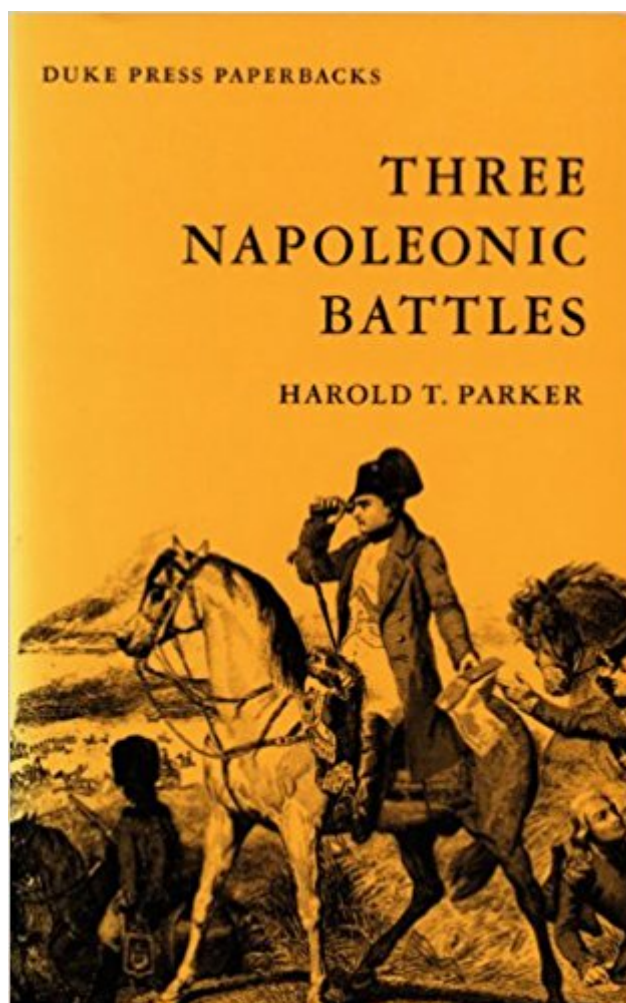


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Three Napoleonic Battles (Duke Press Paperbacks)



Synopsis

This narrative account of three Napoleonic battles adheres rather closely to the Aristotelian configuration of evolving tragedy. The historian succeeds in presenting herein events and character not only in historical reality but also in unities employed by the artist or tragedian. For a beginning of this lively, military story, Harold T. Parker chooses a portrayal of Napoleon at the height of his power, the battle of Friedland. The middle episode is concerned with Napoleon in his first serious personal check, the battle of Aspern-Essling. To complete the unity and to conclude the tragic progression, the author resurveys the episode of Napoleon's final defeat at the battle of Waterloo.

Book Information

Series: Duke Press Paperbacks

Paperback: 258 pages

Publisher: Duke University Press Books; 2nd ed. edition (June 6, 1983)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 082230547X

ISBN-13: 978-0822305477

Product Dimensions: 4.9 x 0.6 x 8.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (2 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

While this is an older book, the perspective is quite clear and new. The author has decided to study three distinct Napoleonic battles in order to shed light on how the great Corsican waged war. The three battles in question are Friedland (1807, Aspern-Essling (1809) and of course Waterloo (1815). The author has singled these particular battles out as a means of surveying Napoleon's generalship over the years. At Friedland we see him at his best against the Russians. Here he wins a crushing victory as the Russians are pinned against a river and destroyed. His generalship is almost flawless on this occasion, and stolid Russian valor can do little to stem the Napoleonic tidal wave.

Aspern-Essling finds him in a difficult position with a large Austrian army under the capable Archduke Charles now almost forcing the French back into the Danube. While the Emperor is not perhaps as sharp as he was just a few years earlier, his abilities still remain impressive. The

beginnings of careless over-confidence in his character might perhaps be seen here as he accepts battle on less than advantageous terms. And finally we have Waterloo where in the opinion of the author Napoleon's skills have become greatly dulled. Here the master of deception has deceived himself. Napoleon has become less imaginative, and slower in his actions. He believes his own propaganda, so convinced is he that his past successes shall continue in the present. At Waterloo Napoleon was not only less capable as a commander than he had been eight years before at Friedland, but in the trio of Wellington, Bluecher and Gneisenau he was facing a formidable combination. These factors combined give us the debacle at Waterloo.

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