

Peace: Napoleon's Hand - Update

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 07 May 1998

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/568>

Exported from an unofficial mirror of a public mailing list. Copyright in each message remains with the person who wrote it. Email addresses are obscured as `user at host`, the form the original archive published. This file was rebuilt from parsed fields rather than retained headers, so it is faithful in content but not byte-exact.

David_Lebling — 07 May 1998, 10:05

I've just finished reading Emil Ludwig's Napoleon, which my local library actually has. It's not bad, a very novelistic sort of biography. There's a lot in it about how Napoleon invented himself, reinvented his past, and other bits that make an interesting counterpoint to Peace.

There is nothing about why he stuck his hand in his coat all the time.

The closest we come is the continuing motif of Napoleon's stomach cramps (which helped decide Waterloo), his father's early death from liver disease, and N's eventual death on St. Helena from (likely) stomach or liver cancer.

In the edition I found, there are plenty of plates reproducing portraits which show him in the characteristic pose. In the text, he is never described as having his hand in his waistcoat: his hands are clenched, or behind his back (most common), or he's pounding a table, or whatever.

If Weer (or Wolfe) read this book, my guess is that his explanation of Napoleon's pose was "He had a stomachache."

--viz

(david_lebling at avid.com)