

**NAPOLEON BONAPARTE
AND THE SIEGE OF
TOULON. INAUGURAL-
DISSERTATION**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649512539

Napoleon Bonaparte and the Siege of Toulon. Inaugural-Dissertation by Charles James Fox

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INAUGURAL-DISSERTATION

ZUR

ERLANGUNG DER DOKTORWÜRDE

DER

HOHEN PHILOSOPHISCHEN FAKULTÄT

DER

RUPRECHT-KARLS-UNIVERSITÄT ZU HEIDELBERG

VORGELEGT VON

CHARLES JAMES FOX

AUS

BOSTON, MASS., U. S. A.



WASHINGTON, D. C.

LAW REPORTER COMPANY, PRINTERS.

1902.

P. 15



**CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNTS AND
BIBLIOGRAPHY.**

A. CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNTS.

Reports in: ¹ Archives de la Guerre à Paris; Archives Nationales à Paris: Manuscript Department, British Museum: Public Record Office London.

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¹ Many of the reports, especially in the Archives de la Guerre, are full of orthographical errors. I have copied them exactly as I found them.

IV CONTEMPORANRY ACCOUNTS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY.

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PREFACE.

The siege of Toulon in 1793 is interesting and important, as a military event in the War of the First Coalition; as a political combination of the European Powers during the early part of the same war; and as a personal incident in the life of Napoleon Bonaparte. The following pages are the result of a study of the siege in which I have tried to give special attention to the second and third phases of the question. I have come to the conclusion that the political importance of the siege was considerable and that the English entered Toulon unexpectedly and intended to hold it simply as a pledge of indemnification; and secondly that the role of Bonaparte was very important and that he by directing the course of this siege, had here for the first time an influence upon the events of his time and consequently enters history. As the last point has been much disputed and as the others have not yet been brought out, I have in attempting to demonstrate each, given as much as possible of the material used, together with frequent references, allowing him whom the subject may interest to draw his own conclusions, hoping however that they will coincide with those which in my opinion are the logical and just ones.

The first accounts of Napoleon's actions were written during, and under the influence of, the grandeur of the Consulate and First Empire. The part he played at Toulon was generally considered great and brilliant; but this prevalent opinion was based principally upon more or less inexact reminiscences of those who took part in the siege with him. Everybody accepted without going into particulars that the First Consul, or Emperor, began his career at Toulon, where his genius first attracted attention. At the Restauration royalists who had served at Toulon published accounts of the siege, which with regard to the role of Bonaparte, had rather the opposite tendency. But as their principal aim was to

bring forward their own actions and thereby win the favor of Louis XVIII, and as anti-Bonapartist statements needed then no foundation on fact, these writings are of no objective value. They reflect but the anti-Bonapartist and pro-English sentiment of the Court at this time. Thiers throws some light on Bonaparte's role at Toulon, attributing principally to him the fall of the city; but Thiers' Work was too vast to permit him to make any special study of the affair of Toulon. His account of it is filled with errors. The Memoirs of Barras (not published until 1895) furnish ample but quite untrustworthy material to those who wish to lessen the role of Bonaparte at this siege. This same spirit of hostility to Napoleon prevails in Jung's "Bonaparte et son temps" He too denies the importance of the role of Bonaparte at Toulon but he does not go much into particulars, nor did he study the question without prejudice. The eagerness with which he seeks an opportunity of defaming the name of Bonaparte is shown where he himself speaks of Napoleon (page 372 vol. I) as an officer of 25 years when he wrote the "Souper de Beaucaire", and then again deliberately accuses him (page 396) of giving a false age in stating that he was 25 after the siege of Toulon. Krebs and Morris in their work on Campagnes in the Alpes give a good general account of the siege, but the role of Bonaparte is passed by with the mere assertion that in the official records nothing is found to prove its importance. It is true that in the documents of the Archives de la Guerre at Paris, no direct statement can be found that Napoleon Bonaparte took a very important part in the entire affair; but indirect proofs are by no means wanting, either here or in the English official reports. The two latest works on Toulon are those of Cottin and Chuquet. Cottin leaves the role of Bonaparte rather aside and using the English sources, writes on their action at Toulon. His work has the value of publishing important documents hitherto inaccessible in printed form; but with the same he has combined much doubtful detail

derived from rather untrustworthy and contradictory sources. His book has an anti-English tendency and fails to bring out the political importance of the affair of Toulon. Chuquet's work, an enlargement of two articles published in *Cosmopolis*, is of rather a popular character but it publishes for the first time some letters of Bonaparte and other important pieces. He goes into detail which is very difficult to control and the sources of which he has not always carefully considered. The role of Bonaparte is emphasized, but not in a manner convincing enough for a question so much in dispute.

In publishing this small volume I wish to take advantage of the opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to all my Professors at Heidelberg, and to mention my appreciation of the kindness of the late Professor Erdmannsdörfer and Professor Schäfer, whose generous aid and hospitality to foreigners I shall always try to emulate.

