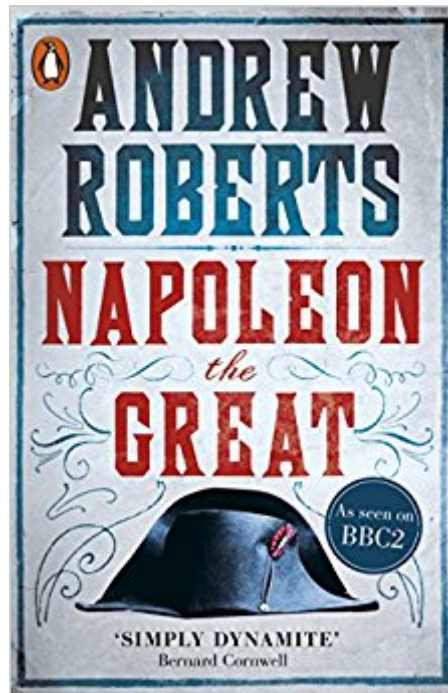




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Napoleon The Great



Synopsis

NOW A MAJOR BBC2 TV SERIES AWARDED THE PRIX DU JURY DES GRANDS PRIX DE LA FONDATION NAPON 2014 From Andrew Roberts, author of the Sunday Times bestseller *The Storm of War*, this is the definitive modern biography of Napoleon. Napoleon Bonaparte lived one of the most extraordinary of all human lives. In the space of just twenty years, from October 1795 when as a young artillery captain he cleared the streets of Paris of insurrectionists, to his final defeat at the (horribly mismanaged) battle of Waterloo in June 1815, Napoleon transformed France and Europe. After seizing power in a coup d'état he ended the corruption and incompetence into which the Revolution had descended. In a series of dazzling battles he reinvented the art of warfare; in peace, he completely remade the laws of France, modernised her systems of education and administration, and presided over a flourishing of the beautiful 'Empire style' in the arts. The impossibility of defeating his most persistent enemy, Great Britain, led him to make draining and ultimately fatal expeditions into Spain and Russia, where half a million Frenchmen died and his Empire began to unravel. More than any other modern biographer, Andrew Roberts conveys Napoleon's tremendous energy, both physical and intellectual, and the attractiveness of his personality, even to his enemies. He has walked 53 of Napoleon's 60 battlefields, and has absorbed the gigantic new French edition of Napoleon's letters, which allows a complete re-evaluation of this exceptional man. He overturns many received opinions, including the myth of a great romance with Josephine: she took a lover immediately after their marriage, and, as Roberts shows, he had three times as many mistresses as he acknowledged. Of the climactic Battle of Leipzig in 1813, as the fighting closed around them, a French sergeant-major wrote, 'No-one who has not experienced it can have any idea of the enthusiasm that burst forth among the half-starved, exhausted soldiers when the Emperor was there in person. If all were demoralised and he appeared, his presence was like an electric shock. All shouted "Vive l'Empereur!" and everyone charged blindly into the fire.' The reader of this biography will understand why this was so.

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Customer Reviews

Simply dynamite ... Roberts's fine book encompasses all the evidence to give a brilliant portrait of the man -- Bernard Cornwell * Mail on Sunday * Masterly ... a huge, rich, deep, witty, humane and unapologetically admiring biography ... gloriously enjoyable -- Dan Jones * Daily Telegraph *

Andrew Roberts is a biographer and historian of international renown whose books include *Salisbury: Victorian Titan* (winner, the Wolfson Prize for History); *Masters and Commanders*; and *The Storm of War*, which reached No. 2 on the Sunday Times bestseller list. Roberts is a Fellow of the Royal Societies of Literature and Arts. He appears regularly on British television and radio and writes for the Sunday Telegraph, Spectator, Literary Review, Mail on Sunday and Daily Telegraph.

This is a monumental effort by a recognized historian and the result is an excellent biography of Napoleon. This is a sympathetic biography of the French Emperor and it ranks right up there with the 1971 biography of Napoleon by Vincent Cronin and the new biography of Napoleon by Michael Broers. The author gives Napoleon what the Emperor deserves—a fair and impartial look and gives Napoleon his due both militarily and as a civilian head of state. The author definitely demonstrates that Napoleon was neither tyrant nor military dictator (agreeing in fact with the eminent French historian Thierry Lentz) and also demonstrates that Napoleon was both a lawgiver and a reformer not only for France, but for those allies and satellites that either belonged to or were allied to the French Empire. What is also quite evident when reading the book that Napoleon as a head of state was vastly superior to his fellow monarchs. No other head of state in Europe or Russia guaranteed to his citizens freedom of religion, equality before the law, basic civil rights, and a law code, the justly famous Code Civile, also known as the Code Napoleon. Further, none of Napoleon's fellow monarchs even attempted the social and governmental reforms achieved by Napoleon, many of them in his first four years as French head of state. And even though Napoleon's fantastic career ended in defeat and exile, he was still recognized as the best soldier of his age, and was recognized as such by Wellington. This excellent volume is a must for anyone interested in the period and is

enthusiastically recommended. It is a great read and excellent history and the author is to be greatly commended for both the effort and the product. This volume is definitely a keeper.

This is a brilliant book - so well researched and so well written. My motivation to read about Napoleon was a visit to St Helena and as I know next to nothing about Napoleon I wanted to have an appreciating for his life, motivations and accomplishments before visiting the island. I am so pleased I chose this book - very grateful. It answered so well the key question I was wondering about Napoleon - how does a kid from Corsica become emperor of France?! One finishes the book being very impressed by Napoleon - as a broad thinker, highly intelligent, military genius and accomplished law-maker. I was sorry when I finished the book! Congratulations to Mr Roberts for such a phenomenal work.

This is a long book that is (because of its length and weight) eminently suited to a Kindle, although if you have a tablet as well you will appreciate the fine colour illustrations and get more out of the maps. It is extremely readable and, quite often, becomes gripping. The author's style is distinguished both by clarity of expression and a mastery of the narrative art. I found it difficult to put down. Not only are Napoleon's battles depicted clearly and with an uncanny sense of the topology of a battlefield, but the author involves us in the Emperor's personal and family life, often with amusing or interesting anecdotes. The book also, without ever flagging, examines Napoleon's contribution to the fields of law-giving and the social reform that was necessary after the stagnation under the Bourbons and the excesses of the French Revolution. I can not recommend this book highly enough.

A great book about one of the greatest personalities in recent history. I always thought he was similar to Hitler but after reading this I see there is no comparison. Napoleon was well versed in reading history. He lost 6 battles out of about 46. Some of the laws he established in France are still in use today.

It is a fascinating read. It is written in a style where not only, historical accuracy is at the forefront but throughout the text, are inserted vignettes that give the reader insight into the personality of this amazing historical figure. The battle descriptions are very well done for someone who is interested in historical warfare. I found these somewhat long but I can understand their importance given the magnitude of the armies involved and the swath of territories that were at stake. In fact, I have since bought the paper copy so that I can glance at the photographs and maps at length.

I was looking for a book to get from someone who is very interested in Napoleon's life, but especially interested in his military tactics, and in military tactics in general. He loves the book and started reading it immediately at his own birthday party. He has thanked me at least once a week for the book, saying this was the book he needed.

A very detailed account of Napoleon's life, sometimes goes into a little too much depth with respect to battles in the wars but otherwise a very readable biography. You will learn new things from this biography even if you consider yourself well versed in Napoleonic history.

Amazing book about the MOST amazing historical figure. Well researched and footnoted. Am a NB fan of many years with many books on him and this is right up there at the top. Thank You Mr. Roberts

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