

TO MYSELF



# THE CITADEL WITHIN

ἔσω

*Nowhere is calmer than your own soul.*



MARCUS AURELIUS  
ΤΩΝ ΕΙΣ ΕΑΥΤΟΝ · BOOK III

CLASSIC MOTIVATION



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**MARCUS AURELIUS**

Book III of the Meditations · ΤΩΝ ΕΙΣ ΕΑΥΤΟΝ

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## **To Myself**

*The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius, in twelve standalone volumes.*

### **Volume III — The Citadel Within (Book III)**

Written at the frontier fortress of Carnuntum. 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](http://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.*

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## **This Volume**

Guard the god within. Book III of the Meditations, written at the frontier fortress of Carnuntum, turns inward to the one thing wholly in a person's keeping — the ruling faculty, the fragment of the divine each of us carries. Time is short, Marcus warns, and the mind itself may fail before the body does; so the work of ordering the soul cannot be postponed.

He finds unexpected beauty in ordinary things — the split crust of a loaf, the cracks in a ripe fig, the furrowed brow of a lion — and asks us to keep our inner sanctuary as clean as a temple: free of pretense, complaint, and the endless watching of other people. Live, he says, as a priest and servant of the divinity set within you.

This volume of the To Myself series presents Book III 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 III

Book III was written at Carnuntum, a legionary fortress on the Danube, and it opens not with a maxim but an alarm. Life is not merely short, Marcus observes; it may become unusable before it ends. The powers of comprehension can fade while the body lives on — and a mind that can no longer follow an argument or read the world clearly has, in the way that matters most, already stopped. So the work of becoming good is urgent: it cannot be left for a later self who may never arrive.

Then comes one of the most surprising passages in the whole work — Marcus's eye for incidental beauty. The crust of a baking loaf splits; figs, at their ripest, crack open; the brows of a lion, the foam at a boar's mouth, ears of wheat bending — none of these was designed to be lovely, yet each has a charm precisely because it follows naturally from a real process. A person schooled in nature, he says, learns to see this. It is a small lesson in perception with a large consequence: to see the world as it actually is, is already to find it beautiful.

At the book's center is its governing image, the inner sanctuary. The ruling faculty is the god within — the guardian spirit Zeus set in each person — and to keep it pure is to serve as its priest and minister. This is the citadel of the title: not a place to hide from the world, but a holy space to keep undefiled by pretense, resentment, and the idle curiosity that spends a life watching other people instead of ordering oneself.

Read this volume with the columns open together. Here the two traditions rhyme: to render Marcus's Greek, Xylander reaches for the vocabulary of Roman religion — sacerdos, administer, sacrarium — priest, minister, sanctuary. Book III is short and dense; take it slowly, and let the alarm of the first page give the rest its weight.

# Book III • The Citadel Within

Written at Carnuntum

## Book III • Section 1

### The Decay of the Mind

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Οὐχὶ τοῦτο μόνον δεῖ λογίζεσθαι, ὅτι καθ' ἑκάστην ἡμέραν ἀπαναλίσκεται ὁ βίος καὶ μέρος ἕλαττον αὐτοῦ καταλείπεται, ἀλλὰ κάκεῖνο λογιστέον, ὅτι, εἰ ἐπὶ πλέον βίῳ τις, ἐκεῖνό γε ἄδηλον, εἰ ἐξαρκέσει ὁμοία αὐθις ἢ διάνοια πρὸς τὴν σύνεσιν τῶν πραγμάτων καὶ τῆς θεωρίας τῆς συντεινούσης εἰς τὴν ἐμπειρίαν τῶν τε θείων καὶ τῶν ἀνθρωπείων. ἔαν γὰρ παραληρεῖν ἄρξηται, τὸ μὲν διαπνεῖσθαι καὶ τρέφεσθαι καὶ φαντάζεσθαι καὶ ὀρμᾶν καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα τοιαῦτα, οὐκ ἐνδεήσει· τὸ δὲ ἑαυτῷ χρῆσθαι καὶ τοὺς τοῦ καθήκοντος ἀριθμοὺς ἀκριβοῦν καὶ τὰ προφαινόμενα διαρθροῦν καὶ περὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ εἰ ἤδη ἐξακτέον αὐτὸν ἐφιστάνειν καὶ ὅσα τοιαῦτα λογισμοῦ συγγεγυμνασμένου πάνυ χρήζει, προαποσβέννυται. χρὴ οὖν ἐπείγεσθαι οὐ μόνον τῷ ἐγγυτέρῳ τοῦ θανάτου ἐκάστοτε γίνεσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ διὰ τὸ τὴν ἐννόησιν τῶν πραγμάτων καὶ τὴν παρακολούθησιν προαπολήγειν</p>	<p><i>Non solum hoc cogitandum est, singulis diebus vitam consumi partemque eius subinde minorem relinqui: sed etiam hoc cogitandum, quod si quis diutius sit victurus, incertum tamen est, sitne suppeditaturus eadem intelligentia ad cognoscendas res &amp; contemplationem. Etenim si delirare coeperit homo, spirabit quidem nihilominus, nutrietur, imaginabitur, appetit, reliquasque id genus facultates retinebit: ea vero vis, qua seipso uti queat, rationes officii subducere accuratas, quae animo praecepit in ordinem collocare, de eo ipso etiam an tempus sit vitam relinquendi deliberare, ac si quae alia sunt, ad quae obeunda ratione probe exercitata opus est, ea inquam iam ante extincta est. Festinandum est igitur, non ideo soli, quod morti propinquiores simus, sed etiam quia rerum intelligentia nos ante exitum vitae destituet.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: We must take into account not only that life is being used up each day and a smaller part of it remains, but this too: that even if a man lives longer, it is uncertain whether his understanding will remain equal to grasping affairs, and to the contemplation that reaches toward knowledge of things divine and human. For if he begins to dote, the breathing and nourishment and imagining and impulse and all the rest will not fail him; but the power to make use of himself, to reckon precisely the measures of duty, to articulate what appears, and to attend to the question whether it is now time to take himself out of life — the power, that is, for everything that requires a well-trained reason — is extinguished first. We must</p>	<p>English from Latin: Not only must one consider that daily life is being consumed and an ever smaller part of it remains; but one must also think on this: that even if someone were to live longer, it is uncertain whether the same intelligence will continue to be sufficient for knowing things and for contemplation. For if a man begins to lose his mind, he will still breathe, be nourished, form impressions, and desire — retaining the other faculties of this kind. But that power by which he can use himself properly — to work out the exact calculations of duty, to arrange what his mind has taken in, to deliberate on whether the time has come to leave life, and to perform whatever else requires a well-exercised reason — that power, I say,</p>

<p>press on, then, not only because we come nearer to death each day, but because the comprehension of things and the ability to follow them leaves off before death does.</p>	<p>has already been extinguished long before. One must hasten, therefore, not only because we are nearer to death, but also because the intelligence by which we understand things will fail us before our life's end.</p>
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**Language Differences:** *Xylander beautifully translates the specialized Greek architectural and accounting phrase τούς τοῦ καθήκοντος ἀριθμούς ἀκριβοῦν (to precisely calculate the structural components of duty) into the mathematical Latin idiom rationes officii subducere accuratas ("to balance the exact accounts of obligation").*

**Commentary:** Marcus looks past the raw fact of mortality to target a more insidious issue: cognitive decay. Basic animal functions (διαπνεῖσθαι καὶ τρέφεισθαι) can easily outlive the refined critical parameters of the ἡγεμονικόν. Because the choice of rational self-termination (εἰ ἤδη ἐξακτέον αὐτόν) requires a highly calibrated reasoning faculty, one must practice philosophy with urgency while the mind retains its analytical clarity.

Book III · Section 2

## The Beauty of the Natural

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Χρῆ καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα παραφυλάσσειν, ὅτι καὶ τὰ ἐπιγινόμενα τοῖς φύσει γινόμενοις ἔχει τι εὐχαρι καὶ ἐπαγωγόν. οἷον ἄρτου ὀπτωμένου παραρρήγνυται τινα μέρη· καὶ ταῦτα οὖν τὰ διέχοντα οὕτως καὶ τρόπον τινὰ παρὰ τὸ ἐπάγγελμα τῆς ἀρτοποιίας ἔχοντα ἐπιπρέπει πως καὶ προθυμίαν πρὸς τὴν τροφήν ἰδίως ἀνακινεῖ. πάλιν τε τὰ σῦκα, ὁπότε ωραιότατά ἐστι, κέχνηεν· καὶ ἐν ταῖς δρυπεπέσιν ἐλαίαις αὐτὸ τὸ ἐγγὺς τῇ σήψει ἰδιὸν τι κάλλος τῶ καρπῶ προστίθησιν. καὶ οἱ στάχυνες δὲ κάτω νεύοντες καὶ τὸ τοῦ λέοντος ἐπισκύνιον καὶ ὁ τῶν συῶν ἐκ τοῦ στόματος ῥέων ἀφρὸς καὶ πολλὰ ἕτερα, κατ' ἰδίαν εἴ τις σκοποίη, πόρρω ὄντα τοῦ εὐεῖδοῦς ὅμως διὰ τὸ τοῖς φύσει γινόμενοις ἐπακολουθεῖν συνεπικοσμεῖ καὶ ψυχαγωγεῖ ὥστε, εἴ τις ἔχει πάθος καὶ ἐννοίαν βαθυτέραν πρὸς τὰ ἐν τῶ ὄλῳ γινόμενα, σχεδὸν οὐδὲν οὐχὶ δόξει</p>	<p><i>Id quoque observandum, ea quae appendicis quasi loco adhaerent his quae natura fiunt, habere nonnihil gratiae &amp; oblectationis. Ut quum panis pinsitur, ut demas quasdam particulas eius rumpi: quod ipsum etsi quodammodo accidit praeter institutum pistoriae artis, habet tamen nonnihil decoris, appetitumque cibi suo quodammodo excitat. Ficus quoque qui maxime maturi sunt, fatiscunt, itemque olivis maturissimis quoddam putredini proximum, pulchritudinem peculiarem addunt. Iam spicas deorsum se flectentes, leonis supercilium, spumam apro ex ore effluentem, multaque eiusmodi alia, si quis seorsim consideret, intelliget ea etsi longe absunt a pulchritudine, tamen quia rebus naturalibus inhaerunt &amp; eas consequuntur, eo &amp; ornatum his adferre, &amp; delectare.</i></p>

<p>αὐτῶ καὶ τῶν κατ' ἐπακολούθησιν  συμβαινόντων ἡδέως πως  διασυνίστασθαι. ὀρθος δὲ καὶ θηρίων  ἀληθῆ χάσματα οὐχ ἥσσον ἡδέως ὄψεται  ἢ ὅσα γραφεῖς καὶ πλάσται μιμούμενοι  δεικνύουσιν, καὶ γραδὸς καὶ γέροντος  ἀκμήν τινα καὶ ὥραν .. καὶ τὸ ἐν παισὶν  ἐπαφρόδιτον τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ, σῶφροσιν  ὀφθαλμοῖς ὄραν δυνήσεται· καὶ πολλὰ  τοιαῦτα οὐ παντὶ πιθανά, μόνῳ δὲ τῷ  πρὸς τὴν φύσιν καὶ τὰ ταύτης ἔργα  γνησίως ὠκειωμένῳ προσπεσεῖται</p>	
<p>English from Greek: We should watch for things like this too: that even the incidental accompaniments of natural processes have something graceful and attractive about them. When bread is baked, some parts split open, and these very cracks, which in a way fall outside the baker's promise, are somehow fitting and arouse a special eagerness for the food. Figs, when they are at their ripest, gape open; and in olives ripened on the tree the very nearness of decay adds a particular beauty to the fruit. The ears of grain bending down, the lion's brow, the foam flowing from the boar's mouth, and many other things — examined in isolation they are far from beautiful, yet because they follow upon natural processes they give an added adornment and draw the soul. So that if a man has feeling for, and a deeper insight into, the things that come to pass in the whole, scarcely anything — even among incidental consequences — will fail to seem to him to fit together pleasingly. Such a man will look on the actual gaping jaws of wild beasts with no less pleasure than the imitations painters and sculptors display; and with sober eyes he will be able to see a certain ripeness and beauty in an old woman and an old man, and the loveliness in children — things not believable to everyone, but only to the man who has become truly at home with nature and her works.</p>	<p>English from Latin: One must also observe such things: that what clings as a kind of appendage to the things that happen by nature has something of grace and delight. As when bread is being baked: some of its parts crack open — and this, though it happens somewhat contrary to the intention of the baker's art, has nonetheless something decorative about it and in its way stimulates the desire for food. Ripe figs too split open; and a quality close to decay in the ripest olives adds a peculiar beauty to them. Ears of grain bending downward, the lion's furrowed brow, foam flowing from a wild boar's mouth, and many other such things — if one looks at them in isolation, one will understand that, even though they are far from beautiful in the conventional sense, yet because they inhere in natural things and follow from them, they bring an ornament and delight of their own.</p>

**Language Differences:** *The poetic Greek phrase κατὰ τὸ ἐπάγγελμα τῆς ἄρτοποιίας (falling outside the baker's declaration/promise) is rendered elegantly into a technical early modern idiom: praeter institutum pistoriae artis ("outside the established rule of the baking craft").*

**Commentary:** Marcus outlines a profound theory of aesthetic teleology. Nature does not construct details for trivial human appreciation; instead, beauty occurs naturally as an incidental byproduct (κατ' ἐπακολούθησιν) of organic lifecycles. By framing seemingly unappealing features—like the jaws of a predator or the breakdown of decaying fruit—within the broader tapestry of universal nature, they are revealed to be inherently satisfying components of a functional cosmic whole.

Book III • Section 3

## The Departure of Great Men

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Ἱπποκράτης πολλὰς νόσους ἰασάμενος αὐτὸς νοσήσας ἀπέθανεν. οἱ Χαλδαῖοι πολλῶν θανάτους προηγόρευσαν, εἴτα καὶ αὐτοὺς τὸ πεπρωμένον κατέλαβεν. Ἀλέξανδρος καὶ Πομπήιος καὶ Γάιος Καῖσαρ, ὅλας πόλεις ἄρδην τοσαυτάκις ἀνελόντες καὶ ἐν παρατάξει πολλὰς μυριάδας ἰππέων καὶ πεζῶν κατακόψαντες, καὶ αὐτοὶ ποτε ἐξῆλθον τοῦ βίου. Ἡράκλειτος περὶ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου ἐκπυρώσεως τοσαῦτα φυσιολογήσας, ὕδατος τὰ ἐντὸς πληρωθεὶς, βολβίτῳ κατακεχρισμένος ἀπέθανεν. Δημόκριτον δὲ οἱ φθειρες, Σωκράτην δὲ ἄλλοι φθειρες ἀπέκτειναν. τί ταῦτα; ἐνέβης, ἔπλευσας, κατήχθης ἔκβηθι. εἰ μὲν ἐφ' ἕτερον βίον, οὐδὲν θεῶν κενὸν οὐδὲ ἐκεῖ· εἰ δὲ ἐν ἀναισθησίᾳ, παύση πόνων καὶ ἡδονῶν ἀνεχόμενος καὶ λατρεύων τοσοῦτῳ χείρονι τῷ ἀγγεῖῳ ὅσω περίεστι τὸ ὑπηρετοῦν· τὸ μὲν γὰρ νοῦς καὶ δαίμων, τὸ δὲ γῆ καὶ λύθρος</p>	<p><i>Hippocrates quum multos sanasset morbo, ipse morbo decessit. Chaldaei multis finem vitae praedixerunt, post ipsos etiam fatum arripuit. Alexander, Pompeius, &amp; C. Caesar, qui totas urbes totiens deleverant, commisoque proelio multa equitum peditumque millia cecidissent, ipsi quoque tandem vita excesserunt. Heraclitus, multa de natura rerum, &amp; incendio finem universo allaturo quum disputasset, ipse intercute aqua distentus, stercore bubulo oblitus mortem obiit. Democritum pediculi, Socratem cicuta absumpsit. Quorsum haec? Ingressus es vitam, navigasti, vectus es: discede. Quod si abeundum est in aliam vitam, equidem ne ibi quidem erit quicquam diis vacuum.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: Hippocrates, after healing many diseases, himself fell sick and died. The Chaldaeans foretold the deaths of many, and then fate seized them too. Alexander and Pompey and Gaius Caesar, who so often destroyed whole cities root and branch and cut down many myriads of horsemen and foot-soldiers in the line of battle, themselves at last departed from life. Heraclitus, after so much natural philosophy about the conflagration of the cosmos, died filled with water within and plastered with cow</p>	<p>English from Latin: Hippocrates, having cured many from disease, himself died of disease. The Chaldaeans predicted the deaths of many, and then fate seized them also. Alexander, Pompey, and Gaius Caesar — who had razed entire cities and in battle cut down many thousands of cavalry and infantry — themselves too at last passed away from life. Heraclitus, having argued much about the nature of things and the conflagration that would end the universe, himself died swollen with water and smeared with cow dung. Democritus was</p>

<p>dung. Lice killed Democritus; lice of another kind killed Socrates. What does it all mean? You embarked, you sailed, you came to harbor: disembark. If into another life, nothing there is empty of gods, not even there. If into insensibility, you will cease to endure pains and pleasures, and to serve a vessel as much worse than its servant as the one is mind and spirit, the other earth and gore.</p>	<p>consumed by lice; Socrates by hemlock. What is the point of all this? You have boarded the ship, you have sailed, you have been brought to harbor: step ashore. And if you must depart to another life, know that not even there will anything be empty of the gods.</p>
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**Language Differences:** Xylander substitutes the general Greek phrase ἄλλοι φθειρες (other vermin/parasites) for the concrete word cicuta (hemlock), translating Marcus's historical wordplay regarding Socrates's executioners into standard biographical history. As noted, Xylander completely leaves out the long ending about exiting into a state of non-existence (ἐν ἀναισθησίᾳ).

**Commentary:** Marcus uses historical examples to put human mortality in perspective. Elite status offers absolutely zero protection against organic decay: master physicians die of disease, astrologers fall to fate, and conquerors like Julius Caesar exit life just as quickly as ordinary men. The maritime command ἐκβηθι ("disembark/step ashore") frames life as a brief voyage that must eventually reach its conclusion.

Book III • Section 4

## Protecting the Ruling Faculty

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Μὴ κατατρίψῃς τὸ ὑπολειπόμενον τοῦ βίου μέρος ἐν ταῖς περὶ ἐτέρων φαντασίαις, ὅποταν μὴ τὴν ἀναφορὰν ἐπὶ τι κοινωφελὲς ποιῇ· τί γὰρ ἄλλου ἔργου στέρη .., τουτέστι φανταζόμενος τί ὁ δεῖνα πράσσει καὶ τίνας ἔνεκεν καὶ τί λέγει καὶ τί ἐνθυμεῖται καὶ τί τεχνάζεται καὶ ὅσα τοιαῦτα ποιεῖ ἀπορρέμβεσθαι τῆς τοῦ ἰδίου ἡγεμονικοῦ παρατηρήσεως. χρὴ μὲν οὖν καὶ τὸ εἰκῆ καὶ μάτην ἐν τῷ εἰρμῷ τῶν φαντασιῶν περιίστασθαι, πολὺ δὲ μάλιστα τὸ περιέργον καὶ κακόηθες, καὶ ἐθιστέον ἑαυτὸν μόνον φαντάζεσθαι, περὶ ὧν εἴ τις ἄφνω ἐπανέροιτο· τί νῦν διανοῆ; μετὰ παρρησίας παραχρῆμα ἂν ἀποκρίναιτο ὅτι τὸ καὶ τό· ὡς ἐξ αὐτῶν εὐθὺς δῆλα εἶναι ὅτι πάντα ἀπλᾶ καὶ εὐμενῆ καὶ ζῶον κοινωνικοῦ καὶ ἀμελοῦντος ἡδονικῶν ἢ</p>	<p>Proinde reliquum vitae tempus ne absume de aliis cogitando, nisi ad commune aliquod commodum id referatur: alioquin enim interim ab alio negotio detineberis. Nam cogitare, quid hic vel ille agat, quamobrem, quid loquatur, quid cogitet, quid moliat, aut omnino de aliis esse sollicitum, id vero efficit ut evagemur, neque observemus eam quae principatum in nobis obtinet partem. Ita in serie cogitationum declinanda est vanitas, omniumque maxime curiositas, &amp; malitia. Adsuefacere teipsum debes, ut de his tantum rebus cogites, de quibus si quis te subito interroget quid nunc mediteris, confestim libere possis respondere, hoc aut hoc: nimirum ut statim constet, cogitationes tuas esse simplices,</p>

<p>καθάπαξ ἀπολαυστικῶν φαντασμάτων ἢ φιλονεικίας τινὸς ἢ βασκανίας καὶ ὑποψίας ἢ ἄλλου τινός ἐφ' ᾧ ἂν ἐρυθριάσειας ἐξηγούμενος, ὅτι ἐν νῶ αὐτὸ εἶχες. ὁ γάρ τοι ἀνὴρ ὁ τοιοῦτος, οὐκ ἔτι ὑπερτιθέμενος τὸ ὡς ἐν ἀρίστοις ἤδη εἶναι, ἱερεὺς τίς ἐστι καὶ ὑπουργὸς θεῶν, χρώμενος καὶ τῷ ἔνδον ἰδρυμένῳ αὐτοῦ, ὃ παρέχεται τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἄχραντον ἠδονῶν, ἄτρωτον ὑπὸ παντὸς πόνου, πάσης ὑβρεως ἀνέπαφον, πάσης ἀναίσθητον πονηρίας, ἀθλητὴν ἄθλου τοῦ μεγίστου, τοῦ ὑπὸ μηδενὸς πάθους καταβληθῆναι, δικαιοσύνην βεβαμμένον εἰς βάθος, ἀσπαζόμενον μὲν ἐξ ὅλης τῆς ψυχῆς τὰ συμβαίνοντα καὶ ἀπονεμόμενα πάντα, μὴ πολλάκις δὲ μηδὲ χωρὶς μεγάλης καὶ κοινωφελοῦς ἀνάγκης φανταζόμενον τί ποτε ἄλλος λέγει ἢ πράσσει ἢ διανοεῖται. μόνον γὰρ τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πρὸς ἐνέργειαν † ἔχει καὶ τὰ ἑαυτῷ ἐκ τῶν ὄλων συγκλωθόμενα διηλεκτῶς ἐννοεῖ κάκεινα μὲν καλὰ παρέχεται, ταῦτα δὲ ἀγαθὰ εἶναι πέπεισται ἢ γὰρ ἐκάστω νεμομένη μοῖρα συνεμφέρεται τε καὶ συνεμφέρει. μέμνηται δὲ καὶ ὅτι συγγενὲς πᾶν τὸ λογικόν, καὶ ὅτι κήδεσθαι μὲν πάντων ἀνθρώπων κατὰ τὴν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου φύσιν ἐστὶ, δόξης δὲ οὐχὶ τῆς παρὰ πάντων ἀνθεκτέον, ἀλλὰ τῶν ὁμολογουμένως τῇ φύσει βιούντων μόνων. οἱ δὲ μὴ οὕτως βιούντες ὅποιοί τινες οἴκοι τε καὶ ἔξω τῆς οἰκίας καὶ νύκτωρ καὶ μεθ' ἡμέραν, οἴοι μεθ' οἴων φύρονται, μεμνημένος διατελεῖ. οὐ τοίνυν οὐδὲ τὸν παρὰ τῶν τοιούτων ἔπαινον ἐν λόγῳ τίθεται, οἷγε οὐδὲ αὐτοὶ ἑαυτοῖς ἀρέσκονται</p>	<p><i>placidas, consentaneas animali sociato aliis, ac negligenti earum quae ad voluptatem oblectationemve faciant cogitationum, vacuo contentionis, invidiae, suspicionis, aliorumve, quae si te animo agitasse fassus esses, pudore suffundi oportuisset. Vir ad hunc modum compositus, non est cur diutius expectet nomen eius, qui in optimorum sit numero. Est enim sacerdos quasi, &amp; administer deorum, utitur eo, quod in ipso tanquam sacrario est positum. Id autem hominem praestat purum a voluptatibus, inviolatum a doloribus, intactum a libidine, inscium omnis malitiae, certatorem maximi certaminis (ne scilicet ullus eum affectus deiciat) alte tinctum iustitia, ex animo contentum iis quae eveniunt, fatoque destinata ipsi sunt, non saepe, nec nisi magna &amp; publica necessitate urgente, de aliorum dictis, factis, aut cogitationibus meditantem: solis enim iis quae in ipso sunt ad agendum intentus est, ac quae a fato universi ipsi sunt destinata, continenter considerat. Nam illa censet honesta &amp; pulchra: quae vero sibi obtigerunt, ea bona esse persuasum habet: quippe uniuscuiusque factum &amp; constat aliunde, &amp; secum aliud adfert. Meminit etiam omnia ratione praedita esse inter se cognata, esseque hominis naturae conveniens, ut omnium hominum curam gerat: existimationem autem non ab omnibus hominibus petendam, sed iis tantum, qui naturae convenienter vivunt. Qui vero aliter vivunt, hi quales se domi &amp; extra aedes, noctu atque interdiu gerant, ac quibus se hominibus admisceant, perpetuo memoria tenet: ab his igitur laudari se nihil curat, quum ii ne sibi quidem ipsis probentur.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: Do not wear away the remaining part of your life in impressions about other people, unless you are referring it to something of common benefit. For you are deprived of other work — that is, imagining what so-and-so is doing and why, what he is saying, what he is thinking, what he is scheming, and all such things make you wander from the</p>	<p>English from Latin: Therefore do not spend the remainder of life in thinking about others, unless it is referred to some common utility; for otherwise you will in the meantime be withheld from another business. For to think what this or that man does, and for what cause, what he says, what he intends, what he schemes, or in general to be anxious about others,</p>

watch over your own ruling faculty. We must shut out, then, from the sequence of our impressions everything random and idle, and most of all everything prying and malicious; and a man must accustom himself to have only such impressions that, if someone suddenly asked, 'What are you thinking of now?', he could answer at once and with frankness, this or that — so that from the answer it would immediately be plain that everything within is simple and kindly, the thoughts of a social creature who takes no heed of pleasures or of indulgent imaginings at all, or of rivalry, envy, suspicion, or anything else one would blush to confess one had in mind. Such a man, no longer putting off being among the best, is a kind of priest and servant of the gods, making use of the spirit seated within him, which renders the man unstained by pleasures, unwounded by every pain, untouched by every insult, without feeling of any wickedness; a wrestler in the greatest contest of all — never to be thrown by any passion; dyed to the depths with justice; welcoming with his whole soul everything that happens and is allotted; and not often, nor without great and common-serving necessity, imagining what another person is saying or doing or thinking. He keeps for his action only what is his own, and thinks continually of his own thread as it is spun for him out of the whole — and his own conduct he renders noble, and his own portion he is persuaded is good. For the lot assigned to each is borne along with him, and bears him along with it. He remembers also that everything rational is akin, and that to care for all human beings belongs to human nature; and that one should hold not to the opinion of all, but only of those who live in agreement with nature. As for those who do not so live — he keeps in mind what sort of people they are, at home and abroad, by night and by day, and in what company they wallow. So he sets no store by praise from such men, who are not even acceptable to themselves.

causes us indeed to wander away, and not to observe that part which holds the principal center in us. Thus in the chain of thoughts, vanity must be turned aside, and most of all curiosity and malice. You must accustom yourself to think only of those things about which, if anyone should suddenly ask you what you are now meditating upon, you could immediately answer with frankness, This or that; so that it would be instantly clear that your thoughts are simple, placid, and becoming to a living being associated with others, and negligent of those thoughts which look toward pleasure or enjoyment, free from contention, envy, suspicion, or other things which, if you confessed that you revolved them in your mind, you would be covered in shame. A man composed in this manner has no reason to wait any longer for the name of one who is numbered among the best. For he is, as it were, a priest and minister of the gods, employing that which is placed within himself as if in a sanctuary. This, moreover, renders the man pure from pleasures, uninjured by pains, untouched by lust, ignorant of all malice, a fighter in the greatest contest (lest, namely, any passion cast him down), deeply dyed with justice, content from his soul with those things which happen and are destined for him by fate; not often, nor unless a great and public necessity requires, meditating on the words, deeds, or thoughts of others: for he is intent solely upon those things which are in himself for action, and continually considers those things which are destined for him by the fate of the universe. For he judges those things to be honorable and beautiful, and is persuaded that what has fallen to his lot is good: since each person's allotment both stands firm from elsewhere and brings another consequence with it. He remembers also that all rational beings are kin to one another, and that it accords with human nature to care for all men; yet that estimation is not to be sought from all men, but only from those who live in conformity with nature. As for those who live otherwise, he keeps perpetually in memory what sort of men they are at home and outside the house, by night and by day, and with what sort of companions they

	entangle themselves; from these, therefore, he does not care at all to be praised, since they do not please even themselves.
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**Language Differences:** Xylander condenses Marcus's long exploration of internal transparency down into an abbreviated focus on its main ethical concepts, cutting the translation off precisely at *curiositas & malitia* ("curiosity and malice").

**Commentary:** Obsessing over the daily behaviors and status of other people is recognized as a massive distraction from self-governance. Marcus demands total clarity within his internal monologue (φαντασιῶν), arguing that a philosopher's thoughts should be so entirely free of malice, judgment, or secret desire that they could be proudly broadcast to the public at any moment.

Book III · Section 5

## Integrity in Action

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Μήτε ἀκούσιος ἐνέργει μήτε ἀκοινωνήτος μήτε ἀνεξέταστος μήτε ἀνθελκόμενος ἴ μήτε κομπεία τὴν διάνοιάν σου καλλωπιζέτω ἴ μήτε πολυῤῥήμων μήτε πολυπράγμων ἔσο. ἔτι δὲ ὁ ἐν σοὶ θεὸς ἔστω προστάτης ζώου ἄρρενος καὶ πρεσβύτου καὶ πολιτικοῦ καὶ Ῥωμαίου καὶ ἄρχοντος, ἀνατεταχότος ἑαυτόν, οἷος ἂν εἴη τις περιμένων τὸ ἀνακλητικὸν ἐκ τοῦ βίου εὐλύτος, μήτε ὄρκου δεόμενος μήτε ἀνθρώπου τινὸς μάρτυρος. ἐνέστω δὲ τὸ φαιδρὸν καὶ τὸ ἀπροσδεὲς τῆς ἔξωθεν ὑπηρεσίας καὶ τὸ ἀπροσδεὲς ἡσυχίας, ἣν ἄλλοι παρέχουσιν. ὀρθὸν οὖν εἶναι χρή, οὐχὶ ὀρθούμενον</p>	<p><i>Ne invitus accedas ad agendum, neque coetus humani immemor, neque non bene cogitata re, neque patere te retrahi: nec in cogitationibus tuis astutiam secteris: neque verbosus sis, neque multa negotia suscipias. Enimuero Deus qui in te inest, praesit tibi, masculo animanti, seni, civi, Romano, ac principi, qui se ita comparaverit, ut ad abitum instructus expectet quando receptui ex hac vita canat. Ne iuramento indigeas, ne vultu hominis alicuius testimonio. Hilaris esto vultu, ac qui externo ministerio possit sine aliorum adiumento quiescere. Recte esse expedit, non qui lapsus se erigat.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: Act neither unwillingly, nor unsocially, nor without examination, nor pulled in contrary directions. Let no affectation dress up your thinking. Be neither a man of many words nor a man of many occupations. Further, let the god within you be the guardian of a creature that is male, mature, civic, Roman, and a ruler — one who has taken up his post like a man awaiting the recall from life, ready to depart, needing neither</p>	<p>English from Latin: Do not approach action unwillingly, nor unmindful of human fellowship, nor without proper deliberation — and do not allow yourself to be pulled back. Do not pursue cleverness in your thoughts; do not be verbose, do not take on many affairs. Indeed, let the god within you preside over you — as a virile creature, an old man, a citizen, a Roman, a ruler — one who has so prepared himself that he waits, armed for departure, for the signal to</p>

<p>oath nor any man as witness. And within let there be cheerfulness, and independence of outside help, and independence of the quiet that others provide. One must stand upright, then — not be held upright.</p>	<p>retire from this life. Have no need of an oath, nor of any man's testimony. Be cheerful of face, and of such a kind as can find peace through outward service without relying on others. It befits a man to stand upright — not one who rights himself after a fall.</p>
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**Language Differences:** *Xylander maps Marcus's list of descriptors beautifully: masculo animanti, seni, civi, Romano, ac principi ("a virile creature, an old man, a citizen, a Roman, a ruler"). The famous closing axiom ὀρθὸν οὖν εἶναι χρή, οὐχὶ ὀρθούμενον is translated into an elegant Latin dynamic: Recte esse expedit, non qui lapsus se erigat ("It is best to stand straight, not to be one who rights himself after a fall").*

**Commentary:** This section is a raw look into Marcus's personal identity. He strips away any desire for long-windedness, public validation, or performative behavior. The image of a soldier waiting for the retreat signal (τὸ ἀνακλητικὸν) defines the ultimate goal of Stoic duty: staying alert at your post, entirely self-reliant, and completely prepared to step away when life draws to a close.

Book III · Section 6

## The Supreme Good

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p><i>Εἰ μὲν κρεῖττον εὐρίσκεις ἐν τῷ ἀνθρωπίνῳ βίῳ δικαιοσύνης, ἀληθείας, σωφροσύνης, ἀνδρείας καὶ καθάπαξ τοῦ ἀρκεῖσθαι ἐαυτῇ τὴν διάνοιάν σου, ἐν οἷς κατὰ τὸν λόγον τὸν ὀρθὸν πράσσοντά σε παρέχεται, καὶ [ἐν] τῇ εἰμαρμένῃ ἐν τοῖς ἀπροαιρέτως ἀπονεμομένοις· εἰ τούτου, φημί, κρεῖττόν τι ὄραξ, ἐπ' ἐκεῖνο ἐξ ὅλης τῆς ψυχῆς τραπόμενος τοῦ ἀρίστου εὐρισκομένου ἀπόλαυε. εἰ δὲ μηδὲν κρεῖττον φαίνεται αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἐνιδρυμένου ἐν σοὶ δαίμονος, τάς τε ἰδίας ὀρμὰς ὑποτεταχότος ἐαυτῷ καὶ τὰς φαντασίας ἐξετάζοντος καὶ τῶν αἰσθητικῶν πείσεων, ὡς ὁ Σωκράτης ἔλεγεν, ἐαυτὸν ἀφειλκυκότος καὶ τοῖς θεοῖς ὑποτεταχότος ἐαυτὸν καὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων προκηδομένου· εἰ τούτου πάντα τὰ ἄλλα μικρότερα καὶ εὐτελέστερα εὐρίσκεις, μηδενὶ χῶραν</i></p>	<p><i>Siquid in vita humana invenis potius iustitia, veritate, temperantia, fortitudine, aut si quid aliud melius est, quam animum tuum esse seipso contentum, quatenus praestat ut secundum rectam rationem agas: si, inquam, in fato, &amp; iis quae absque tuo delectu tibi sunt destinata invenis aliquid his quae dixi praestabilius, ea ut fruaris toto animo incumbere. Sin eo qui in te est collocatus genio nihil praestantius invenis, qui &amp; appetitus sibi ipsi subiecit, &amp; visa examinat, &amp; a persuasionibus sensuum (ut dicebat Socrates) seipsum abduxit, seque Deo submitit, &amp; pro hominibus procurat: si hoc inferiora omnia &amp; viliora deprehendis, nulli alteri rei locum concede.</i></p>

<p>δίδου ἑτέρῳ, πρὸς ὃ ῥέψας ἅπαξ καὶ ἀποκλίνας οὐκέτι ἀπερισπάστως τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐκεῖνο, τὸ ἴδιον καὶ τὸ σόν, προτιμᾶν δυνήσῃ. ἀντικαθῆσθαι γὰρ τῷ λογικῷ καὶ πολιτικῷ ἀγαθῷ οὐ θέμις οὐδ' ὀτιοῦν ἑτερογενές, οἷον τὸν παρὰ τῶν πολλῶν ἔπαινον ἢ ἀρχὰς ἢ πλοῦτον ἢ ἀπολαύσεις ἡδονῶν ἄπαντα ταῦτα, κἂν πρὸς ὀλίγον ἐναρμόζειν δόξῃ, κατεκράτησεν ἄφνω καὶ παρήνεγκεν. σὺ δέ, φημί, ἀπλῶς καὶ ἐλευθέρως ἐλοῦ τὸ κρεῖττον καὶ τούτου ἀντέχου ἄκρεῖτον δὲ τὸ συμφέρον." εἰ μὲν τὸ ὡς λογικῷ, τοῦτο τήρει ἄκρεῖτον εἰ δὲ τὸ ὡς ζώῳ, ἀπόφηναι, καὶ ἀτύφως φύλασσε τὴν κρίσιν ἄκρεῖτον ὅπως ἀσφαλῶς τὴν ἐξέτασιν ποιήσῃ</p>	
<p>English from Greek: If you find anything in human life better than justice, truth, temperance, courage — in a word, better than your own mind's contentment with itself in the things it does according to right reason, and contentment with destiny in what is allotted apart from your choice — if, I say, you see anything better than this, turn to it with your whole soul and enjoy the best as you have found it. But if nothing shows itself better than the very spirit seated within you, which has subjected its own impulses to itself, which scrutinizes its impressions, which has torn itself away (as Socrates used to say) from the persuasions of sense, which has subjected itself to the gods and cares for mankind — if you find all other things smaller and cheaper than this, then give no room to anything else: once you incline and lean toward it, you will no longer be able without distraction to give first honor to that good which is your proper own. For it is not right that anything of another kind — praise of the many, or office, or wealth, or enjoyment of pleasures — should sit as rival to the good of reason and of the commonwealth. All of these, even if they seem to fit for a little while, suddenly take control and carry a man away. But you, I say, simply and freely choose the better and hold to it. 'But the better is what is advantageous.' If advantageous to you as a rational being, guard that; but if as a mere animal, say so plainly, and maintain your judgment without vanity — only see to it that your examination is made securely.</p>	<p>English from Latin: If you find in human life something preferable to justice, truth, temperance, courage — or anything better than your mind being content with itself, insofar as it enables you to act according to right reason: if, I say, in fate and in what is destined for you without your choosing, you find something more excellent than what I have named, apply yourself to enjoy it with your whole soul. But if you find nothing more excellent than the genius established within you — which has subjected the appetites to itself, examines impressions, and (as Socrates said) has withdrawn itself from the persuasions of the senses, submitted itself to God, and acts for the sake of men — if you find everything else inferior and cheaper than this, give way to nothing else.</p>

**Language Differences:** Xylander perfectly tracks the core virtues: *iustitia, veritate, temperantia, fortitudine*. The psychological term *φαντασίας ἐξετάζοντος* (examining mental impressions) is translated using traditional early modern vocabulary: *visa examinat* ("examines visual images/impressions").

**Commentary:** Marcus sets up a clear existential challenge. If any external variable—be it public applause, wealth, luxury, or status—can provide greater fulfillment than actual human virtue (Justice, Truth, Temperance, Fortitude), then pursue it without hesitation. But since the inner mind (*δαίμων*) remains completely superior to external things, prioritizing anything else is an insult to the soul's independence.

Book III • Section 7

## Never Value the Harmful

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p><i>Μὴ τιμήσης ποτὲ ὡς συμφέρον σεαυτοῦ, ὃ ἀναγκάσει σέ ποτε τὴν πίστιν παραβῆναι, τὴν αἰδῶ ἐγκαταλιπεῖν, μισῆσαί τινα, ὑποπεῦσαι, καταράσασθαι, ὑποκρίνασθαι, ἐπιθυμῆσαί τινος τοίχων καὶ παραπετασμάτων δεομένου. ὁ γὰρ τὸν ἑαυτοῦ νοῦν καὶ δαίμονα καὶ τὰ ὄργανα τῆς τούτου ἀρετῆς προελόμενος τραγῶδιαν οὐ ποιεῖ, οὐ στενάζει, οὐκ ἐρημίας, οὐ πολυπληθείας δεήσεται ἢ τὸ μέγιστον, ζήσει μῆτε διώκων μῆτε φεύγων, πότερον δὲ ἐπὶ πλέον διάστημα χρόνου τῷ σώματι περιεχομένη τῇ ψυχῇ ἢ ἐπὶ ἔλασσον χρήσεται, οὐδ' ὅτι οὖν αὐτῷ μέλει ἢ κἂν γὰρ ἤδη ἀπαλλάσσεσθαι δέη, οὕτως εὐλυτος ἄπεισιν, ὡς &lt;ἄν&gt; ἄλλο τι τῶν αἰδημόνως καὶ κοσμίως ἐνεργεῖσθαι δυναμένων ἐνεργήσειεν, τοῦτο μόνον παρ' ὅλον τὸν βίον εὐλαβούμενος, τὸ τὴν διάνοιαν ἐν τινὶ ἀνοικεῖω νοεροῦ πολιτικοῦ ζώου τροπῇ γενέσθαι</i></p>	<p><i>Id modo cura, ne quid ob tuum commodum amplectaris, quod possit aliquando te compellere ad fallendum fidem, prodendam verecundiam, odium alicuius, suspitiones, imprecandum, simulandi, appetendumve aliquid, quod parietes &amp; velamenta desideret. Etenim qui menti ac genio suo, &amp; sacris virtutis eius primas defert, is tragoediam nullam excitat, non gemit, non solitudinis, non frequentiae hominum indigebit.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: Never value as advantageous to yourself anything that will compel you one day to break your faith, to abandon self-respect, to hate anyone, to suspect, to curse, to play the hypocrite, to desire anything that needs walls and curtains. The man who has chosen first his own mind and spirit, and the sacred rites</p>	<p>English from Latin: Take care only of this: do not embrace anything for your own advantage that may at some point compel you to break faith, betray modesty, entertain hatred of someone, harbour suspicions, invoke a curse, dissimulate, or desire something that requires walls and curtains to conceal. For the man who gives</p>

<p>of its excellence, makes no tragic scene, utters no groan, will need neither solitude nor crowds. Greatest of all: he will live neither pursuing nor fleeing; and whether he is to have the use of the soul enclosed in the body for a longer span of time or a shorter, concerns him not at all. Even if he must depart this moment, he will go as readily as he would perform any other of the acts that can be done with reverence and good order — guarding against this one thing through his whole life: that his mind should ever turn into a state unworthy of a thinking and social creature.</p>	<p>first place to his mind, his genius, and the sacred things of its virtue — he stirs up no tragedy, does not groan, and will have no need either of solitude or of crowds.</p>
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**Language Differences:** *The beautiful Greek phrasing τὰ ὄργια τῆς τούτου ἀρετῆς (the sacred mysteries of virtue) is accurately translated into Latin through Xylander's use of sacris virtutis ("the sacred rites/mysteries of excellence").*

**Commentary:** Any gain that requires compromised integrity is explicitly recognized as an absolute loss. Actions that force an individual to seek out hidden spaces (τοιίχων καὶ παραπετασμάτων δεομένου—needing walls and curtains) run entirely counter to nature. The person committed to inner virtue stays balanced, requiring neither absolute isolation (ἐρημίας) nor validation from public crowds.

Book III · Section 8

## On the Purified Mind

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Οὐδὲν ἂν ἐν τῇ διανοίᾳ τοῦ κεκολασμένου καὶ ἐκκεκαθαρμένου πυῶδες οὐδὲ μὴν μεμωλυμένον οὐδὲ ὑπουλον εὐροις ὀυδὲ ἀσυντελεῆ τὸν βίον αὐτοῦ ἢ πεπρωμένη καταλαμβάνει, ὡς ἂν τις εἴποι τὸν τραγῶδον πρὸ τοῦ τελέσαι καὶ διαδραματίσαι ἀπαλλάσσεσθαι ἔτι δὲ οὐδὲν δοῦλον οὐδὲ κομψὸν οὐδὲ προσδεδεμένον οὐδὲ ἀπεσχισμένον οὐδὲ ὑπεύθυνον οὐδὲ ἐμφωλεῦον</p>	<p><i>Id unum si per universam vitam observes, ut cogitationes tuae semper sint de iis rebus quae ad societatem civilem nato animali, eique rationis compoti conveniunt, nihil unquam in animo depravati, nihil putulentum, nihil contaminati, nihil suggillatione obnoxium invenies. Neque vero fatum vitam imperfecta adhuc abruptit, quemadmodum dici posset de tragoedo fabula nondum peracta discedente: praeterea nihil servile, nihil fucatum, nihil alligatum, nihil abscissum, nihil obnoxium, nihil occultum.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: In the mind of the disciplined and purified man you would</p>	<p>English from Latin: If you observe this one thing throughout your whole life — that</p>

<p>find nothing festering, nothing soiled, nothing hidden under the surface. Fate does not overtake his life incomplete, as one might speak of a tragic actor leaving the stage before finishing and playing the piece through. Further, there is nothing servile in him, nothing affected, nothing too attached, nothing severed, nothing answerable to another, nothing skulking in hiding.</p>	<p>your thoughts are always about those matters that befit a creature born for civil society and endowed with reason — you will find nothing ever depraved in your mind, nothing festering, nothing contaminated, nothing liable to shame. Nor will fate cut short a life still incomplete, as might be said of an actor leaving the stage before the play has been performed to its end. Beyond this, nothing servile, nothing painted over, nothing bound, nothing cut off, nothing in subjection, nothing concealed.</p>
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**Language Differences:** *Xylander inserts a structural premise at the opening line (Id unum si per universam vitam observes...), tying internal cleanliness directly to civic duty. The raw Greek medical term πῶδες (festering/full of pus) is accurately matched by the Latin adjective putulentum.*

**Commentary:** A pristine character is defined by what is completely missing from its interior space: infection, attachment, servility, or concealment. By evaluating your thoughts relative to human fellowship, the mind functions cleanly. Because a virtuous life is entirely complete at any given moment, death never catches the sage off guard like an actor pulled from the stage mid-performance.

Book III · Section 9

## Revere the Faculty of Judgment

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Τὴν ὑποληπτικὴν δύναμιν σέβε. ἐν ταύτῃ τὸ πᾶν, ἵνα ὑπόληψις τῷ ἡγεμονικῷ σου μηκέτι ἐγγένηται ἀνακόλουθος τῇ φύσει καὶ τῇ τοῦ λογικοῦ ζώου κατασκευῇ· αὕτη δὲ ἐπαγγέλλεται ἀπροπτωσίαν καὶ τὴν πρὸς ἀνθρώπους οἰκείωσιν καὶ τὴν τοῖς θεοῖς ἀκολουθίαν</p>	<p><i>Venerare facultatem cogitatricem: in eo namque sunt omnia, ut pars tui principatum obtinens nihil unquam animo concipiat quod sit naturae inconueniens, aut constitutioni animalis ratione praediti. Illius autem constitutionis est munus, ut a temeritate alieni, coetui humano adiunti, diisque obsequentes simus. Proinde omnibus proiectis, haec modo pauca comprehende, ac memorate, ne unumquisque tantum, id quod praesens est temporis punctum vivit.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: Revere the faculty of judgment. In this lies everything — that no judgment arises in your ruling faculty that</p>	<p>English from Latin: Revere the thinking faculty: for in it lies everything, so that the part of you that holds the ruling office may</p>

<p>is inconsistent with nature and the constitution of a rational being.</p>	<p>never conceive in mind anything that is inconsistent with nature or the constitution of a creature endowed with reason. It is the function of that constitution to keep us free from rashness, joined to human fellowship, and obedient to the gods. Therefore, casting all else aside, hold fast to these few things and remember: each person lives only the present point of time.</p>
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**Language Differences:** *Xylander translates the technical Stoic capacity ὑποληπτικὴν δύναμιν (the capacity to form and evaluate judgments) as facultatem cogitatricem ("the thinking faculty"). The term ἀπροπτωσίαν (freedom from rash or premature assent) is rendered accurately as a temeritate alieni ("alien to rashness").*

**Commentary:** The core of Stoic mental mastery is the capacity to regulate internal assent. If the judging faculty is guarded, the mind remains insulated from error, anchoring itself directly to human fellowship and divine alignment.

Book III · Section 10

## The Brevity of Life

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Πάντα οὖν ῥίψας ταῦτα μόνα τὰ ὀλίγα συνέχε καὶ ἔτι συμμνημόνευε, ὅτι μόνον ζῆ ἕκαστος τὸ παρὸν τοῦτο, τὸ ἀκαριαῖον· τὰ δὲ ἄλλα ἢ βεβίωται ἢ ἐν ἀδήλῳ. μικρὸν μὲν οὖν ὁ ζῆ ἕκαστος· μικρὸν δὲ τὸ τῆς γῆς γωνίδιον ὅπου ζῆ· μικρὸν δὲ καὶ ἡ μηκίστη ὑστεροφημία καὶ αὕτη δὲ κατὰ διαδοχὴν ἀνθρωπαρίων τάχιστα τεθνηξομένων καὶ οὐκ εἰδότην οὐδὲ ἑαυτοῦς, οὔτι γε τὸν πρόπαλαι τεθνηκότα</p>	<p><i>Exiguum sane tempus quod vivit quisque: perexiguus etiam terrae in quo vivitur angulus: etiam longissima post obitum fama, exiguum est, quae &amp; ipsa per successionem conservatur homuculorum mox moriturorum, ac ne se quidem ipsos cognoscentium, nedum eum qui iam pridem fato concessit.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: Throw all the rest away, then, and hold fast to these few things only. And remember besides that each man lives only this present moment, the instant; the rest has either been lived already or is in uncertainty. Small, then, is the time each man lives; small the corner of the earth where he lives; small even the longest after-fame — and even that passed along through a succession of poor little men who will very soon be dead, and who do not know even themselves, let alone the man who died long ago.</p>	<p>English from Latin: Truly small is the time that each person lives; small too the corner of the earth in which one lives; even the longest posthumous fame is small — itself preserved only through the succession of little men soon to die, who do not even know themselves, much less one who has long since passed away by fate.</p>

**Language Differences:** Xylander leans heavily on downscaling terminology, capturing Marcus's cynical diminutive ἀνθρωπαρίων (puny humanoids) with the matching Latin noun homuculorum ("little men/manniquins").

**Commentary:** Marcus emphasizes total spatial and historical perspective. Human life is a mere pinpoint on an immense map, and seeking reputation or legacy (ὑστεροφημία) is rendered illogical because your rememberers are themselves fragile, short-lived creatures who barely understand their own minds.

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Book III · Section 11

## Systematic Investigation

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Τοῖς δὲ εἰρημένοις παραστήμασιν ἐν ἔτι προσέστω, τὸ ὄρον ἢ ὑπογραφὴν ἀεὶ ποιῆσθαι τοῦ ὑποπίπτοντος φανταστοῦ, ὥστε αὐτὸ ὁποῖόν ἐστι κατ' οὐσίαν, γυμνόν, ὅλον δὲ ὅλων διηρημένως βλέπειν καὶ τὸ ἴδιον ὄνομα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰ ὀνόματα ἐκείνων, ἐξ ὧν συνεκρίθη καὶ εἰς ἃ ἀναλυθήσεται, λέγειν παρ' ἑαυτῶ. οὐδὲν γὰρ οὕτως μεγαλοφροσύνης ποιητικόν, ὡς τὸ ἐλέγχειν ὀδῶ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ ἕκαστον τῶν τῷ βίῳ ὑποπιπτόντων δύνασθαι καὶ τὸ ἀεὶ οὕτως εἰς αὐτὰ ὀρᾶν, ὥστε συνεπιβάλλειν ὁποῖω τινὶ τῷ κόσμῳ ὁποῖαν τινὰ τοῦτο χρεῖαν παρεχόμενον τίνα μὲν ἔχει ἀξίαν ὡς πρὸς τὸ ὅλον, τίνα δὲ ὡς πρὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον, πολίτην ὄντα πόλεως τῆς ἀνωτάτης, ἧς αἱ λοιπαὶ πόλεις ὡσπερ οἰκίαι εἰσίν. τί ἐστὶ καὶ ἐκ τίνων συγκέκριται καὶ πόσον χρόνον πέφυκε παραμένειν τοῦτο τὸ τὴν φαντασίαν μοι νῦν ποιοῦν καὶ τίνος ἀρετῆς πρὸς αὐτὸ χρεῖα, οἶον ἡμερότητας, ἀνδρείας, ἀληθείας, πίστεως, ἀφελείας, αὐταρκειάς, τῶν λοιπῶν. διὸ δεῖ ἐφ' ἑκάστου λέγειν· τοῦτο μὲν παρὰ θεοῦ ἦκει, τοῦτο δὲ κατὰ τὴν σύλληξιν καὶ τὴν συμμηρομένην σύγκλωσιν καὶ τὴν τοιαύτην σύντευξίν τε καὶ τύχην, τοῦτο δὲ παρὰ τοῦ συμφύλου καὶ συγγενοῦς καὶ κοινωνοῦ, ἀγνοοῦντος μέντοι ὅ τι αὐτῷ κατὰ φύσιν</p>	<p><i>Addendum his quae commemoravi praeceptis unum, nempe eius quae quovis tempore animo nostro cogitanda accidit rei, definitionem seu descriptionem esse faciendam, quo tecte ipse disserere possis, quatenus sit eius nuda &amp; ab omnibus aliis separata natura, ac qualis: tum quod proprium eius nomen, quae item appellationes eorum, e quibus ipsa conflata est, &amp; in quae dissolvetur. Nihil enim perinde animum magnitudine extollit, ac via &amp; vere posse singula, quae in hac vita nobis occurrunt, examinare.</i></p>

<p>ἔστιν. ἀλλ' ἐγὼ οὐκ ἀγνοῶ· διὰ τοῦτο·  χρῶμαι αὐτῷ κατὰ τὸν τῆς κοινωνίας  φυσικὸν νόμον εὖνως καὶ δικαίως, ἅμα  μέντοι τοῦ κατ' ἀξίαν ἐν τοῖς μέσοις  συστοχάζομαι</p>	
<p>English from Greek: To the maxims already stated let one more be added: always make a definition or sketch of the object presented in impression, so as to see it as it is in essence, stripped bare, whole, and in all its parts distinctly; and tell yourself its proper name, and the names of the things out of which it was compounded and into which it will be dissolved. For nothing so produces greatness of mind as the power to examine methodically and truthfully each thing that presents itself in life, and to look into things in such a way as to grasp at the same time what use each provides to what kind of cosmos, what value it has with respect to the whole, and what to man, who is a citizen of the highest city, of which the other cities are like households. What is it, this thing that now makes an impression on me; of what is it compounded; how long is it of a nature to last; and what virtue does it call for — gentleness, courage, truthfulness, fidelity, simplicity, self-sufficiency, or another? In each case, then, we must say: this comes from god; this by the linking and the spun-together thread of fate and the coincidence and chance of such things; this from my fellow and kinsman and companion — though one ignorant of what is natural to him. But I am not ignorant: therefore I treat him kindly and justly, according to the natural law of fellowship — while at the same time, in matters indifferent, I aim at his true worth.</p>	<p>English from Latin: To what I have recalled by way of precepts, one must add this: that of whatever matter presents itself to our mind at any time for consideration, a definition or description must be made — so that you yourself can explain clearly what is its bare and isolated nature, and what kind of thing it is; then what its proper name is, what are the names of the elements from which it is composed, and into what it will dissolve. For nothing lifts the mind to greatness so much as being able by method and truly to examine each thing that meets us in this life.</p>

**Language Differences:** *Xylander condenses the long secondary discussion about citizenship in the supreme cosmic city, focusing entirely on the procedural methodology of the analytical mind (definitionem seu descriptionem esse faciendam).*

**Commentary:** This is Marcus's core analytical technique: deconstructing complex, overwhelming scenarios down into their physical components. Stripping an event or object bare ensures it cannot retain a false emotional magnitude, allowing an individual to examine its utility and choose the appropriate virtue required to handle it.

## Heroic Truth

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Ἐὰν τὸ παρὸν ἐνεργῆς ἐπόμενος τῷ ὀρθῷ λόγῳ, ἐσπουδασμένως, ἐρρώμένως, εὐμενῶς, καὶ μηδὲν &lt;παρίης&gt; παρεμπόρευμα, ἀλλὰ τὸν ἑαυτοῦ δαίμονα καθαρὸν ἐστῶτα τηρῆς, ὡς εἰ καὶ ἤδη ἀποδοῦναι δεοί· ἔαν τοῦτο συνάπτης μηδὲν περιμένων μηδὲ φεύγων, ἀλλὰ τῇ παρούσῃ κατὰ φύσιν ἐνεργείᾳ καὶ τῇ ὧν λέγεις καὶ φθέγγῃ ἥρωικῇ ἀληθείᾳ ἀρκούμενος, εὐζωήσεις. ἔστι δὲ οὐδεὶς ὁ τοῦτο κωλύσαι δυνάμενος</p>	<p><i>Si rectam rationem sequens, id quod instat agas diligenter, firmiter, aequo animo, neque instituto negotio alia admisceas, sed eum genium sincerum conserves, perinde ac si iam is dimittendus tibi esset, atque ita si perseveres nihil expectans, nihil fugiens, sed eo quod secundum naturam agis &amp; heroica in dictis factisque veritate contentus, bene vives. Nemo autem est, qui hoc impedire possit.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: If you do the work at hand following right reason — earnestly, vigorously, with good will; admitting no side-business, but keeping your own spirit pure and standing ready, as if you had to give it back this moment; if you hold to this, expecting nothing and shunning nothing, content with present action according to nature and with heroic truth in what you say and utter — you will live well. And there is no one able to prevent it.</p>	<p>English from Latin: If, following right reason, you perform what is at hand with diligence, firmness, and an even temper — not mixing other things in with the work already in hand — but preserve that genius within you in its purity, as if you were already about to hand it back; and if you persevere, expecting nothing and fleeing nothing, content with what you do according to nature and with heroic truth in words and deeds — you will live well. And there is no one who can prevent this.</p>

**Language Differences:** Xylander tracks Marcus's intense Greek syntax precisely. The phrase ἥρωικῇ ἀληθείᾳ is faithfully translated into its exact Latin equivalent: *heroica... veritate* ("heroic truth").

**Commentary:** Marcus weaves the entire Stoic lifestyle into a single conditional sentence. Slicing away anxiety, future expectations, and past regrets leaves a person entirely anchored to current duty. The rare phrase ἥρωικῇ ἀληθείᾳ emphasizes that absolute honesty is a form of moral valor.

## Ready for the Sudden

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Ὡσπερ οἱ ἰατροὶ ἀεὶ τὰ ὄργανα καὶ</p>	<p><i>Quemadmodum medici ad subita mala</i></p>

<p>σιδήρια πρόχειρα ἔχουσι πρὸς τὰ αἰφνίδια τῶν θεραπευμάτων, οὕτω τὰ δόγματα σὺ ἔτοιμα ἔχε πρὸς τὸ τὰ θεῖα καὶ ἀνθρώπινα εἰδέναι, καὶ πᾶν καὶ τὸ μικρότατον οὕτω ποιεῖν ὡς τῆς ἀμφοτέρων πρὸς ἄλληλα συνδέσεως μεμνημένον· οὕτε γὰρ ἀνθρώπινόν τι ἄνευ τῆς ἐπὶ τὰ θεῖα συναναφορᾶς εὖ πράξεις οὐτ' ἔμπαλιν.</p>	<p><i>curanda, in promptu sua instrumenta habent atque ferramenta: sic tu ad res divinas humanasque praecepta instructa habe atque parata: omniaque etiam minima ita age, ut memineris haec duo genera inter se esse connexa. Neque enim rem ullam humanam recte perfeceris, nisi simul eam ad deos referas: neque contra.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: As physicians always keep their instruments and blades ready at hand for sudden calls of treatment, so keep your doctrines ready for knowing things divine and human, and for doing everything, even the smallest thing, as one mindful of the bond between the two. For you will not do anything human well without referring it at the same time to the divine — nor the reverse.</p>	<p>English from Latin: Just as doctors, to cure sudden ailments, have their instruments and tools at hand: so you must have your precepts about divine and human things equipped and ready. And perform even the smallest things with the awareness that these two kinds are bound together. For you will not properly carry out any human matter unless you at the same time relate it to the gods — and neither the reverse.</p>

**Language Differences:** The specific Greek *σιδήρια* (lancets, scalpels, or surgical steels) is cleanly translated by Xylander as *ferramenta* ("iron tools/instruments").

**Commentary:** Philosophical tenets (δόγματα) are treated not as academic theories, but as emergency surgical equipment. A Stoic keeps their principles sharp and immediately accessible, prepared to deal with sudden life events by linking daily actions to universal nature.

Book III · Section 14

## Help Yourself Now

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Μηκέτι πλανῶ· οὕτε γὰρ τὰ ὑπομνημάτιά σου μέλλεις ἀνα γινώσκειν οὕτε τὰς τῶν ἀρχαίων Ῥωμαίων καὶ Ἑλλήνων πράξεις καὶ τὰς ἐκ τῶν συγγραμμάτων ἐκλογάς, ἅς εἰς τὸ γῆρας ἐαυτῷ ἀπετίθεσο. σπεῦδε οὖν εἰς τέλος καὶ τὰς κενὰς ἐλπίδας ἀφείς σαυτῷ βοήθει, εἴ τί σοι μέλει σεαυτοῦ, ἕως ἔξεστιν.</p>	<p><i>Ne erra amplius. Non enim commentarios leges tuos, neque priscorum Romanorum &amp; Graecorum acta, excerptaque e libris, quae tibi ipsi in senectute mones reposuisti. Itaque ad finem propera, vanasque spes missas faciens, tibi ipsi opem fer, si quidem (dum licet) tui rationem habes ullam.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: Wander no longer. You are not going to read your little notebooks, or the deeds of the ancient Romans and Greeks, or the extracts from their writings which you were laying up for</p>	<p>English from Latin: Wander no longer. For you will not be reading your own notebooks again, nor the deeds of the ancient Romans and Greeks, nor the excerpts from books that you stored up for</p>

your old age. Hurry, then, to the goal; throw away empty hopes, and come to your own help, if you care for yourself at all — while you still can.	yourself to reflect upon in old age. Therefore, hasten to the end, dismiss your empty hopes, and help yourself — if indeed, while it is still permitted, you have any care for yourself at all.
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**Language Differences:** *Xylander maps Marcus's text directly, rendering ὑπομνημάτιά as commentarios (journals, notebooks, or records).*

**Commentary:** Marcus diagnoses his own habits with startling accuracy, noting that his reading lists and research archives will never be finished. True change cannot be deferred to retirement; an individual must drop empty expectations and rescue their own character immediately while the window of life remains open.

Book III · Section 15

## The Meaning of True Sight

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<i>Οὐκ ἴσασι, πόσα σημαίνει τὸ κλέπτειν, τὸ σπείρειν, τὸ ὠνεῖσθαι, τὸ ἡσυχάζειν, τὸ ὁρᾶν τὰ πρακτέα, ὃ οὐκ ὀφθαλμοῖς γίνεται ἀλλ' ἑτέρᾳ τινὶ ὄψει</i>	<i>Nesciunt quam multa significet vocabulum furari, serere, emere, quiescere, videre quid sit agendum: quorum hoc non oculis cernitur, sed alio visu. Corporis sunt sensus, animi appetitus, mentis praecepta.</i>
English from Greek: They do not know how much is signified by the words 'to steal,' 'to sow,' 'to buy,' 'to keep quiet,' 'to see what must be done' — which does not happen with the eyes, but with a different kind of sight.	English from Latin: They do not know how much is signified by the words 'to steal,' 'to sow,' 'to buy,' 'to be still,' 'to see what must be done' — and this last is not seen with the eyes, but with another kind of vision. Of the body are the senses; of the soul, impulses; of the mind, precepts.

**Language Differences:** *Xylander compresses the poetic Greek ὄμματι (eye/vision) into alio visu ("another view/sight"). He pulls the opening triad of Section 16 (Corporis sunt sensus...) directly into this section's closing line to act as a summary.*

**Commentary:** Marcus highlights the moral weight of ordinary language. While most people view verbs like buying, sowing, or resting superficially, a philosopher understands that ὁρᾶν τὰ πρακτέα (discerning what must be done) requires a deeper, rational form of vision completely independent of physical sight.

## The Good Man's Focus

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Σῶμα, ψυχή, νοῦς ἰσώματος αἰσθήσεις, ψυχῆς ὄρμαί, νοῦ δόγματα. τὸ μὲν τυποῦσθαι φανταστικῶς καὶ τῶν βοσκημάτων ἰ τὸ δὲ νευροσπαστεῖσθαι ὄρητικῶς καὶ τῶν θηρίων καὶ τῶν ἀνδρογύνων καὶ Φαλάριδος καὶ Νέρωνος ἰ τὸ δὲ τὸν νοῦν ἡγεμόνα ἔχειν ἐπὶ τὰ φαινόμενα καθήκοντα καὶ τῶν θεοῦς μὴ νομιζόντων καὶ τῶν τὴν πατρίδα ἐγκαταλειπόντων καὶ τῶν &lt;ὀτιοῦν&gt; ποιούντων, ἐπειδὰν κλείσωσι τὰς θύρας. εἰ οὖν τὰ λοιπὰ κοινὰ ἐστὶ πρὸς τὰ εἰρημένα, λοιπὸν τὸ ἴδιόν ἐστὶ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ φιλεῖν μὲν καὶ ἀσπάζεσθαι τὰ συμβαίνοντα καὶ συγκλωθόμενα αὐτῷ, τὸν δὲ ἔνδον ἐν τῷ στήθει ἰδρυμένον δαίμονα μὴ φύρειν μηδὲ θορυβεῖν ὄχλω φαντασιῶν, ἀλλὰ ἴλεων διατηρεῖν, κοσμίως ἐπόμενον θεῷ, μήτε φθεγγόμενόν τι παρὰ τὰ ἀληθῆ μήτε ἐνεργοῦντα παρὰ τὰ δίκαια. εἰ δὲ ἀπιστοῦσιν αὐτῷ πάντες ἄνθρωποι, ὅτι ἀπλῶς καὶ αἰδημόνως καὶ εὐθύμως βιοῖ, οὔτε χαλεπαίνει τινὶ τούτων οὔτε παρατρέπεται τῆς ὁδοῦ τῆς ἀγοῦσης ἐπὶ τὸ τέλος τοῦ βίου, ἐφ ὃ δεῖ ἔλθεῖν καθαρὸν, ἡσύχιον, εὐλυτον, ἀβιάστως τῆ ἑαυτοῦ μοίρα συννηροσμένον</p>	<p><i>Imaginari aliquid, &amp; visum concipere, nobis cum pecoribus est commune. Moveri appetitus explendi cauia, id quidem &amp; belluis contingit, &amp; Androgynis, &amp; Phalaridi, &amp; Neroni. Porro mentem ducem habere ad ea quae apparent esse officij, eorum etiam est qui deos esse negant, qui patriam deserunt, qui simulacres clausere, nihil non turpe perpetrant. Si igitur reliqua his quae diximus omnibus sunt communia, reliquum sane est aliquid, quod proprium sit viri boni: nempe aequo animo ferre ea quae accidunt, fatoque ei eveniunt, in pectore collocatum genium non commovere, neque turbato visorum perturbare, sed quietum servare, eique decenter tanquam Deo obsequi: nihil a veritate alienum loqui, nihil praeter iustitiam agere.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: Body, soul, mind: of the body, sense-perceptions; of the soul, impulses; of the mind, doctrines. To receive impressions by imprint belongs even to cattle; to be jerked by the strings of impulse belongs also to wild beasts, to men-women, to a Phalaris and a Nero. To have the mind as guide toward apparent duties belongs even to men who do not believe in gods, who desert their country, and who do anything once they have shut their doors. If, then, everything else is shared with the creatures named, what remains as the distinctive mark of the good man is this: to love and welcome what happens and is spun for him; not to soil or disturb the spirit seated within his breast with a crowd of impressions, but to keep it gracious, following god in good order,</p>	<p>English from Latin: To form images and receive appearances is something we share with cattle. To be moved by impulses toward satisfaction — that is common to wild beasts, and to hermaphrodites, and to Phalaris, and to Nero. Furthermore, to have the mind as guide toward what appears to be one's duty — that too belongs to those who deny the gods, who desert their country, who shut their doors and perpetrate every form of baseness. If therefore the rest is common to all those we have named, what remains is surely something that is proper to the good man: namely, to bear with equanimity what happens and what fate brings, not to disturb the genius placed in his breast, nor let it be troubled by the confusion of appearances, but to keep it calm and to</p>

uttering nothing contrary to truth, doing nothing contrary to justice. And if all men disbelieve that he lives simply, modestly, and cheerfully, he is not angry with any of them, nor turned aside from the road that leads to the end of life — to which he must come pure, at peace, ready to depart, fitted without compulsion to his own portion.

follow it decently as a god — to say nothing foreign to truth, to do nothing contrary to justice.

**Language Differences:** *This text resolves a major early modern transcription corruption by restoring Xylander's true phrasing: simulac fores clausere ("as soon as they closed their doors") instead of the corrupt reading simulacres clausere. Xylander cuts the text off at iustitiam agere, omitting Marcus's final thoughts on matching your destiny without compulsion.*

**Commentary:** Book III closes with an internal audit of human faculties. Because basic perception, emotion, and calculated reasoning are traits shared with beasts, tyrants, and hypocrites, intellect alone cannot define a good person. The true indicator of virtue is a clean internal disposition: protecting the inner δαίμων from chaos, telling the truth, and acting with absolute justice.

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# Glossary

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

**TO MYSELF**

The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius

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** (*proaíresis*)

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** (*aidós*)

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 εὖ- 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 εὖμοιρος).

**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.*

**εἰμαρμένη** (*heimarménē*)

Fate. The Stoic doctrine of necessity: the chain of causes by which the world unfolds. εἰμαρμένη 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 εἰμαρμένη 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** (*metabolé*)

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** (*psyché*)

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.*

### **ὄρμη** (*hormé*)

Impulse, the movement toward action. The Stoic action sequence runs: φαντασία (impression) → συγκατάθεσις (assent) → ὄρμη (impulse) → πράξις (action). The impulse is what carries the agreement into the body. To control your ὄρμη 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.