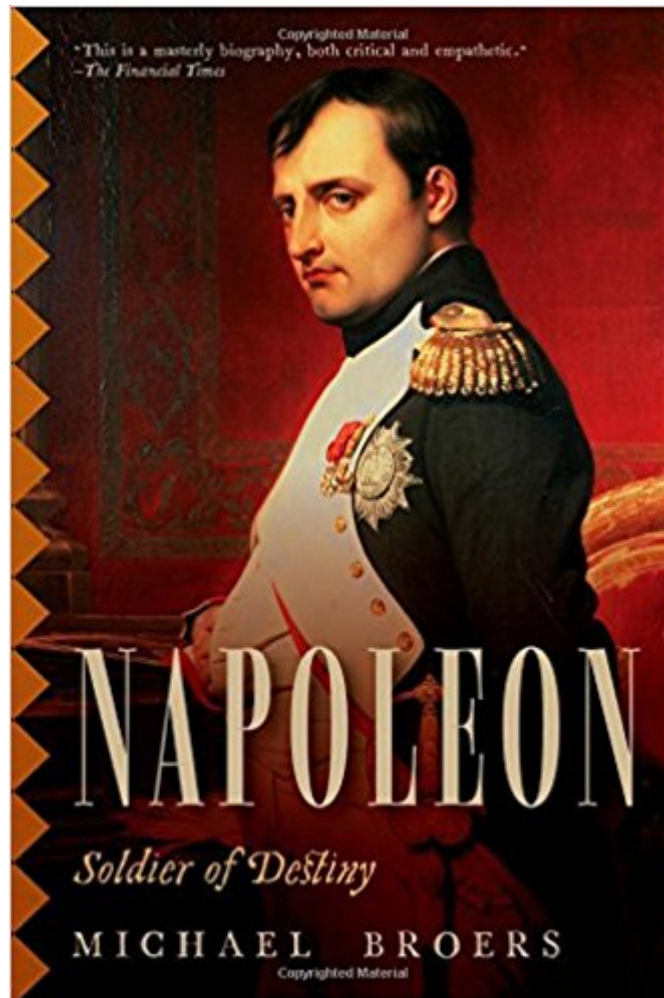




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Napoleon: Soldier Of Destiny



Synopsis

Written with great energy and authority and using the newly available personal archives of Napoleon himself, this is the first volume of a majestic two-part biography of the great French emperor and conqueror. All previous lives of Napoleon have relied more on the memoirs of others than on his own uncensored words. This is the first life of Napoleon, in any language, that makes full use of his newly released personal correspondence compiled by the Napoleon Foundation in Paris. All previous lives of Napoleon have relied more on the memoirs of others than on his own uncensored words. Michael Broers' biography draws on the thoughts of Napoleon himself as his incomparable life unfolded. It reveals a man of intense emotion, but also of iron self-discipline; of acute intelligence and immeasurable energy. Tracing his life from its dangerous Corsican roots, through his rejection of his early identity, and the dangerous military encounters of his early career, it tells the story of the sheer determination, ruthlessness, and careful calculation that won him the precarious mastery of Europe by 1807. After the epic battles of Austerlitz, Jena and Friedland, France was the dominant land power on the continent. Here is the first biography of Napoleon in which this brilliant, violent leader is evoked to give the reader a full, dramatic, and all-encompassing portrait. 16 pages of color and B&W illustrations

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Customer Reviews

"Breathtaking. The best and certainly the most original scholar writing in this field writing in English. Broers succeeds admirably." - New York Review of Books
"Does an excellent job of delineating the emotional and intellectual development of

the Corsican general-turned-French emperor. Offers a wonderful sense of the genius and man who was so stunningly able to remake European boundaries and mores after the meltdown from the French Revolution. Among the plethora of Napoleon biographies, this is immensely engaging for lay readers. - Kirkus Reviews

“Relying heavily on a newly released body of Napoleon Bonaparte’s personal correspondence, Oxford historian Broers (Napoleon’s Other War) brings Napoleon to the brink of mastery of Europe in this first of two projected volumes. - Publishers Weekly

“The great strength of Broers’s book arises from its detail, empathy and even-handedness. He draws extensively on the newly edited volumes of Napoleon’s Correspondence Generale, as well as the thinking of numerous contemporary scholars, whom he generously acknowledges. He presents his information clearly and sometimes even lyrically, though his pages nonetheless demand close attention. This is a serious work, the product of reflection as well as research befitting a distinguished professor of Western European History at Oxford. - Michael Dirda, The Washington Post

“Stimulating and genuinely innovative. - Times Literary Supplement

“Scholars, Francophiles, and lovers of military history will welcome this comprehensive yet highly readable narrative of the life and times of Napoleon Bonaparte the first in any language to make use of new archival material currently being compiled by the Foundation Napoleon in Paris. Rooted in the most recent secondary scholarship, the narrative is enriched with maps, images, and lithographs. Highly recommended for general readers and scholars alike. - Library Journal

“Broers delivers a well-told story full of action and insight, with the added power of Napoleon’s own words. - Minneapolis Star Tribune

“A fresh and highly intelligent look at Napoleon. - The Buffalo News

Michael Broers is Professor of Western European History at Oxford University. He is the author of The Napoleonic Empire in Italy, 1796-1814, winner of the Grand Prix Napoleon Prize, and Napoleon: Soldier of Destiny (Pegasus). He lives in Oxford, England.

This is the best biography of Napoleon since the excellent and sympathetic biography Napoleon Bonaparte: An Intimate Biography by Vincent Cronin in 1971. This volume is an even, balanced, and accurate biography of Napoleon, the first volume in a two-volume study that presents Napoleon the man, not merely Napoleon the soldier and general, the statesman, and head of state. This volume towers head and shoulders above such diatribes that denigrate Napoleon and gives an honest picture of what Napoleon was like as a person and a man, how he grew up, and the outside

and family influences that formed and shaped his character. Napoleon is one of the most fascinating of historical figures, and although arguably the best soldier of modern times and perhaps in all military history, his civil achievements and his mark as a head of state are much more important and even more fascinating. Napoleon completely remade and reformed France upon assuming the position of French head of state by a coup in late 1799. His reforms shaped every facet of French society and later reached across Europe. The author excellently presents these reforms, which included lasting work in education, civil rights, equality before the law, and Napoleon's crowning achievement, the Code Civile, later named the Code Napoleon, and as the author categorically states, deservedly so. This book is well-written and researched and is a signal achievement in Napoleonic historiography. It is an outstanding effort and adds immeasurably to the literature of the period. It is enthusiastically recommended. It is an excellent read and outstanding history.

Probably the best I have read on the subject. Broers sure knows how to weave a yarn, yet still writes with historical competence. Can't wait for the subsequent volumes!

The definite biography of Napoleon may never be written due to the complexity of the subject. But after reading many of the classic romantic Ludwig's Merejkvskys etc. biographies and others more balanced Cronnin, Robert's etc, I think this can truly come close to the man, its insights are really impressive. It maybe not the best introductory biography, its too earthy for that, it does not speak too much about military victories. It doesn't have the thrill, but that even makes it better. Those who want the thrill may be better off reading Max Gallo's novels, which are not insightful. This one really fulfils almost a plutarkian definition of biography, and I think if one wants to learn about the man not the myth and how he became what he came, this is the book to go to. I'm even going on a limb, this is better than any self help book, (*cum grano salis*). I don't know the author he's not in my family but I really ask him to hurry up the second volume. I even recommend listening to his interview in History Book podcast, that will give enough reasons.

great book!

This book focuses at length on technical aspects of Napoleon's career, and much if it is rather dull. It is also highly derivative of other books on Napoleon that I have already read. Still, it is hard to write a book on Napoleon that is completely boring; the subject is always compelling, even in the hands of an inept writer.

I bought this book for my husband. He has over 200 books on Napoleon and he said it's one of the best books he's read about him.

I have this as a gift to a historical enthusiast. He loved it.

Having read Robert's work: Napoleon a Life, I was concerned that Broers work would be repetitive. While I thoroughly enjoyed Robert's work, this effort is very complimentary. The author spares the reader the tedious details of every military encounter. This is not a work about the Napoleonic wars and a reader looking for that focus will be disappointed. He also spends far less time discussing Napoleon's love life and romances. Instead, the reader is offered glimpses into how Napoleon was a product of the revolution and how he skillfully navigated through the terrors of those times to take a centrist position between royalists and leftists. Like most students of history including my French friends, I find the French Revolution is hard to understand. We can't come to grips as to what it was and how it put France on a path of success. Napoleon was a military man but more than that, as an administrator he created institutions and a Napoleonic code that shaped the country for the better in a time of political chaos the likes of which we can't begin to understand. The author does a good job and spends a great deal of time discussing the politics following the revolution and Napoleon's ascent to power. Napoleon experimented with governing in the occupation of Italy after his first campaign. He wanted to be seen by the people as a military leader rather than a politician to enable his meteoric rise in 1799. The author does a good job of presenting events in chronological order. He minimizes the reader's exposure to an array of forgettable characters. This work helps the reader put Napoleon in the context of late 18th and early 19th century Europe without exposing them to unnecessary details. The reader should be aware that this work ends in 1805 and the Russian campaign and Waterloo are yet to come. This work is very readable and informative.

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