



# The Reign Of Napoleon Bonaparte

By Robert Asprey

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## The Reign Of Napoleon Bonaparte By Robert Asprey

Robert Asprey completes his definitive, two-volume biography with an intimate, fast-paced look at Napoleon's daring reign and tragic demise with more of the personality and passion that marked the first volume of this cradle to the grave biography. In *The Rise of Napoleon Bonaparte*, Asprey showed us that Napoleon was not the father of chaos, but rather an heir to it. In this companion volume, we see Napoleon struggling to subdue the turmoil. We peer over Napoleon's shoulder as he solidifies his growing empire through a series of marriages, military victories, and shrewd diplomatic manipulations. We watch Napoleon lose control of his empire, plot his return from Elba, rally peasants in his march to Paris, endure defeat at Waterloo and suffer exile and a lonely death on the island of St. Helena. Robert Asprey tells this fascinating, tragic tale in lush narrative detail.

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## **The Reign Of Napoleon Bonaparte** By Robert Asprey **Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

#### Amazon.com Review

Between the years 1805 and 1815, the armies of Napoleon Bonaparte conquered most of continental Europe, establishing their leader, if but briefly, as "a new Charlemagne." In the second part of his two volumes on the life of the emperor, military historian Robert Asprey examines the armies' triumphs and eventual defeat, following in their footsteps from Spain to Russia, and on to Waterloo.

Bonaparte, Asprey writes, aspired to forge and lead a united, peaceful Europe, a quest that required much blood to be shed. A former U.S. marine officer, Asprey is a reliable commentator on matters of battlefield strategy and tactics, and his book's greatest strength is his power to invoke the feel of bloody engagements, which include the Battle of Borodino, where more than 40,000 Russians fell in a single day (cut down, he notes, by the more than 2 million rounds that French muskets fired); Wagram, where French forces managed to eke out victory over their Austrian foes despite a series of costly blunders; Corunna, where the French forces, having marched 15 and more miles a day, proved "that there have probably been no tougher soldiers in the world"; and the decisive action at Waterloo, where French, Belgian, German, and English armies clashed amid thunderstorms and confusion to an end that was anything but inevitable.

Other books do a better job of treating Napoleon as a political being, but Asprey's is one of the better recent books on Napoleon as general, and students of military history will learn much from his account. --*Gregory McNamee*

#### From Publishers Weekly

This accessible, fast-moving narrative of Napoleon's regime from 1803, a sequel to *The Rise of Napoleon Bonaparte*, encompasses the period from the aftermath of Austerlitz (1805) to its subject's lonely death on the island of St. Helena (1821). Basing his account heavily on the emperor's correspondence, Asprey is often empathetic: he understands Napoleon's determination to sink Britannia's arrogant ruling of the waves. But as a former U.S. Marine captain, he is always aware of the tension between rhetoric and battlefield reality: the irony is palpable when, after the gruesome battle of Friedland, Napoleon orders Te Deums to be sung throughout the empire. The author has as sharp an eye for the common foot soldiers who fought and died in the great "adventures" in Poland, Spain and Russia as he does for their Great Leader. Climbing the fierce December slopes of the Sierra de Guadarrama, north and west of Madrid, French troops encountered a blizzard so strong that they needed to dismount and link arms. Days later, three veteran grenadiers blew their brains out, traumatized by the march and the fear of capture by the English. Asprey is particularly adept at describing the unexpected guerrilla movement that arose in occupied Spain, the result of Napoleon's complacent attempt to wage "a conventional war in an unconventional environment against unconventional people." As the author readily admits, the Great Leader was, after all, increasingly delusional, and the experience in Spain was a foretaste of the scorched Russian earth, the Cossack raids and the harrowing retreat from Moscow, when, in Asprey's words, "the human had become the animal." Illus. and maps.

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#### From Library Journal

Australian anthropologist Stanner (1905-81; Australian National Univ.) was ahead of his time in his vision for the future of Australia's native peoples. At a time when Australian popular opinion considered Aborigines a dying people and government policy encouraged their assimilation into white society, Stanner advocated

civil and land rights for Aborigines and recognition of their unique culture as part of Australia's heritage. In his best-known work, *White Man Got No Dreaming* (1979. o.p.), Stanner presented Aboriginal perspectives on Australian history and race relations. This collection of previously unpublished papers, edited by Martin, a Dominican priest who himself worked closely with the Aborigines of Australia's Northern Territories, includes essays on religion, land tenure, and privacy in Aboriginal society. The largest section of the book contains explanations of Aboriginal ideas on land ownership relating to landmark court cases on Aboriginal land rights. A useful glossary is included, but there are no maps to further the reader's understanding.

Although Martin's introduction and explanatory essays are excellent, the technical nature of Stanner's writing and the subject itself limit the appeal of this work to those familiar with Australian Aboriginal issues and Stanner's previous works. For collections in anthropology and Australian studies. Lucille M. Boone, San Jose P.L., CA

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