



The Emperor's Friend: Marshal Jean Lannes (Contributions in Military Studies)

Margaret S. Chrisawn

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An examination of the life of Marshal Jean Lannes, this study looks at the career of the only soldier of any rank who consistently said exactly what he thought to Napoleon at every stage of their amazing careers. The marshal not only survived these frank encounters, he was well rewarded for his abilities, which were remarkable even among the stellar senior officers who served the Emperor. While Lannes was best known for his military skill, especially as an advance-guard commander, his unconventional three-year diplomatic career was equally noteworthy, since his diplomatic tactics resulted in particular benefits for France. His career spanned much of what many historians and readers believe to be one of the most fascinating and controversial eras in French history.

The marshal's personality and his tendency to lead by example rather than by orders won him the respect and the affection of his troops. He also charmed a diverse number of his contemporaries, from autocratic rulers to literary icons. Although his relationship with Napoleon was stormy at times, he earned and kept the Emperor's friendship and esteem. Chrisawn avoids the tendency of previous biographers to either canonize or condemn the marshal, providing instead a balanced treatment of her subject which includes both his strengths and his shortcomings. Marshal Jean Lannes emerges as a complete person within the context of his own intriguing world.

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