

TO MYSELF



THE GRACIOUS EXIT

ἔξοδος

Depart, then, graciously.



MARCUS AURELIUS
ΤΩΝ ΕΙΣ ΕΑΥΤΟΝ · BOOK XII

CLASSIC MOTIVATION

THE GRACIOUS EXIT

ἔξοδος

Depart, then, graciously.

MARCUS AURELIUS ANTONINUS

Book XII of To Myself

Greek Original · Latin (Xylander, 1558)
English from the Greek · English from the Latin

CLASSIC MOTIVATION

To Myself – Book XII: The Gracious Exit

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This volume presents Book XII of the Meditations of Marcus Aurelius in four parallel columns: the Greek original, the Latin translation of Wilhelm Xylander (1558), a modern English rendering from the Greek, and a modern English rendering from the Latin — followed by notes on the language and commentary.

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

Book XII is the last, and it reads like a man setting his house in order. There are no new doctrines here — only the old ones, gathered, sharpened, and repeated with the urgency of someone who knows the hour is late. Have now, Marcus tells himself, everything you keep hoping to reach by a longer road; stop postponing. Live each remaining day as if it were the last, without agitation, without numbness, without pretense.

And so the whole work arrives, fittingly, at the door. Its final image is of an actor dismissed from the stage by the one who hired him — released before the fifth act, perhaps, but released by the same power that first called him on. There is nothing to fear and nothing to resent in that. Depart, then, graciously; for the one who lets you go is gracious too.

The Greek keyword of this book is ἔξοδος — the way out, the departure, the exit.

Introduction to Book XII

Book XII is a summing-up. Marcus wrote the *Meditations* for no one but himself, and by this final book the habit of self-address has become a kind of last testament: the great themes of the earlier books — providence and nature, the ruling faculty, the shortness of life, the folly of caring what others think — return here in concentrated form, stated plainly and pressed home. The book opens with the promise that everything he keeps hoping to reach by a roundabout path is available to him now, at once, if only he will stop standing in his own way.

Its recurring counsel is to strip things down to what they are. Divide any experience, he says, into its cause, its material, and the brief span within which it must end; look at events naked, without the stories we drape over them. Three relationships order the whole of life: to the divine cause from which each of us has come, to the body that will shortly be given back, and to the people around us, whom we are bound to serve. Guard the ruling faculty — the daimon within — keep it free of passion and aimlessness and discontent with what the gods and men allot, and you have all the philosophy you need.

Death runs quietly through every page and finally steps forward. Marcus reasons with his own fear of it the way he has taught himself to reason with every fear: it is natural, it is universal, it is not in our power to refuse, and it takes from us only the present moment, which is all anyone ever has. Then comes the famous close — the actor and the manager. You have played your part in this great city; if you are dismissed after three acts rather than five, remember that the one who first brought you onto the stage now signals you off it. Make your exit with good grace.

Read the columns together. This is the book in which to watch how Xylander's Latin renders Marcus's plainest and most personal reckonings — the divisions of experience, the three relations, the actor leaving the stage — and how the two English versions weigh that final, quiet dismissal. With this

volume the parallel-text edition of To Myself is complete. A few Latin passages in this book are editorial restorations, noted on the imprint page.

Book XII • The Gracious Exit

Book XII • Section 1

The Direct Path to Happiness

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Πάντα ἐκεῖνα, ἐφ' ἃ διὰ περιόδου εὐχῆ ἐλθεῖν, ἤδη ἔχειν δύνασαι, ἐὰν μὴ σαυτῶ φθονῆς. τοῦτο δέ ἐστιν, ἐὰν πᾶν τὸ παρελθὸν καταλίπῃς καὶ τὸ μέλλον ἐπιτρέψῃς τῇ προνοίᾳ καὶ τὸ παρὸν μόνον ἀπευθύνῃς πρὸς ὁσιότητα καὶ δικαιοσύνην. ὁσιότητα μὲν, ἵνα φιλῆς τὸ ἀπονεμόμενον· σοὶ γὰρ αὐτὸ ἡ φύσις ἔφερεν καὶ σὲ τοῦτῳ· δικαιοσύνην δέ, ἵνα ἐλευθέρως καὶ χωρὶς περιπλοκῆς λέγῃς τε τάληθῆ καὶ πράσῃς τὰ κατὰ νόμον καὶ κατ' ἀξίαν· μὴ ἐμποδίζῃ δέ σε μήτε κακία ἀλλοτρία μήτε ὑπόληψις μήτε φωνὴ μηδὲ μὴν αἴσθησις τοῦ περιτεθραμμένου σοὶ σαρκιδίου· ὄψεται γὰρ τὸ πάσχον. ἐὰν οὖν, ὅτε δήποτε πρὸς ἐξόδῳ γίνῃ, πάντα τὰ ἄλλα καταλιπὼν μόνον τὸ ἡγεμονικόν σου καὶ τὸ ἐν σοὶ θεῖον τιμήσῃς καὶ μὴ τὸ παύσασθαί ποτε <τοῦ> ζῆν φοβηθῆς, ἀλλὰ τό γε μηδέποτε ἄρξασθαί κατὰ φύσιν ζῆν, ἔση ἄνθρωπος ἄξιος τοῦ γεννηθέντος κόσμου καὶ παύσῃ ξένος ὢν τῆς πατρίδος καὶ θαυμάζων ὡς ἀπροσδόκητα τὰ καθ' ἡμέραν γινόμενα καὶ κρεμύμενος ἐκ τοῦδε καὶ τοῦδε</p>	<p><i>Omnia illa ad quae per circuitum perveniendi vota facis, iam nunc habere potes, si tibi ipse non invideris; id autem est, si praeterita omnia dimiseris et futura providentiae permiseris et praesens solum ad pietatem iustitiamque direxeris. Pietatem quidem, ut amentur quae distribuuntur: natura enim ea tibi, teque iis attulit. Iustitiam vero, ut libere et sine ambagibus, et veritatem loquaris, et quae ex lege et pro dignitate sunt agas. Neque te impediatur malicia aliena, neque opinio, neque uox, neque etiam sensus circumpositi tibi corpusculi: sentiet enim id quod patitur. Si igitur, quando cunque ad exitum veneris, ceteris omnibus omissis, solum tuum principatum et id quod in te divinum est honores, et non illud reformides, aliquando desinere te vivere, sed illud quod necdum coeperis secundum naturam vivere: eris homo dignus mundo qui te genuit, et desines esse peregrinus in patria tua, et mirari tanquam insperata quae quotidie fiunt, et ab hoc et ab illo pendere.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: All those things at which you pray to arrive by a roundabout way, you can have now — if you do not begrudge them to yourself. That is: if you leave behind all the past, entrust the future to providence, and direct the present, alone, toward holiness and justice. Holiness, that you may love what is allotted — for nature brought it to you, and you to it. Justice, that freely and without entanglement you may speak the truth and do the things that accord with law and with worth. And let nothing impede you: not another's wickedness, nor opinion, nor</p>	<p>English from Latin: All those things for which you make vows to arrive at by a circuitous path, you can now have, if you do not begrudge them to yourself; and this is so if you release all the past, commit the future to providence, and direct the present alone toward piety and justice. Piety, indeed, so that you may love what is allotted: for nature brought it to you, and you to it. Justice, that freely and without entanglement you may speak the truth and do the things that accord with law and with worth. And let neither another's malice, nor opinion, nor voice, nor even the</p>

<p>voice, nor any sensation of this lump of flesh grown round you — let the part affected see to it. If then, when you come at last to the exit, leaving all else behind you honor only your ruling faculty and the divine within you — if what you fear is not that you must some time cease to live, but rather never to have begun to live according to nature — then you will be a man worthy of the cosmos that begot you, and you will cease to be a stranger in your own fatherland, astonished at what happens every day as at something unexpected, and hanging on this and on that.</p>	<p>sensation of this little body grown round you impede you — for the part affected will see to it. If then, when you come at last to the exit, leaving all else behind you, you honor only your ruling faculty and the divine within you, and do not fear that you must some time cease to live, but rather that you never began to live according to nature, then you will be a man worthy of the cosmos that begot you, and you will cease to be a stranger in your own fatherland, astonished at what happens every day as at something unexpected, and hanging on this and on that.</p>
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Language Differences: Marcus uses *διὰ περιόδου* (by a roundabout detour or circular path). Xylander matches this with *per circuitum*. The central ethical command *πρὸς ὁσιότητα καὶ δικαιοσύνην* (toward holiness / piety and justice) is balanced as *ad pietatem iustitiamque*. Xylander condenses the second half of this long opening chapter, omitting the graphic description of the body as an attached lump of flesh (*σαρκιδίου*).

Commentary: Marcus challenges the common human tendency to pursue peace through long, complex detours — chasing wealth, public validation, or future security. True tranquility is always immediately available via a simple temporal shortcut: cut away the past (which is gone), surrender the future to providence, and apply absolute justice and acceptance to the present moment. True existential danger is not dying, but failing to live in alignment with nature while alive.

Book XII · Section 2

The Naked Mind

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Ὁ θεὸς πάντα τὰ ἡγεμονικὰ γυμνὰ τῶν ὑλικῶν ἀγγείων καὶ φλοιῶν καὶ καθαρμάτων ὄρᾳ· μόνῳ γὰρ τῷ ἑαυτοῦ νοερῷ μόνῳ ἀπτεται τῶν ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ εἰς ταῦτα ἐρρήρηκῶτων καὶ ἀπωχετευμένων. ἔαν δὲ καὶ σὺ τοῦτο ἐθίσης ποιεῖν, τὸν πολὺν περισπασμὸν σεαυτοῦ περιαιρήσεις· ὁ γὰρ μὴ τὰ περικείμενα κρεάδια ὄρων, ἥπου γε ἐσθῆτα καὶ οἰκίαν καὶ δόξαν καὶ τὴν τοιαύτην περιβολὴν καὶ σκηνὴν θεώμενος ἀσχολήσεται</p>	<p><i>Deus omnia principatus nudos a materialibus vasis et cortibus et sordibus videt; sola enim sua intelligentia attingit ea quae ex seipso in haec effluxa et traducta sunt. Quod si et tu id facere assuefeceris, multum a te abicies distractionis: nam qui circumposita sibi carunculas non videt, num is vestem aut domum aut gloriam et talem circumamictum et scaenam spectando occupatus erit?</i></p>

<p>English from Greek: God sees all the ruling faculties bare of their material vessels and husks and dross; for with his own intelligence alone he touches only what has flowed and been channeled out of himself into them. If you too accustom yourself to do this, you will rid yourself of most of your distraction. For will the man who does not look at the surrounding flesh spend his time gazing at dress and house and reputation and all such costume and scenery?</p>	<p>English from Latin: God sees all the ruling principles naked of their material vessels and husks and impurities; for with his own intelligence alone he touches those things that have flowed and been led from himself into these. If you too accustom yourself to do this, you will cast off much distraction; for he who does not look at the scraps of flesh surrounding him, will he be occupied with gazing at dress, house, reputation, and such costume and scenery?</p>
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Language Differences: Marcus uses the vivid compound ἀπωχετευμένων (led away by a trench, or systematically channeled out). Xylander renders this using early-modern hydraulic vocabulary as traducta sunt ("led over / transferred"). Marcus's material catalog — ἀγγείων καὶ φλοιῶν καὶ καθααρμάτων (vessels, husks, and dross) — maps to vasis et cortibus et sordibus.

Commentary: Marcus frames introspection through divine vision. The universal divinity perceives human minds completely bare, stripped of bodily shells, clothing, or social titles. Because human reason is an emanation (ἐρρύηκῶν) that flowed directly from this cosmic source, the mind is inherently divine. Mimicking this divine focus by ignoring external scenery ensures immediate leisure.

Book XII · Section 3

The Three Parts of Man

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Τρία ἐστὶν ἐξ ὧν συνέστηκας ἰσώματιον, πνευμάτιον, νοῦς. τούτων τὰλλα μέχρι τοῦ ἐπιμελεῖσθαι δεῖν σά ἐστι, τὸ δὲ τρίτον μόνον κυρίως σόν. <δι>ὸ ἐὰν χωρίσης ἀπὸ σεαυτοῦ, τουτέστιν ἀπὸ τῆς σῆς διανοίας, ὅσα ἄλλοι ποιοῦσιν ἢ λέγουσιν ἢ ὅσα αὐτὸς ἐποίησας ἢ εἶπας καὶ ὅσα ὡς μέλλοντα τaráσσει σε καὶ ὅσα τοῦ περικειμένου σοι σωματίου ἢ τοῦ συμφύτου πνευματίου ἀπροαίρετα πρόσεστιν καὶ ὅσα ἢ ἐξωθεν περιρρέουσα δίνηέλίσσει, ὥστε τῶν συνειμαρμένων ἐξηρημένην, καθαρὰν <τε> τὴν νοερὰν δύναμιν <καὶ> ἀπόλυτον ἐφ' ἑαυτῆς ζῆν, ποιοῦσαν τὰ δίκαια καὶ θέλουσαν τὰ συμβαίνοντα καὶ λέγουσαν τάληθῆ ἑὰν χωρίσης, φημί,</p>	<p><i>Tria sunt ex quibus compositus es: corpusculum, spiritulum, mens. Horum duo hactenus tua sunt quod cura indigeant; tertium vero proprie tuum. Quare si a teipso, id est, a tua mente, separaveris quae alii agunt aut dicunt, aut quae ipse egisti aut dixisti, et quae te futura conturbant, et quae ad corpusculum tibi circumpositum aut ad spiritulum congenitum absque tuo delectu pertinent, et quae vortex externus circumvolvitur, ut intellectus tui vis, a fato exempta, pura et libera per se vivat, iusta faciens, volens quae accidunt, vera loquens: si, inquam, ab hoc principatu separaveris quae ei ex affectione adhaerent, et quae tempora</i></p>

<p>τοῦ ἡγεμονικοῦ τούτου τὰ προσηρημένα ἐκ προσπαθείας καὶ τοῦ χρόνου τὰ ἐπέκεινα ἢ τὰ παρωχηκότα, ποιήσης τε σεαυτόν, οἷος ὁ Ἐμπεδόκλειος σφαῖρος κυκλοτερῆς μονίῃ περιγηθεῖ γαίων, μόνον τε ζῆν ἐκμελετήσης ὃ ζῆς, τουτέστι τὸ παρόν, δυνήσῃ τό γε μέχρι τοῦ ἀποθανεῖν ὑπολειπόμενον ἀταράκτως καὶ εὐμενῶς καὶ ἴλεως τῷ σαυτοῦ δαίμονι διαβιώναι</p>	<p><i>posthac aut praeterita sunt, teque ipsum feceris talem, qualem Empedoclis sphaeram, rotunda statione gaudentem, et solum vivere mediteris id quod vivis, hoc est, praesens: poteris certe reliquum vitae tempus usque ad mortem, tranquille, benigne, et propitio tuo ipsius genio, transigere.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: There are three things of which you are composed: a little body, a little breath, and mind. Of these, the first two are yours to the extent that you must care for them; only the third is properly your own. Therefore, if you separate from yourself — that is, from your understanding — whatever others do or say, whatever you yourself have done or said, whatever troubles you as still to come, whatever belongs without your choice to the surrounding body or the connate breath, and whatever the outer swirling vortex whirls around — so that the intellectual power, exempted from the things of fate, lives pure and free by itself, doing what is just, willing what happens, and speaking what is true; if, I say, you separate from this ruling faculty the things that cling to it from attachment, and the times beyond and the times gone by, and make yourself like the sphere of Empedocles, 'rounded, rejoicing in the stillness that surrounds it,' and practice living only what you live — that is, the present — then you will be able to pass at least the remainder of your life until death untroubled, with kindness, and at peace with your own guiding spirit.</p>	<p>English from Latin: Three things of which you are composed: a small body, a small spirit, and mind. Of these two are yours only insofar as they need care; but the third is properly yours. Therefore if you separate from yourself—that is, from your understanding—whatever others do or say, or whatever you yourself have done or said, and whatever troubles you as future, and whatever belongs without your choice to the small body surrounding you or the connate spirit, and whatever the external vortex whirls around, so that the intellectual power, exempted from things of fate, lives pure and free by itself, doing just things, willing what happens, and speaking truth; if, I say, you separate from this ruling faculty the things that cling to it from attachment, and times beyond and times gone by, and make yourself like the sphere of Empedocles, 'rounded, rejoicing in the stillness that surrounds it,' and practice living only what you live — that is, the present — you will be able to pass at least the remainder of your life until death untroubled, with kindness, and at peace with your own guiding spirit.</p>

Language Differences: *Marcus uses double diminutives to emphasize material insignificance: σωματίον and πνευμάτιον. Xylander matches these exactly with the Latin diminutives corpusculum and spiritulum. He condenses the long Empedoclean quotation (Ἐμπεδόκλειος σφαῖρος) to keep focus tight on the main moral rule.*

Commentary: Marcus presents his definitive division of human composition. While the biological body and breath are leased to him to maintain, his true identity resides exclusively within his intellect (νοῦς). By stripping away past regrets, future anxieties, and external complications, the mind gathers into an autonomous, balanced sphere, perfectly content with its own internal reason.

Self-Love vs. Reputation

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Πολλάκις ἐθαύμασα πῶς ἑαυτὸν μὲν ἕκαστος μᾶλλον πάντωνφιλεῖ, τὴν δὲ ἑαυτοῦ περὶ αὐτοῦ ὑπόληψιν ἐν ἐλάττωι λόγῳ τίθεται ἢ τὴν τῶν ἄλλων. ἔαν γοῦν τινα θεὸς ἐπιστὰς ἢ διδάσκαλος ἔμφρων κελεύσῃ μὴδὲν καθ' αὐτὸν ἐνθυμεῖσθαι καὶ διανοεῖσθαι ἢ μὴ ἅμα καὶ γεγωνίσκων ἐξοίσει, οὐδὲ πρὸς μίαν ἡμέραν τοῦτοῦπομενεῖ. οὕτως τοὺς πέλας μᾶλλον αἰδούμεθα, τί ποτε περιήμων φρονήσουσιν, ἢ ἑαυτοῦς</p>	<p><i>Saepe miratus sum quomodo unusquisque seipsum quidem omnibus magis diligit, suam tamen de se ipso opinionem minoris faciat quam aliorum. Si quis vero deus aut praeceptor sapiens adesset, qui iuberet nihil te ipsum apud te cogitare aut mente agitare, quod non statim eloqui possis: ne unum quidem diem id sustineres. Tantum nos maiorem rationem habemus eorum quae finitimi nostri de nobis sentient, quam eorum quae nos ipsi de nobis.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: I have often wondered how it is that every man loves himself more than all other men, yet sets less value on his own opinion of himself than on the opinion of others. At any rate, if a god appeared to a man, or some wise teacher, and ordered him to think and design nothing within himself that he would not also utter aloud the moment he conceived it, he would not endure it even for a single day. So much more do we stand in awe of our neighbors — of what they will think of us — than of ourselves.</p>	<p>English from Latin: I have often marveled how each person loves himself indeed more than all others, yet places his own opinion of himself as of less value than that of others. If, however, some god or wise teacher were present, commanding that you think and design nothing within yourself that you would not also utter aloud the moment you conceived it, you would not endure it even for a single day. So much more do we stand in awe of our neighbors—of what they will think of us—than of ourselves.</p>

Language Differences: *Marcus uses ἐν ἐλάττωι λόγῳ τίθεται (to treat as less significant / hold in lower estimation). Xylander captures this via the standard mercantile Latin idiom minoris faciat ("to value at less"). He condenses the illustrative thought experiment regarding speaking thoughts aloud.*

Commentary: Marcus exposes a bizarre psychological paradox: humans are naturally self-interested, yet value the superficial opinions of complete strangers over their own independent conscience. He unmasks this hypocrisy through a thought experiment: if forced to broadcast every internal thought aloud to the public, an individual would endure agony, proving that humanity fears public judgment far more than its own moral failures.

Divine Justice and Death

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Πῶς ποτε πάντα καλῶς καὶ φιλανθρώπως διατάξαντες οἱ θεοὶ τοῦτο μόνον παρείδον, τὸ ἐνίους τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ πάνυ χρηστοὺς καὶ πλεῖστα πρὸς τὸ θεῖον ὡς περ συμβόλαια θεμένων· καὶ ἐπὶ πλεῖστον δι' ἔργων ὀσίων καὶ ἱερουργιῶν συνήθεις τῷ θεῷ γενομένους, ἐπειδὴν ἅπαξ ἀποθάνωσι, μηκέτι αὐθις γίνεσθαι, ἀλλ' εἰς τὸ παντελὲς ἀπεσβηκέναι; τοῦτο δὲ εἶπερ ἄρα καὶ οὕτως ἔχει, εὖ ἴσθι ὅτι, εἰ ὡς ἐτέρως ἔχει ἔδει, ἐποίησαν ἄν' εἰ γὰρ δίκαιον ἦν, ἦν ἂν καὶ δυνατόν, καὶ εἰ κατὰ φύσιν, ἦνεγκεν ἄναυτὸ ἡ φύσις. Ἐκ δὲ τοῦ μὴ οὕτως ἔχειν, εἶπερ οὐχ οὕτως ἔχει, πιστούσθω σοι τὸ μὴ δεῆσαι οὕτως γίνεσθαι· ὁρᾷς γὰρ καὶ αὐτὸς ὅτι τοῦτο παραζητῶν δικαιολογῆ πρὸς τὸν θεόν· οὐκ ἂν δ' οὕτως διελεγόμεθα τοῖς θεοῖς, εἰ μὴ ἄριστοι καὶ δικαιοτάτοι ἦσαν. εἶδὲ τοῦτο, οὐκ ἂν τι περιείδον ἀδίκως καὶ ἀλόγως ἡμελημένων ἐν τῇ διακοσμῇσει</p>	<p><i>Quomodo tandem dii omnia belle et humaniter disponentes hoc solum neglexerunt, ut certi homines, et valde probi, et qui cum divina natura quasi pacta inierunt, et per opera sancta atque sacra Deo familiares facti sunt, post mortem nusquam amplius existant, sed penitus extinguantur? Quod si ita se res habet, scito bene, quod si aliter esse oportuisset, fecissent: si enim iustum esset, fuisset etiam possibile: si vero secundum naturam, natura id tulisset. Ex eo autem quod ita non est, siquidem ita non est, certus esto non debuisse ita fieri. Vides enim et ipse, quod hoc inquirendo causam iustitiae apud Deum agas: neque sic cum diis disputaremus, nisi optimi et iustissimi essent. Quod si hoc ita est, nullo modo neglexissent iniuste aut irrationabiliter aliquid eorum quae in mundi dispositione sunt.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: How can it be that the gods, who ordered all things well and with love for mankind, overlooked this one thing: that some men, thoroughly good, who had — as it were — the most dealings with the divine, and through holy works and sacred service had grown most intimate with it, once they have died, never come to be again, but are utterly extinguished? If indeed it is so, be sure of this: had it needed to be otherwise, they would have made it so. For if it were just, it would also be possible; and if according to nature, nature would have brought it about. Therefore from its not being so — if indeed it is not so — let this assure you: it ought not to have come to pass so. For you see yourself that in raising this question you are pleading a case of justice with god; and we would not be arguing thus with the gods unless they were most good and most just. And if that is so, they would not have allowed anything in their ordering of the cosmos to be unjustly and unreasonably neglected.</p>	<p>English from Latin: How is it that the gods, who have arranged all things beautifully and humanely, neglected this one thing — that certain men, thoroughly good, who had — as it were — the most dealings with the divine, and through holy works and sacred service had grown most intimate with it, once they have died, never come to be again, but are utterly extinguished? If indeed it is so, be sure of this: had it needed to be otherwise, they would have made it so. For if it were just, it would also be possible; and if according to nature, nature would have brought it about. Therefore from its not being so — if indeed it is not so — let this assure you: it ought not to have come to pass so. For you see yourself that in raising this question you are pleading a case of justice with God; and we would not be arguing thus with the gods unless they were most good and most just. And if that is so, they would not have allowed anything in their ordering of the cosmos to be unjustly and unreasonably neglected.</p>

Language Differences: Marcus uses the legalistic phrase *ὡσπερ συμβόλαια θεμένων* (having established contracts / covenants with the divine). Xylander translates the physical target *εἰς τὸ παντελὲς ἀπεσβηκέναι* (completely and utterly quenched) precisely as *penitus extinguantur*.

Commentary: This entry contains the most candid theological doubt in the entire diary. Marcus asks why the finest, most pious human souls are completely extinguished at death. He resolves the question through a circular argument based on character: if survival after death were inherently required by justice, the gods would have designed the universe to allow it. The fact that we can even conceptualize justice proves that the cosmic order is rational, meaning death can never be an error.

Book XII · Section 6

Practice Even the Difficult

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<i>Ἔθιζε καὶ ὅσα ἀπογινώσκεις. καὶ γὰρ ἡ χεὶρ ἢ ἀριστερὰ πρὸς τὰ ἄλλα διὰ τὸ ἀνέθιστον ἀργὸς οὖσα τοῦ χαλινοῦ ἐρῶμενέστερον ἢ ἡ δεξιὰ κρατεῖ· τοῦτο γὰρ εἴθισται</i>	<i>Exerce etiam ea quae desperata videntur; nam et manus sinistra ad alia propter insuetudinem iners cum sit, frenum tamen firmius quam dextra tenet; hoc enim consuevit.</i>
English from Greek: Practice even what is thought to be hopeless; for the left hand, though idle for other tasks due to lack of habit, holds the bridle more firmly than the right — because it has been trained to do so.	English from Latin: Exercise even those things which seem desperate; for the left hand, though for other things is idle through disuse, holds the bridle more firmly than the right; for this it has been accustomed to.

Language Differences: *ἀπογινωσκόμενα* (actions given up as completely hopeless or despaired of) is cleanly rendered by Xylander using the classical Latin adjective *desperata*. The noun *τοῦ χαλινοῦ* (the rein / bridle) maps directly to *frenum*.

Commentary: Marcus supplies a concrete analogy drawn from horsemanship. While the left hand is naturally weaker due to lack of habit (*ἀνέθιστον*), it holds the heavy leather reins far more securely than the dominant right hand because it has been systematically trained to. Virtue functions the same mechanical way: behaviors that initially feel impossible become natural through sustained, habitual practice (*ἔθιζε*).

Book XII · Section 7

The State of Departure

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Ὅποῖον δεῖ καταληφθῆναι ὑπὸ τοῦ θανάτου καὶ σώματι καὶ ψυχῇ· τὴν βραχύτητα τοῦ βίου· τὴν ἀχάνειαν τοῦ ὀπίσω καὶ πρόσω αἰῶνος· τὴν ἀσθένειαν πάσης ὕλης</p>	<p><i>Quali te a morte depreheniri oportet et corpore et anima; brevitatis vitae; immensum temporis ante et post; putredo materiae.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: Consider in what state, of body and of soul, one ought to be overtaken by death; the shortness of life; the yawning gulf of time behind and before; the weakness of all matter.</p>	<p>English from Latin: In what state ought you to be caught by death, both in body and soul: the shortness of life; the immensity of time before and after; the putrefaction of matter.</p>

Language Differences: The dramatic Greek noun ἀχάνειαν (a yawning, boundless chasm) is translated abstractly by Xylander as immensum ("the boundless infinity"). Marcus's description ἀσθένειαν (weakness / fragility) is sharpened into putredo (decay / putrefaction).

Commentary: A structured meditation on preparation. To face death with composure, look directly past external labels to view reality naked: human lifespan is a fleeting point, material time is an infinite chasm, and the biological body is an inherently weak compound destined for decay.

Book XII · Section 8

Naked Causes

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Γυμνὰ τῶν φλοιῶν θεάσασθαι τὰ αἰτιώδη· τὰς ἀναφορὰς τῶν πράξεων· τί πόνος· τί ἡδονή· τί θάνατος· τί δόξα· τίς οὐχ ἑαυτῶ ἀσχολίας αἴτιος· πῶς οὐδεὶς ὑπ ἄλλου ἐμποδίζεται· ὅτι πάντα ὑπόληψις</p>	<p><i>Causas nudas a cortibus intueri. Actuum relationes. Quid dolor; quid voluptas; quid mors; quid gloria; quis non sibi ipsi occupationis causa est; quomodo nemo ab alio impeditur; quod omnia opinio.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: Look at the causal principles stripped of their husks; at the references of actions; at what pain is, what pleasure, what death, what fame; who is not the cause of his own lack of leisure; how no one is impeded by another; and that everything is opinion.</p>	<p>English from Latin: To behold the causes naked of their husks. The references of actions. What is pain; what is pleasure; what is death; what is glory; who is not the cause of his own lack of leisure; how no one is impeded by another; and that everything is opinion.</p>

Language Differences: Marcus uses the vivid image γυμνὰ τῶν φλοιῶν (naked of their bark / husks). Xylander matches this precisely with nudas a cortibus. The foundational axiom πάντα ὑπόληψις translates exactly as omnia opinio.

Commentary: Analytical reduction is applied to strip external things of their emotional power. Pain, pleasure, fame, and death are stripped of their social padding and examined naked. Because internal judgment (ὑπόληψις) is the sole source of value, an individual cannot be truly obstructed by external actors.

Book XII · Section 9

Principles like Wrestling

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Ὅμοιον εἶναι [δεῖ] ἐν τῇ τῶν δογμάτων χρήσει παγκρατιαστῆ, οὐχὶ μονομάχῳ· ὁ μὲν γὰρ τὸ ξίφος ὧ χρηταί ἀποτίθεται καὶ ἀναιρεῖται· ὁ δὲ τὴν χεῖρα ἀεὶ ἔχει καὶ οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἢ συστρέψαι αὐτὴν δεῖ</p>	<p><i>In usu dogmatum similis esse oportet pancratiastae, non gladiatori; hic enim gladium quo utitur deponit et occiditur; ille autem manum semper habet nec aliud opus est quam intendere eam.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: In the use of principles, one should be like a pancratist, not a gladiator; for the gladiator sets aside the sword he uses and is killed; but the wrestler always has his hand and needs nothing more than to flex it.</p>	<p>English from Latin: In the use of principles one should be like a pancratiast, not a gladiator; for the latter sets aside the sword he uses and is killed; but the former always has his hand and needs only to flex it.</p>

Language Differences: Marcus selects παγκρατιαστῆ (the combatant of the all-out pancration). Xylander preserves this specialized Greek noun as pancratiastae because no single Latin word captured this continuous style of hand-to-hand combat.

Commentary: A precise athletic comparison. A gladiator relies on an external weapon (the sword) that can be stripped away, leaving him defenseless; a pancratist uses his own hands, which are an intrinsic part of his body and require only activation. Philosophical tenets (δόγματα) must operate like hands — fully embedded within our character and ready to use instantly in any scenario.

Book XII · Section 10

Essence of Things

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Αὐτὰ τὰ πράγματα ὁρᾶν, διαιροῦντα εἰς ὕλην, αἴτιον, ἀναφοράν</p>	<p><i>Res uti sunt cernere, dividendo in materiam, causam, relationem.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: See things themselves as they are, dividing them into material, cause, and reference.</p>	<p>English from Latin: To see things as they are by dividing them into matter, cause, and relation.</p>

Language Differences: The functional noun ἀναφοράν (the target reference / ultimate objective) is translated standardly by Xylander as relationem.

Commentary: This forms the core analytical program of Stoic logic. To process any complex or overwhelming scenario, divide it into its constituent parts: its physical substance (ὕλη), its efficient cause (αἴτιον), and its structural utility in the world.

Book XII · Section 11

Human Sovereignty

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
Ἡλίκτην ἐξουσίαν ἔχει ἄνθρωπος μὴ ποιεῖν ἄλλο ἢ ὅπερ μέλλει ὁ θεὸς ἐπαινεῖν, καὶ δέχεσθαι πᾶν ὃ ἂν νέμῃ αὐτῷ ὁ θεός, <ὡς>τὸ ἐξῆς τῆ φύσει	<i>Quam potestatem habet homo, nihil aliud facere quam quod deus laudaturus est, et acceptare omne quod deus ei distribuit.</i>
English from Greek: What power man has: to do nothing except what god will praise, and to receive everything god assigns him as what follows from nature.	English from Latin: What power man has: to do nothing other than what God will praise, and to accept all that God distributes to him.

Language Differences: The forceful Greek noun ἐξουσίαν (absolute sovereign authority / jurisdiction) is translated by Xylander as potestatem.

Commentary: Human beings possess a unique moral jurisdiction. True freedom is achieved by restricting choices entirely to things under personal control, executing justice in every action, and embracing external circumstances with goodwill.

Book XII · Section 12

No Blame in the Universe

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
Μῆτε θεοῖς μεμπτέον· οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐκόντες ἢ ἄκοντες ἀμαρτάνουσι· μήτε ἀνθρώποις· οὐδὲν γὰρ οὐχὶ ἄκοντες. ὥστε οὐδενὶ μεμπτέον	<i>In iis quae secundum naturam accidunt nec dii accusandi (nihil enim aut volentes aut inviti peccant) nec homines (nihil enim hi peccant nisi inviti). Itaque nemini accusandum.</i>
English from Greek: The gods are not to be blamed — for they do no wrong, willingly	English from Latin: In those things which happen according to nature, neither the

or unwillingly; nor men — for they do no wrong except unwillingly. Therefore no one is to be blamed.	gods are to be blamed (for they do no wrong, willingly or unwillingly) nor men (for these sin in nothing except unwillingly). Therefore no one is to be blamed.
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Language Differences: *Xylander inserts a helpful contextual condition to open the block: In iis quae secundum naturam accidunt ("In those things which happen according to nature"). The verb μαιμρτέον maps exactly to accusandum.*

Commentary: A complete justification of cosmic order in three clauses. The divine steering principles are inherently incapable of error; human wrongdoers act only out of cognitive ignorance regarding what is good; therefore, finding fault with circumstances or individuals is a basic logical error. With blame retired, the only remaining duty is to instruct or bear with others.

Book XII · Section 13

Surprise Is a Sign of Ignorance

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<i>Πῶς γελοῖος καὶ ξένος ὁ θαυμάζων καὶ ὀτιοῦν τῶν ἐν τῷ βίωγινομένων</i>	<i>Ut ridiculus et alienus qui miratur quicquam eorum quae in vita accidunt.</i>
English from Greek: How ridiculous and out of place is the one who marvels at anything that happens in life.	English from Latin: How ridiculous and out of place is he who marvels at anything of those things which happen in life.

Language Differences: *The original Greek ξένος (a foreigner, stranger, or guest) is cleanly mapped to Xylander's alienus. Both terms convey an absolute alienation from the baseline rules of the environment.*

Commentary: Being shocked by ordinary human actions or natural transitions is an admission of ignorance. Betrayal, sickness, and decay are predictable outcomes of cosmic physics; to look on them with astonishment indicates that you are living like a complete stranger in your own fatherland.

Book XII · Section 14

Three Views of the World

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<i>Ἦτοι ἀνάγκη εἰμαρμένης καὶ ἀπαράβατος τάξις ἢ πρόνοιαιλάσιμος ἢ</i>	<i>Aut fatum necessarium et inviolabilis ordo, aut providentia placabilis, aut</i>

<p>φυρμὸς εἰκαιότητος ἀπροστάτητος. εἰ μὲν οὐν ἀπαράβατος ἀνάγκη, τί ἀντιτείνεις; εἰ δὲ πρόνοια ἐπιδεχομένη τὸ ἰλάσκεσθαι, ἄξιον ἑαυτὸν ποιήσων τῆς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ βοηθείας. εἰ δὲ φυρμὸς ἀνηγεμόνευτος, ἀσμένιζε ὅτι ἐν τοιούτῳ τῶ κλύδωνι αὐτὸς ἔχεις ἐν ἑαυτῷ τινα νοῦν ἡγεμονικόν, κἂν παραφέρῃσῃ ὁ κλύδων, παραφερέτω τὸ σαρκίδιον, τὸ πνεύματιον, τάλλα ἄ τὸν γὰρ νοῦν οὐ παροίσει</p>	<p><i>temeraria confusio sine rectore. Si fatum, cur resisti? Si providentia, dignum te effice. Si confusio, satis esto quod in tali tempestate mentem habes regnantem. Quod si tempestas te abripit, abripiat corpusculum, spiritulum, ceterosque; mentem enim non abripiet.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: Either the necessity of destiny and an order that cannot be transgressed; or a providence open to prayer; or a chaos of randomness without a governor. If a necessity that cannot be transgressed, why do you resist? If a providence admitting of propitiation, make yourself worthy of the divine help. If an ungoverned chaos, be glad that in such a surge you have within yourself a governing mind. And if the surge carries you away, let it carry the flesh, the breath, the rest — the mind it will not carry away.</p>	<p>English from Latin: Either necessary fate and an inviolable order, or a propitious providence, or a reckless confusion without a ruler. If fate — why resist? If providence — make yourself worthy. If confusion — be content that you have a ruling mind. And if the surge carries you away, let it carry the flesh, the breath, the rest — the mind it will not carry away.</p>

Language Differences: The beautiful phrase *φυρμὸς εἰκαιότητος ἀπροστάτητος* (an un-piloted mash of randomness) is elegantly packed by Xylander as *temeraria confusio sine rectore* ("a reckless confusion without a ruler").

Commentary: Marcus reviews his classic triple layout of physics to stabilize intention. If absolute fate rules, fighting it is futile; if a merciful providence governs, make your character worthy of divine help; if the world is an unguided storm of random atoms, take comfort that you possess a sovereign mind capable of self-governance.

Book XII · Section 15

The Lamp of Virtue

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>ἢ τὸ μὲν τοῦ λύχνου φῶς, μέχρι σβεσθῆ, φαίνει καὶ τὴν αὐγὴν οὐκ ἀποβάλλει, ἢ δὲ ἐν σοι ἀλήθεια καὶ δικαιοσύνη καὶ σωφροσύνη προαποσβήσεται</p>	<p><i>Si lucerna, donec exstinguatur, lucet neque splendorem abiicit, veritas et iustitia et temperantia in te prius exstinguetur?</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: If the lamp shines until it is extinguished and does not shed its light before the end, will the truth,</p>	<p>English from Latin: If the lamp shines until extinguished and does not cast away its brightness, will truth and justice and</p>

justice, and temperance within you be extinguished before their time?	temperance within you be extinguished prematurely?
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Language Differences: The radiant Greek noun ἀγήν (the bright beam of light) is translated effectively by Xylander as splendorem.

Commentary: One of the most beautiful metaphors in the Meditations. A physical oil lamp continues to emit its full brightness until the absolute second its fuel is spent. Human character should move through life in the same way, keeping truth and justice burning at peak intensity right up to the final second of dissolution. Dimming your virtues prematurely is the only real failure.

Book XII · Section 16

Guilt and the Fig Tree

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Ἐπὶ τοῦ φαντασίαν παρασχόντος ὅτι ἤμαρτε· τί δαὶ οἶδα εἰ τοῦτο ἀμάρτημα; εἰ δὲ καὶ ἤμαρτεν, ὅτι <οὐ> κατέκρινεν αὐτὸς ἑαυτόν, καὶ οὕτως ὅμοιον τοῦτο τῷ καταδρύπτειν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ὄψιν; Ὅτι ὁ μὴ θέλων τὸν φαῦλον ἀμαρτάνειν ὅμοιος τῷ μὴ θέλοντι τὴν συκῆν ὁπὸν ἐν τοῖς σύκοις φέρειν καὶ τὰ βρέφη κλαυθυρίζεσθαι καὶ τὸν ἵππον χρεμετίζειν καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα ἀναγκαῖα. τί γὰρ πάθη τὴν ἕξιν ἔχων τοιαύτην; εἰ οὖν γοργὸς εἶ, ταύτην θεράπευσον</p>	<p><i>De eo qui peccasse visus est: unde scio an hoc peccatum sit? Quod si etiam peccavit, ipse se iam condemnavit, idque ei simile est ac si faciem suam laceraret. Qui autem nolit malum peccare, similis est ei qui nolit ficum sucum in ficis habere, aut infantes vagire, aut equum hinnire, aut alia quaecunque necessaria. Quid enim faciat, cum talem habitum habeat? Si igitur acer es, hanc eius affectionem cura.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: When something gives you the impression that a man has done wrong: how do I even know that this was a wrong? And if he did do wrong — that he has condemned himself for it already, and so is like a man tearing his own face? Consider that he who would not have the worthless man do wrong is like one who would not have the fig tree bear its juice in the figs, or babies cry, or the horse neigh, or any other thing that must be. What else can he do with such a disposition? If, then, you are so sharp — cure the disposition.</p>	<p>English from Latin: Concerning one who seems to have sinned: how do I know if this is a sin? But if he also sinned, he has already condemned himself, and this is similar to a man tearing his own face. But he who does not wish the wicked man to sin is like him who does not wish the fig tree to have juice in the figs, or infants to cry, or the horse to neigh, or any other necessary thing. For what else can he do with such a disposition? If, then, you are so keen, cure the disposition.</p>

Language Differences: Marcus uses the vivid anatomical verb καταδρύπτειν (to claw, lacerate, or tear one's own skin). Xylander condenses this metaphor to focus

on the judicial action *condemnavit*. He tracks the fig-juice noun *ὄπόν* precisely as *sucum*.

Commentary: A sharp check applied to public criticism. First, absolute certainty regarding another's motivation is rare. Second, if the wrong is real, their internal guilt acts as immediate self-punishment. Demanding that flawed people never act badly is as broken as expecting a fig tree to deny its own sap. If their behavior is intolerable, act as a physician to cure their perspective rather than as an executioner.

Book XII · Section 17

The Rule of Truth and Fit

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<i>Εἰ μὴ καθήκει, μὴ πράξης· εἰ μὴ ἀληθές ἐστὶ, μὴ εἶπης. ἢ γὰρ ὁρμή σου ἔστω</i>	<i>Si non decet, ne facias; si verum non est, ne dicas. Impetus enim tuus in tua potestate sit.</i>
English from Greek: If it is not fitting, do not do it; if it is not true, do not say it. For let your impulse be in your own power.	English from Latin: If it is not fitting, do not do it; if it is not true, do not say it. For let your impulse be in your own power.

Language Differences: *καθήκει* (what is proper, standard, or fitting) maps directly to Xylander's choice of *decet*. The initiating faculty *ἡ ὁρμή* is translated perfectly as *Impetus*.

Commentary: Two crystalline rules to anchor daily conduct: perform only what is proper, and speak only what is true. The structural foundation for both is self-governance: your internal impulses must remain entirely under your own power, completely immune to social pressure or habit.

Book XII · Section 18

Analysis of Impressions

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<i>εἰς τὸ πάν<τως> ἀεὶ ὁρᾶν, τί ἐστὶν αὐτὸ ἐκεῖνο τὸτὴν φαντασίαν σοι ποιοῦν, καὶ ἀναπτύσσειν διαιροῦντα εἰς τὰ αἴτιον, εἰς τὸ ὑλικόν, εἰς τὴν ἀναφοράν, εἰς τὸν χρόνον ἐντὸς ὀρπεπαῦσθαι αὐτὸ δεήσει</i>	<i>Semper totum videre quid sit quod tibi phantasiam facit, et illud evolvere dividendo in causam, in materiam, in relationem, in tempus intra quod necesse est ut desinat.</i>
English from Greek: In everything and always, look at what the thing itself is that is producing the impression in you; and	English from Latin: Always to see the whole: what it is that makes the impression for you, and to unfold it by dividing it into

unfold it by dividing it into its cause, its material, its reference, and the span of time within which it must come to an end.	cause, into matter, into relation, into the time within which it must of necessity cease.
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Language Differences: Marcus uses the expressive verb ἀναπτύσσειν (to unroll, unfold, or open up a scroll completely). Xylander captures this dynamic accurately using the Latin equivalent *evolvere*.

Commentary: A comprehensive deployment of material reductionism. To master an overwhelming internal impression, unroll it like a scroll. Separate the scenario into its structural parts: its substrate matter, its formal cause, its function, and its maximum duration.

Book XII · Section 19

The Master Within

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Αἴσθου ποτὲ ὅτι κρεῖττόν τι καὶ δαιμονιώτερον ἔχεις ἐν σαυτῶν τὰ πάθη ποιούντων καὶ καθάπαξ τῶν νευροσπαστούντων σε. τί μου νῦν ἐστὶν ἡ διάνοια; μὴ φόβος; μὴ ὑπόψία; μὴ ἐπιθυμία; μὴ ἄλλο τι τοιοῦτον</p>	<p><i>Senti aliquando te in teipso habere aliquid melius et divinius iis quae passiones movent et qui te omnino tanquam filis agunt. Quid mihi nunc est mens? Numquid timor? Numquid simulatio?</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: Perceive that you have within yourself something better and more divine than the things that create passions and that pull you entirely like a puppet on strings. What is my mind now? Fear, perhaps? Pretense, perhaps?</p>	<p>English from Latin: Feel at some point that you have within yourself something better and more divine than those which move the passions and which drive you entirely as if with strings. What is my mind now? Is it fear? Is it pretense?</p>

Language Differences: The visceral description τῶν νευροσπαστούντων σε (the things jerking you about like a puppet master pulling strings) is translated by Xylander using a descriptive phrase: *qui te omnino tanquam filis agunt* ("who drive you completely as if with threads").

Commentary: Marcus invokes the core autonomy of the ἡγεμονικόν. The rational mind is an emanation far superior to any bodily passion or external stimulus trying to pull it about like a puppet. Recognizing this internal divinity allows an individual to continuously audit their consciousness, checking whether it has surrendered its sovereignty to fear or pretense.

Book XII · Section 20

Aimless and Unsocial Acts

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Πρῶτον τὸ μὴ εἰκῆ μηδὲ ἄνευ ἀναφορᾶς. δεῦτερον τὸ μὴ ἐπάλλο τι ἢ ἐπὶ τὸ κοινωνικὸν τέλος τὴν ἀναγωγὴν ποιῆσθαι.</p>	<p><i>Primum, non temere neque irrationabiliter. Secundum, non ad aliud quam ad communem finem referre.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: First, not randomly or unaccountably. Second, not to refer one's actions to any other end than the social end.</p>	<p>English from Latin: First, not randomly or irrationally. Second, not to refer to any other than the common end.</p>

Language Differences: Marcus uses ἄνευ ἀναφορᾶς (without reference / unaccountably). Xylander shifts the emphasis slightly toward logic: *irrationabiliter* ("irrationally"). τὸ κοινωνικὸν τέλος maps to *communem finem*.

Commentary: A twin foundation for all human choices. Rule one establishes structural rationality: no action must ever be performed blindly or without a clear account. Rule two coordinates social direction: every single choice must advance the utility of the human community. This program separates human action from animal behavior.

Book XII · Section 21

Dissolution into the Whole

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Ὅτι μετ' οὐ πολὺ οὐδεὶς οὐδαμοῦ ἔσῃ οὐδὲ τούτων τι ἃ νῦν βλέπεις οὐδὲ τούτων τις τῶν νῦν βιούντων· ἅπαντα γὰρ μεταβάλλειν καὶ τρέπεσθαι καὶ φθεῖρεσθαι πέφυκεν, ἵνα ἕτερα ἐφεξῆς γίνηται</p>	<p><i>Quod non multo post nusquam eris, neque id quod olim spectabas, neque eorum quisquam qui nunc vivunt. Omnia enim mutari et verti et perire natura comparata sunt, ut alia deinceps fiant.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: Consider that before long you will be no one and nowhere; and so too with all these things you now see, and all these people now living. For all things are by nature meant to change, to turn, and to perish — that other things may come to be in their succession.</p>	<p>English from Latin: That not much later you will be nowhere, nor what you formerly looked upon, nor any of those who now live. For all things are by nature arranged to change and turn and perish, so that others may come next in succession.</p>

Language Differences: Marcus uses φθεῖρεσθαι πέφυκεν (built by nature to decay / perish). Xylander maps this exactly as *perire natura comparata sunt*.

Commentary: A gentle framing of impermanence. Physical dissolution is not an injury inflicted on objects by a hostile world; it is the vital, natural mechanism that clears away old matter to keep the cosmos forever fresh. Your eventual disappearance is a required contribution to this ongoing creative chain.

Book XII · Section 22

Opinion as a Harbor

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
Ὅτι πάντα ὑπόληψις καὶ αὐτὴ ἐπὶ σοί. ἄρον οὖν ὅτε θέλεις τὴν ὑπόληψιν καὶ ὥσπερ κάμψαντι τὴν ἄκραν γαλήνη, σταθερά πάντα καὶ κόλπος ἀκύμων	<i>Quod omnia opinio est, et haec in tua potestate. Tolle ergo ubi vis opinionem, et velut naviganti circa promontorium tranquillitas, stabilia omnia et sinus sine fluctibus.</i>
English from Greek: That everything is judgment, and this is in your power. Remove the judgment when you will, and just as when rounding a cape there is calm — all is stable and a waveless bay.	English from Latin: That all is opinion, and this in your power. Remove the opinion then where you will, and as for one sailing around a promontory there is calm — all is stable and a harbor without waves.

Language Differences: Marcus uses a beautiful maritime compound *κόλπος ἀκύμων* (a waveless bay / bosom). Xylander captures this image precisely using the parallel phrasing *sinus sine fluctibus*.

Commentary: Opinion operates as a choice of harbor. If you change your mind and refuse to define an external event as an absolute injury, the mental storm clears instantly. Marcus uses a maritime metaphor: changing your judgment is like rounding a turbulent headland (*ἄκραν*) to find yourself suddenly floating inside a perfectly sheltered, waveless bay.

Book XII · Section 23

The Harmony of Ending

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
Μία καὶ ἡτισοῦν ἐνέργεια κατὰ καιρὸν παυσαμένη οὐδὲν κακὸν πάσχει, καθὸ πέπανται ὁ οὐδὲ ὁ πράξας τὴν πράξιν ταύτην κατατὸ τοῦτο, καθὸ πέπανται, κακὸν τι πέπονθεν. ὁμοίως οὖν τὸ ἐκ πασῶν τῶν πράξεων σύστημα, ὅπερ ἐστὶν ὁ βίος, ἐὰν ἐν καιρῷ παύσῃται, οὐδὲν κακὸν πάσχει κατὰ αὐτὸ τοῦτο,	<i>Quaelibet actio, suo tempore desita, nihil mali patitur eo quod desierit: neque is qui actionem hanc peregit, eo ipso quod desierit, quicquam mali passus est. Sic igitur et vita, ex omnibus his actionibus composita, si suo tempore desierit, nihil mali patitur eo quod desierit: neque is qui hunc nexum tempestive finierit, male</i>

<p>καθὸ πέπανται ὁὐδὲ ὁ καταπαύσας ἐν καιρῷ τὸν εἰρμὸν τοῦτον κακῶς διετέθη. τὸν δὲ καιρὸν καὶ τὸν ὄρον δίδωσιν ἡ φύσις, ποτὲ μὲν καὶ ἡ ἰδία, ὅταν ἐν γήρα, πάντως δὲ ἡ τῶν ὄλων, ἧς τῶν μερῶν μεταβαλλόντων νεαρὸς ἀεὶ καὶ ἀκμαῖος ὁ σύμπας κόσμος διαμένει. καλὸν δὲ ἀεὶ πᾶν καὶ ὠραῖον τὸ συμφέρον τῷ ὄλῳ. ἡ οὖν κατάπανσις τοῦ βίου ἐκάστῳ οὐ κακὸν μὲν ὅτι οὐδὲ αἰσχρὸν, εἴπερ καὶ ἀπροαίρετον καὶ οὐκ ἀκοινωνητὸν ἄγαθὸν δὲ εἴπερ τῷ ὄλῳ καίριον καὶ συμφέρον καὶ συμφερόμενον. οὕτως γὰρ καὶ θεοφόρητος ὁ φερόμενος κατὰ ταῦτα θεῷ καὶ ἐπὶ ταῦτα τῇ γνώμῃ φερόμενος</p>	<p><i>affectus est. Tempus autem et finem natura tribuit: aliquando propria, ut in senectute: omnino autem natura universi, cuius partes cum mutantur, mundus ipse semper iuvenis ac vicens manet. Pulchrum autem est omne id, quod universo est utile. Quare vitae uniuscuiusque terminatio non est malum: neque enim turpe est, quum sit extra voluntatem, et non ad societatem pertinens: sed etiam bonum, quatenus universo opportunum et utile est, et cum eo conjunctum. Hoc enim modo et a Deo fertur, qui secundum eadem cum Deo fertur, et ad eadem voluntate sua tendit.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: Any single activity, ceasing at its proper season, suffers nothing evil in that it has ceased; nor has the doer of the action suffered anything evil in this respect, that it has ceased. So likewise the system made up of all our actions — which is life — if it cease at its proper season, suffers nothing evil in that it has ceased; nor has he who brought this chain to a timely close been badly dealt with. And the season and the limit are given by nature — sometimes by your own nature, as in old age, but in every case by the nature of the whole, by the changing of whose parts the entire cosmos remains ever young and in its prime. And everything that is advantageous to the whole is always beautiful and in season. The ending of life, then, is no evil to any man — for it is no disgrace, being neither of his choosing nor against the common good; and it is a good, insofar as it is timely for the whole, advantageous to it, and carried along with it. For so he is borne by god who is borne along the same way as god, and toward the same things, in his judgment.</p>	<p>English from Latin: Any single activity, ceasing at its proper season, suffers nothing evil in that it has ceased; nor has the doer of the action suffered anything evil in this respect, that it has ceased. So likewise the system made up of all our actions — which is life — if it cease at its proper season, suffers nothing evil in that it has ceased; nor has he who brought this chain to a timely close been badly dealt with. And the season and the limit are given by nature — sometimes by your own nature, as in old age, but in every case by the nature of the whole, by the changing of whose parts the entire cosmos remains ever young and in its prime. And everything that is advantageous to the whole is always beautiful and in season. The ending of life, then, is no evil to any man — for it is no disgrace, being neither of his choosing nor against the common good; and it is a good, insofar as it is timely for the whole, advantageous to it, and carried along with it. For so he is borne by God who is borne along the same way as God, and toward the same things, in his judgment.</p>

Language Differences: *Marcus writes θεοφόρητος (borne along by god). Xylander translates this profound concept accurately as a deo latus ("carried by god").*

Commentary: A rigorous validation proving that death is never an evil. Marcus breaks life down into its separate actions: an individual action is not harmed simply because it concludes at its proper season. Since a full life is merely a systematic collection of these individual actions, the conclusion of the entire

system cannot be an evil. Timing is managed by universal nature, and partnering willingly with this breakdown makes a person genuinely god-borne (θεοφόρητος).

Book XII · Section 24

Three Hand-Ready Thoughts

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Τρία ταῦτα δεῖ πρόχειρα ἔχειν· ἐπὶ μὲν ὧν ποιεῖς, [εἰ] μήτεεἰκῆ μήτε ἄλλως ἢ ὡς ἂν ἡ Δίκη αὐτὴ ἐνήργησεν· ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν ἔξωθεν συμβαινόντων, ὅτι ἦτοι κατ' ἐπιτυχίαν ἢ κατὰ πρόνοιαν· οὔτε δὲ τῆ ἐπιτυχία μεμπτέον οὔτε τῆ προνοία ἐγκλητέον. δεῦτεροντό· ὁποῖον ἕκαστον ἀπὸ σπέρματος μέχρι ψυχώσεως καὶ ἀποψυχώσεως μέχρι τοῦ τὴν ψυχὴν ἀποδοῦναι καὶ ἐξ οἴων ἡσύγκρισις καὶ εἰς οἷα ἢ λύσις. τρίτον εἰ ἄφνω μετέωρος ἐξαρθεῖς κατασκέψαιο τὰ ἀνθρώπεια καὶ τὴν πολυτροπίαν [ὄση]κατανοήσαις, ὅτι καταφρονήσεις συνιδῶν ἅμα καὶ ὅσον τὸπεριοικοῦν ἐναερίων καὶ ἐναιθερίων· καὶ ὅτι, ὡς ἂν ἐξαρθῆς, ταῦτα ὄψη· τὸ ὁμοειδές, τὸ ὀλιγοχρόνιον· ἐπὶ τούτοις ὁ τῦφος</p>	<p><i>Tria in promptu habere oportet. In iis quae facis, neque temere neque aliter quam ut Iustitia ipsa egisset; in iis vero quae foris accidunt, aut ex fortuna aut ex providentia: de fortuna autem non est conquerendum, nec providentia accusanda. Secundum: vide quid sit homo a semine usque ad animationem, et ab animatione usque ad redditionem animae, et ex quibus composita sit, et in quae resolvatur. Tertium: si subito in sublime elevatus, res humanas et earum varietatem despexeris, contemnes eas, videns simul quanta sit multitudo eorum qui in aere et aethere circumquaque versantur: et quod, quotiescunque elevatus fueris, eadem videbis: uniformitatem, brevitatem: haec igitur in superbia posita sunt.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: Keep these three thoughts ready at hand. First, concerning what you do: that it be nothing at random, nor otherwise than Justice herself would have acted. And concerning what befalls you from outside: that it is either by chance or by providence — and chance is not to be blamed, nor providence arraigned. Second: what each creature is from seed to ensoulment, and from ensoulment to the giving back of the soul; of what things its composition is, and into what things its dissolution. Third: that if you were suddenly lifted high into the air and looked down on human affairs and their endless variety, you would despise them, seeing at the same time how great a host of beings, of air and of aether, dwells around; and that however often you were lifted up, you would see the same things — uniformity, brevity. And these are the objects of our pride!</p>	<p>English from Latin: Keep these three thoughts ready at hand. First, concerning what you do: that it be nothing at random, nor otherwise than Justice herself would have acted. And concerning what befalls you from outside: that it is either by chance or by providence — and chance is not to be blamed, nor providence arraigned. Second: what each creature is from seed to ensoulment, and from ensoulment to the giving back of the soul; of what things its composition is, and into what things its dissolution. Third: that if you were suddenly lifted high into the air and looked down on human affairs and their endless variety, you would despise them, seeing at the same time how great a host of beings, of air and of aether, dwells around; and that however often you were lifted up, you would see the same things — uniformity, brevity. And these are the objects of our pride!</p>

Language Differences: The compound προεπινοηθέντων (pre-conceptualized / analyzed beforehand) is simplified by Xylander into the standard manual formula in *promptu habere oportet* ("it is necessary to have immediately ready").

Commentary: Marcus summarizes his emergency equipment into three portable tools. Rule one regulates intentional action, requiring every choice to match the standard of justice. Rule two maps biology, tracing existence from fluid seed to the final surrender of the soul. Rule three deploys the aerial watchtower exercise, rising above the earth to show that human status and pride are completely brief and repetitive.

Book XII · Section 25

Casting Out the Heavy Heart

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<i>Βάλε ἔξω τὴν ὑπόληψιν· σέσωσαι. τίς οὖν ὁ κωλύων ἐκβάλλειν</i>	<i>Eiice opinionem; servatus es. Quis ergo prohibet eicere?</i>
English from Greek: Cast out the judgment — you are saved. Who then prevents you from casting it out?	English from Latin: Cast out the opinion — you are saved. Who then prevents you from casting it out?

Language Differences: Marcus uses the perfect passive verb σέσωσαι (you are already completely saved). Xylander preserves this immediate temporal completion perfectly through the Latin perfect passive *servatus es*.

Commentary: Mental rescue is instantaneous and self-administered. There is no need for a complex external ritual or extended time; the second the mind throws out a false value judgment, peace returns. The question 'who prevents you?' forces the individual to recognize that they are their own jailer.

Book XII · Section 26

The Futility of Annoyance

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<i>Ὅταν δυσφορῆς ἐπὶ τινι, ἐπελάθου τοῦ, ὅτι πάντα κατὰ τῆντων ὄλων φύσιν γίνεται, καὶ τοῦ, ὅτι τὸ ἀμαρτανόμενον ἀλλότριον, καὶ ἐπὶ τούτοις τοῦ, ὅτι πᾶν τὸ γινόμενον οὕτως ἀεὶ ἐγένετο καὶ γενήσεται καὶ νῦν πανταχοῦ γίνεται·</i>	<i>Cum aliquid aegre fers, oblitus es quod omnia secundum naturam universitatis fiunt, et quod peccatum aliis est; et quod quisque praesens solum vivit et hoc amittit. Atque etiam oblitus es, quanta sit hominis cognatio cum toto humano</i>

<p>τοῦ, ὅση ἡ συγγένεια ἀνθρώπου πρὸς πᾶν τὸ ἀνθρώπειον γένος· οὐ γὰρ αἱματίου ἡσπερματίου, ἀλλὰ νοῦ κοινωνία. ἐπελάθου δὲ καὶ τοῦ, ὅτι ὁ ἐκάστου νοῦς θεὸς καὶ ἐκεῖθεν ἐρρύηκεν· τοῦ, ὅτι οὐδὲν ἴδιον οὐδενός, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ τεκνίον καὶ τὸ σωματίον καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ ψυχάριον ἐκεῖθεν ἐλήλυθεν· τοῦ, ὅτι πάνθ ὑπόληψις· τοῦ, ὅτι τὸ παρὸν μόνον ἕκαστος ζῆ καὶ τοῦτο ἀποβάλλει</p>	<p><i>genere: non sanguinis aut seminis, sed mentis communio. Oblitus es etiam, uniuscuiusque mentem esse Deum, et inde effluxisse: quod nihil sit cuiusquam proprium, sed et filiolum et corpusculum et ipsam animam inde venisse: quod omnia opinio sint: quod uniuscuiusque praesens solum vivit, et hoc amittit.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: When you bear something hard, you have forgotten that all things come to pass according to the nature of the whole; and that the wrong done belongs to another; and further, that everything that happens always happened so, and will happen so, and is happening so now everywhere; and how great is the kinship of a human being with the whole human race — a community not of blood or seed, but of mind. You have forgotten too that each man's mind is god, and has flowed from there; that nothing is anyone's own, but his little child, his body, his very soul have come from there; that everything is opinion; and that each man lives only the present, and loses only this.</p>	<p>English from Latin: When you bear something hard, you have forgotten that all things come to pass according to the nature of the whole; and that the wrong done belongs to another; and further, that each man lives only the present and loses only this. You have forgotten too how great is the kinship of a human being with the whole human race — a community not of blood or seed, but of mind. You have forgotten too that each man's mind is God, and has flowed from there; that nothing is anyone's own, but his little child, his body, his very soul have come from there; that everything is opinion; and that each man lives only the present, and loses only this.</p>

Language Differences: *Xylander condenses the long five-part inventory severely, compressing Marcus's beautiful description of the rational soul as an emanation of god into a highly simplified summary block.*

Commentary: Marcus logs a checklist of core principles to counteract irritation. Annoyance is a sign that five things have slipped your mind: that events are dictated by cosmic laws, that another's malice remains isolated in their own will, that history is completely repetitive, that human beings share a divine mind, and that the present moment is all anyone can ever lose.

Book XII · Section 27

Smoke and Ashes

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Συνεχῶς ἀναπολεῖν τοὺς ἐπὶ τινὶ λίσαν ἀγανακτήσαντας, τοὺς ἐν μεγίσταις δόξαις ἢ συμφοραῖς ἢ ἔχθραις ἢ ὁποιασοῦν τύχαις ἀκμάσαντας· εἶτα</p>	<p><i>Assidue recordari eos qui super aliqua re nimis indignati sunt, qui in maximis gloriis, aut calamitatibus, aut inimicitiiis, aut quavis alia fortuna vixerunt: deinde</i></p>

<p>ἐφιστάνειν ἄνθρωποι νῦν πάντα ἐκεῖνα; καπνὸς καὶ σποδὸς καὶ μῦθος ἢ οὐδὲ μῦθος. συμπροσπιπτέτω δὲ καὶ τὸ τοιοῦτο πᾶν, οἶον Ἰάβιος Κατουλλῖνος ἐπὶ ἀγροῦ καὶ Λούσιος Λοῦπος ἐν τοῖς κήποις καὶ Στερτίνιος ἐν Βαίαις καὶ Τιβέριος ἐν Καπρέαις καὶ Οὐήλιος Ῥοῦφος καὶ ὄλως ἢ πρὸς ὅτιοῦν μετοίησεως διαφορὰ καὶ ὡς εὐτελὲς πᾶν τὸ κατεντεινόμενον καὶ ὅσω φιλοσοφώτερον τὸ ἐπὶ τῆς δοθείσης ὕλης ἑαυτὸν δίκαιον, σώφρονα, θεοῖς ἐπόμενον ἀφελῶς παρέχειν ὅ γὰρ ἐπὶ ἀτυφία τῦφος τυφόμενος πάντων χαλεπώτατος</p>	<p><i>subsistere, et quaerere: Ubi nunc illa omnia? Fumus et cinis et fabula vel ne fabula quidem. Atque haec omnia simul ante oculos ponere: ut Fabium Catullinum in rure, Lucium Lupum in hortis, Stertinium in Baiis, Tiberium in Capreis, Velium Rufum, et omnino in quavis re sollicitudinem, cum ambitione coniunctam. Quam vile est omne id quod tam instanter expetitur! Et quanto philosophicum magis, in data materia seipsum iustum, moderatum, deis simpliciter obsequentem praebere! Superbia enim, quae de seipsa superbit propterea quod non sit superba, est omnium gravissima.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: Continually run over in mind those who were furiously indignant at something; the men who reached the heights of fame or calamity or enmity or any kind of fortune. Then pause and ask: where is it all now? Smoke and ash and a tale — or not even a tale. And let every instance of the kind occur to you together: Fabius Catullinus in the country, Lusius Lupus in his gardens, Stertinus at Baiae, Tiberius on Capri, Velius Rufus — in short, obsession with anything whatever, joined with self-conceit. How cheap is everything so strained after; and how much more philosophic it is, on the material given, to render oneself just, temperate, a follower of the gods, with simplicity. For the pride that prides itself on freedom from pride is the most insufferable of all.</p>	<p>English from Latin: Continually recall those who were greatly indignant over something; those who flourished in the greatest fame, or calamities, or enmities, or any kind of fortune. Then pause and ask: where is it all now? Smoke and ashes and a tale — or not even a tale. And let every instance of the kind occur to you together: Fabius Catullinus in the country, Lusius Lupus in his gardens, Stertinus at Baiae, Tiberius on Capri, Velius Rufus — in short, obsession with anything whatever, joined with self-conceit. How cheap is everything so strained after; and how much more philosophic it is, on the material given, to render oneself just, temperate, and a follower of the gods with simplicity! For the pride that prides itself on freedom from pride is the most insufferable of all.</p>

Language Differences: In several early manuscript lineages *Xylander* runs this short reminder on directly from the preceding section rather than setting it apart; the standard division restores it as its own entry.

Commentary: Marcus runs over the intensely occupied — each name fixed to the scene of his obsession (Fabius Catullinus in the country, Lusius Lupus in his gardens, Stertinus at Baiae, Tiberius on Capri, Velius Rufus) — then asks the only question that outlives them all: where is it now? Smoke and ash and a tale, or not even a tale. The closing turn is the sharpest of all — the pride that prides itself on freedom from pride is the most insufferable vanity of them all.

Evidence of the Gods

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Πρὸς τοὺς ἐπιζητοῦντας ἑποῦ γὰρ ἰδῶν τοὺς θεοὺς ἢ πόθενκατειληφῶς ὅτι εἰσὶν οὕτω σέβεις; πρῶτον μὲν καὶ ὄψει ὀρατοίεῖσιν ἔπειτα μέντοι οὐδὲ τὴν ψυχὴν τὴν ἐμαυτοῦ ἐώρακα καὶ ὁμῶς τιμῶ ὁὕτως οὖν καὶ τοὺς θεοὺς, ἐξ ὧν τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτῶν ἐκάστοτε πειρῶμαι, ἐκ τούτων ὅτι τε εἰσὶ καταλαμβάνω καὶ αἰδοῦμαι</p>	<p><i>Ad eos qui interrogant: 'Ubi enim vidisti deos, aut unde comprehendisti eos esse, quod sic colis?' Primum quidem visu etiam visibiles sunt; deinde autem ne animam quidem meam vidi, et tamen honoro: ita et deos, quorum potestatem singulis momentis experior, ex iis cognosco esse, et colo.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: To those who ask: 'Where did you see the gods, or from where did you grasp that they exist, that you worship thus?' ...First, they are visible to sight; then, I have not even seen my own soul, and yet I honor it...</p>	<p>English from Latin: To those who ask: 'For where did you see the gods, or from where did you grasp that they exist, so that you worship thus?' First they are even visible to sight; but then I have not seen even my own soul, and yet I honor it: so too the gods, whose power I experience at every moment, from these things I recognize that they exist, and I worship them.</p>

Language Differences: Greek 'κατειληφῶς' (having grasped/comprehended — literally 'having seized') is rendered 'comprehendisti' — the Latin verb is a near-cognate in meaning, preserving the intellectual 'grasping' of understanding.

Commentary: Marcus's response to theological skepticism: we see the gods in their effects (sun, stars, natural order) just as we know our souls by their effects. We have never directly observed our own consciousness, yet we know it exists. The inference from effects to cause is equally valid for both soul and gods.

Book XII · Section 29

The Salvation of Life

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Σωτηρία βίου ἕκαστον δι' ὅλου αὐτὸ τί ἐστὶν ὁρᾶν, τί μὲν αὐτοῦ τὸ ὑλικόν, τί δὲ τὸ αἰτιώδες ἕξ ὅλης τῆς ψυχῆς τὰ δίκαια ποιεῖν καὶ τὰ ληθῆ λέγειν. τί λοιπὸν ἢ ἀπολαύειν τοῦ ζῆν συνάπτουσα ἄλλο ἐπ' ἄλλω ἀγαθόν, ὥστε μηδὲ τὸ βραχύτατον διάστημα ἀπολείπειν</p>	<p><i>Salus vitae: unumquodque per totum videre quid sit materiale, quid causale; ex tota anima iusta facere et vera dicere. Quid restat nisi frui vita iungendo aliud super aliud bonum, ut ne minimum quidem intervallum desit.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: The salvation of life: to see each thing throughout its material</p>	<p>English from Latin: The salvation of life: to see each thing entirely as to what is its</p>

and causal aspects; to do just things with the whole soul and speak true things. What remains but to enjoy life by joining good upon good...	material and what its cause; to do just deeds with the whole soul and to say true things. What remains but to enjoy life joining good upon good, so that not even the smallest interval is lacking.
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Language Differences: Greek 'συνάπτοντα ἄλλο ἐπ' ἄλλω ἀγαθόν' (joining good upon good) is rendered 'iungendo aliud super aliud bonum' — both images are of continuous chaining of good actions so closely that no gap for unhappiness can enter.

Commentary: The salvation formula: analytical seeing (know what things are made of and what causes them), wholehearted just action, and truthful speech. With these, string together good upon good so closely that there is no gap for misery to enter. This is the fulfilled philosophical life — not a distant achievement but a present practice.

Book XII · Section 30

The Unity of Light and Soul

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
Ἐν φῶς ἡλίου, κἂν διείργηται τοίχοις, ὄρεσιν, ἄλλοις μυρίοις.μία οὐσία κοινή, κἂν διείργηται ἰδίως ποιοῖς σώμασι μυρίοις.μία ψυχή, κἂν φύσει διείργηται μυρίαῖς καὶ ἰδίαις περιγραφαῖς.μία νοερά ψυχή, κἂν διακεκρίσθαι δοκῆ. τὰ μὲν οὖν ἄλλα μέρητῶν εἰρημένων, οἷον πνεύματα καὶ ὑποκείμενα ἀναίσθητα, καὶ ἀνοικεῖωτα ἀλλήλοις· καίτοι κάκεῖνα τὸ ἐνοῦν συνέχει καὶ τὸ ἐπὶ τὰ αὐτὰ βρῖθον. διάνοια δὲ ἰδίως ἐπὶ τὸ ὁμόφυλον τείνεται καὶ συνίσταται καὶ οὐ διείργεται τὸ κοινωνικὸν πάθος	<i>Una lux solis, etsi parietibus intercipiatur, montibus, aliis innumeris. Una substantia communis, etsi corporibus propriis innumeris intercipiatur. Una anima, etsi naturis innumeris et propriis descriptionibus dividatur. Una intellectualis anima, etsi divisa esse videatur. Reliquae partes eorum quae dicta sunt, ut spiritus et subiecta inanimata, non sunt sibi invicem cognata; quamvis et illa teneat principium illud uniens, et pondus quod in eadem fertur. Mens autem sua natura ad cognata tendit, et in his consistit, neque intercisa est societas.</i>
English from Greek: There is one light of the sun, even though it is parted by walls, by mountains, by ten thousand other things. There is one common substance, even though it is parted among ten thousand bodies with their individual qualities. There is one soul, even though it is parted among ten thousand natures and individual circumscriptions. There is one intelligent soul, even though it seems to be	English from Latin: There is one light of the sun, even though it is parted by walls, by mountains, by ten thousand other things. There is one common substance, even though it is parted among ten thousand bodies with their individual qualities. There is one soul, even though it is parted among ten thousand natures and individual circumscriptions. There is one intelligent soul, even though it seems to be

divided. Now the other parts of the things named — such as breaths and substrates — are without sense and without kinship to one another; yet even these are held together by the unifying principle and by the weight that draws them to the same place. But the understanding stretches in its own peculiar way toward what is of its kind, and joins with it — and the feeling of fellowship is not parted.	divided. Now the other parts of the things named — such as breaths and substrates — are without sense and without kinship to one another; yet even these are held together by the unifying principle and by the weight that draws them to the same place. But the understanding stretches in its own peculiar way toward what is of its kind, and joins with it — and the feeling of fellowship is not parted.
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Language Differences: Marcus builds a triple anaphora on μία (one): one light (φῶς), one common substance (οὐσία κοινή), one soul (ψυχή) — each divided (διείργηται) among countless bodies yet remaining single. Xylander tracks the parallelism with una lux ... una substantia communis ... una anima.

Commentary: A meditation on the unity beneath apparent division. Just as a single sunlight is partitioned by walls and mountains without ceasing to be one light, so the common substance of the cosmos and the rational soul shared by all minds remain unified despite being parceled out among innumerable separate bodies and natures.

Book XII · Section 31

Desiring the Trivial

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Τί ἐπιζητεῖς; τὸ διαγίνεσθαι; ἀλλὰ τὸ αἰσθάνεσθαι; τὸ ὀρμᾶν; τὸ αὔξεσθαι; τὸ λήγειν αὐθις; τὸ φωνῆ χρῆσθαι; τὸ διανοεῖσθαι; τί τούτων πόθου σοι ἄξιον δοκεῖ; εἰ δὲ ἕκαστα εὐκαταφρόνητα, πρόιθι ἐπὶ τελευταῖον τὸ ἔπεσθαι τῷ λόγῳ καὶ τῷ θεῷ. ἀλλὰ μάχεται τὸ τιμᾶν ταῦτα, τὸ ἄχθεσθαι εἰ διὰ τοῦ τεθνηκέναι στερήσεται τις αὐτῶν</p>	<p><i>Quid inquiris? An manere? An sentire? An impetum capere? An crescere? An iterum cessare? An voce uti? An cogitare? Quid horum dignum desiderio videtur tibi? Quod si haec omnia facile contemni possunt, perge ad extremum, id est, sequi rationem et Deum. At pugnat cum hoc, honores habere, et dolere si quis morte horum privetur.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: What do you seek? To go on existing? Or to have sensation? Impulse? Growth? Ceasing again? Use of speech? Thinking? Which of these seems to you worth the longing? But if each of these is easily despised, go forward to the final thing: to follow reason and god. But honoring those others — grieving that death will deprive one of them — fights against this.</p>	<p>English from Latin: What do you seek? To remain? To feel? To take impulse? To grow? To cease again? To use the voice? To think? Which of these seems to you worthy of desire? But if each of these is easily despised, go forward to the final thing: to follow reason and God. But honoring those others — grieving that death will deprive one of them — fights against this.</p>

Language Differences: Marcus strings together a chain of bare biological functions — τὸ διαγίνεσθαι (continuance), τὸ αἰσθάνεσθαι (sensation), τὸ ὀρμᾶν (impulse), τὸ διανοεῖσθαι (thinking) — and asks which is genuinely worth craving. Xylander renders the list as a parallel sequence of infinitives.

Commentary: Marcus interrogates the will to live by itemizing what 'staying alive' actually consists of. Bare existence, sensation, appetite, even speech, are mechanical functions largely shared with animals; none, examined alone, is worth clinging to. What is worth keeping is the rational use of these faculties — and that fails only when reason itself does.

Book XII · Section 32

The Tiny Fraction of All

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Πόστον μέρος τοῦ ἀπείρου καὶ ἀχανοῦς αἰῶνος ἀπομεμέρισται ἐκάστῳ· τάχιστα γὰρ ἐναφανίζεται τῷ αἰδίῳ· πόστον δὲ τῆς ὅλης οὐσίας· πόστον δὲ τῆς ὅλης ψυχῆς· ἐν πόστῳ δὲ βωλαρίῳ τῆς ὅλης γῆς ἔρπεις. πάντα ταῦτα ἐνθυμούμενος μηδὲν μέγα φαντάζουη τό, ὡς μὲν ἡ σὴ φύσις ἄγει ποιεῖν, πᾶσχειν δὲ ὡς ἡ κοινὴ φύσις φέρει</p>	<p><i>Quota pars infiniti et immensi aevi unicuique attributa est; celerrime enim in aeternum evanescit. Quanta pars universae substantiae; quanta universae animae; quam exigua gleba totius terrae super quam reptas.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: How small a part of infinite and immeasurable time is allotted to each person — for it vanishes swiftly into the eternal. How small a part of all substance; how small a part of the universal soul; what a tiny clod of the whole earth you creep upon.</p>	<p>English from Latin: How small a part of infinite and immeasurable time has been assigned to each; for it vanishes most swiftly into eternity. How great a part of universal substance; how great of universal soul; what a small clod of the whole earth you creep upon.</p>

Language Differences: Greek 'βωλακίς' (small clod of earth — a tiny lump) is rendered 'gleba' — the Latin is the same concept (a clod of soil), maintaining the earthiness and smallness of the metaphor, the tininess of the space any human occupies.

Commentary: The quadruple diminishment: your time is tiny, your matter is tiny, your soul is a tiny part of the universal soul, and the earth you inhabit is a tiny clod of the whole planet. These four perspectives together should dissolve all grandiose self-importance. The Stoic cosmos renders human pretension ridiculous — and strangely liberating.

Book XII · Section 33

The Health of the Governing Faculty

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<i>Πῶς ἑαυτῷ χρῆται τὸ ἡγεμονικόν; ἐν γὰρ τούτῳ τὸ πᾶν ἐστὶ. τὰ δὲ λοιπὰ ἢ προαιρετικά ἐστὶν ἢ ἀπροαίρετα, νεκρὰ καὶ καπνός</i>	<i>Quomodo sibi ipsi utitur principatus? In hoc enim omnia sunt. Reliqua vero aut in nostra potestate aut non sunt, mortua et fumus.</i>
English from Greek: How does the ruling faculty use itself? For in this lies everything. The rest — whether within our choice or not — are dead and smoke.	English from Latin: How does the ruling principle use itself? For in this everything consists. The rest — whether in our power or not — are dead and smoke.

Language Differences: Greek 'προαιρετικά/ἀπροαίρετα' (what is within prohairesis/what is not — the key Stoic technical distinction of Epictetus) becomes 'in nostra potestate/non sunt' (in our power/not in our power) — Xylander abandons the technical Greek term for the clearer Latin expression of the same distinction.

Commentary: Everything depends on how the ruling faculty uses itself. All other things — within our control or not — are 'dead and smoke' by comparison. This is the final Stoic hierarchy: the quality of the governing mind is everything; all else is derivative and secondary.

Book XII · Section 34

Effective Contempt for Death

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<i>Πρὸς θανάτου καταφρόνησιν ἐγερτικώτατον ὅτι καὶ οἱ τὴν ἡδονὴν ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸν πόνον κακὸν κρίνοντες ὅμως τούτουκατεφρόνησαν.</i>	<i>Hoc ad contemptum mortis efficacissimum, quod etiam ii qui voluptatem bonum et dolorem malum existimant, ipsam tamen contempserunt.</i>
English from Greek: Most rousing toward contempt of death is this: even those who judged pleasure a good and pain an evil — even they despised it.	English from Latin: This is the most effective thing against contempt of death: that even those who judge pleasure to be good and pain to be evil have nonetheless despised it.

Language Differences: The superlative ἐγερτικώτατον (most rousing / most apt to awaken) frames the argument. Marcus notes that even the hedonists (οἱ τὴν ἡδονὴν ἀγαθὸν ... κρίνοντες) have despised death; Xylander tracks the concessive logic with *tamen*.

Commentary: A sharp argument from the unlikeliest witnesses. Even the Epicureans, who classify pleasure as the good and pain as the evil, nonetheless faced death with contempt. If those most attached to bodily pleasure could meet

their end without dread, the Stoic — who counts only virtue as good — has even less excuse to fear it.

Book XII · Section 35

The Right Moment

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Ὅτι τὸ εὐκαιρὸν μόνον ἀγαθὸν καὶ ὃ τὸ πλείους κατὰ λόγονόρθον πράξεις ἀποδοῦναι τῷ ὀλιγωτέρας ἐν ἴσῳ ἐστὶ καὶ ὃ τὸνκόσμον θεωρῆσαι πλείονι ἢ ἐλάσσονι χρόνῳ οὐ διαφέρει, τούτω οὐδὲ ὁ θάνατος φοβερὸν</p>	<p><i>Cui solum bonum est opportunum, et cui pluribus rationabilibus actis fungi idem est quod paucioribus, et cui quocunque tempore vivere, sive diuturno sive brevi, non est huic mors terribilis.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: For the man to whom the only good is what comes in due season — for whom it is all the same to render more acts according to right reason or fewer, and to whom it makes no difference whether he beholds the cosmos for a longer or a shorter time — for this man not even death is a thing of fear.</p>	<p>English from Latin: For him to whom only what is timely is good, and for whom performing more rational acts is the same as fewer, and for whom to live any amount of time, whether long or short, is not terrible — for this person death is not terrible.</p>

Language Differences: Marcus's key term τὸ εὐκαιρὸν (the well-timed / seasonable) anchors the section. Xylander renders it through the vocabulary of opportune timing (tempestivum / opportunum), tracking the series of 'makes no difference' clauses (ἐν ἴσῳ / οὐ διαφέρει).

Commentary: The closing argument before the final farewell. For the man who counts only the well-timed as good — for whom performing more right actions or fewer comes to the same, and contemplating the cosmos for a longer or shorter span makes no difference — death loses every terror. Quality, not quantity, is the only measure; and a life is complete whenever nature closes it.

Book XII · Section 36

Departing with a Gracious Heart

Greek Original	Latin (Xylander 1558)
<p>Ἄνθρωπε, ἐπολιτεύσω ἐν τῇ μεγάλῃ ταύτῃ πόλει· τί σοι διαφέρει, εἰ πέντε ἔτεσιν <ἢ πεντήκοντα>; τὸ γὰρ κατὰ τοὺς νόμους ἴσον ἐκάστω. τί οὖν δεινόν, εἰ τῆς πόλεως ἀποπέμψει σε οὐτύραννος οὐδὲ δικαστῆς ἄδικος, ἀλλ' ἡ φύσις ἡ</p>	<p><i>Homo, civis fuisti in hac magna civitate; quid tibi refert si quinque annis an tribus? Quod enim legi consentaneum est aequale est unicuique. Quid ergo terribile est, si te ex civitate non tyrannus, non iudex iniustus expellit, sed</i></p>

<p>εἰσαγαγοῦσα, οἶον εἰ κωμῶδον ἀπολύοι τῆς σκηνῆς ὁ παραλαβὼν στρατηγός;- “ἀλλ οὐκ εἶπον τὰ πέντε μέρη, ἀλλὰ τὰ τρία.” - “καλῶς εἶπας ἔν μέντοι τῷ βίῳ τὰ τρία ὅλον τὸ δρᾶμά ἐστι.” τὸ γὰρ τέλειον ἐκεῖνος ὀρίζει ὁ τότε μὲν τῆς συγκρίσεως, νῦν δὲ τῆς διαλύσεως αἴτιος· σὺ δὲ ἀναίτιος ἀμφοτέρων. ἄπιθι οὖν ἴλεως· καὶ γὰρ ὀαπολύων ἴλεως.</p>	<p><i>ipsa natura, quae te introduxit? Perinde ut si praetor, qui comoedum conduxerit, eum a scaena dimittat. 'At non feci quinque actus, sed tres.' Bene dixisti: in vita autem tres actus sunt tota fabula. Etenim perfectionem ille determinat, qui tum compositionis, nunc dissolutionis causa est: tu autem neutrius. Exi igitur placatus; etenim qui te dimittit, placatus est.</i></p>
<p>English from Greek: Man, you have been a citizen in this great city. What difference to you whether for five years or fifty? What the laws assign is equal for every man. Why then is it terrible, if it is no tyrant nor unjust judge that sends you out of the city, but the nature that brought you in — as if the praetor who engaged a comic actor should dismiss him from the stage? 'But I have not played the five acts — only three.' Well said: but in life, three acts are the whole play. For he sets the completion who was once the cause of your composition, and is now the cause of your dissolution; and you are the cause of neither. Depart, then, graciously — for he who releases you is gracious.</p>	<p>English from Latin: Man, you have been a citizen in this great city. What difference to you whether for five years or three? What the laws assign is equal for every man. Why then is it terrible, if it is no tyrant nor unjust judge that sends you out of the city, but the nature that brought you in — as if the praetor who engaged a comic actor should dismiss him from the stage? 'But I have not played the five acts — only three.' Well said: but in life, three acts are the whole play. For he sets the completion who was once the cause of your composition, and is now the cause of your dissolution; and you are the cause of neither. Depart, then, graciously — for he who releases you is gracious.</p>

Language Differences: *Marcus uses ἴλεως (gracious, serene, propitious). Xylander renders this closing state with the matching early-modern adjective placatus (pacified, appeased). The theatrical magistrate ὁ παραλαβὼν στρατηγός (the praetor / general who engaged the cast) maps to qui te dimittit ("he who dismisses you").*

Commentary: The grand conclusion of the entire Meditations. Marcus addresses himself as a citizen of the supreme cosmic city (μεγάλη ταύτη πόλει). Life is a play: a comic actor does not grumble at the director if dismissed after three acts instead of five, because for his role three acts are the whole play. Human will caused neither birth (συγκρίσεως) nor death (διαλύσεως); both are requirements of the system. The final command is to step off the stage with unconditional grace — because the cosmic director who releases you is himself gracious.

Glossary

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

TO MYSELF

The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius

Stuart Schonwetter Edition

Classic Motivation

About this Glossary

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

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

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

Stoic Vocabulary

ἡγεμονικόν (*hēgemonikón*)

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

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

λόγος (*lógos*)

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

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

προαίρεσις (*proaíresis*)

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

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

αἰδώς (*aidós*)

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

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

οἰκείωσις (*oikeíōsis*)

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

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

φαντασία (*phantasía*)

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

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

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

ὑπόληψις (*hypólēpsis*)

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

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

συγκατάθεσις (*synkatáthesis*)

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

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

ἀπάθεια (*apátheia*)

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

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

εὐδαιμονία (*eudaimonía*)

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

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

ἀρετή (*aretḗ*)

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

Xylander's Latin: *virtus*.

πρόνοια (*prónoia*)

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

Xylander's Latin: *providentia*.

φύσις (*phýsis*)

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

Xylander's Latin: *natura*.

κόσμος (*kósmos*)

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

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

δαίμων (*daímōn*)

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

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

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

πνεῦμα (*pneûma*)

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

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

εἰμαρμένη (*heimarménē*)

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

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

ἀπροπτωσία (*aproptōsía*)

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

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

μεταβολή (*metabolé*)

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

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

καθῆκον (*kathêkon*)

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

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

ἀδιάφορα (*adiáphora*)

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

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

ψυχή (*psychḗ*)

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

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

ὄρμη (*hormḗ*)

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.