes is even more absolute than that created by Louis XIV back in the Seventeenth Century.
- The date when the notes were compiled - the time of Napoleon's coronation - marks the end of the Consulate and a return to a system hereditary government that was overthrown in 1792 when the First Republic was established.
- References are made to the way in which Napoleon as First Consul is consolidating his power and binding groups to regime such as the Catholic Church through the Concordat and aspirational upwardly mobile members of the bourgeoisie and former nobility by the Legion of Honour.
- Bourrienne offers an insight into how Napoleon conducted the business of government - his organisation of Councillors of State sent to gather and collate information in the form of reports.
- A critical tone is offered when he suggests, '...the reports will never convey the truth to the First Consul.' This is because he believes to further their own ambitions. 'Councillors know that the best way to gain favour with Bonaparte is not to describe public feeling as it really is, but as he wishes it to be.'
- There is a reference to how the most famous of the Republic's generals, '... has adapted his mind so completely to civil and legislative affairs.'
- The tone of the source aims to strike a balance between the critical and the insightful as could be expected from private notes compiled by such a key official with almost unique access to Napoleon.

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Keeping the question in mind, use the information above and identify similarities and differences between the sources. These may vary in number: you do not need to have an equal amount of each.

Similarities between the sources

Sources A, B and C all relate either directly (as in the case of A and C or indirectly - Source B) to Napoleon.

Sources B and C deal directly with the powers of the Councillors of State, men who were hand-picked by the First Consul to be his eyes and ears in France and to keep him informed of public opinion and warn him of any looming crises.

Sources A and C focus more directly on Napoleon himself. In Source A, his popularity with the public is referred to and the widespread belief that he is the saviour France has been waiting for. In Source C there is a reference to his complete transformation from the most successful general to emerge from the Revolution to one who has completely adapted to civil and legislative affairs.

Sources B and Source C are both private and secret extracts which would suggest a measure of accuracy and/or candour.

Differences between the sources

Source B and Source C differ from Source A in that both focus on events during the Consulate, while Source A is from the period immediately preceding the Coup which created it.

Source A and Source C both contain positive statements about Napoleon – Source A mentions his great popularity and the vast crowds who greeted him on his way to Paris, while Source C is complementary of the way he has adapted ‘...so completely...’ to civil and legislative affairs from his skill as a military commander.

Source A and Source C focus on the abilities of Napoleon while Source B deals with a central issue affecting the Consulate – the religious divisions in France emanating from the Civil Constitution of the Clergy.

Source B differs from sources A and C in that it deals very specifically and in detail with one issue namely the divisions within the Catholic Church. Sources A and C mention several differing issues and policy initiatives: dissatisfaction with the Directory, military setbacks (Source A) the Concordat, Legion of honour (Source C).

Now, considering the general context of the period, your analysis of the sources and their provenances, identification of the specific content and identification of similarities and differences outline and explain the value and limitations of the sources – both individually and collectively – to an historian studying the issue in the question. Again, these may vary in number: you do not need to have an equal amount of each.

What is the value of the source or sources to an historian studying...

**Why is this a value?
 (include contextual material – specific or general – where necessary)**

The most significant value of Source A to an historian studying the Consulate in the period from 1799 to 1804 is that it relates to the arrival back in France of Napoleon Bonaparte and records the tumultuous welcome which he received in Avignon, one which would be replicated over the course of his journey back to Paris. It also indicates that the author (along with many others) viewed him as a saviour.

There was deep disillusion with the Directory. Over the course of the period 1795-99 they had faced growing opposition from the left (former Jacobins) and the right with the re-emergence of a vibrant and active royalist resurgence. Their response had been to suppress both sides by purges, force and measures of dubious legality. Boulart is optimistic when he writes that Napoleon has been summoned back from Egypt to save France – a belief that in one sense was inaccurate as Napoleon had abandoned his army.

Source A deals with the period immediately preceding the Coup of Brumaire which led to the Directory’s overthrow, and the ending of what was a deeply unpopular – if in the context of the revolution a long-lasting regime.

The most significant value of Source B is that it provides a good insight into how the government of Napoleon as First Consul operated. The source is a secret report from one of several Councillors of State (they varied in number between 30 and 40 and were appointed directly by Napoleon) who fed information to the First Consul on a number of issues. The content of this extract relates to one of the most divisive issues in France at the time – that relating to the Roman Catholic Church and the deep division within it following the passing by the National Assembly of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy in July 1790.

Following the passing of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, all priests were required to take an oath of loyalty to the new Constitution. This was held in November 1790. A significant number refused. In the Assembly, 2 of the 44 Bishops and a third of the other Clergy took the oath. In France as a whole, 7 Bishops and 55% of the Clergy took the oath. This split in the Clergy had led to a schism in the church. The Pope condemned the Civil Constitution of the Clergy in March and April 1791. Opponents of the Civil Constitution were known as non-jurors and were considered by revolutionaries to be hostile to the Revolution. They helped support in many rural areas of the country the counter-revolution. The Source suggests how deep the divisions were in the Departments of France controlled by General Lacuée.

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Source C is an extract from the private notes of Napoleon’s former secretary. He occupied a very important role in the Consulate’s administration and was able to witness at first-hand how Napoleon conducted the day to day business of governing France. He directly witnessed the dispatch of Councillors of State (such as General Lacuée in Source B) on missions to the military areas and how the reports which they had compiled were used. Bourienne is by no means uncritical of how the Councillors presented their information and hints that their desire to curry favour with the First Consul was a systemic weakness.

The source is of value because of who produced it. As Napoleon’s private secretary, Bourienne had more access than most to the First Consul. In later years, he fell out of favour and it is evident from the source that the tone is critical but also strives to be balanced. The father of French absolutism was Louis the XIV – the ‘Sun King’ who exerted a vice like grip over the French State. He famously stated in 1655, ‘L’etat c’est moi’. Bourienne suggests that Napoleon’s government was even more absolute than Louis XIV’s. He offers an insight into Napoleon’s approach to govern. On the one hand, he sought to dispense patronage and appeal to the sense of self-importance and self-aggrandisement among many prominent Frenchmen by setting up the Legion of Honour, and on the other of seeking to reconcile one of the most intractable problems to emerge out of the Revolution namely the schism in the Catholic Church through negotiating the Concordat with the papacy. Among his councillors, Napoleon, according to Bourienne, encouraged the free expression of opinion which facilitated the decision-making process. There is an obvious element of admiration in the way one of the Republics most famous and successful soldiers (the victor over the Austrians in Italy and the negotiator of the treaty of Campo Formio (1797) had transformed himself so smoothly and almost effortlessly to civil and legislative affairs.

Of significant value is that the three sources, taken together, indicate the disillusion with the Directory and how Napoleon sought to govern during the Consulate and address some of the key issues confronting him.

The sources focus on Napoleon and confirm his great popularity and ability to transform himself from the ablest soldier of the Republic into a skilled and insightful administrator who is not afraid to compromise in order to resolve by negotiation the Concordat, such a divisive and destructive issue as that affecting the Catholic Church. They indicate how he gathered information and the nature of the Religious tension within the country.

What are the limitations of the source or sources to an historian studying...

**Why is it a limitation?
 (include contextual material – specific or general – where necessary)**

The most significant limitation of Source A is that apart from hinting at the unpopularity of the Directory, it does not deal with anything that occurred during the Consulate.

The Directory was deeply unpopular, and this explains why it was overthrown during the Coup of Brumaire, yet the source while alluding to Napoleon’s great popularity does not explain why the Directory was overthrown or who was involved in the coup. The source contains a glaring falsehood. Napoleon was not summoned back to save France. Quite the converse, he abandoned his army in Egypt.

Source B offers the view of one of Napoleon’s Councillors of State of the issues relating to the Catholic Church in areas under his supervision. There is no indication of any other pressing problems.

General Lacuée reports on the religious situation in departments under his supervision, there is no indication that this is typical and/or widespread across the entire country.

What other groups were challenging the authority of the First Consul?

The picture in rural parts of France was complex. Three were reluctant to support the war in many communities. The continuing war is not mentioned as a backdrop to the ever-present religious tension.

For Source C, the most significant limitation is that the author focusses almost entirely on the role of the Councillors and while noting how Napoleon absorbs advice, very little is imparted in the source regarding the structure of government during the Consulate.

In Source C, we have very little idea of the structure over which the First Consul provided. While we know that he dispensed patronage, there is no indication of the other methods employed to maintain power and oil the wheels of government.

While Bourienne suggests that Napoleon’s government is the most absolute since that of Louis XIV, there is very little evidence to back this up in this sweeping assessment.

In what way was it absolute?

In summary, what is the value of these sources to an historian studying...

Overall, all three sources are of some value to an historian studying the Consulate in the period 1799 to 1804. Each relates to a different aspect of the Consulate. The first source which precedes the events which set up the Consulate and refers to attitudes towards the Directory and the great popularity the public felt for Napoleon. The author is obviously entranced by what he has experienced. Source B offers an insight into how Napoleon governed through Councillors of State who gathered intelligence for the First Consul. The focus of the source is the religious schism that tore France apart following the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. Source C offers a critical insight of how Napoleon as first Consul managed his decision making and some of the key policies which he implemented.