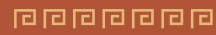


TO MYSELF



# THE WORK OF A HUMAN BEING

ἔργον

*On rising, and the duty to act.*



MARCUS AURELIUS

ΤΩΝ ΕΙΣ ΕΑΥΤΟΝ · BOOK V

CLASSIC MOTIVATION



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Book V of the Meditations · ΤΩΝ ΕΙΣ ΕΑΥΤΟΝ

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## To Myself

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

### **Volume V — The Work of a Human Being (Book V)**

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**

At dawn, when it is hard to leave your bed, have this thought ready: I am rising to do the work of a human being. So begins Book V of the *Meditations* — Marcus Aurelius's answer to inertia, self-pity, and the thousand small reasons not to act. Look at the ants, the birds, the bees, he says: each rises and does its own work, ordering its share of the world. Were you made only to be warm and comfortable — for feeling, and not for effort?

Book V is the Stoic case for showing up. A life is built out of the plain, unglamorous work our nature asks of us — done now, without waiting to be admired or repaid, and borne with an even mind when the day does not go our way.

This volume of the *To Myself* series presents Book V 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 V

Book V opens with the most bracing morning passage Marcus ever wrote. It is hard to get up; the bed is warm; and he answers the reluctance not with willpower but with an argument from nature. Everything alive has a work — an *ergon* — it was made to perform, and performs without complaint: the ant carries, the bee makes honey, the vine bears its grapes. To lie warming yourself, preferring sensation to action, is to fall below your own design. You were made, he insists, for the work of a human being.

But the work has to be the right work, done in the right spirit — and here Book V turns subtle. Do good and let it go, like the vine that bears its cluster and asks for nothing further; be the kind of person who, having helped, does not stand over the deed waiting to be thanked, but moves on to the next as naturally as the vine to its next season. Effort, yes — but effort emptied of vanity and the hunger for reward.

Action is balanced, throughout the book, by acceptance. Bear what nature assigns as a patient bears the physician's bitter prescription: the same nature that made you also prescribes your circumstances, and it prescribes for your health as surely as Asclepius did. And keep auditing the one thing that is yours — the ruling faculty. Ask, again and again, to what use am I now putting my soul? — for that question, honestly answered, is most of the work.

Read this volume with the columns side by side. Book V is one of the places where Xylander's Latin runs close to the Greek, so it rewards slow comparison; the notes also flag the handful of points where Xylander's section-divisions part company with the standard Greek ones — a small window onto how the same text was organized differently across the centuries.

# Book V · The Work of a Human Being

Book V · Section 1

## The Duty to Wake

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Ὅρθρου, ὅταν δυσόκνως ἐξεγείρη, πρόχειρον ἔστω ὅτι ἐπὶ ἀνθρώπου ἔργον ἐγείρομαι ἔτι οὖν δυσκολαίνω, εἰ πορεύομαι ἐπὶ τὸ ποιεῖν ὧν ἔνεκεν γέγονα καὶ ὧν χάριν προῆγμαί εἰς τὸν κόσμον; ἢ ἐπὶ τοῦτο κατεσκεύασμαι, ἵνα κατακείμενος ἐν στρωματίοις ἐμαυτὸν θάλπω; “ἀλλὰ τοῦτο ἡδίων.” πρὸς τὸ ἡδεσθαι οὖν γέγονας, ὅλως δὲ πρὸς πεῖσιν, οὐ πρὸς ἐνέργειαν; οὐ βλέπεις τὰ φυτάρια, τὰ στρουθάρια, τοὺς μύρμηκας, τοὺς ἀράχνας, τὰς μελίσσας τὸ ἴδιον ποιούσας, τὸ καθ’ αὐτὰς συγκοσμούσας κόσμον; ἔπειτα σὺ οὐ θέλεις τὰ ἀνθρωπικὰ ποιεῖν ὃ οὐ τρέχεις ἐπὶ τὸ κατὰ τὴν σὴν φύσιν ἄλλα δεῖ καὶ ἀναπαύεσθαι.” δεῖ φημί κάγω ἔδωκε μέντοι καὶ τούτου μέτρα ἢ φύσις, ἔδωκε μέντοι καὶ τοῦ ἐσθίειν καὶ πίνειν, καὶ ὅμως σὺ ὑπὲρ τὰ μέτρα, ὑπὲρ τὰ ἀρκοῦντα προχωρεῖς, ἐν δὲ ταῖς πράξεσιν οὐκ ἔτι, ἀλλ’ ἐντὸς τοῦ δυνατοῦ. οὐ γὰρ φιλεῖς ἑαυτὸν, ἐπεὶ τοι καὶ τὴν φύσιν ἄν σου καὶ τὸ βούλημα ταύτης ἐφίλεις. ἄλλοι δὲ τὰς τέχνας ἑαυτῶν φιλοῦντες συγκατατήκονται τοῖς κατ’ αὐτὰς ἔργοις ἄλλοι καὶ ἄσιτοι ὃ τὴν φύσιν τὴν σαυτοῦ ἔλασσον τιμᾶς ἢ ὁ τορευτὴς τὴν τορευτικὴν ἢ ὁ ὄρχηστὴς τὴν ὄρχηστικὴν ἢ ὁ φιλάργυρος τὸ ἀργύριον ἢ ὁ κενόδοξος τὸ δοξάριον. καὶ οὗτοι, ὅταν προσπαθῶσιν, οὔτε φαγεῖν οὔτε κοιμηθῆναι θέλουσι μᾶλλον ἢ ταῦτα συναύξειν, πρὸς ἃ διαφέρονται ἃ σοὶ δὲ αἱ κοινωνικαὶ πράξεις εὐτελέστεραι φαίνονται καὶ ἡσσοῦς σπουδῆς ἄξια</p>	<p><i>Mane cum gravatim a somno surgis, in promptu tibi sit cogitare, te ad humanum opus faciendum surgere. Itaque ergo (dices) gravate accedo ad agenda ea, quorum causa natus sum, ac propter quae in hunc veni mundum? Scilicet in hoc factus, ut decumbens in lecto meipsum calefaciam? Atqui hoc iucundius est. Ergone ad voluptatem natus es, non ad agendum? Non vides plantulas, passerculos, formicas, araneas, apes, singula haec suo intenta officio? Tu vero ea quae sunt hominis obire recusas, neque ad id te confers, quod naturae tuae convenit. At vero quiete opus est. Sane: sed &amp; huic modum statuit natura, perinde ut edendi bibendique: atqui tu ultra modum &amp; quam quod satis est procedis; in rebus vero agendis intra modum subsistis. Fit hoc eo, quod teipsum non diligis: alioquin enim &amp; naturam tuam, eiusque voluntatem diligeres. Etenim alii qui suas artes amant, operibus suis ita incumbunt, ut neque balneorum neque cibi curam habeant. Tu naturam tuam non tanti facis, quanti aut tornator, aut histrio suam artem, quanti avarus argentum, &amp; inanis gloriae cupidus gloriolam. Hi enim, quarum rerum studio tenentur, dum eas augere possint, cibum &amp; somnum postponunt. At tibi actiones ad societatem spectantes humanam viliores videntur, minorisque opera dignae?</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: At dawn, when you wake reluctantly, let this be ready at hand: I am rising for a human being's work. Am I still complaining, then, if I am going to do the things for which I came to be, and for whose sake I was brought into the cosmos?</p>	<p>English from Latin: When you rise from sleep with reluctance, let this thought be ready at hand: 'I am rising to perform the work of a human being.' 'Am I then,' you will say, 'to go with a heavy heart to execute those tasks for which I was born,</p>

Or was I framed for this — to lie in my bedclothes and keep myself warm? 'But this is more pleasant.' So you came to be for pleasure, then? And, in sum, for feeling, not for action? Do you not see the little plants, the little sparrows, the ants, the spiders, the bees doing their own work, each setting in order its own share of the cosmos? And after that, will you not do the work of a human being — will you not run toward what accords with your own nature? 'But one must also rest.' One must — I say so too. But nature has given measures for this, as it has given measures for eating and drinking; and yet you go beyond the measures, beyond what is sufficient — though in your actions, no longer: there you stay within what is possible. For you do not love yourself; if you did, you would love your nature too, and its will. Other men, loving their crafts, wear themselves out in the labors of them, unwashed and unfed; you honor your own nature less than the engraver honors engraving, the dancer dancing, the money-lover his silver, the vain man his scrap of glory. These men, when they are gripped, choose neither to eat nor to sleep rather than fail to advance the things they care about. And to you, do actions for the common good appear cheaper, worthy of less devotion?

and for the sake of which I came into this world? Was I made for this: to lie under the blankets and keep myself warm?' 'But this is more pleasant!' Were you then born for pleasure, and not for action? Do you not see the little plants, the sparrows, the ants, the spiders, and the bees, each intent upon their own duty: and do you refuse to perform the works of a human being, running away from what fits your own nature? 'But surely, rest is necessary.' Unquestionably; yet nature has set a bound to this, just as it has to eating and drinking. Nonetheless, you go past the limit, beyond what is enough, while in actions you fall short of your capacity. This happens because you do not truly love yourself; otherwise, you would love your nature and its will. For craftsmen who love their arts exhaust themselves in their labors, throwing away thoughts of both baths and food. Do you value your own nature less than the turner values turning, or the actor his acting, or the miser his silver, or the vain man his minor glory? When these men are possessed by their passions, they set aside food and sleep to advance their goals. Do actions that seem to serve human society appear viler to you, or worthy of less labor?

**Language Differences:** Marcus uses the specialized organic compounds *φυτάρια* and *στρουθάρια* (little plants, little sparrows). Xylander mimics this style by deploying the standard Latin diminutives *plantulas* and *passerculos*. The Greek *πρὸς πεῖσιν* (for passive sensation or feeling) is sharpened into *ad voluptatem* (for pleasure), emphasizing a direct, physical temptation.

**Commentary:** This iconic passage captures the foundational Stoic concept of teleology. Marcus uses an unvarnished internal dialogue to critique his own physical inertia. By referencing the unreflective, instinctual labor of insects and animals, he proves that human beings violate their own constitutional design when they prioritize passive luxury over constructive social actions (*κοινωνικὰ πράξεις*).

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
Ὡς εὐκόλον ἀπώσασθαι καὶ ἀπαλεῖψαι πάσαν φαντασίαν [τὴν] ὀχληρὰν ἢ ἀνοίκειον καὶ εὐθὺς ἐν πάσῃ γαλήνῃ εἶναι	<i>Quam facile est omnem cogitationem, quae animo aut perturbationem afferat, aut non conveniat, reiicere, &amp; delere, statimque esse in summa animi tranquillitate.</i>
English from Greek: How easy it is to push away and wipe out every impression that is troubling or alien, and to be at once in complete calm.	English from Latin: How easy it is to repel and wipe away every thought that brings turmoil to the soul or is out of harmony, and immediately settle into absolute mental tranquility?

**Language Differences:** Marcus addresses the sensory faculty φαντασίαν (mental impression). Xylander shifts this slightly into the purely intellectual realm, rendering it as cogitationem (thought/reflection). He translates the lyrical Greek noun γαλήνη (a glassy calm sea) into the humanist phrase summa animi tranquillitate.

**Commentary:** This short aphorism reinforces the sovereignty of the Stoic mind over external inputs. Disturbances (ὀχληρὰν) do not possess an inherent right of entry; they can be instantly wiped away by withholding our cognitive assent, preserving the serene state of the inner consciousness.

### Book V • Section 3

## Worthy of Word and Deed

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
Ἄξιον ἑαυτὸν κρῖνε παντὸς λόγου καὶ ἔργου τοῦ κατὰ φύσιν καὶ μὴ σε παρειπάτω ἢ ἐπακολουθοῦσά τινων μέμψις ἢ λόγος, ἀλλά, εἰ καλὸν πεπράχθαι ἢ εἰρησθαι, μὴ σεαυτὸν ἀπαξίου. ἐκεῖνοι μὲν γὰρ ἴδιον ἡγεμονικὸν ἔχουσι καὶ ἰδίᾳ ὀρμῇ χρῶνται· ἃ σὺ μὴ περιβλέπου, ἀλλ εὐθεῖαν πέραινε ἀκολουθῶν τῇ φύσει τῇ ἰδίᾳ καὶ τῇ κοινῇ, μία δὲ ἀμφοτέρων τούτων ἡ ὁδός	<i>Omnem sermonem &amp; actionem quae sit secundum naturam, dignam te iudica: neque te avertat ab iis reprehensio aut sermones aliorum ea consequentes: sed si quid facto dictive pulchrum est, id te ne indignum putes. Alii enim aliam rationem, alios appetitus habent; quos tibi non est respiciendum, sed recta via pergendum, quo &amp; tua, &amp; communis omnium ducit natura.</i>
English from Greek: Judge yourself worthy of every word and deed that accords with nature, and do not let the blame or talk of others that follows talk you out of it; if a thing is noble to have done or said, do not count yourself unworthy of it. Those others have their own ruling faculty and follow	English from Latin: Judge every speech and action that conforms to nature to be worthy of you. Do not let the criticism or subsequent chatter of others turn you aside; if something is noble to say or do, do not deem yourself unworthy of it. For others follow their own internal logic and

their own impulse. Do not look around at that, but go on the straight way, following your own nature and the common nature — and the road of both is one.	their own impulses. Do not look to them, but press forward along the straight path where your own nature and the universal nature lead; for the path of both is one and the same.
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**Language Differences:** The specific Greek verb *παρειπάτω* (to talk out of, to lead astray by persuasion) is captured by Xylander through direct physical motion: *avertat* ("to turn you aside").

**Commentary:** Marcus reminds himself that the evaluations of external critics are irrelevant to his duties. Other people operate from their own internal logic and impulses (ἰδίᾳ ὁρμῇ). An individual must keep his eyes fixed purely on his own path, knowing that the trajectory of individual human nature aligns with universal nature.

Book V · Section 4

## Walking to Rest

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Πορεύομαι διὰ τῶν κατὰ φύσιν, μέχρι πεσῶν ἀναπαύσωμαι ἐναποπνεύσας μὲν τούτῳ, ἐξ οὗ καθ' ἡμέραν ἀναπνέω, πεσῶν δὲ ἐπὶ τοῦτο, ἐξ οὗ καὶ τὸ σπερμάτιον ὃ πατήρ μου συνέλεξε καὶ τὸ αἷμάτιον ἢ μήτηρ καὶ τὸ γαλάκτιον ἢ τροφός· ἐξ οὗ καθ' ἡμέραν τοσοῦτοις ἔτεσι βόσκομαι καὶ ἀρδεύομαι· ὃ φέρει με πατοῦντα καὶ εἰς τοσαῦτα ἀποχρώμενον ἑαυτῷ</p>	<p><i>Utriusque autem una eademque est via, per ea quae sunt secundum naturam progrediens, donec morte finiam: expirans quidem eam, quam inspiro quotidie, animam, cadens vero in terram, ex qua &amp; semen meum pater, &amp; sanguinem mater, &amp; lac nutrix collegit: quae me terra tot annos quotidie alit cibo ac potu, quae me calcantem fert, ac tot modis ipsa abutentem [patitur].</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: I walk on through what accords with nature until, falling, I shall rest — breathing out my last into that air from which I draw breath daily, and falling onto that earth from which my father gathered the seed, my mother the blood, my nurse the milk; from which, day by day for so many years, I am fed and watered; the earth that bears me as I tread on it and use it so fully.</p>	<p>English from Latin: I march forward through the things that accord with nature until I am halted by death—breathing out my last into that air from which I draw breath daily, and falling back onto that earth from which my father gathered his seed, my mother her blood, and my nurse her milk; that earth which has fed me daily for so many years with food and drink, which bears my steps, and which endures my many abuses.</p>

**Language Differences:** Marcus builds a poignant list of bodily components using rhythmic double diminutives: *σπερμάτιον* (little seed), *αἷμάτιον* (little blood), and *γαλάκτιον* (little milk). Xylander replaces these with standard, non-diminutive Latin

nouns (*semen, sanguinem, lac*), but adds a sharp, active ending: *ac tot modis ipsa abutentem [patitur]* ("and which endures my many abuses").

**Commentary:** Marcus contemplates the inescapable material reality of his body. The physical frame is not a permanent possession but a collection of elemental ingredients borrowed temporarily from earth and air. Death is stripped of its tragic tone and presented as a quiet, natural return to the cosmic baseline that has sustained him since infancy.

Book V • Section 5

## Intellectual Sharpness

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Δριμύτητά σου οὐκ ἔχουσι θαυμάσαι ἔστω, ἀλλὰ ἕτερα πολλά, ἐφ' ὧν οὐκ ἔχεις εἰπεῖν· οὐ γὰρ πέφυκα. ἐκεῖνα οὖν παρέχον, ἅπερ ὅλα ἐστὶν ἐπὶ σοί, τὸ ἀκίβδηλον, τὸ σεμνόν, τὸ φερέπονον, τὸ ἀφιλήδονον, τὸ ἀμεμψίμοιρον, τὸ ὀλιγοδεές, τὸ εὐμενές, τὸ ἐλεύθερον, τὸ ἀπέρισσον, τὸ ἀφλύαρον, τὸ μεγαλείον. οὐκ αἰσθάνη πόσα ἤδη παρέχεσθαι δυνάμενος, ἐφ' ὧν οὐδεμία ἀφύιας καὶ ἀνεπιτηδειότητος πρόφασις, ὅμως ἔτι κάτω μένεις ἐκῶν; ἢ καὶ γογγύζειν καὶ γλισχρεύεσθαι καὶ κολακεύειν καὶ τὸ σωματίον κατατιτῆσθαι καὶ ἀρεσκεύεσθαι καὶ περπερεύεσθαι καὶ τοσαῦτα ῥιπτάζεσθαι τῇ ψυχῇ διὰ τὸ ἀφυῶς κατεσκευάσθαι ἀναγκάζη; οὐ μὰ τοὺς θεοὺς, ἀλλὰ τούτων μὲν πάλαι ἀπηλλάχθαι ἐδύνασο, μόνον δέ, εἰ ἄρα, ὡς βραδύτερος καὶ δυσπαρακολουθητότερος καταγινώσκεσθαι. καὶ τοῦτο δὲ ἀσκητέον μὴ παρενθυμουμένῳ μηδὲ ἐμφιληδοῦντι τῇ νωθείᾳ</p>	<p><i>Austeritatem tuam ut admirentur, non est: sit sane; at multa alia ad quae te non esse natura aptum dicere non potes. Ea igitur tota sunt in te: integritatem, gravitatem, laborum tolerantiam, voluptatum abstinentiam, animum sua sorte contentum, pauca desiderantem, placidum, liberum, ac curiositate &amp; nugis alienum, altitudine praeditum. Non sentis quam multa possis praestare, de quibus nulla est excusatio naturae ad ea non aptae? &amp; tamen adhuc sponte tua inferius manes. Quid? an te natura parum bene instructa cogit indignari, eiulari, adulari, corpusculum tuum incusare, tuam sortem improbare, levem esse, animoque vagari? Non mehercle; sed his omnibus tam pridem ut liberareris malis, in tua fuit potestate.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: Sharpness of wit — that they cannot admire in you. So be it. But there are many other things of which you cannot say, 'I was not born for that.' Furnish, then, the things that are wholly in your power: sincerity, dignity, endurance of toil, abstinence from pleasure, contentment with your portion, needing little, kindness, freedom, plainness, economy of speech, greatness of spirit. Do you not perceive how many things you are</p>	<p>English from Latin: No one is going to marvel at your sharp wit. So be it! Yet there are many other qualities of which you cannot claim, 'Nature did not equip me for this.' Display those virtues which are entirely within your power: integrity, dignity, endurance of labor, abstinence from pleasure, a mind content with its lot, wanting little, gentle, free, a stranger to curiosity and meddling, and endowed with high-mindedness. Do you not see how</p>

<p>already able to furnish, for which there is no excuse of want of talent or aptitude — and yet you willingly remain below your level? Or are you compelled, because of defective endowment, to grumble, to be stingy, to flatter, to blame your poor body, to ingratiate, to show off, to have your soul tossed about so? No, by the gods — you could have been rid of all these long ago, and been charged only, if at all, with being rather slow and dull of comprehension. And even that is to be trained away — not overlooked, and not indulged in as if your dullness were a comfort.</p>	<p>many things you can perform for which there is no excuse of natural incapacity? And yet, by your own choice, you still remain below your potential. What? Does an ill-equipped nature compel you to complain, to hesitate, to flatter, to find fault with your poor body, to reject your fortune, to be fickle, and to wander in mind? No, by Hercules! To be free from all these miseries has long been within your power.</p>
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**Language Differences:** The Greek Δριμύτητά (*sharpness, razor-wit*) is translated by Xylander as *austeritatem* (*sternness or austerity*), converting a purely intellectual capacity into a Roman moral trait. The key phrase τὸ ἀκίβδηλον (*unadulterated, uncounterfeited authenticity*) is mapped to *integritatem*.

**Commentary:** Marcus dismisses the common excuse of natural intellectual incapacity. While one might not possess innate, razor-sharp brilliance, there is no excuse for lacking core moral virtues. Integrity, industry, and self-restraint do not require exceptional talent; they depend entirely on personal choice.

Book V • Section 6

## Spontaneous Virtue

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Ὁ μὲν τίς ἐστίν, ὅταν τι δεξιὸν περὶ τινα πράξει, πρόχειρος καὶ λογίσασθαι αὐτῷ τὴν χάριν. ὁ δὲ πρὸς μὲν τοῦτο οὐ πρόχειρος, ἀλλὰ μέντοι παρ' ἑαυτῷ ὡς περὶ χρεώστου διανοεῖται καὶ οἶδεν ὃ πεποίηκεν. ὁ δὲ τις τρόπον τινὰ οὐδὲ οἶδεν ὃ πεποίηκεν, ἀλλὰ ὅμοιός ἐστιν ἀμπέλω βότρυν ἐνεγκούση καὶ μηδὲν ἄλλο προσεπιζητούση μετὰ τὸ ἅπαξ τὸν ἴδιον καρπὸν ἐνηνοχέειν. ἵππος δραμῶν, κύων ἰχνεύσας, μέλισσα μέλι ποιήσασα, ἄνθρωπος δ' εὖ ποιήσας οὐκ ἐπίσταται, ἀλλὰ μεταβαίνει ἐφ' ἕτερον, ὡς ἄμπελος ἐπὶ τὸ πάλιν ἐν τῇ ὥρᾳ τὸν βότρυν ἐνεγκεῖν. ἐν τούτοις οὖν δεῖ εἶναι τοῖς τρόπων τινὰ ἀπαρακολουθήτως αὐτὸ ποιοῦσι. “ναί· ἀλλ' αὐτὸ τοῦτο δεῖ παρακολουθεῖν ἴδιον γάρ,” φησί, “τοῦ</p>	<p><i>Hoc tantum erat vitii, quod tardioris ingenii, ac qui non facile assequeretur ea quae traderentur, existimari poterat: sed &amp; hoc exercitatione erat corrigendum, ne subinde cogitares de tua tarditate, neve ea delectareris. Eorum qui bene aliis faciunt, tria sunt genera: primum eorum, qui statim exhibito beneficio, statim etiam quam sint meriti gratiam reputant. Alterum eorum, qui id quidem non faciunt, tamen conscii quid fecerint, debitorem se iam habere cogitant. Tertii quodammodo ne hoc ipsum quidem quod fecere, norunt — viti similes, quae uvam cum protulit, ut semel suum dedit fructum, nihil praeterea quaerit. Equus si cucurrit, canis si venatus est, apis si mel fecit, satis est; homo autem si bene</i></p>

<p>κοινωνικοῦ τὸ αἰσθάνεσθαι ὅτι κοινωνικῶς ἐνεργεῖ, καὶ νῆ Δία βούλεσθαι καὶ τὸν κοινωνὸν αἰσθέσθαι.” “ἀληθὲς μὲν ἐστὶν ὃ λέγεις, τὸ δὲ νῦν λεγόμενον παρεκδέχη· διὰ τοῦτο ἔση εἷς ἐκείνων ὧν πρότερον ἐπεμνήσθην· καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖνοι λογικῇ τινι πιθανότητι παράγονται. ἐὰν δὲ θελήσης συνεῖναι τί ποτέ ἐστι τὸ λεγόμενον, μὴ φοβοῦ, μὴ παρὰ τοῦτο παραλίπῃς τι ἔργον κοινωνικόν</p>	<p><i>fecit, non revocatur, sed ad aliud negotium transit, quemadmodum vitis, ut rursum suo tempore uvam producat. In his ne igitur esse debent, qui aliquo modo sine consequentia id faciunt? Equidem; sed hoc ipsum debet consequi. Proprium enim est (inquit) animalis lege sociati, ut sentiat se &amp; societatis tantae [partem esse], &amp; velit omnino id, qui societatis est eiusdem, sentire.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: One kind of man, when he has done a good turn to someone, is quick to reckon up the favor owed him. Another is not quick to do that, but within himself he thinks of the man as a debtor, and he knows what he has done. A third in a certain way does not even know what he has done: he is like a vine that has borne a cluster of grapes and seeks nothing more once it has borne its proper fruit. A horse that has run, a hound that has tracked, a bee that has made honey — and a man who has done good — does not know it, but passes on to the next act, as the vine passes on to bear its cluster again in season. So one ought to be among those who do this, in a way, without attending to it. 'Yes — but one ought to attend to precisely this; for it is the mark of the social creature,' someone says, 'to perceive that it is acting socially, and indeed to want its fellow to perceive it too.' What you say is true, but you take the present point amiss; because of this you will be one of those I mentioned before, for they too are led astray by a kind of plausible reasoning. But if you are willing to understand what is being said, do not fear that you will thereby omit any social act.</p>	<p>English from Latin: The only fault was that you might be judged as possessing a slower mind, one that does not easily grasp what is taught. Yet even this should have been corrected through practice, rather than constantly brooding over your dullness or taking pleasure in it. Of those who do good to others, there are three types: First, those who, the moment they bestow a favor, immediately calculate the gratitude and reward they have earned. Second, those who do not do this directly, yet remain fully conscious of what they did, viewing the recipient as a debtor. Third, those who in a sense do not even know what they have done; they are like the vine, which, having produced its grapes and given its fruit in due season, asks for nothing more. A horse that has run its race, a dog that has tracked its prey, a bee that has made its honey—each is content. A human being who has done a good deed does not call attention to it but passes on to the next task, just like the vine passes on to bear grapes again in the next season. Should we then be among those who act in this manner without calculating the consequences? Unquestionably. But this very principle must be understood. For it is characteristic, they say, of a social animal to perceive that it has acted for the sake of society, and to want its fellow citizens to perceive this too. What you say is true; but grasp what is now being argued. If you do not, you will fall into the second category of people I mentioned before. For they are led astray by a plausible kind of logic. But if you truly want to understand the core of our argument, have no fear that it will ever cause you to neglect any action that serves human society.</p>

**Language Differences:** The expressive Greek οὐκ ἐπίσταται (he does not stand over it / does not dwell on it) is captured by Xylander as non revocatur ("he does not recall it / does not summon it back").

**Commentary:** Marcus tracks three tiers of moral maturity in social interactions. The lowest expects reciprocal reward; the middle keeps a silent mental ledger. The highest executes goodness spontaneously, unaware of its own merit. True virtue should produce acts of cooperation as naturally as a vine produces fruit.

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Book V · Section 7

## The Prayer of the Athenians

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<i>Εὐχὴ Ἀθηναίων· ὕσον, ὕσον, ὦ φίλε Ζεῦ, κατὰ τῆς ἀρούρας τῆς Ἀθηναίων καὶ τῶν πεδίων. ἤτοι οὐ δεῖ εὐχεσθαι ἢ οὕτως ἀπλῶς καὶ ἐλευθέρως</i>	<i>Atheniensium erat hoc votum: 'Plue, plue, o chare Iupiter, in agros &amp; campos Athenienses demitte.' Enimvero aut nihil est optandum, aut omnino simpliciter &amp; liberaliter.</i>
English from Greek: A prayer of the Athenians: 'Rain, rain, dear Zeus, on the plowland of the Athenians and on the plains.' Either one should not pray at all, or one should pray like this — simply and freely.	English from Latin: This was a prayer of the Athenians: 'Rain, rain, o dear Zeus, down upon the fields and pastures of the Athenians.' In truth, we should either not pray at all, or we should pray in this simple, noble, and direct manner.

**Language Differences:** Xylander tracks the ancient text closely, translating ὦ φίλε Ζεῦ into its early-modern equivalent o chare Iupiter. He renders ἐλευθέρως (freely/generously) as liberaliter (nobly/generously).

**Commentary:** Marcus admires the stark simplicity of this regional prayer. It avoids individual entitlement, focusing entirely on collective needs. For a Stoic, prayer must never be a transaction for personal advantage, but a simple alignment with common utility.

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Book V · Section 8

## The Prescription of Nature

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<i>Ὅποῖόν τί ἐστι τὸ λεγόμενον, ὅτι ἡ συνέταξεν ὁ Ἀσκληπιὸς τούτῳ ἵππασίαν ἢ ψυχρολουσίαν ἢ ἀνυποδησίαν, τοιοῦτόν ἐστι καὶ τό ἡ συνέταξε τούτῳ ἡ</i>	<i>Quod dicimus Aesculapium huic equitationem, illi lotionem in frigida, alteri ut nudis pedibus ambulet iniunxisse, nihil aliud est cum dicimus</i>

τῶν ὄλων φύσις νόσον ἢ πῆρωσιν ἢ ἀποβολὴν ἢ ἄλλο τι τῶν τοιούτων. καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖ τὸ συντάξε τοιοῦτόν τι σημαίνει ἔταξε τούτῳ τούτῳ ὡς κατάλληλον εἰς ὑγίειαν, καὶ ἐνταῦθα τὸ συμβαῖνον ἐκάστῳ τέτακται πῶς αὐτῷ <ὡς> κατάλληλον εἰς τὴν εἰμαρμένην. οὕτως γὰρ καὶ συμβαίνει αὐτὰ ἡμῖν λέγομεν ὡς καὶ τοὺς τετραγώνους λίθους ἐν τοῖς τείχεσιν ἢ ἐν ταῖς πυραμίσι συμβαίνει οἱ τεχνῖται λέγουσι, συναρμόζοντας ἀλλήλοις τῇ ποιᾷ συνθέσει. ὅλως γὰρ ἀρμονία ἐστὶ μία καὶ ὡσπερ ἐκ πάντων τῶν σωμάτων ὁ κόσμος τοιοῦτον σῶμα συμπληροῦται, οὕτως ἐκ πάντων τῶν αἰτίων ἢ εἰμαρμένη τοιαύτη αἰτία συμπληροῦται. νοοῦσι δὲ ὃ λέγω καὶ οἱ τέλειον ἰδιῶται φασὶ γὰρ "τοῦτο ἔφερεν αὐτ". οὐκοῦν τοῦτο τούτῳ ἐφέρετο καὶ τοῦτο τούτῳ συνετάττετο ἰδεώμεθα οὖν αὐτὰ ὡς ἐκεῖνα <ᾶ> ὁ Ἀσκληπιὸς συντάττει. πολλὰ γοῦν καὶ ἐν ἐκείνοις ἐστὶ τραχέα, ἀλλὰ ἀσπαζόμεθα τῇ ἐλπίδι τῆς ὑγείας. τοιοῦτόν τί σοι δοκεῖτω ἄνυσις καὶ συντέλεια τῶν τῇ κοινῇ φύσει δοκούντων, οἷον ἢ σὴ ὑγίεια, καὶ οὕτως ἀσπάζου πᾶν τὸ γινόμενον, κἄν ἀπηνέστερον δοκῇ, διὰ τὸ ἐκεῖσε ἄγειν, ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ κόσμου ὑγίειαν καὶ τὴν τοῦ Διὸς εὐοδίαν καὶ εὐπραγίαν. οὐ γὰρ ἂν τοῦτό τι ἐφερεν, εἰ μὴ τῷ ὄλω συνέφερεν ἢ οὐδὲ γὰρ ἢ τυχοῦσα φύσις φέρει τι, ὃ μὴ τῷ διοικουμένῳ ὑπ αὐτῆς κατάλληλόν ἐστιν. οὐκοῦν κατὰ δύο λόγους στέργειν χρὴ τὸ συμβαῖνόν σοι καθ ἓνα μὲν, ὅτι σοὶ ἐγένετο καὶ σοὶ συνετάττετο καὶ πρὸς σέ πῶς εἶχεν, ἄνωθεν ἐκ τῶν πρεσβυτάτων αἰτίων συγκλωθόμενον καθ ἕτερον δέ, ὅτι τῷ τὸ ὄλον διοικούντι τῆς εὐοδίας καὶ τῆς συντελείας καὶ νῆ Δία τῆς συμμονῆς αὐτῆς καὶ τὸ ἰδίᾳ εἰς ἕκαστον ἦκον αἰτίον ἐστὶ. πηροῦται γὰρ τὸ ὀλόκληρον, ἔαν καὶ ὀτιοῦν διακόψη τῆς συναφείας καὶ συνεχείας ὡσπερ τῶν μορίων, οὕτω δὴ καὶ τῶν αἰτίων διακόπτεις δέ, ὅσον ἐπὶ σοί, ὅταν δυσαρεστῆς, καὶ τρόπον τινὰ ἀναιρεῖς

*naturam universi huic homini morbum, defectum aut amissionem membri alicuius imposuisse. Nam ut illic cum dicimus 'iniunxisse,' intelligitur Aesculapium unam rem ad alteram ordinasse, verbi gratia, eam rem respectum habere ad sanitatem: ita hic id quod unicuique accidet, rationem habet & respectum ad fatum. Ita enim haec nobis accidere & congruere dicimus, ut opifices quadratos lapides in muris aut pyramidibus extruendis congruere asserunt, quippe certa eos collocatione inter se componentes. Omnino enim una quaedam est harmonia: atque ut unum corpus ex omnibus corporibus est compactum, ita ex omnibus causis fatum suprema causa constat. Id quod dico, etiam rudissimi intelligunt homines: dicit enim, 'hoc sors eius tulit, hoc ei erat impositum.' Accipiamus ergo haec ita, ut illa quae Aesculapius imposuit: nam & in illis multa sunt aspera, quae tamen spe sanitatis [amplectimur]. Tibi ergo ea perfectio quam communis natura tibi iniunxerit, similis sanitati iudicetur: atque ita aequo suscipe animo omnia quae fiunt (etiamsi quid durius videatur) quoniam ad id ducunt, quod ratione mundi est sanitas, nempe ad felicitatem. Nihil enim accidisset tibi, nisi in rem universi ita esset: neque enim una quaevis natura quicquam fert, nisi id modo, quod respectum ad id quod ab ea administratur habeat.*

English from Greek: Just as we understand the saying that 'Asclepius prescribed for

English from Latin: When we say, 'Aesculapius prescribed horse-riding for

this man horseback riding, or cold baths, or going barefoot,' so too we should understand this: 'the nature of the whole prescribed for this man disease, or mutilation, or loss, or something else of the kind.' In the first case, 'prescribed' means something like this: he ordered this for him as suited to his health; and in the second, what happens to each man has been ordered for him, in a way, as suited to his destiny. So we say that things 'fit' us as the craftsmen say that squared stones 'fit' in walls or in pyramids, joining with one another in a particular arrangement. For there is, in the whole, one harmony; and just as out of all bodies the cosmos is filled out into the body it is, so out of all causes destiny is filled out into the cause it is. Even the wholly uninstructed understand what I am saying, for they say: 'this was brought to him' — this, then, was brought to this man, and this was prescribed for this man. Let us receive these things, then, as we receive what Asclepius prescribes. Many things in his prescriptions, surely, are harsh — but we welcome them in the hope of health. Let the accomplishment and completion of what the common nature has judged good seem to you like your health; and so welcome everything that happens, even if it appears rather grim, because it leads to that — to the health of the cosmos, and to the good faring and good fortune of Zeus. For nature would not have brought this to a man if it were not advantageous to the whole; nor does any nature whatsoever bring anything that is not suited to what it governs. For two reasons, then, you must hold in affection whatever happens to you: first, that it came to be for you, was prescribed for you, and stood related to you, spun from above out of the most venerable causes; second, that even what comes individually to each man is, to the governor of the whole, a cause of good faring, of completion, and — by Zeus — of its very continuance. For the wholeness of the whole is mutilated if you cut off even the least part of its connection and continuity — and you do cut it off, so far as in you lies, when you are discontented, and in a manner you destroy it.

this person, cold baths for that one, or walking barefoot for another,' it is exactly like saying: 'The nature of the universe has prescribed for this person a disease, a disability, or the loss of a limb.' For just as in the medical context 'prescribing' means that Aesculapius ordered one thing to suit another—for instance, to bring about health—so here, whatever happens to each individual has an intentional relation and fitness to their destiny. For we say these events happen to us and fit us, just as masons say that squared stones fit together harmoniously in walls or pyramids, joining them to one another in a specific arrangement. Indeed, there is one grand harmony; and just as the body of the universe is a complete whole made up of all individual bodies, so Fate stands as the supreme cause, made up of all individual causes. Even the most uncultivated people understand this; for they say, 'His luck brought this,' or 'This was imposed upon him.' Let us accept these occurrences just as we accept the prescriptions of Aesculapius; for many of his treatments are harsh, yet we endure them in the hope of health. Therefore, let the fulfillment of whatever the common nature ordains for you be judged in the same light as your health. Welcome everything that happens with an equal mind—even if it appears somewhat harsh—since it leads directly to the health and happiness of the universe. For nothing would have happened to you if it did not suit the whole; because no particular nature brings anything to pass unless it has an intentional relation to that which it governs.

**Language Differences:** The Greek technical medical verb *συνέταξεν* (prescribed, ordered a course of treatment) is translated by Xylander with the legalistic *iniunxisse / imposuisse* ("to enjoin or impose as a duty"). Xylander shifts the structural boundary here, carrying the concluding discussion on acceptance over into the next section (our §9).

**Commentary:** One of Book V's most profound medical metaphors. Just as a patient accepts a painful prescription from a physician (Ἀσκληπιὸς) trusting it will heal the body, an individual must accept chronic illness or grief as a prescription issued by universal nature to maintain the harmony of the whole cosmos.

Book V • Section 9

## Philosophy as Treatment

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Μὴ σικχαίνειν μηδὲ ἀπαυδαῖν μηδὲ ἀποδυσπετεῖν, εἰ μὴ καταπυκνοῦταί σοι τὸ ἀπὸ δογμάτων ὀρθῶν ἕκαστα πράσσειν, ἀλλὰ ἐκκρουσθέντα πάλιν ἐπανιέναι καὶ ἀσμενίζειν, εἰ &lt;σοι&gt; τὰ πλείω ἀνθρωπικώτερα, καὶ φιλεῖν τοῦτο, ἐφ' ὃ ἐπανερχῆ, καὶ μὴ ὡς πρὸς παιδαγωγὸν τὴν φιλοσοφίαν ἐπανιέναι, ἀλλ' ὡς οἱ ὀφθαλμιῶντες πρὸς τὸ σπογγάριον καὶ τὸ ὤον, ὡς ἄλλος πρὸς κατάπλασμα, ὡς πρὸς καταιόνησιν. οὕτως γὰρ οὐδὲν ἐπιδείξει τὸ πειθαρχεῖν τῷ λόγῳ, ἀλλὰ προσαναπαύσει αὐτῷ. μέμνησο δὲ ὅτι φιλοσοφία μόνα, ἃ θέλει ἢ φύσις σου, θέλει ἰσὺ δὲ ἄλλο ἤθελες οὐ κατὰ φύσιν. τί γὰρ τούτων προσηνέστερον; ἢ γὰρ ἡδονὴ οὐχὶ διὰ τοῦτο σφάλλει; ἀλλὰ θέασαι, εἰ προσηνέστερον μεγαλοψυχία, ἐλευθερία, ἀπλότης, εὐγνωμοσύνη, ὀσιότης. αὐτῆς γὰρ φρονήσεως τί προσηνέστερον, ὅταν τὸ ἄπταιστον καὶ εὖρουν ἐν πᾶσι τῆς παρακολουθητικῆς καὶ ἐπιστημονικῆς δυνάμεως ἐνθυμηθῆς</p>	<p><i>Quare duae sunt rationes, cur ea quae tibi eveniunt, aequo debeas animo ferre. Una, quia sors tua sic ferebat, &amp; tibi destinata erant ab antiquissima causa fatali, habentia ad te certum respectum. Altera, quod ea faciunt ad profectum &amp; perfectionem, ac permanentiam eius, qui [universo] praeest. Totum enim mutilatur, si etiam minimam partem continuitatis &amp; cohaerentiae membrorum, ita etiam causarum, discindas. Id autem, quantum in te est, facis, quoties ea quae tibi obtigerit moleste fers, ac quodam modo tollis.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: Do not be disgusted, or give up, or lose heart, if you do not succeed in doing everything according to right principles; rather, when you have been knocked back, return again, and be glad if most of what you do is worthier of a human being — and love that to which you return. Do not come back to philosophy as</p>	<p>English from Latin: Thus, there are two reasons why you must bear whatever happens to you with an equal mind: First, because your destiny brought it, and it was woven for you from the most ancient of fateful causes, possessing a specific relation to you. Second, because it contributes to the welfare, perfection, and</p>

<p>to a schoolmaster, but as men with sore eyes come to the little sponge and the egg, as another comes to a poultice, another to a fomentation. For so you will make no display of obeying reason — you will rest in it. And remember that philosophy wants only what your own nature wants, whereas you were wanting something else, not according to nature. For which of these is more agreeable? Is it not through just that promise that pleasure trips us? But look whether greatness of soul is not more agreeable — and freedom, and simplicity, and consideration, and piety. And what is more agreeable than understanding itself, when you reflect on the sureness and the smooth flow, in all things, of the faculty of comprehension and knowledge?</p>	<p>continued existence of that which governs the universe. For the whole is mutilated if you sever even the smallest part of its continuity and coherence, whether of its limbs or of its causes. And you do this, as far as it is in your power, whenever you complain about your lot and seek to undo it.</p>
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**Language Differences:** The intense Greek opening *Μὴ σικχαίνειν* (do not feel a wave of nausea/disgust at yourself) is rendered accurately by Xylander as *Non fastidire*. He masterfully translates the home-remedy components *σπογγάριον καὶ τὸ ὄν* directly as *spongiam & ovum*. Xylander also carries Section 8's Greek closing lines on cosmic unity over as the structural prefix to this block (the *Quare duae sunt rationes opening*).

**Commentary:** Marcus offers a gentle perspective on ethical failure. Complete moral perfection is an unrealistic standard; the true discipline is *ἐπανιέναι* (the act of returning to the path after being knocked back). Philosophy must not be viewed as a punitive schoolmaster (*παιδαγωγὸν*), but as a soothing, restoring salve for the soul's injuries.

Book V · Section 10

## The Flux of Reality

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p><i>Τὰ μὲν πράγματα ἐν τοιαύτῃ τρόπῳ τινα ἐγκαλύψει ἐστίν, ὥστε φιλοσόφοις οὐκ ὀλίγοις οὐδὲ τοῖς τυχοῦσιν ἔδοξε παντάπασιν ἀκατάληπτα εἶναι, πλὴν αὐτοῖς γε τοῖς Στωικοῖς δυσκατάληπτα δοκεῖ· καὶ πᾶσα ἡ ἡμετέρα συγκατάθεσις μεταπτώτῃ· ποῦ γὰρ ὁ ἀμετάπτωτος; μέτιθι τοίνυν ἐπ' αὐτὰ τὰ ὑποκείμενα ὡς ὀλιγοχρόνια καὶ εὐτελεῆ καὶ δυνάμενα ἐν κτήσει κιναίδου ἢ πόρνης ἢ ληστοῦ εἶναι. μετὰ τοῦτο ἔπιθι</i></p>	<p><i>Non fastidire, animum despondere, ac deterreri non debes, si non ubique tibi successus respondet, secundum recta praecepta agere singula cupienti: sed frustratus conatu, eum redintegrare, &amp; aequo animo pleraque humana ferre: neque debet te eius, ad quod redis, poenitere. Neque tibi est ad philosophiam tanquam ad paedagogum redeundum: sed, ut solent qui ex oculis laborant ad spongiam &amp; ovum, alii ad</i></p>

<p>ἐπὶ τὰ τῶν συμβιούτων ἦθη, ὧν μόλις ἐστὶ καὶ τοῦ χαριστάτου ἀνασχέσθαι, ἵνα μὴ λέγω, ὅτι καὶ ἑαυτὸν τις μόγις ὑπομένει. ἐν τοιοῦτῳ οὖν ζόφῳ καὶ ῥύπῳ καὶ τοσαύτῃ ῥύσει τῆς τε οὐσίας καὶ τοῦ χρόνου καὶ τῆς κινήσεως καὶ τῶν κινουμένων τί ποτέ ἐστὶ τὸ ἐκτιμηθῆναι ἢ τὸ ὅλως σπουδασθῆναι δυνάμενον, οὐδὲ ἐπινοῶ. τούναντίον γὰρ δεῖ παραμυθούμενον ἑαυτὸν περιμένειν τὴν φυσικὴν λύσιν καὶ μὴ ἀσχάλλειν τῇ διατριβῇ, ἀλλὰ τούτοις μόνοις προσαναπαύεσθαι· ἐνὶ μὲν τῷ, ὅτι οὐδὲν συμβήσεται μοι ὃ οὐχὶ κατὰ τὴν τῶν ὄλων φύσιν ἐστίν· ἐτέρῳ δέ, ὅτι ἕξεστί μοι μηδὲν πράσσειν παρὰ τὸν ἐμὸν θεὸν καὶ δαίμονα· οὐδεὶς γὰρ ὁ ἀναγκάσων τοῦτον παραβῆναι</p>	<p><i>cataplasma &amp; perfusionem confugere. Ita enim non opus erit tibi ostendi, ut rectae rationi obedias: sed in ea ipse acquiesces.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: Things are, in a certain way, so wrapped in veils that to philosophers not few or undistinguished they seemed entirely beyond grasping; indeed even to the Stoics themselves they seem hard to grasp. And every assent of ours is liable to change — for where is the unchangeable man? Pass on, then, to the objects themselves: how short-lived they are, how cheap — capable of being the property of a catamite, a whore, a bandit. After that, pass to the characters of those who live with you, the most charming of whom it is hard to endure — to say nothing of how hard it is for a man to endure even himself. In such fog, then, and such filth, in so great a flux of being and of time, of motion and of moving things, what there is that can be prized or pursued with seriousness at all, I cannot conceive. On the contrary: a man must console himself and await the natural dissolution — not chafing at the delay, but finding rest in these two things alone: first, that nothing will happen to me that is not in accordance with the nature of the whole; second, that it is in my power to do nothing against my god and inner spirit. For there is no one who will compel me to transgress against that.</p>	<p>English from Latin: You must not look on things with disgust, lose heart, or be deterred if you do not always succeed in acting according to right principles in every single instance. Instead, when you fail, return to the charge, and embrace the majority of human duties with a calm mind, never regretting the philosophy to which you return. Do not return to philosophy as to a harsh schoolmaster, but rather as those with sore eyes turn to a sponge and egg, or as others turn to a poultice and a soothing wash. For in this way, you will not need to make a show of obeying right reason, but will genuinely find your rest within it.</p>

**Language Differences:** *The evocative Greek word ἐγκαλύψει (wrapped in veils or shrouds) is translated by Xylander as obscuritate (obscurity/darkness). The technical*

*epistemological noun συγκατάθεσις (cognitive assent to an impression) is accurately matched to assensio.*

**Commentary:** Marcus looks closely at the extreme difficulty of maintaining absolute certainty. Because material reality is caught in a constant ῥύσει (flux), and our cognitive filtering is inherently fallible, tracking outward details is exhausting. True stability cannot be found by analyzing external details, but by resting on the inner soul's alignment with nature.

Book V · Section 11

## Examining the Soul

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Πρὸς τί ποτε ἄρα νῦν χρῶμαι τῇ ἐμαντοῦ ψυχῇ; παρ' ἕκαστα τοῦτο ἐπανερωτᾶν ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἐξετάζειν τί μοί ἐστι νῦν ἐν τούτῳ τῷ μορίῳ, ὃ δὴ ἡγεμονικὸν καλοῦσι, καὶ τίνος ἄρα νῦν ἔχω ψυχὴν; μήτι παιδίου; μήτι μειρακίου; μήτι γυναικαρίου; μήτι τυράννου; μήτι κτήνους; μήτι θηρίου</p>	<p><i>Memento philosophiam ea tantum poscere, quae natura etiam tua exigit: tu autem aliud quippiam volebas. Utrum vero horum blandius est? An non hoc pacto decipit voluptas? Vide gratior ne sit magnanimitas, libertas, simplicitas, aequanimitas, sanctitas? Quid enim ipsa prudentia sit acceptius, ubi cum animo tuo reputes facultatem quae scientiam certam &amp; certis consequentiis nixam habet, nusquam labi, &amp; ubique successum habere? Res quidem ipsae in tanta quodammodo versantur obscuritate, ut philosophorum plerisque, &amp; iis non ignobilibus, omnino percipi posse nihil visum sit: Stoici tamen posse percipi, sed plane difficulter, censuerunt. Estque omnis nostra assensio talis, ut falli &amp; mutari possit: quis enim se nunquam posse errare dixerit? Transfer itaque cogitationes ad ipsas res subiectas, ac vide quam breves vilesque sint, quae etiam a cinaedo, scorto, aut praedone possint teneri.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: To what use, then, am I now putting my soul? At every step ask yourself this, and examine: what do I now have in this part they call the ruling faculty? And whose soul do I have now? Not a child's? Not an adolescent's? Not a little woman's? Not a tyrant's? Not a beast of the stall's? Not a wild animal's?</p>	<p>English from Latin: Remember that philosophy demands only what your nature requires, whereas you were seeking something else entirely. Which of these two is truly more welcoming? Is this not the very way pleasure deceives us? Consider whether high-mindedness, freedom, simplicity, equanimity, and holiness are not more rewarding. What is more welcome than wisdom itself, especially when you realize that the</p>

	<p>capacity for sound, logical knowledge protects you from error and ensures success in all your paths? The realities of things are wrapped in such deep obscurity that to many philosophers—and those of no mean standard—all things seem completely incomprehensible. Even the Stoics think they are comprehensible, yet only with immense difficulty. Let our every act of assent be recognized as fallible and subject to change; for who can claim to be entirely beyond error? Direct your thoughts to the underlying realities, and see how brief and cheap they are, capable of being possessed by a profligate, a prostitute, or a thief. Then turn your attention to the characters of those you live with; it is difficult to tolerate even the most agreeable of them, not to mention how hard it is for a person to tolerate himself. In the midst of such darkness, filth, and the immense flux of things, time, and motion, I see nothing that is truly worthy of human ambition or high esteem. On the contrary, it is better to steady oneself and await death with a serene mind, never chafing at the delay, but resting content in these two axioms alone: First, that nothing will happen to me that does not accord with the nature of the universe; second, that it is within my power never to act against my God and internal spirit, for no one can compel me to do so.</p>
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**Language Differences:** *Xylander tracks Marcus's list of psychological archetypes perfectly, using mulierculae to capture the diminutive γυναικαρίου (little/weak woman) and iumentum for κτήνους (beast of burden). His column also carries over Section 10's closing argument (the Memento philosophiam lines) as the preface to this block.*

**Commentary:** A vital exercise in self-monitoring. Marcus stops at intervals to audit the orientation of his ἡγεμονικόν. He checks his reactions to see if his internal monologue has degraded into childish reactivity (παιδίου), emotional volatility, or the brute cruelty of a tyrant (τυράννου).

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Book V · Section 12

## True Goods vs. Vulgar Goods

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
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<p>Ὅποιά τινά ἐστὶ τὰ τοῖς πολλοῖς δοκοῦντα ἀγαθὰ, κἂν ἐντεῦθεν λάβοις. εἰ γάρ τις ἐπινοήσειεν ὑπάρχοντά τινα ὡς ἀληθῶς ἀγαθὰ, οἷον φρόνησιν, σωφροσύνην, δικαιοσύνην, ἀνδρείαν, οὐκ ἂν ταῦτα προεπινοήσας ἔτι ἀκοῦσαι δυνηθεῖη τό· “ὑπὸ τῶν ἀγαθῶν”, &lt;οὐ&gt; γὰρ ἐφαρμόσει. τὰ δέ γε τοῖς πολλοῖς φαινόμενα ἀγαθὰ προεπινοήσας τις ἐξακούσεται καὶ ῥαδίως δέξεται ὡς οἰκείως ἐπιλεγόμενον τὸ ὑπὸ τοῦ κωμικοῦ εἰρημένον. οὕτως καὶ οἱ πολλοὶ φαντάζονται τὴν διαφορὰν· οὐ γὰρ ἂν τοῦτο μὲν [οὐ] προσέκοπτε καὶ ἀπηξιοῦτο, τὸ δὲ ἐπὶ τοῦ πλούτου καὶ τῶν πρὸς τρυφήν ἢ δόξαν εὐκκληρημάτων παρεδεχόμεθα ὡς ἰκνουμένως καὶ ἀστείως εἰρημένον. πρόθι οὖν καὶ ἐρώτα, εἰ τιμητέον καὶ ἀγαθὰ ὑποληπτέον τὰ τοιαῦτα, ὧν προεπινοηθέντων οἰκείως ἂν ἐπιφέροιτο τὸ τὸν κεκτημένον αὐτὰ ὑπὸ τῆς εὐπορίας “οὐκ ἔχειν ὅποι χέσ</p>	<p><i>Subinde hoc teipsum interroga: 'Quam ad rem nunc utor utor animo meo?' Atque examina teipsum: ea pars, quam principem vocant, quomodo nunc habet? Cuius animo praeditus sum? Num pueri, num adolescentis, num mulierculae, num tyranni, num iumentis, num ferae?</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: What sort of things the many take for goods, you may gather from this. If a man conceived of the existence of the true goods — wisdom, temperance, justice, courage — then, with these in mind, he could not bear to hear the old tag about being 'crushed under goods'; it would not apply. But with what appear as goods to the many in mind, a man will listen to the comic poet's line and easily accept it as aptly said. That is how even the many sense the difference. Otherwise the saying would offend in the one case and be rejected — whereas of wealth, and of the windfalls that serve luxury or fame, we accept it as fitting and witty. Go on, then, and ask: should we prize, and count as goods, things of such a kind that — once we have them in mind — the saying would aptly apply, that their owner is so well supplied that he 'has nowhere to relieve himself'?</p>	<p>English from Latin: Ask yourself this constantly: 'For what purpose am I now employing my soul?' Examine yourself: 'How stands that part of me which they call the ruling center? What kind of soul do I possess now? Is it the soul of a child, a youth, a weak woman, a tyrant, a beast of burden, or a wild animal?'</p>

**Language Differences:** *Xylander handles Marcus's blunt comedic reference with unvarnished accuracy, translating the vulgar Greek verb χέσση into its exact literal Latin equivalent cacet.*

**Commentary:** Marcus uses a popular theatrical joke to expose the difference between true virtues and superficial material assets. True goods like wisdom, justice, and courage are self-limiting and cannot be over-accumulated. The fact that society readily laughs at a rich person being completely overwhelmed by his own possessions proves that luxury and wealth are not genuine goods.

Book V · Section 13

## Causal and Material

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Ἐξ αἰτιώδους καὶ ὑλικοῦ συνέστηκα, οὐδέτερον δὲ τούτων εἰς τὸ μὴ ὄν φθαρήσεται, ὥσπερ οὐδὲ ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος ὑπέστη. οὐκοῦν καταταχθήσεται πᾶν μέρος ἐμὸν κατὰ μεταβολὴν εἰς μέρος τι τοῦ κόσμου καὶ πάλιν ἐκεῖνο εἰς ἕτερον μέρος τι τοῦ κόσμου μεταβαλεῖ καὶ ἤδη εἰς ἄπειρον. κατὰ τοιαύτην δὲ μεταβολὴν κἀγὼ ὑπέστην καὶ οἱ ἐμὲ γεννήσαντες καὶ ἐπανιόντι εἰς ἄλλο ἄπειρον. οὐδὲν γὰρ κωλύει οὕτως φάναι, κἂν κατὰ περιόδους πεπερασμένας ὁ κόσμος διοικῆται</p>	<p><i>Qualia sint illa, quae vulgo bona habentur, etiam hinc evidens fiat. Si enim animo concipias ea quae sunt reipsa bona, ut prudentia, ut temperantia, ut iustitia, ut fortitudo, his iam ante reputatis, nihil porro audies nominari bonum, quod non sub haec referatur. Quae vero vulgus hominum bona putat, ea qui ante mente conceperunt, simul atque nominari audiunt, perfacile accipiunt, perinde ut si quid a Comico apposite dictum est: nempe eum qui ista possideat, propter hanc copiam ne ubi quidem cacet habere.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: I am composed of the causal and the material. Neither of these will perish into not-being, just as neither came to exist out of not-being. So every part of me will be assigned, by change, to some part of the cosmos; and that again will change into another part of the cosmos, and so on without limit. By such change I too came to be, and those who begot me, and so backward into another infinity. For nothing forbids speaking so, even if the cosmos is governed in completed cycles.</p>	<p>English from Latin: What clear evidence we have regarding the things that the crowd considers good! For if you conceptualize true goods—such as wisdom, temperance, justice, and courage—once you have focused on them, you will never accept anything else as a good that does not align with them. But as for the things the crowd thinks are good, people listen to them being named and accept them instantly, just like they appreciate a witty line from a comic poet. How the crowd judges the value of things; otherwise, they would not reject true goods, while greeting the mention of wealth, pleasure, or celebrity as something remarkably clever and refined. Go forward, then, and ask yourself whether we should value or class as 'goods' those things which are of such a nature that, if you imagine them, someone could appropriately joke that their owner has so many possessions he has no place left to relieve himself.</p>

**Language Differences:** The standard Greek pairing αἰτιώδους καὶ ὑλικοῦ (causal/active and material/passive) is translated by Xylander into classical Aristotelian vocabulary: forma & materia (form and matter).

**Commentary:** Marcus grounds his identity in physics. Human existence is a temporary arrangement of eternal materials. Because matter and cause cannot vanish into absolute nothingness, death is simply a standard recycling process where components return to the cosmos to build new forms.

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Book V · Section 14

## The Reason's Power

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
Ὁ λόγος καὶ ἡ λογικὴ τέχνη δυνάμεις εἰσὶν ἑαυταῖς ἀρκούμεναι καὶ τοῖς καθ' αὐτὰς ἔργοις. ὀρμῶνται μὲν οὖν ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκείας ἀρχῆς, ὀδεύουσι δὲ εἰς τὸ προκειμένον τέλος, καθὸ κατορθώσεις αἱ τοιαῦται πράξεις ὀνομάζονται τὴν ὀρθότητα τῆς ὁδοῦ σημαίνουσαι	<i>Ex forma &amp; materia consto: horum vero neutrum in nihil vertetur, ut neque ex nihilo exstitit. Ergo omnis mei pars per mutationem redigetur in aliquam mundi partem, atque haec rursus in aliam universi portionem transibit, idque ad infinitum usque. Huiusmodi autem mutatione &amp; ipse exstiti, &amp; parentes mei, idque in infinitum usque retro eunti licet dicere: quanquam certis alioquin circuitibus mundus administratur.</i>
English from Greek: Reason, and the art of reasoning, are powers sufficient to themselves and to their proper works. They set out from their own first principle, and they travel to the end set before them — which is why such actions are called katorthoseis, 'right-goings,' signifying the rightness of the road.	English from Latin: I consist of both form and matter; neither of these will ever vanish into nothingness, just as neither came from nothing. Therefore, every part of me will be transformed into some part of the universe, and that will change again into another part, and so on to infinity. By such a process of change I came to exist, and my parents did too, and so on back to infinity; even though the universe is otherwise governed in fixed, cyclical periods.

**Language Differences:** Xylander tracks the text precisely, preserving the core Greek technical term κατορθώσεις in its native Greek script and providing a solid Latin alternative: rectas effectiones ("straight / rectified achievements").

**Commentary:** Reason operates autonomously. It requires no external architecture or outside validation to execute its purpose. A moral choice is a κατόρθωμα — a straight, unswerving path that carries its own fulfillment.

## Not Demanded of Man

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Οὐδὲν τούτων τηρητέον ἀνθρώπῳ, ἃ ἀνθρώπῳ, καθὸ ἀνθρωπός ἐστιν, οὐκ ἐπιβάλλει. οὐκ ἔστιν ἀπαιτήματα ἀνθρώπου οὐδὲ ἐπαγγέλλεται αὐτὰ ἢ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου φύσις οὐδὲ τελειότητές εἰσι τῆς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου φύσεως. οὐ τοίνυν οὐδὲ τὸ τέλος ἐν αὐτοῖς ἐστι τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ κείμενον οὐδέ γε τὸ συμπληρωτικὸν τοῦ τέλους, τὸ ἀγαθόν. ἔτι, εἴ τι τούτων ἦν ἐπιβάλλον τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ, οὐκ ἂν τὸ ὑπερφρονεῖν αὐτῶν καὶ κατεξανίστασθαι ἐπιβάλλον ἦν οὐδὲ ἐπαινετὸς ἦν ὁ ἀπροσδεῖ τούτων ἑαυτὸν παρεχόμενος, οὐδ' ἂν ὁ ἐλαττωτικὸς ἑαυτοῦ ἐν τινι τούτων ἀγαθὸς ἦν, εἴπερ ταῦτα ἀγαθὰ ἦν. νῦν δ, ὅσῳ περ πλείω τις ἀφαιρῶν ἑαυτοῦ τούτων ἢ τοιούτων ἑτέρων ἢ καὶ ἀφαιρούμενός τι τούτων ἀνέχεται, τοσῶδε μᾶλλον ἀγαθός ἐστιν</p>	<p><i>Ratio, &amp; rationalis ars, facultates sunt sibi ipsae sufficientes, suisque operibus. Progrediuntur a suo principio, ac pergunt ad finem propositum: habent actiones suas, quibus insistunt, illud nomen apud Graecos, ut sint katorthoseis: nos rectas effectiones dicere possumus.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: None of those things should a man hold to which do not fall to a human being insofar as he is a human being. They are not demands on a man; the nature of man does not promise them; they are not completions of man's nature. Therefore the end for man does not lie in them, nor that which fills out the end — the good. Further, if any of these things did fall to a man as his, then to look down on it and stand against it would not be what falls to him; the man who shows himself without need of them would not be praiseworthy; and the man who took less than his share of them would not be good — if these things were really goods. But as it is, the more a man strips himself of these and the like, or endures being stripped of them, by so much the more is he good.</p>	<p>English from Latin: Reason and the rational art are faculties that are self-sufficient for themselves and their operations. They move forward from their own beginning and march directly toward their proposed end; their actions are called by the Greeks *katorthōseis*, which we can translate as 'right actions.'</p>

**Language Differences:** The original Greek τελειότητές (completions/fulfillments) is translated by Xylander using the classical standard noun perfectio. He condenses the final lines of this section to retain rhetorical focus.

**Commentary:** External variables (such as systemic power, wealth, or safety) are not constitutional requirements for human nature. Because they do not advance the soul's virtue, they can be freely stripped away without ever diminishing an individual's actual humanity.

Book V • Section 16

## Dyeing the Soul

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Οἷα ἂν πολλάκις φαντασθῆς, τοιαύτη σοι ἔσται ἡ διάνοια· βάπτεται γὰρ ὑπὸ τῶν φαντασιῶν ἡ ψυχὴ. βάπτε οὖν αὐτὴν τῇ συνεχείᾳ τῶν τοιούτων φαντασιῶν· οἷον, ὅτι ὅπου ζῆν ἔστιν, ἐκεῖ καὶ εὖ ζῆν· ἐν ἀλύτῃ δὲ ζῆν ἔστιν· ἔστιν ἄρα καὶ εὖ ζῆν ἐν ἀλύτῃ. καὶ πάλιν, ὅτι οὐπὲρ ἔνεκεν ἕκαστον κατεσκεύασται, &lt;πρὸς τοῦτο κατεσκεύασται· &gt; πρὸς ὃ δὲ κατεσκεύασται, πρὸς τοῦτο φέρεται· πρὸς ὃ φέρεται δέ, ἐν τούτῳ τὸ τέλος αὐτοῦ· ὅπου δὲ τὸ τέλος, ἐκεῖ καὶ τὸ συμφέρον καὶ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἕκαστου· τὸ ἄρα ἀγαθὸν τοῦ λογικοῦ ζῴου κοινωνία. ὅτι γὰρ πρὸς κοινωνίαν γεγόναμεν, πάλαι δέδεικται· ἢ οὐκ ἦν ἐναργὲς ὅτι τὰ χεῖρω τῶν κρείττωνων ἔνεκεν, τὰ δὲ κρείττω ἀλλήλων; κρείττω δὲ τῶν μὲν ἀψύχων τὰ ἔμψυχα, τῶν δὲ ἐμψύχων τὰ λογικά</p>	<p><i>Horum nihil de homine dici potest, neque enim ei convenit ea ratione qua homo est: non haec homo, neque ipsius natura proficitur: non est ea in humana natura perfectio. Proinde in externis rebus nequaquam erit finis homini constitutus, neque id bonum, quod finem illum absolvit. Alioquin hominis partes non fuisset ut eos despiceret, neque laude dignus, qui se ita parat ut illis non indigeat: neque qui illis rebus abstinet, bonus dici mereretur, siquidem ea bona essent.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: Such as your repeated impressions are, such will your mind be; for the soul is dyed by its impressions. Dye it, then, with a continuity of impressions such as these: that where life is possible, there the good life is possible; that life in a palace is possible; therefore the good life is possible in a palace. And again: each thing was framed for the sake of something; toward that for which it was framed, it is carried; in that toward which it is carried lies its end; where the end is, there too is what is advantageous and good for each. The good of the rational creature, therefore, is fellowship. For that we were born for fellowship has long been shown: or was it not evident that the lower exist for the sake of the higher, and the higher for one another? And above the soulless</p>	<p>English from Latin: None of these external conditions can be said to belong to a person as a human being; for they are not required by his nature, they do not define him, and human perfection does not reside in them. Therefore, a person's ultimate goal cannot lie in external things, nor can true goodness be found there. If these things were true goods, it would not be a man's duty to despise them, nor would praise belong to him who goes without them, nor could someone who restrains himself from them be called good.</p>

stand the ensouled, and above the ensouled the rational.

**Language Differences:** Marcus uses the vivid verb βάπτεται (to dip, submerge, or saturate in dye). Xylander matches it with the expressive Latin imbuitur (to steep, saturate, imbue).

**Commentary:** Character is shaped by habitual thoughts. Marcus addresses his own situation: living in the imperial palace (ἐν αὐλῇ) surrounds him with corrupting luxuries. He must deliberately flood his mind with thoughts of service and restraint to keep his character from being stained by his environment.

Book V · Section 17

## Chasing the Impossible

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Τὸ τὰ ἀδύνατα διώκειν μανικόν· ἀδύνατον δὲ τὸ τοὺς φαύλους μὴ τοιαῦτά τινα ποιεῖν</p>	<p><i>Nunc vero tanto quisque melior est, quanto magis seipsum ab illis rebus abstinet. Talis erit intellectus tuus, qualia sunt ea de quibus subinde cogitas: nam a visis seu cogitationibus illis animus imbuitur. Imbue igitur eum assiduitate huiusmodi cogitationum, quales sunt: ubicunque vivere, ibi etiam bene vivere licet; vivere autem licet in aula, ergo etiam bene vivere licet in aula. Item: cuius rei causa singula sunt facta, eo fertur; ubi vero fertur, in eo finis eius est positus: ubi vero finis, ibi etiam bonum unicuique. Ergo finis animanti ratione praedito propositus est, societas: natos enim nos esse ad ea, iam pridem est demonstratum.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: To pursue the impossible is madness; and it is impossible that worthless men should not do things of this kind.</p>	<p>English from Latin: In truth, a person is better precisely to the degree that he detaches and abstains himself from these external attachments. Your intellect will match the character of the things you habitually think upon, for the soul is dyed by its thoughts. Dye it thoroughly, then, with a continuous stream of thoughts like these: 'Wherever it is possible to live, it is possible to live well; it is possible to live in a palace, therefore it is possible to live well in a palace.' Again, everything is</p>

	constructed for some specific purpose; and that for which it is constructed is its natural destination and end. Where the end is, there also lies the good of each thing. Therefore, the good of a rational creature is fellowship, for it has long been proven that we are born for society.
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**Language Differences:** The strong Greek adjective *μανικόν* (insane/frantic) is rendered by Xylander through a classic genitive of characteristic: *Insani est* ("it is the mark of a madman").

**Commentary:** To expect bad people never to cause harm is a form of cognitive madness — their flaws follow naturally from their ignorance, and accepting this fact keeps their actions from disturbing your peace.

Book V · Section 18

## Built to Bear

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Οὐδὲν οὐδενὶ συμβαίνει ὃ οὐχὶ ἐκεῖνο πέφυκε φέρειν. ἄλλω τὰ αὐτὰ συμβαίνει καὶ ἤτοι ἀγνοῶν ὅτι συμβέβηκεν, ἢ ἐπιδεικνύμενος μεγαλοφροσύνην, εὐσταθεῖ καὶ ἀκάκωτος μένει. &lt;οὐ&gt; δεινὸν οὖν ἀγνοίαν καὶ ἀρέσκειαν ἰσχυροτέρας εἶναι φρονήσεως</p>	<p><i>An vero non evidens est, deteriora praestantium causa esse, rursumque ex his unum alterius causa? Praestant vero inanimis animata, atque inter haec ipsa, ea quae rationem habent.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: Nothing happens to any man that he is not framed by nature to bear. The same things happen to another, and — whether because he does not know they have happened, or because he is displaying greatness of mind — he stands firm and remains unharmed. Strange, then, that ignorance and self-conceit should be stronger than wisdom.</p>	<p>English from Latin: Is it not plain that lower things exist for the sake of the higher, and the higher for the sake of one another? Animate things excel the inanimate, and among animate things, those that possess reason excel the rest.</p>

**Language Differences:** Xylander translates *πέφυκε φέρειν* (built by nature to carry) using an intentional, providential phrasing: *Natura destinavit* ("Nature has destined/assigned").

**Commentary:** Universal nature never delivers a crisis that the individual mind is unequipped to handle. If uneducated individuals can endure immense physical pain through simple ignorance, a philosopher must be able to endure it through conscious reason.

## The Soul's Autonomy

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Τὰ πράγματα αὐτὰ οὐδ' ὀπωστιοῦν ψυχῆς ἄπτεται οὐδὲ ἔχει εἴσοδον πρὸς ψυχὴν οὐδὲ τρέψαι οὐδὲ κινῆσαι ψυχὴν δύναται, τρέπει δὲ καὶ κινεῖ αὐτὴ ἑαυτὴν μόνη καὶ οἴων ἄν κριμάτων καταξιώση ἑαυτὴν, τοιαῦτα ἑαυτῇ ποιεῖ τὰ προσυφροστώτα</p>	<p><i>Insani est sectari impossibilia; at fieri non potest quin malus suo more agat. Nihil cuiquam accidit, nisi ita Natura destinarit. Id quod alius inique fert, alteri accidit, qui sive ignoratione eius casus, sive ut magnanimitatem ostendat, constantia tuetur, atque illaesus manet.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: Things in themselves do not touch the soul in the least; they have no entrance to the soul; they cannot turn or move the soul. The soul alone turns and moves itself, and whatever judgments it deems itself worthy of — such it makes for itself the things that present themselves before it.</p>	<p>English from Latin: It is the mark of a madman to chase after impossible things. Yet it is impossible for wicked men to act otherwise than according to their nature. Nothing happens to anyone that nature has not equipped him to bear. The same trial that causes one person to break down happens to another who remains steady and unhurt, either through ignorance of the danger or to show high-mindedness.</p>

**Language Differences:** Xylander tracks the Greek text with high accuracy, using *Solus ipse seipsum ciet* to translate the sovereign phrase *κινεῖ αὐτὴ ἑαυτὴν μόνη* (it alone moves itself).

**Commentary:** A declaration of mental independence. Physical objects have zero power to alter our internal state. The soul alone handles its impressions, meaning our internal reality is shaped entirely by the judgments we choose to apply to our experiences.

## Obstacles as Fuel

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Καθ' ἕτερον μὲν λόγον ἡμῖν ἐστὶν οἰκειότατον ἄνθρωπος, καθ' ὅσον εὖ ποιητέον αὐτοῦς καὶ ἀνεκτέον· καθ' ὅσον δὲ ἐνίστανται τινες εἰς τὰ οἰκεῖα ἔργα, ἐν τῶν ἀδιαφόρων μοι γίνεται ὁ ἄνθρωπος οὐχ ἡσσον ἢ ἡλιος ἢ ἄνεμος ἢ θηρίον. ὑπὸ τούτων δὲ ἐνέργεια μὲν τις ἐμποδισθεῖη ἄν, ὀρμῆς δὲ καὶ διαθέσεως</p>	<p><i>Iniqui est igitur admittere, ut inscitia et opinio prudentiam superent. Etenim res ipsae animum nequaquam attingunt, non intrant ad eum, neque movere, neque vertere possunt. Solus ipse seipsum ciet, ac quale iudicium tulerit, talia ea quae accidere fiunt.</i></p>

<p>οὐ γίνεται ἐμπόδια διὰ τὴν ὑπεξαίρεσιν καὶ τὴν περιτροπὴν. περιτρέπει γὰρ καὶ μεθίστησι πᾶν τὸ τῆς ἐνεργείας κώλυμα ἢ διάνοια εἰς τὸ προηγούμενον καὶ πρὸ ἔργου γίνεται τὸ τοῦ ἔργου τούτου ἐφεκτικὸν καὶ πρὸ ὁδοῦ τὸ τῆς ὁδοῦ ταύτης ἐνστατικόν</p>	
<p>English from Greek: In one respect man is what is nearest to us, insofar as we must do good to men and bear with them. But insofar as some of them stand in the way of our proper actions, man becomes for me one of the things indifferent — no less than sun, or wind, or wild beast. By these some action may be hindered; but for impulse and disposition there are no hindrances, because of reservation and the turning-about. For the mind turns about and transfers every impediment to action into what is preferred: what would check this work becomes the work itself, and what would block this road becomes the road.</p>	<p>English from Latin: It is a shameful thing, therefore, to let ignorance and unexamined opinion master wisdom. For external things cannot touch the soul in any way; they have no entry to it, nor can they move or turn it. The soul alone moves and turns itself, and whatever judgments it forms, it shapes its experiences to match them.</p>

**Language Differences:** *Xylander translates the technical Greek phrase διὰ τὴν ὑπεξαίρεσιν καὶ τὴν περιτροπὴν (by means of the reserve-clause and the turning-about) as quia haec exceptionem habet & conversionem. He simplifies Marcus's concluding epigram into a practical summary.*

**Commentary:** This section is the source of the famous Stoic axiom that the obstacle is the way. While physical constraints can block specific actions, they can never obstruct our underlying disposition. The mind uses its power of adaptation to turn disruptions into new opportunities for practicing virtue.

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Book V · Section 21

## Honor the Best

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Τῶν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ τὸ κράτιστον τίμα ἔστι δὲ τοῦτο τὸ πᾶσι χρώμενον καὶ πάντα διέπον. ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τῶν ἐν σοὶ τὸ κράτιστον τίμα ἔστι δὲ τοῦτο τὸ ἐκείνῳ ὁμογενές. καὶ γὰρ ἐπὶ σοῦ τὸ τοῖς ἄλλοις χρώμενον τοῦτό ἐστι, καὶ ὁ σὸς βίος ὑπὸ τούτου διοικεῖται</p>	<p><i>Alia ratione summa nobis est necessitudo cum homine constituta, qua ei benefacere, eumque ferre iubemur: cum autem impedire conantur nostras actiones, non magis ad nos attinent quam Sol, ventus, bestiae. Atque hi quidem impedire effectum aliquando possint: animi vero appetitionem &amp; affectum nequeunt, quia haec</i></p>

	<i>exceptionem habet &amp; conversionem. Nam omne id quod impedimento fuit effectioni, id animus ad eam convertit; atque eo modo id, quod instituto operi vice initii obstitit, etiam confert aliquid.</i>
English from Greek: Honor the strongest of the things in the cosmos: that which uses all and governs all. Likewise honor the strongest of the things in yourself: that which is of one kind with the former. For in you also it is this that uses the rest, and your life is governed by it.	English from Latin: In another respect, we are bound to human beings by a supreme obligation, which commands us to do good to them and to endure them. But when they try to obstruct our duties, they become as indifferent to us as the sun, the wind, or wild beasts. These forces may indeed hinder the execution of an action, but they cannot obstruct our inner purpose or disposition, because these possess a power of adaptation and transformation. For the mind converts every obstacle to action into a means for its own progress, so that what stood in the way of the task now advances it.

**Language Differences:** Marcus uses the superlative τὸ κράτιστον (the strongest/most powerful), while Xylander selects praestantissimum (most excellent) and primum (supreme). The Latin cognatum (related by blood or birth) captures the visceral Greek ὁμογενές (of the same stock) with exceptional precision.

**Commentary:** This section sets up a direct microcosm-to-macrocosm mirror image. The same rational, governing capacity that maintains order across the macro-cosmos (πάντα διέπον) operates inside the individual as the ἡγεμονικόν. Honoring this capacity means treating it with absolute autonomy, ensuring it is never compromised by lesser bodily variables.

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Book V · Section 22

## The Citizen and the City

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
Ὅ τῃ πόλει οὐκ ἔστι βλαβερόν, οὐδὲ τὸν πολίτην βλάπτει. ἐπὶ πάσης τῆς τοῦ βεβλάφθαι φαντασίας τοῦτον ἔπαγε τὸν κανόνα· εἰ ἡ πόλις ὑπὸ τούτου μὴ βλάπτεται, οὐδὲ ἐγὼ βέβλαμμαι· εἰ δὲ ἡ πόλις βλάπτεται, οὐκ ὀργιστέον, ἀλλὰ δεικτέον· τῷ βλάπτουσι τὴν πόλιν τί τὸ παρορώμενον	<i>Id quod in mundo est praestantissimum, cole. Est autem id, quod omnibus rebus utitur, omnia gubernat. Similiter id quoque honora, quod in te est primum: nimirum illi alteri cognatum, quod &amp; ceteris quae in te sunt omnibus utitur, &amp; tuam vitam regit.</i>
English from Greek: What is not harmful to the city does not harm the citizen either. At	English from Latin: Honor that which is most excellent in the universe: it is that

every impression of having been harmed, apply this rule: if the city is not harmed by this, neither am I harmed. But if the city is harmed, do not be angry at the one who harms the city — show him what he has overlooked.	which employs all things and governs all things. In the same way, honor that which is supreme within yourself: it is of one kin with the former, for it employs everything else within you and directs your life.
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**Language Differences:** The Greek φαντασίας (mental impression) is interpreted by Xylander as cogitas (thoughts). He translates τί τὸ παρορώμενον (what has been overlooked) as quid neglectum est ("what has been neglected or omitted"), converting a cognitive oversight into a failure of civil duty.

**Commentary:** Marcus outlines a framework for cosmopolitan justice. An act counts as an injury only if it genuinely disrupts the common utility of the human community (πόλις). When a civic error occurs, reacting with personal anger is itself an error; the philosopher simply deploys reason to show the offender where his perspective went wrong.

Book V · Section 23

## The Speed of Flux

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Πολλάκις ἐνθυμοῦ τὸ τάχος τῆς παραφορᾶς καὶ ὑπεξαγωγῆς τῶν ὄντων τε καὶ γινομένων. ἢ τε γὰρ οὐσία οἶον ποταμὸς ἐνδιηνεκεῖ ῥύσει καὶ αἱ ἐνέργειαι ἐν συνεχέσι μεταβολαῖς καὶ τὰ αἴτια ἐν μυρίαῖς τροπαῖς καὶ σχεδὸν οὐδὲν ἐστῶς καὶ τὸ πάρεγγυς· τὸ δὲ ἄπειρον τοῦ τε παρωχηκότος καὶ μέλλοντος ἀχανές, ὧ πάντα ἐναφανίζεται. πῶς οὖν οὐ μωρὸς ὁ ἐν τούτοις φυσώμενος ἢ σπώμενος ἢ σχετλιάζων ὡς ἐν τινὶ χρονίῳ καὶ ἐπὶ μακρὸν ἐνοχλήσαντι</p>	<p><i>Quod civitati nullum affert detrimentum, id ne civi quidem nocet. Hac regula recolenda tibi est, quotiescunque te laesum aliqua re esse cogitas. Sin civitas damno affecta est, ei qui intulit succensere non debes; ostende potius quid neglectum est. Saepenumero considera, quam celeriter omnia quae &amp; sunt &amp; fiunt abripiantur &amp; evanescant. Etenim &amp; ipsa natura amnis instar in assiduo est: actiones effectionesque continentibus mutationibus obnoxiae, &amp; causarum infinitae sunt vices: denique nihil fere persistit, aut sui simile durat; &amp; praeteriti &amp; venturi infinita est, in qua omnia abolentur, vastitas.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: Often consider the speed with which the things that exist and that come to be are swept past and carried out of sight. For substance is like a river in ceaseless flow; activities are in continual change; causes in ten thousand turnings; almost nothing stands still — not even what is close at hand; and the infinite gulf</p>	<p>English from Latin: What brings no harm to the city brings no harm to the citizen either. Keep this rule ready whenever you think you have been injured. If the city is not harmed, you must not feel anger toward the one who caused the event. What duty was neglected? Meditate often on how swiftly all things that exist or come</p>

of past and future gapes, in which all things vanish. How is he not a fool, then, who in the midst of this is puffed up, or torn apart, or full of grievance — as if anything troubled him for any length of time?	into being are swept away and vanish. For nature is like a river in constant flux, its operations are subject to perpetual changes, and its causes turn in infinite cycles; almost nothing stands still or remains the same.
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**Language Differences:** Marcus contrasts οὐσία (substance/being) with ἐνέργεια (activities/operations). Xylander renders οὐσία directly as natura (nature), and captures ἐνέργεια via the dual humanist terms actiones effectionesque ("actions and outcomes"). He omits Marcus's concluding challenge about the fool who grows proud inside this flux.

**Commentary:** A powerful application of Stoic physics to dismantle ego. Because material conditions are caught in an unrelenting ῥύσει (rapid flow), clinging to reputation or external security is revealed as irrational. Full perspective requires seeing all physical phenomena as temporary snapshots inside an infinite chronological abyss.

Book V • Section 24

## Your Tiny Portion

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Μέμνησο τῆς συμπάσης οὐσίας, ἧς ὀλίγιστον μετέχεις, καὶ τοῦ σύμπαντος αἰῶνος, οὐ βραχὺ καὶ ἀκαριαῖόν σοι διάστημα ἀφώρισται, καὶ τῆς εἰμαρμένης, ἧς πόστον εἶ μέρος</p>	<p><i>Qui ergo stultitiae non damnet eum, qui in hoc tam exiguo temporis articulo superbit, appetit, aut molestia se affici quiritat? Universae rerum naturae recordare, cuius minimam partem tenes: totius aevi, cuius breve &amp; momentaneum tibi est attributum spatium: fati, cuius perexigua ad te portio pertinet.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: Remember the whole of substance, of which you partake of the very least; and the whole of time, of which a brief and momentary interval has been marked off for you; and destiny — of which how small a fraction are you?</p>	<p>English from Latin: Consider the vast abyss of the past and the future, in which all things are swallowed up. How can a person not be a fool who grows proud, anxious, or miserable in this brief micro-moment of time? Remember the whole of universal nature, of which you are the smallest part; and the whole of time, of which a brief and fleeting moment has been assigned to you; and destiny, of which your portion is so minute.</p>

**Language Differences:** Xylander introduces an active rhetorical opening (*Qui ergo stultitiae non damnet...*) to bridge Section 23's themes into Section 24. The Greek

ἀκαριαῖον (an instant / a hair's breadth) is captured by the late-Latin phrase *exiguo temporis articulo* ("a tiny juncture of time").

**Commentary:** Marcus runs a triple geometric reduction to shrink his self-importance to zero: his body is a tiny drop of universal matter, his lifespan a micro-moment (διάστημα) of infinity, and his imperial choices a minute fraction of absolute fate (εἰμαρμένης).

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Book V · Section 25

## Another's Sin

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
Ἄλλος ἀμαρτάνει. τί εἰς ἐμέ; ὄψεται ἰδίαν ἔχει διάθεσιν, ἰδίαν ἐνέργειαν. ἐγὼ νῦν ἔχω, ὃ με θέλει νῦν ἔχειν ἢ κοινὴ φύσις, καὶ πράσσω, ὃ με νῦν πράσσειν θέλει ἢ ἐμὴ φύσις	<i>Peccat alius quis adversum me? Viderit. Sua habet affectionem, suum actum. Ego in praesentia id habeo, quod me habere vult communis natura: agoque id quod agere me iubet mea natura.</i>
English from Greek: Another does wrong. What is that to me? Let him see to it: he has his own disposition, his own activity. I have now what the common nature wills me to have now, and I do what my own nature wills me to do now.	English from Latin: Does someone wrong me? Let him look to that; he has his own disposition and his own way of acting. I possess at this moment what the common nature wishes me to possess, and I do what my own nature commands me to do.

**Language Differences:** Xylander tracks the text cleanly, inserting *adversum me* ("against me") to clarify the relational context of the error. The Greek *διάθεσιν* (internal arrangement/disposition) is rendered exactly as *affectionem*.

**Commentary:** A vital execution of Stoic boundary-drawing. Moral failure is compartmentalized as a local crisis belonging exclusively to the wrongdoer's ἡγεμονικόν. Marcus isolates his own intention from external provocation, focusing entirely on executing his natural duty in the passing moment.

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Book V · Section 26

## Mind and Flesh

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
Τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν καὶ κυριεῦον τῆς ψυχῆς σου μέρος ἄτρεπτον ἔστω ὑπὸ τῆς ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ λείας ἢ τραχείας κινήσεως καὶ μὴ συγκιρνάσθω, ἀλλὰ περιγραφέτω αὐτὸ καὶ περιοριζέτω τὰς πείσεις ἐκείνας ἐν τοῖς μορίοις. ὅταν δὲ ἀναδιδῶνται κατὰ	<i>Pars animi tui princeps ne invertatur ullo vel levi vel aspero carnis motu, neque admittat persuasiones quae in membris oriuntur, sed circumscribat eas. Quod si ea ratione alterius consensus ad intelligentiam efferuntur, nimirum</i>

<p>τὴν ἑτέραν συμπάθειαν εἰς τὴν διάνοιαν ὡς ἐν σώματι ἠνωμένῳ, τότε πρὸς μὲν τὴν αἴσθησιν φυσικὴν οὐσαν οὐ πειρατέον ἀντιβαίνειν, τὴν δὲ ὑπόληψιν τὴν ὡς περὶ ἀγαθοῦ ἢ κακοῦ μὴ προστιθέτω τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ</p>	<p><i>quatenus ea cum corpore copulata est, tum quidem sensui, cum is a natura proficiscatur, reluctandum non est: opinioni autem mali aut boni assentire mens non debet. Vivendum est cum diis.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: Let the ruling and sovereign part of your soul stand unturned by smooth or rough movement in the flesh; let it not mingle with it, but circumscribe itself and confine those affections to their own parts. But when, by the other sympathy, they rise into the understanding — as in a body that is one — then one must not try to resist the sensation, which is natural; only let the ruling part add, from itself, no opinion that the thing is good or evil.</p>	<p>English from Latin: Let the ruling part of your soul remain unswayed by any smooth or rough movement of the flesh, and do not let it join itself with the sensations that arise in the limbs, but isolate them within their own bounds. But if these sensations reach the intellect by way of sympathy— since the soul and body are bound together —you must not try to resist a natural sensation, yet the mind must refrain from adding its own opinion that the sensation is either good or bad.</p>

**Language Differences:** *Marcus describes physical sensations as λείας ἢ τραχείας κινήσεως (smooth or rough movements). Xylander tracks this with *levi vel aspero carnis motu*. The key verb περιγραφέτω (to draw a boundary line around) is translated as *circumscribat*.*

**Commentary:** Marcus analyzes the relationship between mind and body. Physical sensations are unavoidable and natural, but the ruling faculty must draw a boundary around them: pain may be felt, yet the mind must refuse to add the judgment that the discomfort is a moral evil.

Book V • Section 27

## Living with the Gods

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>“Συζῆν θεοῖς.” συζῆ δὲ θεοῖς ὁ συνεχῶς δεικνὺς αὐτοῖς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ψυχὴν ἀρεσκομένην μὲν τοῖς ἀπονεμομένοις, ποιοῦσαν δὲ ὅσα βούλεται ὁ δαίμων, ὃν ἐκάστῳ προστάτην καὶ ἡγεμόνα ὁ Ζεὺς ἔδωκεν, ἀπόσπασμα ἑαυτοῦ. οὗτος δὲ ἐστὶν ὁ ἐκάστου νοῦς καὶ λόγος</p>	<p><i>Vitam vero cum diis agit, qui continenter iis suum animum ostendit probantem ea quae ipsi fatum tribuit, agentemque ea quae genio placerent: quem Iupiter suae cuiusdam particulae naturae unicuique praesidem ducemque dedit, nimirum mentem atque rationem.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: 'Live with the gods.' And he lives with the gods who continually shows them his own soul satisfied with what is allotted, and doing all that is willed by the spirit which Zeus has given to each man as guardian and guide — a fragment</p>	<p>English from Latin: Live with the gods. And he lives with the gods who constantly demonstrates to them a soul content with what destiny has allotted him, performing whatever satisfies that internal spirit which Zeus has given to each person as a</p>

of himself. And this spirit is each man's mind and reason.	protector and guide—namely, mind and reason.
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**Language Differences:** Xylander tracks the Greek layout precisely, translating ἀπόσπασμα ἑαυτοῦ (a broken-off piece / fragment of himself) as suae cuiusdam particulae ("a certain particle of his own nature").

**Commentary:** One lives with the gods by accepting their assignments without complaint and following the Daimon (Reason) — the spark of divinity that Zeus gave to each person to serve as guardian and guide.

Book V • Section 28

## Smelly Breath and Anger

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Τῷ γράσωνι μήτι ὀργίζῃ, μήτι τῷ ὄζοστόμῳ ὀργίζῃ; τί σοι ποιήσῃ; τοιοῦτον στόμα ἔχει, τοιαύτας μάλας ἔχει, ἀνάγκη τοιαύτην ἀποφορὰν ἀπὸ τοιούτων γίνεσθαι. “ἀλλ’ ὁ ἄνθρωπος λόγον ἔχει,” φησί, “καὶ δύναται συνοεῖν ἐφιστάνων τί πλημμελεῖ.” εὖ σοι γένοιτο· τοιγαροῦν καὶ σὺ λόγον ἔχεις, κίνησον λογικῇ διαθέσει λογικῆν διάθεσιν, δεῖξον, ὑπόμνησον· εἰ γὰρ ἐπαίει, θεραπεύσεις καὶ οὐ χρεῖα ὀργῆς. Οὔτε τραγωδὸς οὔτε πόρνη</p>	<p><i>Ne irascaris ei qui hircum olet, aut cui anima foetet: nihil enim ad te inde mali redibit. Talis ipsius &amp; os &amp; ita sunt affecta, ut necesse sit haec mala consequi. 'Ratione,' inquis, 'praeditus est homo, ac si scrutari velit, intelligere potest qua in re delinquat.' Bene res habet. At inde tu, qui &amp; ipse praeditus es ratione, mentem eius tuae mentis motu excita, doce, commonefac: si enim obtemperat tibi, sanabis eum, neque ira opus erit.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: Are you angry at the man with goat-smelling armpits, or at the man with foul breath? What will anger do for you? He has such a mouth, such armpits; it is necessary that such an emanation come from such things. 'But the man has reason,' you say; 'he can attend and grasp what offends.' Good — may it do you good! Well then, you too have reason: move his rational disposition with your rational disposition; show him, remind him. If he listens, you will cure him, and there is no need of anger. Neither tragedian nor whore.</p>	<p>English from Latin: Do not be angry with a man whose armpits smell or whose breath is foul; no evil comes to you from it. His body and his mouth are simply conditioned this way, and these effects must follow from those causes. But, you say, 'man possesses reason, and if he uses his intellect, he can understand where he goes wrong.' Excellent! Therefore, use your own reason to awaken his reason; show him, remind him. If he listens to you, you will cure him, and there will be no need for anger.</p>

**Language Differences:** The specific Greek γράσωνι (one smelling like a male goat) is matched by Xylander with the classic Latin idiom hircum olet. The technical

λογικῆ διαθέσει (*rational disposition*) is simplified to rousing the man's mind by the movement of your own mind.

**Commentary:** Marcus uses bodily traits to make a point about character. Just as foul breath is a natural bodily outcome, bad behavior is a natural result of ignorance. Rather than react with anger, the philosopher should use clear reason to guide the wrongdoer back toward reason.

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Book V • Section 29

## Departure as Freedom

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Ὡς ἐξελθὼν ζῆν διανοῆ, οὕτως ἐνταῦθα ζῆν ἔξεστιν· ἐὰν δὲ μὴ ἐπιτρέπωσι, τότε καὶ τοῦ ζῆν ἔξιθι, οὕτως μέντοι ὡς μηδὲν κακὸν πάσχων. καπνὸς καὶ ἀπέρχομαι· τί αὐτὸ πρᾶγμα δοκεῖς; μέχρι δέ με τοιοῦτον οὐδὲν ἐξάγει, μένω ἐλεύθερος καὶ οὐδεὶς με κωλύσει ποιεῖν ἃ θέλω· θέλω δὲ ἄ· κατὰ φύσιν τοῦ λογικοῦ καὶ κοινωνικοῦ ζώου</p>	<p><i>Non ita hic tibi vivendum est, ut Tragoedo aut scorto qui egrediens vivere cogitat. Quod si tibi non conceditur, tunc vita excedere, ita quidem ut qui nihil mali patiat, ac fumi instar abeat. Quid hoc rei esse putas? Dum vero nihil me tale abducit, liber permaneo, neque me quisquam prohibet agere ut volo; volo autem ut naturae animantis ratione praediti, &amp; ad certum nati, convenit.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: As you intend to live when you have departed, so you are able to live here. But if men do not allow it, then depart even from life — yet as one who suffers no evil. There is smoke, and I leave the room: why does anyone think it a great matter? But while no such thing drives me out, I remain free, and no one will prevent me from doing what I will; and I will what accords with the nature of the rational and social creature.</p>	<p>English from Latin: You should not live your life here like an actor or a courtesan who changes roles on a whim. If true freedom is denied to you, then depart from life entirely, yet do so as one who suffers no evil, vanishing quietly like smoke. What is there to make a tragedy out of this? As long as nothing of that sort drives me out, I remain free, and no one can stop me from doing what I wish; and I wish to act as conforms to a rational and social being.</p>

**Language Differences:** Marcus's famous phrase καπνὸς καὶ ἀπέρχομαι (*smoke, and I leave*) is rendered smoothly as *ac fumi instar abeat* ("and he departs like smoke"). Xylander inserts a framing question, *Quid hoc rei esse putas?* ("what do you take this matter to be?").

**Commentary:** Marcus invokes Epictetus's open door. If life's conditions make the practice of virtue truly impossible, one may exit peacefully; but so long as no such necessity drives him out, he remains free to pursue his social and rational duty.

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Book V • Section 30

## The Social Mind

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Ὁ τοῦ ὅλου νοῦς κοινωνικός. πεποίηκε γούν τὰ χείρω τῶν κρείττωνων ἕνεκεν καὶ τὰ κρείττω ἀλλήλοις συνήρμοσεν. ὀρᾷς πῶς ὑπέταξε, συνέταξε, καὶ τὸ κατ' ἀξίαν ἀπένειμεν ἑκάστοις καὶ τὰ κρατιστεύοντα εἰς ὁμόνοιαν ἀλλήλων συνήγαγεν</p>	<p><i>Mens quae mundum gubernat, societatis rationem habuit: itaque &amp; inferiora praestantiorum causa effecit, &amp; praestantiorum unum alteri subdidit. Vide ut subiecerit, coniunxerit, ac unicuique, dum dignitatem suam tribuerit, fecerit; eaque quae sunt praestantissima, mutuo consensu devinxerit.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: The mind of the whole is social. At any rate, it has made the lower for the sake of the higher, and has fitted the higher to one another. You see how it has subordinated and coordinated, how it has distributed to each according to worth, and brought the most excellent things into concord with one another.</p>	<p>English from Latin: The mind that governs the universe is focused on social harmony; thus it has made lower things for the sake of the higher, and coordinated the higher things to support one another. You see how it has subordinated, coordinated, and distributed to each according to its worth, bringing the noblest things into mutual concord.</p>

**Language Differences:** Xylander translates ὁ τοῦ ὅλου νοῦς (the mind of the whole) interpretively as *Mens quae mundum gubernat* ("the mind that governs the universe"). ὁμόνοιαν (concord/unity of mind) is framed as *mutuo consensu* ("mutual consensus").

**Commentary:** The universe is designed for social cooperation. It has made the lower for the sake of the higher, coordinated all things according to their merit, and brought rational beings into a harmonious community.

Book V · Section 31

## A Life Review

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Πῶς προσενήνεξαι μέχρι νῦν θεοῖς, γονεῦσιν, ἀδελφῶ, γυναικί, τέκνοις, διδασκάλοις, τροφεῦσι, φίλοις, οἰκείοις, οἰκέταις; εἰ πρὸς πάντας σοι μέχρι νῦν ἔστι τό' μήτε τινα ῥέξαι ἑξαίσιον μήτε εἰπεῖν. ἀναμιμνήσκου δὲ καὶ δι' οἴων διελέλυθας καὶ οἷα ἤρκεσας ὑπομεῖναι καὶ ὅτι πλήρης ἤδη σοι ἡ ἱστορία τοῦ βίου καὶ τελεία ἡ λειτουργία καὶ πόσα ὥπται καλὰ καὶ πόσων μὲν ἡδονῶν καὶ πόνων ὑπερεΐδες, πόσα δὲ ἔνδοξα</p>	<p><i>Quomodo usus es hactenus diis, parentibus, fratribus, uxore, liberis, doctoribus, alumniis, amicis, familiaribus, famulis? An in hunc usque diem in neminem horum verbove fuisti iniurius? Reminiscere etiam quae superaveris ac toleraveris: tum fabulam vitae tibi iam peractam, teque tuo ministerio defunctum esse. Quam multa vidisti pulchra? Quot voluptates, quot dolores despexisti? Quot perversis hominibus</i></p>

<p>παρεΐδες, εἰς ὅσους δὲ ἀγνώμονας εὐγνώμων ἐγένου</p>	<p><i>aequum te praeuisti?</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: How have you borne yourself, up to now, toward gods, parents, brother, wife, children, teachers, tutors, friends, household, servants? Has it held true of you toward all of them, up to now, that you have 'neither done nor said anything against what is right'? Recall both what you have passed through and what you have proved strong enough to endure; and that the story of your life is now full, and your service complete; and how many noble things you have seen; how many pleasures and pains you have looked down upon; how many honors you have passed over; toward how many unkind people you have been kind.</p>	<p>English from Latin: How have you behaved up to this point toward the gods, your parents, brothers, wife, children, teachers, tutors, friends, familiars, and servants? Have you avoided saying or doing wrong to any of them to this day? Remember what trials you have passed through and what you have found the strength to endure. Realize that the story of your life is already written, and your service is fully accomplished. How many beautiful sights have you seen? How many pleasures and pains have you looked down upon? How many ungrateful people have you treated with kindness?</p>

**Language Differences:** *Xylander renders Marcus's epic phrase μήτε τινα ῥέξαι ἐξαΐσιον (neither to do nor say anything beyond the mark) through a Roman legal lens: in neminem horum verbove fuisti iniurius ("nor have you wronged any of them in word").*

**Commentary:** Marcus conducts a comprehensive audit of his relationships. Success is measured by how well he has treated his companions; refusing to be swept by pleasure or pain, and staying kind toward ungrateful people, count among the true achievements of his life.

Book V • Section 32

## Artistic Soul vs. Ignorant Soul

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Διὰ τί συγχέουσιν ἄτεχνοι καὶ ἀμαθεῖς ψυχὰ ἔντεχνον καὶ ἐπιστήμονα; τίς οὖν ψυχὴ ἔντεχνος καὶ ἐπιστήμων; ἡ εἰδυῖα ἀρχὴν καὶ τέλος καὶ τὸν δὲ ὅλης τῆς οὐσίας διήκοντα λόγον καὶ διὰ παντὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος κατὰ περιόδους τεταγμένας οἰκονομοῦντα τὸ πᾶν</p>	<p><i>Quamobrem animi arte &amp; disciplina vacui eum, qui arte &amp; scientia praeditus est, confundunt? Quem vero animum arte &amp; scientia praeditum vocas? Eum, qui principium &amp; finem cognoscet, et mentem, quae per universam rerum naturam penetrat, ac per omnes saeculorum cursus definitos atque statos mundum gubernat.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: Why do unskilled and ignorant souls confound the skilled and understanding one? And which soul is skilled and understanding? The one that</p>	<p>English from Latin: Why do uncultivated and uninstructed souls confuse a soul endowed with art and knowledge? And what soul do you call endowed with true</p>

knows beginning and end, and the reason that pervades the whole of substance and governs the whole of time in appointed cycles.	art and knowledge? The one that knows the beginning and the end, and understands the mind that permeates all nature, governing the universe through regular, ordered cycles throughout eternity.
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**Language Differences:** The Greek *ἄτεχνοι καὶ ἀμαθεῖς* (craftless and ignorant) is tracked by Xylander as *arte & disciplina vacui* ("vacant of craft and instruction"). He renders the structural *λόγον* (universal reason) as *mentem* (mind).

**Commentary:** The skilled soul is the one that understands the beginning, the end, and the pervasive Reason that governs all matter through eternal, ordered cycles.

Book V · Section 33

## Ashes and Noise

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
Ὅσον οὐδέπω σποδὸς ἢ σκελετὸς καὶ ἦτοι ὄνομα ἢ οὐδὲ ὄνομα, τὸ δὲ ὄνομα ψόφος καὶ ἀπήχημα. τὰ δὲ ἐν τῷ βίῳ πολυτίμητα κενὰ καὶ σαπρὰ καὶ μικρὰ καὶ κυνίδια διαδακνόμενα καὶ παιδία φιλόνηικα, γελῶντα εἶτα εὐθὺς κλαίοντα	<i>Iam cinis eris, &amp; ossa nuda, nihil praeter nomen (siquidem id supererit) tui restabit. Nomen autem nihil est quam sonitus. At ea quae magni in vita pretii habentur, vana sunt, putrida, exigua, atque instar catellorum mordicantium, aut puerorum inquietorum, qui modo rident, mox plorant.</i>
English from Greek: In how short a time, ash or a skeleton — and either a name or not even a name; and the name itself a noise and an echo. The things prized in life are empty and rotten and small — puppies snapping at one another, quarrelsome children who laugh and then immediately cry. And Faith and Reverence and Justice and Truth are gone 'to Olympus from the wide-wayed earth.'	English from Latin: Soon you will be nothing but ashes and bare bones, and a mere name—if even a name remains. And a name is nothing but empty sound and echo. The things highly valued in life are empty, rotten, and trivial—like puppies snapping at one another, or quarrelsome children who laugh one moment and cry the next. As for faith, modesty, justice, and truth: they have fled the wide earth up to Olympus.

**Language Differences:** Marcus uses the graphic *σκελετὸς* (skeleton); Xylander shifts the phrasing into standard late-classical imagery, *ossa nuda* ("bare bones"). *ψόφος καὶ ἀπήχημα* (noise and echo) is translated cleanly as *sonitus*.

**Commentary:** Reputation is revealed to be nothing but empty noise. Life's highly prized achievements are exposed as small and rotten the moment they are evaluated with detached, objective reason.

## Justice on Earth

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Πίστις δὲ καὶ Αἰδῶς καὶ Δίκη καὶ Ἀλήθεια πρὸς Ὀλυμπον ἀπὸ χθονὸς εὐρυοδείης. τί οὖν ἔτι τὸ ἐνταῦθα κατέχον, εἴ γε τὰ μὲν αἰσθητὰ εὐμετάβλητα καὶ οὐχ ἑστῶτα, τὰ δὲ αἰσθητήρια ἀμύδρα καὶ εὐπαρατύπωτα, αὐτὸ δὲ τὸ ψυχάριον ἀναθυμίασις ἀφ' αἵματος, τὸ δὲ εὐδοκιμεῖν παρὰ τοιοῦτοις κενόν; τί οὖν; περιμένειν ἴλεων τὴν εἴτε σβέσιν εἴτε μετάστασιν ἕως δὲ ἐκείνης ὁ καιρὸς ἐφίσταται, τί ἄρκεϊ; τί δὲ ἄλλο ἢ θεοὺς μὲν σέβειν καὶ εὐφημεῖν, ἀνθρώπους δὲ εὖ ποιεῖν καὶ ἀνέχεσθαι αὐτῶν καὶ ἀπέχεσθαι ὅσα δὲ ἐντὸς ὄρων τοῦ κρεαδίου καὶ τοῦ πνευματίου, ταῦτα μεμνηῖσθαι μήτε σὰ ὄντα μήτε ἐπὶ σοί</p>	<p><i>Ceterum fides, pudor, iustitia &amp; veritas 'climatibus terrae, caelum petiere relictis.'</i> Quid ergo restat, quod te hic detineat? Sensiliane tam fluxa, totque mutationibus exposita? An sensus, obscuri, &amp; qui facile decipiantur? An animula ipsa, quae est exhalatio a sanguine? An gloria inter huiusmodi homines, inanis illa? Quid ergo aliud operiris, nisi vel extinctionem, vel translationem, idque aequo animo?</p>
<p>English from Greek: What is it, then, that still holds you here — if indeed the objects of sense are ever-changing and never standing, the organs of sense dim and easily deceived, the poor soul itself an exhalation from blood, and good repute among such beings emptiness? What then? You wait serenely for either extinction or removal. And until the time for that arrives, what suffices? What else but to reverence the gods and speak well of them, and to do good to men, to bear with them and to refrain from them; and as for all that lies within the bounds of this scrap of flesh and this little breath — to remember that it is neither yours nor in your power.</p>	<p>English from Latin: What is left, then, to keep you here? The objects of sense are fluid and constantly changing; our senses themselves are dim and easily deceived; the soul itself is an exhalation from the blood; and fame among such mortals is pure vanity. What else do you wait for but either your extinction or transformation, accepting either with an equal mind? And until that moment arrives, what is sufficient for you?</p>

**Language Differences:** To render Hesiod's poetic image of the classical virtues fleeing to heaven (πρὸς Ὀλυμπον ἀπὸ χθονὸς...), Xylander supplies a matching classical hexameter fragment from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: 'climatibus terrae, caelum petiere relictis.'

**Commentary:** Since the supreme cosmological virtues have seemingly fled the wide earth, external objects are shown to be hollow illusions. The only action that carries weight is to reverence the gods and execute social justice until dissolution arrives.

## Unobstructed Good

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Δύνασαι ἀεὶ εὐροεῖν, εἴ γε καὶ εὐοδεῖν, εἴ γε καὶ ὀδῶ ὑπολαμβάνειν καὶ πράσσειν. δύο ταῦτα κοινὰ τῇ τε τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τῇ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ παντὸς λογικοῦ ζώου ψυχῇ· τὸ μὴ ἐμποδίζεσθαι ὑπ' ἄλλου καὶ τὸ ἐν τῇ δικαϊκῇ διαθέσει καὶ πράξει ἔχειν τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ ἐνταῦθα τὴν ὄρεξιν ἀπολήγειν</p>	<p><i>Quid interim, dum eam occasio adducit, tibi sufficiet? Quid aliud, quam deos venerari &amp; collaudare, hominibus benefacere, eosque &amp; ferre &amp; iis abstinere; quaeque extra tuae carunculae &amp; animulae fines sunt posita, ea meminisse neque possessionis neque potestatis tuae esse? Semper potes uti secundis successibus, si recte viae insistere vis, duoque haec observare, quae divinae menti communia sunt cum hominis omnisque ratione praediti animalis animo: unum, non posse te ab alio impediri; alterum, in iusta voluntate &amp; actione bonum esse collocatum, eoque ad finem esse appetitiones dirigendas.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: You can always have a good flow of life, if you can go on a good road — if you can both judge and act in a good way. These two things are common to the soul of god and to the soul of man and of every rational creature: not to be impeded by another, and to hold the good to lie in a just disposition and just action, and to let desire end there.</p>	<p>English from Latin: What else but to revere and praise the gods, to do good to human beings, to bear with them, and to practice restraint toward them—remembering that what lies outside the boundaries of your poor flesh and breath is neither your property nor within your power? You can always ensure a fortunate course if you keep to the right path, keeping two principles in mind which are shared by the divine mind and the mind of every rational creature: First, that you cannot be obstructed by anyone else; second, that your true good resides in a just disposition and action, and that all your desires must end there.</p>

**Language Differences:** The Greek δικαϊκῇ διαθέσει (a just inner disposition) is rendered by Xylander as *iusta voluntate* ("a just will"), infusing a Roman emphasis on volitional choice.

**Commentary:** Marcus points to εὐροια, the smooth, unobstructed flow of life. Peace requires recognizing two things: that our internal choices cannot be forced by others, and that our real good resides solely in justice. Within these parameters, human reason operates on the same level as divine reason.

## Guarding the Common Good

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Εἰ μήτε κακία ἐστὶ τοῦτο ἐμὴ μήτε ἐνέργεια κατὰ κακίαν ἐμὴν μήτε τὸ κοινὸν βλάπτεται, τί ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ διαφέρομαι; τίς δὲ βλάβη τοῦ κοινοῦ; Μὴ ὀλοσχερῶς τῇ φαντασίᾳ συναρπάζεσθαι, ἀλλὰ βοηθεῖν μὲν κατὰ δύναμιν καὶ κατ' ἀξίαν, κἂν εἰς τὰ μέσα ἐλαττώνται, μὴ μέντοι βλάβην αὐτὸ φαντάζεσθαι· κακὸν γὰρ ἔθος. ἀλλ' ὡς ὁ γέρον ἀπελθὼν τὸν τοῦ θρεπτοῦ ρόμβον ἀπῆτει, μεμνημένος ὅτι ρόμβος, οὕτως οὖν καὶ &lt;σὺ&gt; ᾧδε. ἐπεὶ τοι γίνη κλαίων ἐπὶ τῶν ἐμβόλων· ἄνθρωπε, ἐπελάθου τί ταῦτα ἦν; “ναὶ· ἀλλὰ τούτοις περισπούδαστα.” διὰ τοῦτ' οὖν καὶ σὺ μωρὸς γένη</p>	<p><i>Si hoc neque mea sit malitia, neque actio a mea proficiscens malitia, neque communitati damno est, quid sollicitus de eo sum? Quod vero damnum est communis societatis? Non debemus nos cogitationibus omnino abripiendos praebere, sed opitulari quantum eius fieri potest &amp; dignum est, etiamsi in medio sit defectus: neque id pro damno ducere. Ea enim consuetudo mala est. Sed quemadmodum senex discedens rhombum alumni poscebat, memor rhombum esse: ita etiam hic, quoniam bonum aliquid fiat in rostris.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: If this is no vice of mine, nor an action that follows from my vice, and the common interest is not harmed — why am I troubled over it? And what harm is there to the common interest? Do not be carried away wholesale by the impression, but help men as far as you can and as they deserve, even if their loss is in things indifferent. Do not, however, imagine the loss as harm — that is a bad habit. Like the old man who, leaving, asked back his foster-child's top, remembering that it was a top — so do here as well. Indeed — you, lamenting on the rostra! Man, have you forgotten what these things were? 'Yes — but they are objects of great concern to these others.' Is that a reason for you to become a fool as well?</p>	<p>English from Latin: If this event is neither a fault of my own will nor an action springing from it, and if it does not harm the common welfare, why should I trouble myself over it? And what real harm can it cause to human society? We must not allow ourselves to be carried away headlong by our thoughts, but must help others as much as possible and as they deserve, even if they fail in minor things; yet we must not treat such failures as actual injuries, for that is a harmful habit. Act like the dying old man who, when leaving, still asked for his favorite toy, remembering perfectly well that it was just a toy. So also here: when something occurs in the forum, remember its true value. 'Hey man, have you forgotten what these things are?' 'Yes, but they are highly important to those people.' Is that any reason for you to become a fool too?</p>

**Language Differences:** Marcus uses the metaphor of an old man asking back a child's toy top (ρόμβον). Xylander keeps the structural context intact, mapping the toy directly via the noun rhombum.

**Commentary:** If an external complication is neither a moral failure of our own will nor an injury to common society, it must be dismissed as an irrelevant variable. Material shortfalls should be treated with the detached perspective of adults regarding children's toys.

## The Fortunate Man

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<i>“Ἐγενόμην ποτέ, όπουδήποτε καταληφθείς, εὖμοιρος ἄνθρωπος.” τὸ δὲ εὖμοιρος, ἀγαθὴν μοῖραν σεαυτῷ ἀπονείμας ἄγαθὴ δὲ μοῖρα ἄγαθαὶ τροπαὶ ψυχῆς, ἀγαθαὶ ὀρμαί, ἀγαθαὶ πράξεις</i>	<i>Heus homo, oblitus es quid haec sint? 'Sane: sed ea sunt, in quibus hi versantur.' Praeterea tu quoque stultus es factus? 'Aliquando, utcunque relictus, factus sum felix.' Felicitas autem est, ut bonam tibi ipsi sortem vendices: id est, boni motus animi, bonae appetitiones, bonae actiones.</i>
English from Greek: 'I was once a fortunate man — favored by lot, wherever and whenever you took me.' But 'fortunate' means: having assigned a good portion to yourself; and a good portion means good turnings of the soul, good impulses, good actions.	English from Latin: 'No matter how I was once abandoned, I became a fortunate man.' To have a good fortune means to carve it out for oneself; and a good fortune consists of good movements of the soul, good impulses, and good actions.

**Language Differences:** *Marcus's εὖμοιρος (favored by a good lot or portion) is translated by Xylander into humanist vocabulary as felix (happy/fortunate). The Greek τροπαὶ ψυχῆς (turnings/adaptations of the soul) becomes motus animi ("movements of the mind").*

**Commentary:** Book V closes by redefining luck. Genuine good fortune is never external chance or material assets; it is built within the mind through healthy impulses, just choices, and a well-regulated soul.

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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** (*metabolē*)

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.