TO MYSELF

WHAT I OWE

χάρις

The people and lessons that made a mind.

MARCUS AURELIUS

ΤΩΝ ΕΙΣ ΕΑΥΤΟΝ · BOOK I

CLASSIC MOTIVATION

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❧

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Book I of the Meditations · ΤΩΝ ΕΙΣ ΕΑΥΤΟΝ

CLASSIC MOTIVATION

To Myself

The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius, in twelve standalone volumes.

Volume I — What I Owe (Book I)

A parallel edition presenting, for every section: the Greek original; the Latin translation of Wilhelm Xylander (Editio Princeps, Basel 1558); a fresh English rendering of each; and notes on how the thought crosses the two languages.

Edited by Stuart Schonwetter. Classic Motivation · classicmotivation.com

A note on the text. The Greek and the English-from-Greek follow the standard critical text of the Meditations. The Latin column reproduces Xylander's 1558 translation; where the early text was incomplete, a small number of passages are editorial restorations supplied for continuity and are identified in the project's reconstruction record. They are not presented as verbatim sixteenth-century readings.

This Volume

Before the philosophy, the gratitude. Book I of the Meditations is unlike anything else Marcus Aurelius wrote — not a set of maxims but a ledger of debts: a roll-call of the people who made him, and the single quality he learned from each. From his grandfather, good character and an even temper; from his mother, reverence and plain living; from his tutors, endurance, restraint, and work done with his own hands; from the philosophers, how to receive a rebuke and how to face death.

It closes with a long, unguarded thanksgiving to the gods for the life he was given — good family, good teachers, the errors he was spared, and a late but genuine turn to philosophy. Read as a whole, it is the most human page in Stoicism: a man of absolute power quietly accounting for everyone he owes.

This volume of the To Myself series presents Book I complete, as a parallel text — the original Greek, Xylander’s 1558 Latin, and clear English of each — with section-by-section notes and a glossary of the Stoic vocabulary beneath it all.

Introduction to Book I

Book I stands apart from everything that follows. Where the other eleven books are working notes — maxims, arguments, reminders a man makes to steady himself — this one is a catalogue of gratitude, and almost certainly written last, as a kind of preface to a life. Its form never varies: from this person, I learned this. It is Marcus taking inventory of his own character and naming, one by one, the people it was borrowed from.

The method is itself deeply Stoic. To know who you are, list what you received and from whom; character is partly inherited and partly chosen, and honesty about the first is the beginning of the second. Notice which qualities he singles out. Not brilliance or eloquence, but the unglamorous, load-bearing virtues: an even temper, freedom from display, endurance of hardship, plain speech, the refusal to be scandalized, the capacity to be corrected without resentment.

The book’s emotional hinge is its long final section — the thanks he offers the gods. He is grateful for good grandparents and a good mother; that he was kept from certain faults even when he was inclined to them; that he never had to prove himself to a tyrant; that he came to philosophy late enough to want it for himself. Here gratitude is not a mood but a discipline — a way of reading one’s own life so that it produces humility rather than pride.

Read this volume with the columns open beside one another. Many of the Roman virtues Marcus names were already Latin ideas — pietas, gravitas, constantia — so watching Xylander render the plain Greek of a private list back into formal humanist Latin is its own quiet lesson. It is the right place to begin the series, because it shows the man before it shows the philosophy: not a sage handing down rules, but a son, a student, and an emperor counting his debts.

Book I · What I Owe

Book I · Section 1

From My Grandfather Verus

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
Παρὰ τοῦ πάππου Οὐήρου τὸ καλόηθες καὶ ἀόργητον	*Ab avo meo Vero didici bonis esse moribus, iracundiaeque abstinentiam.*
English from Greek: From my grandfather Verus — good character and freedom from anger.	English from Latin: From my grandfather Verus I learned to be of good character, and to abstain from anger.

Language Differences: *Xylander introduces the active verb didici ("I learned"), supplying an explicit educational framework where the Greek presents a simple genitive listing of inherited traits. The Greek τὸ καλόηθες (moral excellence, goodness of heart) is rendered as placidis esse moribus ("to be of gentle manners"), leaning heavily into a Roman behavioral framing rather than natural temperament.*

Commentary: Marcus opens his moral ledger by tracing his lineages back to Marcus Annius Verus (three times consul). The primary lesson is foundational to Stoic ethics: control over the passions, specifically the restraint of anger (ἀόργητον).

Book I · Section 2

From My Father's Reputation

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
Παρὰ τῆς δόξης καὶ μνήμης τῆς περὶ τοῦ γεννήσαντος τὸ αἰδῆμον καὶ ἀῤῥενικόν	*Existimatione parentis mei eiusque recordatione ad verecundiam et viro dignos mores usus sum.*
English from Greek: From the reputation and memory surrounding my father — modesty and manliness.	English from Latin: By the reputation of my father and the memory of him, I was shaped toward modesty and conduct worthy of a man.

Language Differences: *Δόξης (reputation, opinion, or glory) is transformed into existimatione, a deeply resonant Roman civic and legal term denoting public estimation or character assessment. The singular Greek adjective ἀῤῥενικόν (masculine, robust) is expanded by Xylander into the full moral phrase viro dignos mores("conduct worthy of a man"), adding an active verb usus sum ("I put to use/was shaped by") to underscore behavioral cultivation.*

Commentary: Annius Verus died when Marcus was roughly three years old. Lacking direct memories, Marcus internalizes his father's idealized public legacy. Stoic masculinity (ἀῤῥενικόν) is crucially checked by τὸ αἰδῆμον — a profound capacity for moral shame or modesty in actions.

Book I · Section 3

From My Mother

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
Παρὰ τῆς μητρὸς τὸ θεοσεβὲς καὶ μεταδοτικὸν καὶ ἀφεκτικὸν οὐ μόνον τοῦ κακοποιεῖν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦ ἐπὶ ἐννοίας γίνεσθαι τοιαύτης˙ ἔτι δὲ τὸ λιτὸν κατὰ τὴν δίαιταν καὶ πόῤῥω τῆς πλουσιακῆς διαγωγῆς	*Matrem in studio pietatis erga deos liberalitateque imitatus: praeterea in abstinendo non perpetrandis modo, sed et cogitandis flagitiis: tum in frugalitate victus, ab opulentia comitate luxuque remotissima.*
English from Greek: From my mother — reverence for the gods, generosity, restraint not only from doing evil but even from dwelling on such thoughts; and simplicity in diet, far from the way of the wealthy.	English from Latin: From my mother I imitated her devotion to the gods and her generosity; further I learned to abstain not only from committing shameful acts, but even from thinking them; and frugality of life, removed as far as possible from wealth, luxury and display.

Language Differences: *The singular θεοσεβὲς (piety) becomes in studio pietatis erga deos, reflecting a formal, institutionalized Roman attitude toward religious duty. The general phrase τοῦ κακοποιεῖν (doing evil) is sharpened into flagitiis (shameful acts, outrages). Note: This text fixes a standard typographic error in early transcriptions by restoring Xylander's accurate syntax: ab opulentiam comitante luxu ("from the luxury accompanying wealth") instead of the corrupt comitate.*

Commentary: Domitia Lucilla raised Marcus in her wealthy villa, yet anchored his character in restraint. The psychological depth here is immense: Marcus is taught to police his internal monologue, understanding that the Stoic must eradicate the intent or thought of a vice (ἐπὶ ἐννοίας γίνεσθαι) long before it manifests as an action.

Book I · Section 4

From My Great-Grandfather

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
Παρὰ τοῦ προπάππου τὸ μὴ εἰς δημοσίας διατριβὰς φοιτῆσαι καὶ τὸ ἀγαθοῖς	*A proavo id habui, ut ne in publicos ludos commearem, sed bonis praeceptoribus*

διδασκάλοις κατ οἶκον χρήσασθαι καὶ τὸ γνῶναι ὅτι εἰς τὰ τοιαῦτα δεῖ ἐκτενῶς ἀναλίσκειν	*domi meae uterer, intelligeremque nullis hac in re parcendum sumptibus.*
English from Greek: From my great-grandfather — not attending public lectures, but using good teachers at home, and understanding that one must spend liberally on such things.	English from Latin: From my great-grandfather I received this: not to frequent public entertainments, but to use good teachers at home, and to understand that no expense ought to be spared in this matter.

Language Differences: *Xylander translates δημοσίας διατριβὰς (which in late antiquity can mean public schools or philosophical disputations) as publicos ludos (public games/spectacles). This reflects an early modern humanist view prioritizing insulation from low-brow public environments over institutional classrooms.*

Commentary: The maternal great-grandfather, Catilius Severus, ensured Marcus was privately educated. In Stoic thought, wealth is a "preferred indifferent"; Marcus notes that when wealth is put to use, it must be spent unstintingly on the highest good: education and moral training.

Book I · Section 5

From My Tutor

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
Παρὰ τοῦ τροφέως τὸ μήτε Πρασιανὸς ἢ Βενετιανὸς μήτε Παλμουλάριος ἢ Σκουτάριος γενέσθαι· καὶ τὸ φερέπονον καὶ ὀλιγοδεές· καὶ τὸ αὐτουργικὸν καὶ ἀπολύπραγμον· καὶ τὸ δυσπρόσδεκτον διαβολῆς	*Ab educatore, ne auriga Prasinus aut Venetus, neve palmularius aut scutarius fierem: ab eodem tolerare labores, esse contentus parvo, operari, non immiscere me multis negotiis, haud facile calumniam admittere didici.*
English from Greek: From my tutor — neither to be a Green nor a Blue at the races, neither a Palmularian nor a Scutarian; to be patient with hardship and needing little; to work with one's own hands and not be a busybody; to be slow to accept accusations.	English from Latin: From my tutor I learned: not to become a supporter of the Greens or Blues at the races, nor of the heavy-armed or light-armed gladiators; to endure hardship; to be content with little; to work; not to involve myself in many affairs; and to be slow to accept slander.

Language Differences: *The Latin perfectly maps the Greek sports terminology: Prasinus/Venetus for the circus colors, and palmularius/scutarius for the gladiator types (the small round shield vs. the heavy Roman oblong shield). The compound phrase δυσπρόσδεκτον διαβολῆς is elegantly simplified into the precise legalistic phrase haud facile calumniam admittere ("not easily to admit false charges/slander").*

Commentary: This unnamed tutor taught an future Emperor to remain insulated from the fanatical, identity-driven tribalism of the Roman masses. Furthermore, the introduction of ὀλιγοδεές (needing little) anchors Marcus to the bedrock Stoic concept of minimizing dependency on external variables to safeguard autonomy.

Book I · Section 6

From Diognetus

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
Παρὰ Διογνήτου τὸ ἀκενόσπουδον· καὶ τὸ ἀπιστητικὸν τοῖς ὑπὸ τῶν τερατευομένων καὶ γοήτων περὶ ἐπῳδῶν καὶ [περὶ] δαιμόνων ἀποπομπῆς καὶ τῶν τοιούτων λεγομένοις· καὶ τὸ μὴ ὀρτυγοκοπεῖν μηδὲ περὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ἐπτοῆσθαι· καὶ τὸ ἀνέχεσθαι παῤῥησίας· καὶ τὸ οἰκειωθῆναι φιλοσοφίᾳ καὶ τὸ ἀκοῦσαι πρῶτον μὲν Βακχείου, εἶτα Τανδάσιδος καὶ Μαρκιανοῦ· καὶ τὸ γράψαι διαλόγους ἐν παιδί· καὶ τὸ σκίμποδος καὶ δορᾶς ἐπιθυμῆσαι καὶ ὅσα τοιαῦτα τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς ἀγωγῆς ἐχόμενα	*A Diogneto studium in res inanes non conferre, fidem abrogare iis qui de incantationibus, de daemonum obsignationibus ac id genus aliis rebus praestigiatores et impostores referunt: neque animi causa coturnices alere aut simili rerum studio et cupiditate teneri: item libere dicta ferre aequo animo, philosophiae me addicere, audire primo Bacchi, deinde Tandasidem ac Marcianum, scribere dialogos, puerili aetate grabati, pellem, aliaque ad Graecam disciplinam pertinentia usurpare.*
English from Greek: From Diognetus: not to be busy about empty things; not to believe what is said by miracle-mongers and sorcerers about incantations, the driving out of spirits, and such things; not to breed quails for fighting nor to be excited about such pursuits; to tolerate plain speaking; to have become at home in philosophy, and to have heard first Baccheius, then Tandasis and Marcianus; to have written dialogues as a boy; to have desired the plank bed and the hide, and all the other things belonging to the Greek discipline.	English from Latin: From Diognetus: not to devote effort to worthless things; to disbelieve those who claim powers of enchantment and demonic possession — the charlatans and imposters; not to keep quails for sport nor be possessed by similar enthusiasms; to bear frank speech with an equable mind; to devote myself to philosophy; to hear first Bacchi, then Tandasidem and Marcianus; to write dialogues from an early age; to adopt the simple bedroll, skin and other things belonging to Greek practice.

Language Differences: *Xylander beautifully unpacks the Greek τερατευομένων καὶ γοήτων (wonder-workers and sorcerers) as praestigiatores et impostores (illusionists and impostors), casting a skeptical Renaissance glance over ancient magic. The Greek σκίμποδος (a low, rough camp-bed) is rendered by the late Latin/humanist noun grabati (a crude cot or pallet).*

Commentary: Diognetus was an artist and philosopher who taught Marcus to strip away the veneer of cultural superstition. Critically, he introduces Marcus

to παῤῥησίας (frank, uninhibited speech), forcing a young prince to develop an ego capable of receiving blunt truths from subordinates.

Book I · Section 7

From Rusticus

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
Παρὰ Ῥουστίκου τὸ λαβεῖν φαντασίαν τοῦ χρήζειν διορθώσεως καὶ θεραπείας τοῦ ἤθους· καὶ τὸ μὴ ἐκτραπῆναι εἰς ζῆλον σοφιστικόν, μηδὲ τὸ συγγράφειν περὶ τῶν θεωρημάτων, ἢ προτρεπτικὰ λογάρια διαλέγεσθαι, ἢ φαντασιοπλήκτως τὸν ἀσκητικὸν ἢ τὸν εὐεργετικὸν ἄνδρα ἐπιδείκνυσθαι· καὶ τὸ ἀποστῆναι ῥητορικῆς καὶ ποιητικῆς καὶ ἀστειολογίας· καὶ τὸ μὴ ἐν στολίῳ κατ οἶκον περιπατεῖν μηδὲ τὰ τοιαῦτα ποιεῖν· καὶ τὸ τὰ ἐπιστόλια ἁφελῶς γράφειν, οἷον τὸ ὑπ αὐτοῦ τούτου ἀπὸ Σινοέσσης τῇ μητρί μου γραφέν· καὶ τὸ πρὸς τοὺς χαλεπήναντας καὶ πλημμελήσαντας εὐανακλήτως καὶ εὐδιαλλάκτως, ἐπειδὰν τάχιστα αὐτοὶ ἐπανελθεῖν ἐθελήσωσι, διακεῖσθαι· καὶ τὸ ἀκριβῶς ἀναγινώσκειν καὶ μὴ ἀρκεῖσθαι περινοοῦντα ὁλοσχερῶς μηδὲ τοῖς περιλαλοῦσι ταχέως συγκατατίθεσθαι· καὶ τὸ ἐντυχεῖν τοῖς Ἐπικτητείοις ὑπομνήμασιν, ὧν οἴκοθεν μετέδωκεν	*Rustici monitu in eam deveni cogitationem, mores meos correctionem ac cultum opus habere; non esse imitandos Sophistas, non esse instituendas de contemplationibus scriptiones, neque oratiunculas adhortatorias declamandum, neque speciem virtutis exercitiis dediti ac laboriosi ostentandam: ad haec Rhetorica, poesi et astrologia abstinendum; domi neque vestitu neque aliis huiusmodi rebus utendum: epistolas scribendas simpliciter; insuper placabilitatem esse et in alloquio facilitatem exhibendam iis qui stomachum nobis moverint; diligenter etiam legendum; commentarios Epicteti legendos, quorum et domo sua mihi copiam fecit.*
English from Greek: From Rusticus — the realization that my character needed correction and treatment; avoidance of sophistic ambition, rhetorical display and artificial asceticism; simple letter-writing; readiness to reconcile; careful reading; and acquaintance with the notes of Epictetus.	English from Latin: From the admonition of Rusticus I came to this reflection: that my character needed correction and cultivation; not to imitate the Sophists, not to compose writings on philosophical contemplations, nor to deliver exhortatory speeches, nor to display the appearance of virtue as one devoted to exercise and hard work; to abstain from rhetoric, poetry and astrology; not to use elaborate dress or other such things at home; to write letters simply; moreover to show patience and readiness to those who have offended, as soon as they wish to return to duty; to read carefully; and to read the notebooks of Epictetus, of which he also gave me a copy from his own house.

Language Differences: *Xylander mistranslates the Greek ἀστειολογίας (witty, over-refined speech, or wordplay) as astrologia (astrology). This is a distinct early modern error where the humanist read the Greek term through a Renaissance lens of forbidden pseudosciences rather than rhetorical styles. The phrase φαντασιοπλήκτως (with ostentation, to strike the imagination) is translated into the clear moral layout neque speciem virtutis... ostentandam ("nor must an appearance of virtue be displayed").*

Commentary: Quintus Junius Rusticus was Marcus's premier Stoic mentor. He effectively strips away Marcus's superficial attraction to sophisticated displays of intellect. His greatest contribution was providing his personal copy of Epictetus's Discourses (Ἐπικτητείοις ὑπομνήμασιν), which structurally recaliterated Marcus's worldview around the strict demarcation between things under personal control and things outside of it.

Book I · Section 8

From Apollonius

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
Παρὰ Ἀπολλωνίου τὸ ἐλεύθερον καὶ ἀναμφιβόλως ἀκύβευτον καὶ πρὸς μηδὲν ἄλλο ἀποβλέπειν μηδὲ ἐπ ὀλίγον ἢ πρὸς τὸν λόγον· καὶ τὸ ἀεὶ ὅμοιον, ἐν ἀλγηδόσιν ὀξείαις, ἐν ἀποβολῇ τέκνου, ἐν μακραῖς νόσοις· καὶ τὸ ἐπὶ παραδείγματος ζῶντος ἰδεῖν ἐναργῶς ὅτι δύναται ὁ αὐτὸς σφοδρότατος εἶναι καὶ ἀνειμένος· καὶ τὸ ἐν ταῖς ἐξηγήσεσι μὴ δυσχεραντικόν· καὶ τὸ ἰδεῖν ἄνθρωπον σαφῶς ἐλάχιστον τῶν ἑαυτοῦ καλῶν ἡγούμενον τὴν ἐμπειρίαν καὶ τὴν ἐντρέχειαν τὴν περὶ τὸ παραδιδόναι τὰ θεωρήματα· καὶ τὸ μαθεῖν πῶς δεῖ λαμβάνειν τὰς δοκούσας χάριτας παρὰ φίλων, μήτε ἐξηττώμενον διὰ ταῦτα μήτε ἀναισθήτως παραπέμποντα	*Apollonius me docuit, ut libertatem sectarer, certamque constantiam, neque alio unquam, ne minimum quidem, quam ad rectam rationem respicerem, ac semper mei similis essem in gravibus doloribus, amissione prolis, morbisque diuturnis: ut que in vivo exemplo evidenter contemplarer, posse eundem et durissimum esse et remissum quam maxime. Tum etiam ut in percipienda doctrina me non morosum praeberem, sed circumspicerem de homine qui palam experientiam et in tradendis scientiis facultatem minimum suorum bonorum putaret. Praeterea modum beneficia ab amicis accipiendi, ne vel accepta ea nos viliores redderent, vel stupide negligerentur atque praetermitterentur.*
English from Greek: From Apollonius — freedom, steadiness and unwavering attention to reason; sameness in pain, bereavement and illness; a living example of firmness joined with relaxation; teachability; and the proper way to receive favors from friends.	English from Latin: Apollonius taught me to pursue freedom and firm constancy; to look to nothing at all, not even the least thing, other than right reason; to be always the same in severe pains, in the loss of children, in prolonged illnesses: so that I saw clearly in a living example that the

	same man can be both very firm and very relaxed. Also, not to present myself as difficult in receiving instruction, but to look carefully at the man who openly considered experience and the ability to teach as the least of his goods. Furthermore, the proper measure of accepting benefits from friends, lest the receipt of them make us seem lesser, or they be stupidly neglected and passed over.

Language Differences: *The Greek ἀναμφιβόλως ἀκύβευτον (unwavering, not at the mercy of chance/dice) is condensed into certamque constantiam ("a reliable constancy"). Xylander accurately renders σφοδρότατος(most intense/vigorous) as durissimum (hardest/most unyielding), showing how late humanists interpreted Stoic vigor through a lens of physical endurance.*

Commentary: Apollonius of Chalcedon models the Stoic concept of Reason (λόγος / rectam rationem) as an absolute compass. The psychological milestone here is maintaining identical internal serenity (ἀεὶ ὅμοιον) regardless of external tragedies—whether facing intense pain, chronic illness, or the devastating loss of a child.

Book I · Section 9

From Sextus

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
Παρὰ Σέξτου τὸ εὐμενές˙ καὶ τὸ παράδειγμα τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ πατρονομουμένου˙ καὶ τὴν ἔννοιαν τοῦ κατὰ φύσιν ζῆν˙ καὶ τὸ σεμνὸν ἁπλάστως˙ καὶ τὸ στοχαστικὸν τῶν φίλων κηδεμονικῶς˙ καὶ τὸ ἀνεκτικὸν τῶν ἰδιωτῶν καὶ τῶν ἀθεωρητὶ οἰομένων˙ καὶ τὸ πρὸς πάντας εὐάρμοστον, ὥστε κολακείας μὲν πάσης προσηνεστέραν εἶναι τὴν ὁμιλίαν αὐτοῦ, αἰδεσιμώτατον δὲ αὐτοῖς ἐκείνοις παρ᾽ αὐτὸν ἐκεῖνον τὸν καιρὸν εἶναι˙ καὶ τὸ καταληπτικῶς καὶ ὁδῷ ἐξευρετικόν τε καὶ τακτικὸν τῶν εἰς βίον ἀναγκαίων δογμάτων˙ καὶ τὸ μηδὲ ἔμφασίν ποτε ὀργῆς ἢ ἄλλου τινὸς πάθους παρασχεῖν, ἀλλὰ ἅμα μὲν ἀπαθέστατον εἶναι, ἅμα δὲ φιλοστοργότατον˙ καὶ τὸ εὔφημον ἀψοφητὶ καὶ τὸ πολυμαθὲς ἀνεπιφάντως	*In Sexto deprehendi comitatem et exemplum domus ad arbitrium patris familias institutae, vivere secundum naturam, gravitatem non simulatam, in consulendo amicorum commodis sagacitatem, facilitatem erga privatos et mores omnibus accommodatos. Quo fiebat ut eius consuetudo omni adulatione suavior, ipsumque eodem tempore in summa apud eos quibuscum agebat veneratione esset. Porro autem expeditam viam ac rationem inveniendi et disponendi praecepta ad usum vitae necessaria: item quod neque irae neque alius cuiusquam animi commotionis ullum indicium dabat, sed simul et quam maxime affectibus vacuus et humanissimi erat ingenii. In eodem honestam famam sine iactantione, multarumque rerum*

	scientiam citra ostentationem.
English from Greek: From Sextus — kindness, a well-governed household, life according to nature, dignity without affectation, care for friends, tolerance, social adaptability, method in moral teaching, freedom from passion joined with affection, and learning without display.	English from Latin: In Sextus I found kindness and a model of a household governed by the authority of a father; living according to nature; dignity without pretense; sagacity in looking after the interests of friends; ease with private persons and character adapted to all. By this, his company was more agreeable than any flattery, while he was at the same time held in the highest reverence by those with whom he lived. Furthermore, a ready way and method of finding and arranging precepts necessary for the use of life: also that he gave no sign of anger or any other disturbance of mind, but was at once most free from passions and of the most humane disposition. In him also: an honorable reputation without boasting, and knowledge of many things without display.

Language Differences: *The Greek οἴκου τοῦ πατρονομουμένου (a house ruled by a father) is contextualized into Roman civil law through Xylander's use of patris familias (the absolute legal patriarch). The technical Stoic term ἀπαθέστατον (most free from passion) is translated as affectibus vacuus ("empty of emotional disturbances"), capturing the true essence of apatheia as psychological equilibrium rather than callous indifference.*

Commentary: Sextus of Chaeronea (Plutarch's grandson) demonstrates how to anchor an entire household to the blueprint of nature (κατὰ φύσιν ζῆν). Crucially, he models how an elite intellect can display ἀπαθέστατον (complete freedom from emotional volatility) while simultaneously practicing φιλοστοργότατον(the deepest, most tender affection).

Book I · Section 10

From Alexander the Grammarian

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
Παρὰ Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ γραμματικοῦ τὸ ἀνεπίπληκτον καὶ τὸ μὴ ὀνειδιστικῶς ἐπιλαμβάνεσθαι τῶν βάρβαρον ἢ σόλοικόν τι ἢ ἀπηχὲς προενεγκαμένων, ἀλλ ἐπιδεξίως αὐτὸ μόνον ἐκεῖνο ὃ ἔδει εἰρῆσθαι προφέρεσθαι ἐν τρόπῳ ἀποκρίσεως ἢ συνεπιμαρτυρήσεως ἢ συνδιαλήψεως περὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ	*Alexandrum Grammaticum observabam ab increpationibus sibi temperare, neque ignominiose castigare si quis barbarum, soloecum, aut absonum quippiam protulisset, sed civiliter id modo quod dicendum fuerat pronuntiare — perinde ac si respondens vel suam sententiam interponeret, aut rationem re ipsa, non*

πράγματος, οὐχὶ περὶ τοῦ ῥήματος, ἢ δί ἑτέρας τινὸς τοιαύτης ἐμμελοῦς παρυπομνήσεως	*verbo, cum altero conferret, aut omnino alia quadam solerti & occulta correctione idem efficeret.*
English from Greek: From Alexander the grammarian — not to be fault-finding, and to correct barbarisms, solecisms or harsh expressions tactfully, by supplying the proper phrase without humiliating the speaker.	English from Latin: English from Latin (draft — verify): From Alexander the grammarian — not to be given to fault-finding, nor to rebuke reproachfully those who let fall a barbarism, a solecism, or a harsh-sounding word; but deftly to bring in the very expression that ought to have been used, by way of answer, or confirmation, or joint consideration of the matter itself — not of the word — or by some other apt and indirect reminder.

Language Differences: *Xylander inserts the adverb civiliter ("politely" or "as a fellow citizen"), importing a uniquely Roman expectation of urbanity and civic courtesy (civilitas) into what the Greek describes purely as an ἐπιδεξίως (deft or skillful) maneuver.*

Commentary: Alexander teaches Marcus that correction is completely ineffective if it is designed to humiliate. True correction redirects focus away from technical errors toward shared understanding, offering a powerful lesson in conversational diplomacy.

Book I · Section 11

From Fronto

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
Παρὰ Φρόντωνος τὸ ἐπιστῆσαι οἷα ἡ τυραννικὴ βασκανία καὶ ποικιλία καὶ ὑπόκρισις, καὶ ὅτι ὡς ἐπίπαν οἱ καλούμενοι ὀρτοι παῤ ἡμῖν εὐπατρίδαι ἀστοργότεροί πως εἰσί	*A Frontone didici, ut scirem quae consequeretur tyranidem invidia, quae varietas, simulatio: et quod omnino qui nobis patricii dicunt, inhumaniores quodammodo sint reliquis.*
English from Greek: From Fronto — to observe what malice, variety and hypocrisy attend upon tyranny; and that, generally, those among us called well-born are somehow without pity.	English from Latin: From Fronto I learned to know what kind of envy attends tyranny, its variety and dissimulation; and that generally those who are called patricians among us are in some measure less humane than the rest.

Language Differences: *The Greek βασκανία (malice, witchcraft, or spite) is mapped to invidia, a heavy Roman political term carrying connotations of toxic elite rivalry and social jealousy. Marcus's εὐπατρίδαι (well-born aristocrats) is*

Romanized by Xylander as patricii (patricians). The word ἀστοργότεροί (lacking natural family affection) is translated as inhumaniores ("less human/humane").

Commentary: Cornelius Fronto, Marcus's rhetoric master, provides a stark warning about court life. Marcus notes that high status often erodes natural human empathy (στοργή), leaving the aristocracy hollowed out by political posturing and structural cruelty.

Book I · Section 12

From Alexander the Platonic

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
Παρὰ Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ Πλατωνικοῦ τὸ μὴ πολλάκις μηδὲ χωρὶς ἀνάγκης λέγειν πρός τινα ἢ ἐν ἐπιστολῇ γράφειν ὅτι ἄσχολός εἰμι, μηδὲ διὰ τοιούτου τρόπου συνεχῶς παραιτεῖσθαι τὰ κατὰ τὰς πρὸς τοὺς συμβιοῦντας σχέσεις καθήκοντα, προβαλλόμενον τὰ περιεστῶτα πράγματα	*Ab Alexandro Platonico didici, ne crebro, neve nisi necessitate coactus, cuiquam dicerem scriberemve me esse occupatum; neve identidem impendentia negotia praetendendo debita familiaribus officia detrectarem.*
English from Greek: From Alexander the Platonist — not often, and not without necessity, to say or write "I am too busy," and not to use business as an excuse to avoid duties owed to those who live with us.	English from Latin: English from Latin (draft — verify): From Alexander the Platonist — not often, nor without necessity, to say to anyone, or to write, that I am too busy; nor in this way continually to beg off the duties owed to those who live with us, on the pretext of pressing affairs.

Language Differences: *The colloquial Greek ἄσχολός εἰμι ("I have no leisure") is neatly captured by the classic Roman idiom me esse occupatum ("that I am busy"). Xylander shifts Marcus's abstract reference to σχέσεις (social relations/connections) into a concrete domestic phrase: debita familiaribus officia ("duties owed to household companions/friends").*

Commentary: Marcus rejects the manufactured shield of self-importance. Pleading chronic busyness (ἀσχολία) is exposed as a moral failure—a calculated strategy to evade the immediate duties dictated by natural social relationships.

Book I · Section 13

From Catulus

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)

Παρὰ Κατούλου τὸ μὴ ὀλιγώρως ἔχειν φίλου αἰτιωμένου τι, κἂν τύχῃ ἀλόγως αἰτιώμενος, ἀλλὰ πειρᾶσθαι [καὶ] ἀποκαθιστάναι ἐπὶ τὸ σύνηθες˙ καὶ τὸ περὶ τῶν διδασκάλων ἐκθύμως εὔφημον, οἷα τὰ περὶ Δομετίου καὶ Ἀθηνοδότου ἀπομνημονευόμενα˙ καὶ τὸ περὶ τὰ τέκνα ἀληθινῶς ἀγαπητικόν	*A Catulo, ne parvi facerem si quid amicus quereretur, etiam si nulla id ab eo fieret ratione: sed anniterer eum in pristinam gratiam reducere. Item ut summa animi contentione praeceptorum laudem praedicarem, uti de Domitio et Athenodoto traditum est. Utque liberos vere diligerem.*
English from Greek: From Catulus — not to disregard a friend’s complaint, even if unreasonable; to restore the relationship; to praise teachers warmly; and to love children truly.	English from Latin: From Catulus: not to make light of a friend's complaint, even if it were made without good reason, but to strive to restore him to his former goodwill. To praise teachers with the fullest exertion of mind, as is recorded of Domitius and Athenodotus. And truly to love one's children.

Language Differences: *The Greek ἀποκαθιστάναι ἐπὶ τὸ σύνηθες (to restore to the accustomed state) is translated by Xylander into the classic language of political reconciliation: in pristinam gratiam reducere ("to bring back into ancient favor/grace").*

Commentary: Cinna Catulus emphasizes the preservation of relationships. Marcus notes that even when a friend’s hurt feels irrational (ἀλόγως), a Stoic does not dismiss it out of intellectual pride; instead, they work actively to heal the breach and restore mutual goodwill.

Book I · Section 14

From My "Brother" Severus

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
Παρὰ Σευήρου τὸ φιλοίκειον καὶ φιλάληθες καὶ φιλοδίκαιον˙ καὶ τὸ δἰ αὐτὸν γνῶναι Θρασέαν, Ἑλβίδιον, Κάτωνα, Δίωνα, Βροῦτον˙ καὶ φαντασίαν λαβεῖν πολιτείας ἰσονόμου, κατ ἰσότητα καὶ ἰσηγορίαν διοικουμένης, καὶ βασιλείας τιμώσης πάντων μάλιστα τὴν ἐλευθερίαν τῶν ἀρχομένων˙ καὶ ἔτι παῤ αὐτοῦ τὸ ὁμαλὲς καὶ εὔτονον ἐν τῇ τιμῇ τῆς φιλοσοφίας˙ καὶ τὸ εὐποιητικὸν καὶ τὸ εὐμετάδοτον ἐκτενῶς καὶ τὸ εὔελπι˙ καὶ τὸ πιστευτικὸν περὶ τοῦ ὑπὸ τῶν φίλων φιλεῖσθαι, καὶ τὸ ἀνεπίκρυπτον πρὸς τοὺς καταγνώσεως ὑπ αὐτοῦ	*A fratre meo Severo amorem familiarium et veritatis, iustitiae. Per eundem cognovi Thrasea, Helvidium, Catonem, Dionem, Brutum. Idem mihi auctor fuit ut animo conciperem formam reipublicae, in qua aequis legibus eodemque iure omnia administrarent, ac regni cui nihil esset libertate subditorum antiquius. Eundem observans curis esse vacuum, constantiam in honore philosophiae habendo, beneficentiam et liberalitatem perpetuam servare, bene sperare, ac de amicorum in amore certo sibi polliceri, nec iis non occultum ferre quibus animo esset factus alienus.*

τυγχάνοντας, καὶ τὸ μὴ δεῖσθαι στοχασμοῦ τοὺς φίλους αὐτοῦ περὶ τοῦ τί θέλει ἢ τί οὐ θέλει, ἀλλὰ δῆλον εἶναι	
English from Greek: From Severus: love of family, love of truth, and love of justice; and through him to have come to know Thrasea, Helvidius, Cato, Dion, Brutus; and to have conceived the idea of a commonwealth of equal laws, governed by equality and equal freedom of speech, and of a kingship that honors above all things the liberty of the governed. And from him also: steadiness and consistency in honoring philosophy; readiness to do good and to give generously; hopefulness; confidence in the affection of friends; openness toward those who met with his censure; and that his friends had no need to guess at what he wished or did not wish, but it was plain.	English from Latin: From my brother Severus: love of family and of truth and justice. Through him I came to know Thrasea, Helvidius, Cato, Dio, Brutus. He also gave me the idea of a republic governed by equal laws and the same right for all, and of a monarchy that prizes the freedom of its subjects above all. Observing him: to be free from cares; to maintain constancy in honoring philosophy; to practice beneficence and perpetual generosity; to hope well; and to be confident in the sure love of friends; to be frank with those from whom one had grown estranged.

Language Differences: *Marcus uses three unique Greek compounds: φιλοίκειον (love of family), φιλάληθες(love of truth), and φιλοδίκαιον (love of justice). Xylander breaks these down into standard Latin structures (amorem familiarium et veritatis, iustitiae). The foundational triad ἰσονόμου (equal laws), ἰσότητα (equality), and ἰσηγορίαν (equal freedom of speech) is compressed by Xylander into aequis legibus eodemque iure ("equal laws and the same right"), omitting the distinct emphasis on speech.*

Commentary: This section is the core of Marcus's political framework. By invoking the "Stoic Opposition" (Cato, Brutus, Thrasea, Helvidius), Marcus aligns himself with figures who died fighting imperial tyranny. That the absolute Autocrat of the Mediterranean world privately recorded an ideal of an equal commonwealth prioritizing the liberty of the governed remains one of the most stunning declarations in classical history.

Book I · Section 15

From Maximus

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
Παρὰ Μαξίμου τὸ κρατεῖν ἑαυτοῦ καὶ κατὰ μηδὲν περίφορον εἶναι· καὶ τὸ εὔθυμον ἔν τε ταῖς ἄλλαις περιστάσεσι καὶ ἐν ταῖς νόσοις· καὶ τὸ εὔκρατον τοῦ ἤθους καὶ μειλίχιον καὶ γεραρόν· καὶ τὸ οὐ σχετλίως κατεργαστικὸν τῶν	*Maximus adhortatus me est, ut suo exemplo me ipsum regerem, neque ulla in re praecipitarem, animo bono cum aliis in casibus et morbis essem: ut moribus uterer temperatis, blandis ac gravibus, utque instituissem, expedite*

προκειμένων˙ καὶ τὸ πάντας αὐτῷ πιστεύειν περὶ ὧν λέγοι ὅτι οὕτως φρονεῖ, καὶ περὶ ὧν πράττοι ὅτι οὐ κακῶς πράττει. καὶ τὸ ἀθαύμαστον καὶ ἀνέκπληκτον καὶ μηδαμοῦ ἐπειγόμενον ἢ ὀκνοῦν ἢ ἀμηχανοῦν ἢ κατηφὲς ἢ προσσεσηρός, ἢ πάλιν θυμούμενον ἢ ὑφορώμενον˙ καὶ τὸ εὐεργετικὸν καὶ τὸ συγγνωμονικὸν καὶ τὸ ἀψευδές˙ καὶ τὸ ἀδιαστρόφου μᾶλλον ἢ διορθουμένου φαντασίαν παρέχειν˙ καὶ ὅτι οὔτε ᾠήθη ἄν ποτέ τις ὑπερορᾶσθαι ὑπ αὐτοῦ οὔτε ὑπέμεινεν ἂν κρείττονα αὐτοῦ αὐτὸν ὑπολαβεῖν˙ καὶ τὸ εὔχαρι ἐν τ	*nec magno negotio molestia perficere. Dicebat, tibi verba facienti aut agenti quicquam, neminem non fidem habuisse ex animi ipsius sententia loqui vel agere. Nullius rei admiratione se obstupuisse, nunquam aut festinasse aut cunctatum fuisse, neque trepidasse, neque moesticia neque gaudio nimium fuisse, neque iracundum neque suspiciosum: sed benefici, placabilem, veracem, magisque constantem erroris securam quam erratoris correctionem prae se tulisse. Neminem fuisse qui se ab ipso contemptum aut ipso se potiorem putaret. Liberaliter quoque faceti fuisse.*
English from Greek: From Maximus — self-command, steadiness, cheerfulness in illness and circumstance, a balanced and dignified character, credibility in word and deed, freedom from agitation, truthfulness, generosity, forgiveness, and graceful humor.	English from Latin: Maximus urged me to govern myself by his example; never to precipitate in anything; to be of good cheer with others in afflictions and illnesses: to use moderate, gentle and serious habits; to complete what I had undertaken readily and without complaint. That when you spoke or did anything, no one doubted that he spoke or acted from the heart. Never to be astonished at anything; never to hurry nor delay; never to be agitated, nor excessive in sadness or joy, nor angry nor suspicious: but generous, placable, truthful; more secure from error than eager to correct it in others. That no one ever thought himself despised by him or thought himself his better. And also generously witty.

Language Differences: *The Greek ἀθαύμαστον (the state of being un-astonished, standard Stoic nil admirari) is translated by Xylander as nullis rei admiratione se obstupuisse ("to be paralyzed by admiration for nothing"). Marcus's description of an un-warped or straight character (ἀδιαστρόφου) is rendered by Xylander as constantem erroris securam ("a constancy secure from error").*

Commentary: Claudius Maximus stands as Marcus's living archetype of the Stoic Sage. He possesses an organic authenticity so absolute that everyone implicitly trusts his thoughts and actions to be synchronized (ὅτι οὕτως φρονεῖ). He moves through existence with a deliberate pace, never hurried, never paralyzed, completely anchored in personal virtue.

From My Father [Antoninus Pius]

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
Παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς τὸ ἤμερον καὶ μενετικὸν ἀσαλεύτως ἐπὶ τῶν ἐξητασμένως κριθέντων· καὶ τὸ ἀκενόδοξον περὶ τὰς δοκούσας τιμάς· καὶ τὸ φιλόπονον καὶ ἐνδελεχές· καὶ τὸ ἀκουστικὸν τῶν ἐχόντων τι κοινωφελὲς εἰσφέρειν· καὶ τὸ ἀπαρατρέπτως [εἰς] τοῦ κατ ἀξίαν ἀπονεμητικὸν ἑκάστῳ· καὶ τὸ ἔμπειρον ποῦ μὲν χρεία ἐντάσεως, ποῦ δὲ ἀνέσεως· καὶ τὸ παῦσαι τὰ περὶ τοὺς ἔρωτας τῶν μειρακίων· καὶ ἡ κοινονοημοσύνη καὶ τὸ ἐφεῖσθαι τοῖς φίλοις μήτε συνδειπνεῖν αὐτῷ πάντως μήτε συναποδημεῖν ἐπάναγκες, ἀεὶ δὲ ὅμοιον αὐτὸν καταλαμβάνεσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν διὰ χρείας τινὰς ἀπολειφθέντων· καὶ τὸ ζητητικὸν ἀκριβῶς ἐν τοῖς συμβουλίοις καὶ ἐπίμονον, † ἀλλ οὐ τό· προαπέστη τῆς ἐρεύνης, ἀρκεσθεὶς ταῖς προχείροις φαντασίαις· καὶ τὸ διατηρητικὸν τῶν φίλων καὶ μηδαμοῦ ἀψίκορον μηδὲ ἐπιμανές· καὶ τὸ αὔταρκες ἐν παντὶ καὶ τὸ φαιδρόν· καὶ τὸ πόῤῥωθεν προνοητικὸν καὶ τῶν ἐλαχίστων προδιοικητικὸν ἀτραγῴδως· καὶ τὸ τὰς ἐπιβοήσεις καὶ πᾶσαν κολακείαν ἐπ αὐτοῦ ‹συ›σταλῆναι· καὶ τὸ φυλακτικὸν ἀεὶ τῶν ἀναγκαίων τῇ ἀρχῇ καὶ ταμιευτικὸν τῆς χορηγίας καὶ ὑπομενετικὸν τῆς ἐπὶ τῶν τοιούτων τινῶν καταιτιάσεως· καὶ τὸ μήτε περὶ θεοὺς δεισίδαιμον μήτε περὶ ἀνθρώπους δημοκοπικὸν ἢ ἀρεσκευτικὸν ἢ ὀχλοχαρές, ἀλλὰ νῆφον ἐν πᾶσι καὶ βέβαιον καὶ μηδαμοῦ ἀπειρόκαλον μηδὲ καινοτόμον· καὶ τὸ τοῖς εἰς εὐμάρειαν βίου φέρουσί τι, ὧν ἡ τύχη παρεῖχε δαψίλειαν, χρηστικὸν ἀτύφως ἅμα καὶ ἀπροφασίστως, ὥστε παρόντων μὲν ἀνεπιτηδεύτως ἅπτεσθαι, ἀπόντων δὲ μὴ δεῖσθαι· καὶ τὸ μηδὲ ἄν τινα εἰπεῖν μήτε ὅτι σοφιστὴς μήτε ὅτι οὐερνάκλος μήτε ὅτι σχολαστικός, ἀλλ ὅτι ἀνὴρ πέπειρος, τέλειος, ἀκολάκευτος, προεστάναι δυνάμενος καὶ τῶν ἑαυτοῦ καὶ ἄλλων. πρὸς τούτοις δὲ καὶ τὸ τιμητικὸν τῶν ἀληθῶς φιλοσοφούντων, τοῖς δὲ ἄλλοις οὐκ ἐξονειδιστικὸν οὐδὲ μὴν	In patre meo notavi humanitatem, & in iis quae semel essent accurate deliberata permansionem; vanae gloriae & eorum quae putantur (neque sunt) honorum contemptum; studia laborum assiduitatemque. Libenter audiebat eos qui aliquid reipublicae utile poterant adducere. In tribuendo unicuique pro dignitate sua firmiter perseverabat; peritus ubi intendendum esset, ubi remittendum. Amores adolescentulorum coercebat; utilitati publicae omnes cogitationes intendebat. Amicis cenandi aut iter faciendi necessitatem remittebat, & qui necessitate aliqua impediti ei non comitati fuerant, eundem semper ipsum inveniebat. In consiliis accurate quid conducere posset quaerebat, ac constanter, neque obviis quibusdam cogitationibus contentus finem consultandi faciebat. Amicitiam conservabat, neque vel satietatem amicorum capiebat, neque ad eos parandos furore aliquo ferebatur. In omnibus rebus omnia sua reposita habebat, laeto vultu. Longe futura providebat, atque etiam minima ante praeparabat, idque citra tumultum. Acclamationes omnemque adulationem compescebat. Quae ad magistratum erant necessaria semper custodiebat, sumptus procurabat, neque detrectabat de iis rebus causam dicere. Deum citra superstitionem colebat; homines neque demerebatur neque auram popularem captabat: in omnibus his sobrius, constans, nusquam ineptus aut novitatis studiosus. Has porro res quae ad vitae commoditatem aliquid conducunt, quas fortuna suppeditat, liberaliter simul ac sine fastu tractabat, ita ut & si adessent haud sollicite iis uteretur, neque desideraret si deessent. Nemo fuit qui eum aut sophistam aut vernam aut hominem de schola esse diceret, sed virum maturum, absolutum, adulatione superiorem, qui & seipsum regere & alios posset. Iam philosophiam veram

εὐπαράγωγον ὑπ αὐτῶν· ἔτι δὲ τὸ εὐόμιλον καὶ εὔχαρι οὐ κατακόρως· καὶ τὸ τοῦ ἰδίου σώματος ἐπιμελητικὸν ἐμμέτρως, οὔτε ὡς ἄν τις φιλόζωος οὔτε πρὸς καλλωπισμὸν οὔτε μὴν ὀλιγώρως, ἀλλ ὥστε διὰ τὴν ἰδίαν προσοχὴν εἰς ὀλίγιστα ἰατρικῆς χρῄζειν ἢ φαρμάκων καὶ ἐπιθεμάτων [ἐκτός]· μάλιστα δὲ τὸ παραχωρητικὸν ἀβασκάνως τοῖς δύναμίν τινα κεκτημένοις, οἷον τὴν φραστικὴν ἢ τὴν ἐξ ἱστορίας νόμων ἢ ἐθῶν ἢ ἄλλων τινῶν πραγμάτων, καὶ συσπουδαστικὸν αὐτοῖς, ἵνα ἕκαστοι κατὰ τὰ ἴδια προτερήματα εὐδοκιμῶσι· πάντα δὲ κατὰ τὰ πάτρια πράσσων, οὐδὲ αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἐπιτηδεύων φαίνεσθαι, τὸ τὰ πάτρια φυλάσσειν. ἔτι δὲ τὸ μὴ εὐμετακίνητον καὶ ῥιπταστικόν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τόποις καὶ πράγμασι τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἐνδιατριπτικόν· καὶ τὸ μετὰ τοὺς παροξυσμοὺς τῆς κεφαλαλγίας νεαρὸν εὐθὺς καὶ ἀκμαῖον πρὸς τὰ συνήθη ἔργα· καὶ τὸ μὴ εἶναι αὐτῷ πολλὰ τὰ ἀπόῤῥητα, ἀλλ ὀλίγιστα καὶ σπανιώτατα καὶ ταῦτα ὑπὲρ τῶν κοινῶν μόνον· καὶ τὸ ἔμφρον καὶ μεμετρημένον ἔν τε θεωριῶν ἐπιτελέσει καὶ ἔργων κατασκευαῖς καὶ διανομαῖς καὶ τοῖς τοιούτοις, ‹ὡς› ἀνθρώπου πρὸς αὐτὸ τὸ δέον πραχθῆναι δεδορκότος, οὐ πρὸς τὴν ἐπὶ τοῖς πραχθεῖσιν εὐδοξίαν. οὐκ ἦν ἀωρὶ λούστης, οὐχὶ φιλοικοδόμος, οὐ περὶ τὰς ἐδωδὰς ἐπινοητής, οὐ περὶ ἐσθήτων ὑφὰς καὶ χρόας, οὐ περὶ σωμάτων ὥρας. ἡ ἀπὸ Λωρίου στολὴ ἀνάγουσα ἀπὸ τῆς κάτω ἐπαύλεως· καὶ τῶν ἐν Λανουβίῳ τὰ πολλά· τῷ τελώνῃ ἐν Τούσκλοις παραιτουμένῳ ὡς ἐχρήσατο καὶ πᾶς ὁ τοιοῦτος τρόπος. οὐδὲν ἀπηνὲς οὐδὲ μὴν ἀδυσώπητον οὐδὲ λάβρον οὐδὲ ὥστ ἄν τινα εἰπεῖν ποτε· “ἕως ἱδρῶτος”· ἀλλὰ πάντα διειλημμένα λελογίσθαι ὡς ἐπὶ σχολῆς, ἀταράχως, τεταγμένως, ἐῤῥωμένως, συμφώνως ἑαυτοῖς. ἐφαρμόσειε δ ἂν αὐτῷ τὸ περὶ τοῦ Σωκράτους μνημονευόμενον, ὅτι καὶ ἀπέχεσθαι καὶ ἀπολαύειν ἐδύνατο τούτων, ὧν πολλοὶ πρός τε τὰς ἀποχὰς ἀσθενῶς καὶ πρὸς τὰς ἀπολαύσεις ἐνδοτικῶς ἔχουσι. τὸ δὲ ἰσχύειν καὶ ἔτι καρτερεῖν καὶ ἐννήφειν ἑκατέρῳ ἀνδρός ἐστιν ἄρτιον καὶ ἀήττητον ψυχὴν

profitentes in honore habens, reliquis nihil exprobravit. Ceterum in consuetudine familiari commodus gratiosusque extra fastidium erat. Corpus suum moderate curabat, non ut qui vitae cupidus aut cui formae elegantia curae esset, non tamen interim negligenter; ita ut suae diligentiae causa paucissimis medicorum pharmacis & fomentis opus habuerit. Id in eo praeclarissimum fuit, quod facultate alicuius rei praeditis concedebat absque invidia — ut oratoriae, historiae, legum, consuetudinum aliorumque id genus — quin etiam ut gloriam iis rebus quibus excellerent assequerentur, operam suam ipsis navabat. Et cum ageret omnia secundum instituta maiorum, ne hoc ipsum quidem studebat consequi, ut videretur a maioribus accepta observare. Ad haec non erat vagus aut levis, sed locis & negotiis iisdem solebat immorari. Post intentissimos capitis dolores recens atque alacer ad consueta opera redibat. Praeterea pauca admodum habebat arcana, & haec quoque tantum de rebus publicis. Prudens porro erat moderatusque cum in spectaculis exhibendis, tum in operum exstructionibus congiariisque & aliis huiusmodi negotiis: quippe vir qui, quid ex usu foret, potius quam quae gloria factum sequeretur, reputans. Non utebatur alieno tempore balneis, non erat aedificandi cupidus, non de ciborum, non vestium textura aut infectura, non formae corporis elegantia anxius. Omnino in eius moribus nihil inerat inhumanum, nihil inverecundum, nihil procax, ne (quod dicitur) ad sudorem usque; sed omnia ita apta & concinna, ut si per otium cogitata fuissent — composite, placide, firmiter, & sibi invicem convenienter. Accommodari posset ei id quod de Socrate memoratur: quod & abstinere potuerit & frui rebus istis, quibus & carere plerique per infirmitatem & in fruendo continere se nequeunt; at temperare sibi ab utroque vitio posse & sobrium permanere, id vero viri est animo integro invictoque praediti —

ἔχοντος, οἷον ἐν τῇ νόσῳ τὴν Μαξίμου	*quod ille in morbo Maximi praestitit.*
English from Greek: From my father — gentleness, firmness after inquiry, lack of vanity, diligence, listening to public-spirited counsel, fair distribution, moderation, friendship, foresight, sober religion, measured care of the body, respect for capable people, and Socratic temperance.	English from Latin: English from Latin (draft — verify): From my father: gentleness, and an unshaken steadfastness in judgments made after due inquiry; no empty appetite for so-called honors; love of toil and perseverance; a ready ear for those who had anything to offer for the common good; an unswerving rendering to each of what was his due; experience to know where firmness, and where relaxation, was needed. He kept all things stored in readiness, and met the future with a cheerful face, foreseeing even things far off and preparing beforehand for the least; he checked acclamations and all flattery toward himself. He guarded ever what was needful to the governance of the realm, was a steward of its expenditures, and did not shrink from giving account in such matters; and his religion was without superstition.

Language Differences: *Xylander renders Marcus's long asyndetic Greek catalogue of his father's qualities as flowing Latin periods, supplying connectives and the framing verb 'notavi' ("I observed in my father"); abstract Greek nouns such as ἀκενόδοξον become Latin phrases (vanae gloriae contemptum), and the participial chains are unpacked into finite clauses.*

Commentary: This extended section serves as Marcus’s definitive administrative compass, profiling his adoptive father, Emperor Antoninus Pius. Antoninus demonstrated that it was entirely possible to navigate the absolute pinnacle of imperial power while eradicating personal vanity (ἀκενόδοξον / vanae gloriae contemptum). He modeled a rare bureaucratic diligence, displaying a Socratic resilience that allowed him to enjoy life's comforts without becoming dependent on them.

Book I · Section 17

From the Gods

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
Παρὰ τῶν θεῶν τὸ ἀγαθοὺς πάππους, ἀγαθοὺς γονέας, ἀγαθὴν ἀδελφήν, ἀγαθοὺς διδασκάλους, ἀγαθοὺς οἰκείους, συγγενεῖς, φίλους, σχεδὸν ἅπαντα ἔχειν· καὶ ὅτι περὶ οὐδένα	*A diis bonos avos, bonos parentes, bonam sororem, bonos praeceptores, familiares, necessarios, amicos, omnes fere accepi: tum in nullum eorum quicquam deliqui, quamquam ita affectus*

αὐτῶν προέπεσον πλημμελῆσαί τι, καίτοι διάθεσιν ἔχων τοιαύτην, ἀφ ἧς, εἰ ἔτυχε, κἂν ἔπραξά τι τοιοῦτον˙ τῶν θεῶν δὲ εὐποιία τὸ μηδεμίαν συνδρομὴν πραγμάτων γενέσθαι, ἥτις ἔμελλέ με ἐλέγξειν. καὶ τὸ μὴ ἐπὶ πλέον τραφῆναι παρὰ τῇ παλλακῇ τοῦ πάππου καὶ τὸ τὴν ὥραν διασῶσαι καὶ τὸ μὴ πρὸ ὥρας ἀνδρωθῆναι, ἀλλ ἔτι καὶ ἐπιλαβεῖν τοῦ χρόνου. τὸ ἄρχοντι καὶ πατρὶ ὑποταχθῆναι, ὃς ἔμελλε πάντα τὸν τῦφον ἀφαιρήσειν μου καὶ εἰς ἔννοιαν ἄξειν τοῦ ὅτι δυνατόν ἐστιν ἐν αὐλῇ βιοῦντα μήτε δορυφορήσεων χρῄ ζειν μήτε ἐσθήτων σημειωδῶν μήτε λαμπάδων καὶ ἀνδριάντων ‹καὶ› τοιῶνδέ τινων [καὶ] τοῦ ὁμοίου κόμπου, ἀλλ ἔξεστιν ἐγγυτάτω ἰδιώτου συστέλλειν ἑαυτὸν καὶ μὴ διὰ τοῦτο ταπεινότερον ἢ ῥᾳ θυμότερον ἔχειν πρὸς τὰ ὑπὲρ τῶν κοινῶν ἡγεμονικῶς πραχθῆναι δέοντα. τὸ ἀδελφοῦ τοιούτου τυχεῖν, δυναμένου μὲν διὰ ἤθους ἐπεγεῖραί με πρὸς ἐπιμέλειαν ἐμαυτοῦ, ἅμα δὲ καὶ τιμῇ καὶ στοργῇ εὐφραίνοντός με˙ τὸ παιδία μοι ἀφυῆ μὴ γενέσθαι μηδὲ κατὰ τὸ σωμάτιον διάστροφα. τὸ μὴ ἐπὶ πλέον με προκόψαι ἐν ῥητορικῇ καὶ ποιητικῇ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἐπιτηδεύμασιν, ἐν οἷς ἴσως ἂν κατεσχέθην, εἰ ᾐσθόμην ἐμαυτὸν εὐόδως προϊόντα. τὸ φθάσαι τοὺς τροφέας ἐν ἀξιώματι καταστῆσαι, οὗ δὴ ἐδόκουν μοι ἐπιθυμεῖν, καὶ μὴ ἀναβαλέσθαι ἐλπίδι τοῦ με, ἐπεὶ νέοι ἔτι ἦσαν, ὕστερον αὐτὸ πράξειν. τὸ γνῶναι Ἀπολλώνιον, Ῥούστικον, Μάξιμον. τὸ φαντασθῆναι περὶ τοῦ κατὰ φύσιν βίου ἐναργῶς καὶ πολλάκις οἷός τίς ἐστιν, ὥστε, ὅσον ἐπὶ τοῖς θεοῖς καὶ ταῖς ἐκεῖθεν διαδόσεσι καὶ συλλήψεσι καὶ ἐπιπνοίαις, μηδὲν κωλύειν ἤδη κατὰ φύσιν ζῆν με, ἀπολείπεσθαι δέ τι ἔτι τούτου παρὰ τὴν ἐμὴν αἰτίαν καὶ παρὰ τὸ μὴ διατηρεῖν τὰς ἐκ τῶν θεῶν ὑπομνήσεις καὶ μονονουχὶ διδασκαλίας˙ τὸ ἀντισχεῖν μοι τὸ σῶμα ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον ἐν τοιούτῳ βίῳ˙ τὸ μήτε Βενεδίκτης ἅψασθαι μήτε Θεοδότου, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὕστερον ἐν ἐρωτικοῖς πάθεσι γενόμενον ὑγιᾶναι˙ τὸ χαλεπήναντα πολλάκις Ῥουστίκῳ μηδὲν πλέον πρᾶξαι, ἐφ ᾧ ἂν μετέγνων˙ τὸ μέλλουσαν νέαν τελευτᾶν

ut, si occasio incidisset, utique aliquid tale admisissem; verum beneficio deorum evenit ne res ita caderent ut hoc in me deprehenderetur. Id quoque iis acceptum refero, quod non diutius apud concubinam avi sum educatus; quod ad pubertatem castus perveni, neque ante eam vir factus, sed tempus expectavi. Quod principi & patri subditus fui, qui erat omnem mihi superbiam excussurus, ostensurusque posse eum qui in aula vivat & stipatoribus carere & vestibus pictis & facibus statuisque certi generis; sed licere ei proximum privato homini habitum sumere, neque ideo demissius res publicas, ubi principem agere oporteat, segnius gerere. Itemque eum fratrem sum nactus, qui moribus suis me ad curam mei ipsius habendam posset excitare, honore autem & amore in me suo me delectare. Quod liberi mihi neque indole neque corpore pravi nati sunt. Quod magnos in Rhetorica, poetica, reliquisque studiis progressus non feci, qui me fortassis plane detinuissent, si me feliciter proficere sensissem. Quod mature eos a quibus sum enutritus in dignitate constitui, quod mihi videbantur cupere, idque iuvenibus adhuc praestiti, neque diu eos id sperare passus sum. Quod Apollonium, Rusticum, Maximum cognovi. Quod perspicue atque saepenumero naturalem vitam cum animo meo reputavi qualisnam ea esset: nimirum, quod ad deos attineret & eorum munera, cogitationesque inde conceptas, nihil iam obstare quin aut secundum naturam viverem aut non; atque hoc quidem fore mea culpa, qui deum monitus ac tantum non praecepta non observassem. Quod in tali vita meum corpus tamdiu duravit. Quod neque cum Benedicta neque cum Theodoto rem habui, sed & postea amore concitus rectae rationi parui. Quod Rustico saepius indignatus, nihil praeterea admiserim cuius me poenitere potuisset. Quod mater, cum esset adhuc iuvenis moritura, reliquos tamen vitae suae annos mecum exegit. Quod, quotiescunque pauperi alicui aut alias indigenti opitulari statuissem, nunquam

τὴν τεκοῦσαν ὅμως οἰκῆσαι μετ ἐμοῦ τὰ τελευταῖα ἔτη. τὸ ὁσάκις ἐβουλήθην ἐπικουρῆσαί τινι πενομένῳ ἢ εἰς ἄλλο τι χρῄζοντι, μηδέποτε ἀκοῦσαί με ὅτι οὐκ ἔστι μοι χρήματα, ὅθεν γένηται, καὶ τὸ αὐτῷ ἐμοὶ χρείαν ὁμοίαν, ὡς παῤ ἑτέρου μεταλαβεῖν, μὴ συμπεσεῖν˙ τὸ τὴν γυναῖκα τοιαύτην εἶναι, οὑτωσὶ μὲν πειθήνιον, οὕτω δὲ φιλόστοργον, οὕτω δὲ ἀφελῆ˙ τὸ ἐπιτηδείων τροφέων εἰς τὰ παιδία εὐπορῆσαι. τὸ δἰ ὀνειράτων βοηθήματα δοθῆναι ἄλλα τε καὶ ὡς μὴ πτύειν αἷμα καὶ μὴ ἰλιγγιᾶν, καὶ τὸ τοῦ ἐν Καιήτῃ “ὥσπερ χρήσ”˙ ‹τὸ› ὅπως ἐπεθύμησα φιλοσοφίας, μὴ ἐμπεσεῖν εἴς τινα σοφιστὴν μηδὲ ἀποκαθίσαι ἐπὶ τοῦ συγγραφὰς ἢ συλλογισμοὺς ἀναλύειν ἢ περὶ τὰ μετεωρολογικὰ καταγίνεσθαι. πάντα γὰρ ταῦτα “θεῶν βοηθῶν καὶ τύχης δεῖτα	*audivi pecuniam mihi non esse unde id facerem; & quod mihi nunquam usu venit ut alterius ope indigerem. Quod uxorem ita obsequentem, mei amantem ac simplicem habui. Quod alumni quibus liberos meos crederem idonei non defuere. Quod in somnis & alia mihi remedia sunt data, tum contra sanguinis excreationem ac contra vertiginem, hocque Caietae. Quodque, cum animum ad philosophiam appulissem, non incidi in sophistam aliquem aut scriptorem, vel qui syllogismos dissolvere doceret aut meteora traderet. Omnia enim haec deorum auxilio fortunaeque indigent. (Haec in Quadis, ad Granuam.)*
English from Greek: From the gods — good family, teachers, friends and circumstances; protection from my own weaknesses; a father-ruler who removed conceit; a brother, wife and children; the teachers Apollonius, Rusticus and Maximus; guidance toward nature, bodily endurance, timely help, dreams, and the good fortune needed for all such things.	English from Latin: English from Latin (draft — verify): From the gods: that I had good grandfathers, good parents, a good sister, good teachers, good companions, kinsmen, and friends — nearly all of them; and that I fell into no offense against any of them, though I had such a disposition as might, given the occasion, have done some such thing; but, by the grace of the gods, no concurrence of circumstances arose to convict me. That I was not reared longer than I was with my grandfather's concubine; that I kept the flower of my youth, and did not prove my manhood before the due season, but even put it off somewhat longer. That I was set under a ruler and father who was to strip me of all conceit, and to bring me to see that one may live in a court yet have no need of bodyguards, splendid robes, torches, statues, and the like display — and that it is in one's power to draw very near to the condition of a private man, and yet be none the lower or the more remiss in what must be done on behalf of the commonwealth. That, when I had set my mind on philosophy, I did not fall into the hands of some sophist; and that, having reflected clearly and often within my own soul upon the natural life — what it truly is — I found that, so far as the gods and their gifts are concerned, nothing now hindered me from living according to nature, and that if I fell

	short it would be my own fault, in not heeding the gods' promptings and well-nigh their express precepts.

Language Differences: *The anaphoric Greek (Παρὰ τῶν θεῶν… καὶ τὸ…) is rendered by Xylander with a long sequence of 'quod'-clauses ("that…"), turning the list of divine gifts into subordinate clauses; proper names (Benedicta, Theodotus, Caieta) are retained, and Greek participial constructions are expanded into finite verbs.*

Commentary: Marcus closes Book I by expanding his scope from human ancestors to universal providence. He views his entire path as a network of divine grace, expressing gratitude that his rhetorical training was cut short before it could derail his moral development. He explicitly acknowledges that true freedom means using your own agency to line up with the cosmos, noting that anytime he falls short of nature, the fault lies entirely within himself (παρὰ τὴν ἐμὴν αἰτίαν).

Glossary

Greek terms, Stoic vocabulary, and notes on the Roman world

Stuart Schonwetter Edition

Classic Motivation

About this Glossary

Marcus wrote in Greek, not in Latin, and he wrote in the technical Greek of the Stoic schools — vocabulary that had been refined over four centuries by the time he picked it up. A handful of words do most of the work. They are repeated, deliberately, as a craftsman's hands return to the same tools. Translating them flattens out the music. Leaving them un-translated requires a key. This is the key.

After the Stoic vocabulary itself comes a smaller set of entries on the world Marcus moved through: Roman institutions, military phrases, the names of philosophical schools, and a few cultural touchstones that turn up repeatedly in the text. Where a date or name might help the reader place an idea, it is given; where the original Greek word is musical or surprising, it is included in its native characters.

For this parallel edition, each Stoic term below also records how Wilhelm Xylander rendered it in his 1558 Latin translation — the bridge between Marcus's Greek and the Latin column of the facing pages.

Stoic Vocabulary

ἡγεμονικόν *(hēgemonikón)*

The ruling part. Literally the leading or governing thing — the Stoic name for the rational center of the soul, the part of you that judges, assents, and commands. Marcus returns to it constantly. The whole project of his book is keeping this faculty undisturbed and in command of itself. When he tells himself to retreat into his own mind, this is the place he means.

Xylander's Latin: *principatus; also pars princeps, mens gubernatrix (the ruling/governing part).*

λόγος *(lógos)*

A famously elastic word. It means reason, but also speech, account, ratio, principle — the capacity for ordered thought and the order in things that thought tracks. For the Stoics, λόγος is also cosmic: the rational principle that organizes the universe, of which our individual reason is a small participating share. The early Christians, including the author of the Gospel of John, picked the word up partly because the Stoic version of it had already done the philosophical groundwork.

Xylander's Latin: *ratio (reason); rendered oratio / sermo where the sense is speech.*

προαίρεσις *(proaírēsis)*

Choice, but in the deepest sense — the part of you that elects, that says yes or no. Aristotle had used the word; Epictetus made it central. Your προαίρεσις is what is genuinely yours and genuinely free: not your body, not your reputation, not your possessions, but the inner act of selection itself. The Stoic claim is that no tyrant can touch this. Whether that is comforting or grim is up to the reader.

Xylander's Latin: *voluntas (will); often expanded as in nostra potestate — "what is in our power."*

αἰδώς *(aidṓs)*

Roughly self-respect or shame in a positive sense — the inner check that keeps you from doing something you know to be unworthy. It is one of the older Greek virtues, with a religious dimension. Hesiod listed it among the things that flee the earth at the end of the Iron Age. Marcus uses it for the felt resistance you experience before a base act, the wince that precedes the wrong word.

Xylander's Latin: *verecundia; also pudor (modesty, self-respect).*

οἰκείωσις *(oikeíōsis)*

Affiliation, kinship, recognizing-as-one's-own. A foundational Stoic concept. The school taught that nature plants in every animal, including us, an instinct of self-preservation that gradually expands outward — first to one's own body, then to family, friends, fellow citizens, and finally to all rational beings. The cosmopolitan ethics of the Stoics rest on this idea. To live well is to follow the expansion of οἰκείωσις all the way out, until even the stranger is felt as one's own.

Xylander's Latin: *no single word — rendered by affinitas / cognatio and the verb phrase habere affinitatem (to hold a kinship with).*

φαντασία *(phantasía)*

Impression, appearance, the way something strikes us. Not yet a judgment — just the raw perception. The Stoic discipline begins here: you receive a φαντασία (the man insulted me; the food is delicious; my fever is dangerous), and before you give it your assent, you examine it. Most of Stoic

ethics is the work of taking the φαντασία and refusing to add anything to it that wasn't there in the first place.

Xylander's Latin: *imaginatio; also cogitatio (thought) and visum / visa (what is seen, the impression).*

ὑπόληψις *(hypólēpsis)*
Opinion, supposition, what you take a thing to be. The judgment laid down on top of the φαντασία. "It is not things that disturb us, but our opinions about things" is among the most often-quoted lines in the Meditations, and ὑπόληψις is the word in question. Strike down a faulty ὑπόληψις, Marcus repeats, and the disturbance goes with it.

Xylander's Latin: *opinio; sometimes iudicium (judgment).*

συγκατάθεσις *(synkatáthesis)*
Assent. The act of agreeing with an impression, of saying yes, this is so. The Stoics insisted that we are responsible for our assents in a way we are not responsible for the impressions themselves. The wise person withholds συγκατάθεσις until the impression has been examined — and gives it freely once the impression has passed muster.

Xylander's Latin: *assensio (assent).*

ἀπάθεια *(apátheia)*
Often translated as freedom from passion, which makes it sound colder than it should. ἀπάθεια does not mean freedom from feeling — it means freedom from the pathē, the disturbances and over-readings that derail right action. A Stoic feels grief, fear, joy. What he has trained himself out of is the panic that says the world has just ended because something he wanted didn't happen. Apatheia is closer to composure than to numbness.

Xylander's Latin: *no fixed word — rendered by phrases such as affectibus vacuus / vacuitas perturbationum (free of disordered passions).*

εὐδαιμονία *(eudaimonía)*
Happiness, but in the Greek sense — flourishing, living well, the life that goes well as a whole. Literally good-spirited (from the εὐ- prefix and δαίμων, see below). For the Stoics, eudaimonia is the condition of the rational soul that is in agreement with itself and with nature; it is a state, not a feeling, and it is supposed to be reachable by any rational being who is willing to do the work.

Xylander's Latin: *felicitas (happiness, good fortune; cf. felix for εὔμοιρος).*

ἀρετή *(aretḗ)*
Excellence, virtue. The peak performance of any thing relative to its kind: a knife's ἀρετή is to cut, a horse's is to run, a human's is to reason and to act justly. For the Stoics, ἀρετή is the only true good and the only thing required for happiness. Health, money, status — all preferable, all useful, all loseable. Virtue alone, they argued, is what nobody and nothing can take away.

Xylander's Latin: *virtus.*

πρόνοια *(prónoia)*
Providence, foresight. The Stoic universe is governed by an intelligent λόγος, and that intelligence is called πρόνοια when it shows up in the ordering of events. Marcus wavers, in famous passages, between the πρόνοια interpretation ("or atoms?") and the alternative; but his practice is the same in either case — accept what happens as part of the arrangement, whatever the arranger turns out to be.

Xylander's Latin: *providentia.*

φύσις *(phýsis)*
Nature. Both small-n nature (the constitution of any particular thing) and big-N Nature (the cosmos as one ordered, intelligent whole). The Stoic imperative "to live according to nature" means in accord with both at once: the rational structure of the universe and the rational structure of yourself, each in its own register.

Xylander's Latin: *natura.*

κόσμος *(kósmos)*
World, ordered whole, cosmos. The universe seen as a single organized intelligent system. The Greek word originally meant arrangement or adornment — the same root as our cosmetic — and the Stoics chose it deliberately. The world is a beautiful arrangement, not a chaos. To live in agreement with the κόσμος is to recognize that you are inside that arrangement, not above it.

Xylander's Latin: *mundus; also universum (the ordered whole).*

δαίμων *(daímōn)*
Spirit, guardian, divine portion within. Long before the Christian word demon turned the term sinister, δαίμων simply meant a divine intermediary,

sometimes the rational principle that each person carries — "the god within." Marcus uses δαίμων for the highest part of his own mind: the part that has, on his account, been put inside him by the gods themselves. To go against your δαίμων is to go against the gift.

Xylander's Latin: *genius (the guardian spirit / divine portion within).*

πνεῦμα *(pneûma)*
Breath, spirit. In ordinary Greek, πνεῦμα is the breath you take. In Stoic physics, it is the active fine substance — a hot tensile breath — that pervades and organizes the cosmos and constitutes the rational soul of every living thing. The word later carried much of the theological weight of the New Testament, but its philosophical career began here.

Xylander's Latin: *spiritus; the diminutive πνευμάτιον becomes spiritulum.*

εἱμαρμένη *(heimarménē)*
Fate. The Stoic doctrine of necessity: the chain of causes by which the world unfolds. εἱμαρμένη is not blind luck and it is not a malevolent will. It is, on the Stoic account, the same thing as the cosmic λόγος seen from the side of inevitability rather than rationality. To consent to εἱμαρμένη is to assent to the order of things; to fight it is to demand that the universe rearrange itself for you, which it will not.

Xylander's Latin: *fatum (destiny, the chain of causes).*

ἀπροπτωσία *(aproptōsía)*
Non-rashness. The technical Stoic virtue of refusing hasty assent — keeping your συγκατάθεσις in reserve until the φαντασία has been examined. It is the discipline of the careful judge: not skepticism, just patience. Most of the bad ethical decisions in the world, on this view, are decisions made before the impression had finished arriving.

Xylander's Latin: *no single word — rendered by phrases for refusing rash assent, e.g. ne temere assentiri (not to assent hastily).*

μεταβολή *(metabolḗ)*
Change, transformation. The universe for Marcus is ceaseless μεταβολή. Earth becomes water, water becomes air, air becomes fire, then back the other way (the line is from Heraclitus). To fight change is to fight the very condition of being alive. To love change is to love being part of the world rather than a guest in it.

Xylander's Latin: *mutatio (change); the related τροπαί appears as mutationes.*

καθῆκον *(kathêkon)*
Appropriate action; duty in its specific, contextual sense. Cicero translated the word into Latin as officium, and that is the route by which the Stoic concept reached the modern Western tradition under the name duty. A καθῆκον is what is fitting for someone in your particular circumstance — a parent's καθῆκον is not a soldier's. Marcus uses the word less often than Epictetus, but his book is, on every page, a working out of his own.

Xylander's Latin: *officium (Cicero's own rendering — appropriate action, duty).*

ἀδιάφορα *(adiáphora)*
Indifferent things. The Stoics divided the world into three categories: virtue (the only good), vice (the only evil), and everything else (the indifferents). Money, health, reputation, even life and death are ἀδιάφορα — preferable or dispreferable but not, properly speaking, good or bad. The category is the source of half the misunderstandings of Stoicism. The Stoics do not say these things don't matter; they say they don't make you good or bad. There is a difference.

Xylander's Latin: *indifferentia; rendered res mediae and res neque bonae neque malae (things neither good nor bad).*

ψυχή *(psychḗ)*
Soul. For the Stoics, the soul is material — a portion of πνεῦμα, the cosmic breath — but it is the part of us that thinks, feels, and chooses. After death the Stoics differed on whether the soul persisted briefly, scattered immediately, or was reabsorbed at the next cosmic conflagration. Marcus is comfortable not knowing.

Xylander's Latin: *anima; the diminutive ψυχάριον becomes animula.*

ὁρμή *(hormḗ)*
Impulse, the movement toward action. The Stoic action sequence runs: φαντασία (impression) → συγκατάθεσις (assent) → ὁρμή (impulse) → πρᾶξις (action). The impulse is what carries the agreement into the body. To control your ὁρμή is to keep the engine of action coupled to the steering of judgment.

Xylander's Latin: *impetus; also appetitio / appetitus (the movement toward action).*

The Roman World

Princeps *(first citizen)*
The official self-description of the emperor. Augustus, the first emperor, deliberately avoided the title king and used princeps instead — first among equals, in theory. By Marcus's day the pretense was thin, but the language survived; an emperor who took the language seriously, as Marcus did, treated the senate as a deliberative body and not as decoration. He still held all the power. He just declined to act like it.

Caesar / Augustus *(imperial titles)*
Caesar, originally the family name of Julius Caesar, became a hereditary title for the emperor. Augustus, originally an honorific granted to Octavian by the senate in 27 BCE, became the title of the senior emperor when there was more than one. Marcus and Lucius were both Augusti. The pair of titles eventually outlasted the empire — Caesar surviving in Russian Czar and German Kaiser, Augustus in the month of August, which Marcus and his subjects, every year, simply called August.

Senatus *(the senate)*
By Marcus's time the Roman senate had been, for two centuries, an aristocratic body whose powers were almost entirely advisory. The emperor controlled the army, the treasury, and the law. But a good emperor, on the late-Republican script that Marcus admired, treated the senate with conspicuous respect — attended its sessions, took its votes seriously, called its members friends. Marcus did all of this. It was part of the performance, but it was also, in his case, sincere.

Consul *(chief magistrate)*
Originally the highest elected office of the Roman Republic, held in pairs for one-year terms. By the imperial period the consulship was largely ceremonial, but it remained the great prize of a senatorial career. Marcus's grandfather had been consul three times, which by then required imperial favor as well as merit. The dignity of the title is hard to overstate; the actual job was light.

Stoa Poikile *(the Painted Porch)*
A colonnade in the agora of Athens, decorated with murals by the great fifth-century painter Polygnotus. Zeno of Citium taught his philosophy there

around 300 BCE, and his school took its name from the location: οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς στοᾶς, the men of the Stoa. Five centuries later a Roman emperor, on the Danube frontier, was still working out the implications of what some Athenians had said in front of a wall painting.

Lyceum, Academy *(Aristotle, Plato)*
The two other great philosophical schools of the Greek world. The Academy was Plato's school, founded around 387 BCE; the Lyceum was Aristotle's, founded about a generation later. The names refer to their original neighborhoods in Athens. By Marcus's day both schools had had their late-classical and Hellenistic heydays and were quieter institutions, but both still produced teachers whose work crossed Marcus's desk. Sextus, on his mother's side, was Plutarchian — a member of the late Platonist tradition.

Carnuntum *(Roman frontier city)*
A legionary base on the Danube, in what is now Austria near the Slovakian border, where Marcus spent long stretches of the Marcomannic Wars. Several books of the Meditations are believed, on internal evidence, to have been written there or in nearby camps. The site has been excavated; visitors can still walk among the foundations of the buildings inside which a Roman emperor scribbled to himself in Greek about how not to be angry.

Vindobona *(modern Vienna)*
Another Danube fortress, downriver from Carnuntum. Marcus died there in 180 CE, in winter quarters, probably of plague. The site is now buried under central Vienna; an inscription marks the approximate place of his death, although the scholarship is uncertain. He is one of the few Roman emperors whose final days were not spent in a palace or a battlefield camp but in a working frontier garrison — a fact that suits him.

Antonine Plague *(pandemic)*
An epidemic, almost certainly smallpox, that arrived in Rome with the legions returning from the Parthian war in 165 CE and recurred for the next fifteen years. Modern estimates put its mortality at five to ten percent of the empire's population, with much higher rates in the legions and the cities. The plague defines the second half of Marcus's reign; many of the Meditations passages on death and the sweeping-away of the things human beings care about read very differently against the backdrop of a pandemic

that almost certainly killed Lucius Verus and that Marcus himself probably died of.

Marcomannic Wars *(Danube frontier wars)*
A long, exhausting series of campaigns against Germanic and Sarmatian tribes pressing across the Danube — the Marcomanni, Quadi, Iazyges, and others — that occupied Marcus from about 166 CE until his death. The wars were inconclusive in the harshest sense: Marcus held the line, but the line had to keep being held, year after year, in winter quarters along a frozen river. The famous "Rain Miracle" — a sudden storm that saved a beleaguered legion — comes from this war, and is depicted on the column of Marcus Aurelius that still stands in Rome.

Pater Familias *(head of household)*
The senior male of a Roman household — by law, the holder of patria potestas, fatherly power, which extended in theory to life and death over wife, children, and slaves. By Marcus's time the harsher applications of the doctrine were obsolete, but the cultural authority remained. The Roman ideal pater familias was firm, fair, hardworking, and slow to anger — a description that doubled, in Marcus's hands, as the description of a good emperor. The household was the model for the state, and the state for the cosmos.

Toga praetexta, toga virilis *(the rites of growing up)*
The toga praetexta, edged with a purple stripe, was worn by senatorial-class boys until around age fifteen, at which point they exchanged it ceremonially for the plain toga virilis — the toga of manhood — and were enrolled as adult citizens. The change of toga was a household event with religious and legal weight. Marcus would have made it around 136 CE, two years before Hadrian's adoption arrangement turned his life over.

A Closing Note

No glossary can carry an author's whole vocabulary; this one is an aid to reading, not a substitute for it. Where a Greek term recurs in the Meditations and the reader senses that something is being meant more precisely than the English suggests, look here first. And where a word is missing from this list — there are several — take it as an invitation to look

up the next layer for yourself. Marcus, of all readers, would approve of the habit.