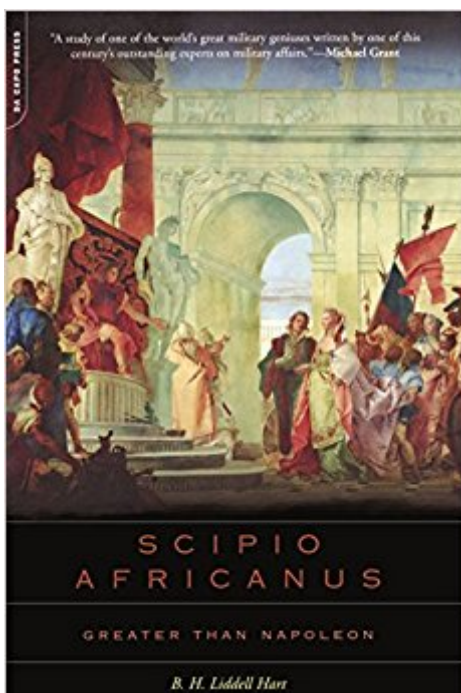


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Scipio Africanus: Greater Than Napoleon



Synopsis

Scipio Africanus (236-183 b.c.) was one of the most exciting and dynamic leaders in history. As commander, he never lost a battle. Yet it is his adversary, Hannibal, who has lived on in public memory. As B.H. Liddell Hart writes, "Scipio's battles are richer in stratagems and ruses--many still feasible today--than those of any other commander in history." Any military enthusiast or historian will find this to be an absorbing, gripping portrait.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Captain Basil Henry Liddell Hart (1895-1970) was one of the foremost military theorists of our time. His many books include *Scipio Africanus*, *Lawrence of Arabia*, *The Rommel Papers*, and *Sherman* (all available from Da Capo Press/ Perseus Books Group).

I'm a rather obsessive history buff. While many periods are of interest to me, probably most interesting is the Roman Empire and WWI era. For some interested in both, this is quite possibly the best book ever written. Many other famous warriors are also referenced in this classic, which touches on a variety of historical periods. Nonetheless, Scipio Africanus is the focus, and he is thoroughly covered. You have to walk away agreeing with Hart that he quite probably is the greatest "captain" ever. Hart wrote a true masterpiece here. I thoroughly enjoyed his writing style. I've already picked up another one of his books and will surely read others. I give this one my highest recommendation!

The author gives a compelling argument that Scipio Africanus is the greatest general of all time. First, he defeated Hannibal, widely recognized as one of the greatest. No other general defeated an opponent with Hannibal's abilities. Scipio's tactics, and strategy, under extremely difficult circumstances, and with minimal help from Rome, probably were unsurpassed. He had a new trick for every circumstance. He left Rome unchallenged in the Mediterranean world. This book is a good read, adding insights into the strengths and weaknesses of most of the great generals of all time. His arguments are at times over the top, and refutable, but overall he's probably correct. A more in-depth comparison with Subutai would be a worthwhile study, at least as far as tactical skill is concerned. However, for the benefit of his country and the conquered, Scipio can't be beat.

Liddell Hart is a military analyst and as such the book focuses on strategy and tactics, not just of battles but includes theater strategies before and after conflict. The same sort of tactics continued up to WWII - only the weapons changed. Scipio was very innovative and fought with limited support from Rome. He used coordinated naval and land operations. His ability to change formations in the heat of battle are amazing. How this was accomplished is not explained as communications were bound to be early developmental. His communications must have been amazing and probably lost for centuries. He was also able to separate his cavalry from his troops and then bring them back at a critical stage (remember Gettysburg?) I concur that he was the greatest general, more so than even Alexander, as Scipio fought and seasoned the troops of Carthage in Spain and Africa.

I rarely give reviews and this one will be short and to the point. Well written and researched with obvious respect for Scipio Africanus but not in any way does Mr. Hart edge toward gushing in his praise. Logical and thorough with engaging commentary. Well done biography with a concise and even timeline done to inform and entertain. Thanks to the author, well done sir.

No way Rome could have become the Super-Power of the ancient world without Scipio. Truly one of the greatest military commanders who ever existed, only Alexander the Great is better. Hannibal almost destroyed Rome, but Scipio helped make Rome the most dominant force in the Mediterranean for centuries to come! Too bad he was thrown away like trash by the very Republic he helped save from destruction. Very good book and author too, Basil Liddell Hart has other military books on modern warfare that are complete eye-openers!

Interesting take on historical figure. Published in 1926, I still felt that it was a good read with

interesting thoughts on Scipio Africanus. A number of references to World War I in various analogies.

A concise and well written history. Should be required reading for all politicians and military personnel. The world urgently needs another Scipio Africanus.

A staff is a crude impliment. But it props the crippled up. As the author points out other great warriors compared themselves to a scourge. The word Scipio however means staff. And Scipio held Rome up in her time of need. It is the unfortunate habit of many to prefer charisma over character. Forgetting that charisma can be as easily used for evil means as good. Scipio had charisma. But he also had character. While other "Great Captains" fought for their own vanity, Scipio fought to defend his home. He was exemplar of an old principal that is too often forgotten; that it is great to be a servant and Scipio was a warrior who was content to put his skill-at-arms at his country's service. His biography is seldom given which is unfortunate, for he is a great lesson to learn from. And here Mr Hart gives the biography. The biography is written by a professional strategist. And as it happens one who had an ax to grind in bureaucratic politics. This shows through in his writing but it can also provide insights. The book sounds remarkably like a lecture series at Sandhurst, and those who wish can imagine the writer pontificating in a classroom while they read. The writer's prejudices come forth. It is very much literary "triumph" to Scipio. Which isn't so bad. Except in his effort to praise his hero the author constantly harps on the utter worthlessness of Everyone Who Is Not Scipio. Which is rather ironic is that the very thing that makes Scipio worthy of praise in the author's (and this reviewer's) eyes is that Scipio was a team player who fought for his country not for his own personal fame. Aside from these criticisms the book is quite worthy of reading. It does not show epic battle pieces and the like; after all it is written by an intellectual soldier. It does however show Scipio's career and gives insight into his campaigns. It is a short book but a worthy one about a man who deserves to be better known.

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