

A speech, as recorded by Livy, given by Scipio Africanus. This speech was given by Scipio before the famous battle of Zama against the famous Carthaginian general, Hannibal Barca.

“Bear in mind your past battles and fight like brave men worthy of yourselves and of your country. Keep it before your eyes that if you overcome your enemies not only will you be unquestioned masters of Africa, but you will gain for yourselves and your country the undisputed command and sovereignty of the rest of the world. But if the result of the battle be otherwise, those who have fallen bravely in the fight will be forever shrouded in the glory of dying thus for their country, while those who save themselves by flight will spend the remainder of their lives in misery and disgrace. For no place in Africa will afford you safety, and if you fall into the hands of the Carthaginians it is plain enough to those who reflect what fate awaits you. May none of you, I pray, live to experience that fate, now that fortune offers us the most glorious of prizes; how utterly craven, nay, how foolish shall we be, if we reject the greatest of goods and choose the greatest of evils from mere love of life. Go, therefore, to meet the foe with two objects before you, either victory or death. For men animated by such a spirit must always overcome their adversaries, since they go into battle ready to throw their lives away.” (This passage can be found in B. H. Liddell Hart's book, “Scipio Africanus: Greater than Napoleon”)

From Meditations by Divus Marcus Aurelius

“Whatsoever I am, is either flesh, or life, of that which we commonly call the mistress and overruling part of man; reason. Away with thy books, suffer not thy mind any more to be distracted, and carried to and fro; for it will not be; but as even now ready to die, think little of thy flesh: blood, bones, and a skin; a pretty piece of knit and twisted work, consisting of nerves, veins, and arteries; think no more of it, than so. And as for thy life, consider what it is; a wind; not one constant wind neither, but every moment of an hour let out, and sucked in again. The third, is thy ruling part; and here consider; Thou art an old man; suffer not that excellent part to be brought in subjection, and to become slavish: suffer it not to be drawn up and down with unreasonable and unsociable lusts and motions, as it were with wires and nerves; suffer it not any more, either to repine at anything now present, or to fear and fly anything to come, which the destiny hath appointed thee.”

“To my dear Prince Alexis, I did not usurp the crown. I found it, in the gutter, and I picked it up with my sword. And it was the people Alexis, the people who put it on my head. He who

saves a nation, violates no law.” (From the movie Waterloo 1970, Napoleon Bonaparte)

Stendhal, “The Charterhouse of Parma”

“On 15 May 1796, General Bonaparte made his entry into Milan at the head of a youthful army which had just crossed the bridge at Lodi and let the world know that after all these centuries, Caesar and Alexander had a successor.

Henri Poincare, “The Value of Science”

“Of all the parts of analysis, the most elevated, the purest, so to speak, will be the most fruitful in the hands of those who know how to use them.”

Napoleon Bonaparte speaking to his soldiers and followers upon departing for Elba April 20, 1814:

“Officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers of the Old Guard, I bid you adieu! For twenty years I have found you ever brave and faithful, marching in the path of glory. All Europe was united against us. The enemy, by steeling three marches upon us, has entered Paris. I was advancing in order to drive them out. They would have remained there three days. I thank you for the noble spirit you have evinced in that same place under these circumstances. But a portion of the army, not sharing these sentiments, abandoned me and passed over to the camp of the enemy... I could with three parts of the army which remained faithful, and aided by the sympathy and efforts of the great part of the population, have fallen back upon the Loire, or upon my strongholds, and have sustained the war for several years. But a foreign and civil war would have torn the soil of our beautiful country, and at the cost of all these sacrifices and all these ravages, could we hope to vanquish united Europe, supported by the influence which the city of Paris exercised, and which a faction had succeeded in mastering? Under these circumstances I have only considered the interests of the country and the repose of France. I have made the sacrifice of all my rights, and am ready to make that of my person, for the aim of all my life has been the happiness and glory of France. As for you, soldiers, be always faithful in the path of duty and honour. Serve with fidelity your new sovereign. The sweetest occupation will henceforth be to make known to the posterity all that you have done that is great... You are my children. I cannot embrace you all so I will do so in person of your general. (Kissing on the cheek Jean-Martin Petit, Commander of the Old Guard)

I will embrace these eagles, which have served us as guides in so many glorious days. Farewell!
Preserve me in your memories! Adieu, my children!"

Michael Broers, Napoleon "The Spirit of the Age 1805-1810"

In the course of 13 October, Napoleon rode out on a reconnaissance and entered Jena. The German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, then a professor at the university there and in no way sympathetic to revolutionary France, wrote to a friend on seeing him: "I saw the Emperor-this world spirit-riding out of the city...It is indeed a wonderful sensation to see such an individual, who, concentrated here at a single point, astride a horse, reaches out over the world and masters it...The spirit of the age, who commands history."