

THE *ROMANITAS* OF MARCUS AURELIUS' *MEDITATIONS*

Słowa kluczowe: filozofia starożytna, stoicyzm rzymski, ideologia, władza, imperium rzymskie

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the modern studies on the *Meditations* of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius (Τὰ εἰς ἑαυτὸν, according to the MS tradition going back to the XIIth century)¹ there was (and still is) a frequent but understandable drift to see and analyze this famous treatise in purely philosophical terms. Such reading mainly pays the attention to Stoic doctrine(s) in the book. Needless to say that most frequently it came from the historians of philosophy, and was often and usually (but not exclusively) practiced regardless of the historical context in which the work itself has appeared. Of course, an approach of this kind is well justified as little is told by the author himself about the political or military realities of his day. In this sense, the *Meditations* are neither history, nor autobiography; they are not even memoirs in the common sense of this

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¹ The problem of the title of this work is discussed by P. Hadot in his admirable *The Inner Citadel. The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*, Cambridge (MA) 1998, p. 23ff. (Polish translation of this work has appeared in 2004 as *Twierdza wewnętrzna. Wprowadzenie do „Rozmyślań” Marka Aureliusza*, tł. P. Domański, Kęty).

word. It is only the *Meditations*², or rather ‘notes or notelets’ – as Matteo Cepporina rightly has recently put it³.

None the less, one must remind an obvious truism: no literary work – notwithstanding sublime, theoretical and esoteric in the assumption of its author – operates in a social and cultural vacuum. No differently matter presents in this case too. Suffice it to say that the circumstances in which the emperor wrote down his notices constituted the Marcomannic wars (they lasted fifteen years – between AD 166–180), one of the most turbulent and serious period in the history of the Roman empire since the end of Octavian’s conflict with the Ptolemaic queen Cleopatra. In some sense, these operations in Germany meant the end of the Roman *aurea aetas*, so glorified and immortalized by the Augustan court bards (cf. Cassius Dio, 71. 36. 4)⁴. The conflict was regarded by the Romans themselves as an impetuous abruption of the famous *Pax Augusta*, rude awakening from Arcadian dream and a true beginning of the period of crisis – to recall the conclusions of the very recent paper by Thomas Fischer⁵. Some of the Roman citizens themselves certainly were conscious of the immense danger just because either they witnessed it or took part in the long campaigns in the north; later Roman writers compared even these times of turmoil to the situation from the Hannibalic wars⁶. What those Romans did not know, however, was the future and the future, as we are privileged to know it today, has appeared even worse⁷. It looks as if in the times of the reign of the emperor Mar-

² One should perhaps to focus on the term *meditatio*, through analyzed by Robert J. Newman, *Cotidie meditare. Theory and Practice of the meditatio in Imperial Stoicism*, [in:] *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II. 36. 3, hrsg. H. Temporini und W. Haase, Berlin – New York 1989, pp. 1474–1475 and 1507ff.

³ *The Meditations*, [in:] *A Companion to Marcus Aurelius*, ed. M. van Ackeren, Malden (MA) – Oxford 2012, p. 45; cf. also P. Hadot’s excellent and thoughtful *Introduction* (avec la collaboration de Concetta Luna), [in:] *Marc-Aurèle. Ecrits pour lui même I*, Paris 1998, pp. IX–CCXXV; see Ch. Gill, *Introduction*, [in:] *Marcus Aurelius, Meditations with Selected Correspondence*, tr. R. Hard, Oxford 2011, p. xviii–ix; cf. P. Grimal, *Marek Aureliusz*, tł. A. Łukaszewicz, Polish edn. Warszawa 1997, p. 5ff. D.M. Schenkeveld, *Philosophical Prose*, [in:] *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period 330 B.C. – A.D. 400*, ed. S.I. Porter, Boston – Leiden 2001, p. 252 includes it to the category of the ‘Ego – Documents’.

⁴ Cassius Dio’s judgment was repeated by Gibbon in his *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, published between 1776–1788; see M. Goodman, *The Roman World 44 BC – AD 180*, London – New York 1997, p. 31ff.; recently G. Woolf, *Rome. An Empire’s Story*, Oxford 2012, p. 7.

⁵ *Archaeological Evidence of the Marcomannic Wars of Marcus Aurelius (AD 166–80)*, [in:] *Comp. Marcus Aurelius*, p. 29; cf. B. Campbell, *The Roman Empire*, [in:] *War and Society in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds. Asia, the Mediterranean, Europe, and Mesoamerica*, eds. K. Raaflaub and N. Rosenstein, Cambridge (MA) – London 1999, p. 220; cf. M. Cary i H.H. Scullard, *Dzieje Rzymu od czasów najdawniejszych do Konstantyna*, t. II, tł. J. Schwakopf, Polish edn. Warszawa 1992, pp. 240–242.

⁶ Eutropius, *Brev. 8. 13: Ingenti ergo labore et moderatione, cum apud Carnuntum iugi trienni perseverasset, bellum Marcomannicum confecit, quod cum his Quadi, Vandali, Sarmatae, Suevi atque omnis barbaria commoverat, multa hominum milia interfecit, ac Pannonis servitio liberatis Romae rursus cum Commodo Antonino, filio suo, quem iam Caesarem fecerat, triumphavit.*

⁷ Cf. G. Alföldy, *Historia społeczna starożytnego Rzymu*, tr. A. Gierlińska, Polish edn. Poznań 1991, pp. 209–211.

cus (AD 161–180) Virgil's dire 'prophecy' from the *Aeneid* (6. 84) really had begun to be realized: *graviora manent*.

In following my aim is to examine the 'earthly' aspect of this famous philosophical handbook by putting a simple question how much 'Roman' were the *Meditations* and what influence had that Roman context on the philosophical character of the work? Leaving essentially aside Stoic doctrine itself, I shall try to demonstrate that the Roman character / aspect of the treatise cannot be treated separately from its purely Stoic contents. Conversely, it will be argued that Roman empire provided a necessary framework for developing of Stoic doctrines. In particular, such claim may be corroborated by exploring two questions.

The first of them is relatively easy to realize: to gather these remarks from the *Meditations* where the emperor stresses out the needs of living and working for the (Roman) community; additionally, to remind his references to his supreme position in ruling the empire as well to his political authority; further, to quote his mentions of -, or allusions to Roman power at all, to his imperial duties, Roman institutions, customs and practices. The aim of such collection of such *topoi* is to show that first and foremost the Stoic monarch was not a man living suspended somewhere in the air but a personality firmly stepping on the ground. To this goal will be devoted the subsection two (II. 'The Glimpse at *Romanitas*').

The second task (being by far more vague, hereof inevitably difficult to explore) – is to give some comment on these Roman traces in the treatise. Accordingly, in this subsection (III. 'Roman Stoicism at Work') attention will be paid to the investigation of a cliché well popular already in antiquity⁸, that's, topic known from Plato and concerning the rule of philosopher-king (*Legg.* 473c-e)⁹. To be more precise, it will be asked not only how did Emperor Marcus' deep commitment to Stoic doctrine and virtues affect his style of imperial reign but – more broadly – whether did Stoic outlook influence his sense of being Roman emperor at all. In other words, far from denying that Marcus was a philosopher (the later *vita* in *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* calls him *philosophus*; cf. n. 12), an effort will be made to ask whether is it possible to find out vestiges of Stoic influences on Marcus' imperial rule over his vast state. This last question, too often assumed than proven, was again stated nowadays by Marcel van Ackeren, the editor of the very useful and thoughtful volume *A Companion to Marcus Aurelius* (Blackwell 2012; see n. 3, above). In his introductory chapter entitled *The Study of Marcus Aurelius* van Ackeren casts a shadow of doubt on such influence by reminding one fundamental fact: essentially, the *Meditations*

⁸ So Musonius Rufus, the teacher of Epictetus, thought that a good monarch should study philosophy: fr. VIII (*Even the kings should be philosophers*), being an extract from the treatise Discourses, quoted usually as *Dissertationum a Lucio digestarum reliquiae*: Μη οἶου, ἔφη, ἄλλω τινὶ μᾶλλον προσήκειν φιλοσοφεῖν ἢ σοί, μηδ' ἄλλου του χάριν μᾶλλον ἢ ὅτι βασιλεὺς τυγχάνεις ὢν. δεῖ μὲν γὰρ δήπου δύνασθαι τὸν βασιλέα σώζειν ἀνθρώπους καὶ εὐεργετεῖν τὸν δέ γε σώσοντα καὶ εὐεργετήσοντα χρῆ ἐπίστασθαι τί μὲν ἀγαθὸν ἀνθρώπω τί δὲ κακόν, καὶ τί μὲν ὠφέλιμον τί δὲ βλαβερόν, καὶ συμφέρον γε καὶ ἀσύμφορον (ed. O. Hense, Leipzig 1905, Teubner, p. 32).

⁹ Cf. J. B r u c h and K. H e r m a n n, *Marcus Aurelius as Philosopher-King and Good Emperor, Good Politician (Antiquity, Medieval Age)*, [in:] *Comp. Marcus Aurelius*, p. 483ff.; see R. Flacelière, *Historia literatury greckiej*, tł. P. Sobczak, Polish edn. Kęty 2004, p. 406.

were written for private use¹⁰. It is then very reasonable to suppose that, in all likelihood, nobody (or: almost nobody) living at that time at the imperial court or serving as a staff-member of the military camp at Danube knew the emperor's intimate Stoic thoughts. The same observation was also perceptively reminded by R.B. Rutherford in his entry 'Marcus Aurelius', inserted in the standard reference book *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (eds. S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth, Oxford 1996, p. 221)¹¹. This does not mean that the famous reputation Marcus has won as 'the philosopher on the throne' was attributed to him just as a postmortem verdict, being popularized later by the readers of his imperial notebook (most probably, it was known from the fourth century AD onwards). Conversely – by his contemporaries Marcus certainly was perceived as philosopher just on the ground that he was a pupil of the famous thinkers of his day, to quote Eutropius' statement (*Brev.* 8. 11): *Philosophiae deditus Stoicae, ipse etiam non solum vitae moribus, sed etiam eruditione philosophus* (cf. *Medit.* 1, passim; with P. Hadot, *Marc-Aurèle*, [in:] op. cit., pp. LXIII – CXXXVII, on 'Les personnages')¹². Yet, the problem is then not so much with Marcus' personal Stoic commitment (which nobody ever contested¹³) but rather limits in realization of Stoic precepts: all of all, the monarch was no 'professional philosopher' (cf. van Ackeren [in:] op. cit., p. 3) like, for example, the famous Epictetus who ostentatiously, in a Platonic manner, settled in Nicopolis (Epirus) and gave there the courses¹⁴. What more, Marcus had no opportunity to teach Stoic doctrine (e. g., we do not possess any firm clue how great, if any, was his influence on his offspring: the case of Commodus' personality, at least, allows us to doubt this)¹⁵. Through all his busy life the emperor acted, as Cassius Dio, 71. 6. 1, proves (cf. *Medit.* 1. 16. 1; 2. 5; 2. 17; 3. 4; 3. 12; 4. 3; 4. 33); he was a man of deeds, not an average administrator,

¹⁰ Also H.F. S a n d b a c h, *The Stoics*, London 1989, p. 176.

¹¹ Also R.B. Rutherford's fundamental book *The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius. A Study*, Oxford 1991 (reprint; I am heavily indebted to Dr. Tomasz Mojsik, University in Białystok, for his efforts to enable me consulting this study); see also Rutherford's *Introduction*, [in:] *Marcus Aurelius, Meditations*, tr. A.S.L. Farquharson, Oxford 1989, p. xxiii; cf. W. E c k, *Marcus Aurelius*, [in:] *Der neue Pauly VII*, hrsg. H. Cancik und H. Schneider, Stuttgart – Weimar 1999, cols. 870–875.

¹² Cf. Sextus Aurelius Victor, *Epit. de Caes.* 16. 7: *Philosophiae studens litterarumque Graecarum <peritissimus>*; cf. SHA, *Marcus Aurelius Antoninus* (by a Julius Capitolinus), 3. 1: *studium in eo philosophiae fuit* (ed. H. Rackham, Loeb); also J. H a h n, *Philosophy as Socio-Political Upbringing*, [in:] *The Oxford Handbook of Social Relations in the Roman World*, ed. M. Peachin, Oxford 2011, p. 119; as he reminds, about AD 176 the emperor endowed 'four professorships of philosophy at Athens'; on this see J.H. O l i v e r, *Marcus Aurelius and the Philosophical Schools at Athens*, *American Journal of Philology* 102 (1981), pp. 213ff.

¹³ A full treatment is given by E. Asmis in her detailed study *The Stoicism of Marcus Aurelius*, [in:] *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt II*. 36. 3, pp. 2228–2252.

¹⁴ A. B o n h ö f f e r, *Epictet und die Stoa. Untersuchungen zur stoischen Philosophie*, Stuttgart 1890, pp. 2–3; idem, *Die Ethik des Stoiker Epictet*, Stuttgart 1894, p. IIIff.; cf. W.A. O l d f a t h e r, *Introduction*, [in:] *Epictetus, The Discourses as Reported by Arrian, the Manual and Fragments I*, Cambridge (MA) – London 1956, pp. x–xi.

¹⁵ See M. van Ackeren's remarks on 'praktische Philosophie' in his *Die Philosophie Marc Aurels I. Textform – Stilmerkmale – Selbstdialog*, Berlin – New York 2011, p. 34.

governor of province or mere bureaucrat of a local level (also Cassius Dio, 72. 5)¹⁶. So, leaving aside plenty of 'significant' stories (such as that about Marcus' beard – a sign of being philosopher), the question arises: was it possible in the case of the Roman emperor live truly that life¹⁷? Of course, it was, provided that his personal life and views are at stake. Matter complicates, however, if one investigates the dilemma how did Marcus' views affect his governing the state¹⁸. Among others, J. Hahn ([in:] op. cit., p. 121; cf. note 12, above), tried to approach this problem when regarding a practical impact of philosophy on the Romans (cf. *Medit.* 8. 1)¹⁹. Following his attempt, it may be asked whether could it be the same said of Stoic thinking?²⁰ In further remarks I would like to answer this negatively, arguing that

¹⁶ Although his legal activity was recorded in the Digest. On the emperors' duties see F.A. Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World*, Ithaca (NY) 1977; recently: P. Veyne, *Cesarstwo grecko-rzymskie*, tr. P. Domański, Polish edn. Kęty 2008, ch. 1, and H. Beek, *Structures*, [in:] *A Companion to Ancient History*, ed. A. Erskine, Malden (MA) – Oxford 2009, p. 503.

¹⁷ See G.R. Stanton, *Marcus Aurelius, Emperor and Philosopher*, Historia 18 (1969), pp. 570–587; the famous phrase from *SHA (Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, 27. 7)* states that *sententia Platonis semper in ore illius fuit, florere civitates si aut philosophi imperarent aut imperantes philosopharentur* looks like a typical apocryphal bon-mot, *aureum dictum* (also *Medit.* 19. 12), taking its origin in Plato, *Resp.* 473c; cf. also Herodian, 1. 2; see Rutherford, *Meditations*, p. 66.

¹⁸ Cf. P. Hadot, *Czym jest filozofia starożytna?*, tł. P. Domański, Polish edn. Warszawa 2000, p. 132 who calls the attention to the fact that it was Marcus himself who deplored the lack of understanding on the part of his subjects – a significant grumble in itself, proving that the popularity of Stoic ideas and doctrines was not so easy to establish; cf. especially *Medit.* 9. 29, where the emperor expresses his disillusionment how little can any ruler influence minds of his subjects; see Rutherford, *Meditations*, pp. 172–177. This observation goes back to 1910, when a book by F.W. Bussell (*Marcus Aurelius and the Later Stoics*, Edinburgh) has appeared: the author expresses a severe judgment (p. 5) that emperor's company or character did not make anyone from his circle of associates a better person; also P.A. Brunt, *Marcus Aurelius in His Meditations*, Journal of Roman Studies 64 (1974), pp. 12–13, writes (more mildly): 'But the Stoic on the throne well knew that he was surrounded by men who did not share his principles'; cf. Rutherford, *Meditations*, p. 174, reminding that the idea goes back to Epictetus: Arrian, *Epicteti Diss.* 4. 6. 5.

¹⁹ Also an earlier, important book by M. TRAP, *Philosophy in the Roman Empire. Ethics, Politics and Society*, Aldershot 2007, p. 19ff; earlier on: M.L. Clark, *The Roman Mind. Studies in the History of Thought from Cicero to Marcus Aurelius*, London 1968.

²⁰ This point is the subject-matter of Professor L. de Blois' analysis in his chapter *The Relations of Politics and Philosophy under Marcus Aurelius*, [in:] *Comp. Marcus Aurelius*, p. 178: 'What about the influence of Marcus' philosophical ideas on politics? Very soon after his death Marcus was praised by all writers we know of, and was even made into a paradigm but literary sources that discuss his reign do not make mention of any political effect of the emperor's philosophical convictions'. Especially, as de Blois observes, neither Cassius Dio nor Herodian and the author of the Marcus – *vita* in the *SHA* note any connection between the emperor's philosophical training and ruling the empire or actual politics; in result – as de Blois concedes – 'the influence of philosophy on practical politics is not traceable'; similar doubts were expressed over hundred years ago by Samuel Dill in his book *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius* (London 1904, p. 506): 'Philosopher, in the large speculative sense, he certainly is not in his Meditations'; cf. also D. Schenkeweld, *Philosophical Prose*, [in:] op. cit., p. 253: 'Marcus never became a full-blown philosopher but fully sympathized with this school of thought'; see also the interesting remarks of M. Grant, *The Antonines. The Roman Empire in Transition*, Milton Park – New York 1996, p. 39ff.; cf. Ch. Gill, *Stoic Writers of the Imperial Era*, [in:] *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*, eds. Ch. Rowe and M. Schofield, Cambridge 2000, pp. 611–612: "Marcus' *Meditations* present in an extreme form a paradox also raised, though less acutely, by Seneca's philosophical writings:

there was no direct connection between Stoic doctrines and administrating Roman empire. No philosophy does work in such straightforward way as to its influences could be detected in administration or political decisions²¹. Instead of exploring this badly stated question or looking for a mutual interdependence, a different (and more fruitful, I believe) way to solve the dilemma will be suggested: I propose to see the Roman empire as providing a background against which Stoic views were aired, formulated and discussed. But this is not all, of course. Additionally, I shall also imply that it was the prolonged effect of the Roman rule over the inhabited world and a sense of stability given by the Roman power that inspired Stoic thinkers to raise and develop many philosophical items. This is particularly true when observing that there was not something like a separated Stoic political theory. Instead, in Stoic teaching political issues formed a part of ethical themes. To put it briefly: a great part of vital Stoic themes concerning such eternal problems as what is the world which mankind lives in, what is the nature a man must live according to (and why must he to live according to it), were, to a great extent, caused by the social and political circumstances those thinkers experienced every day²²; by the same token, one may call their everyday experience by one term: Roman empire – the main (unique) point of reference for many generations of the Stoic thinkers.

II. A GLIMPSE AT *ROMANITAS*

It is widely known that the term *Romanitas*, which can be translated as ‘Roman-ness’/ ‘Romanity’, was firstly used by Tertulian in his well-known treatise *On the Philosopher’s Cloak (De pallio, 4. 1)*. Tertulian asked there: *Quid nunc, si est Romanitas omni salus, nec honestis tamen modis ad Graios estis?* (‘But now, if Romanity

that what seem to be the deepest reflections of a practicing politician have so little overt reference to his own political life’. On the other hand, there are scholars who seem to argue that the opposite was true: A. Dihle in his *Greek and Latin Literature of the Roman Empire from Augustus to Justinian*, London – New York 1994, p. 279, says of the *Meditations* that ‘there is not other Classical text which illustrates the impact of philosophy on the individual and on *public life*’ (italics mine – B.B.); similarly W.B. Irvine, *A Guide to the Good Life. The Ancient Art of Stoic Joy*, Oxford 2009, p. 44, claiming that ‘we watch (in the *Meditations* – B.B.) as he searches for Stoic solutions to the problems of daily life as well as the problems he encountered as emperor of Rome’.

²¹ Suffice it to say that it was Cicero himself who revealed the doubts in his *Paradoxa stoicorum*, 4.

²² It must be, however, pointed out that although Rome provided a basis for cosmopolitan thinking, no particular ‘social’ problems (in our sense of this word) were discussed by the Stoics; what do we today understand under the terms ‘political’ or ‘social’, they analyzed in, say, ‘anthropological’ and ‘ethical’ terms (cf. n. 42, below): on the one hand, their concern was ‘nature’ and ‘cosmos’ – for political order was a part of natural order; on the other, the ethical question how to live honestly in such ‘natural’ world was to them most important. To a great degree, a predecessor for such universal ‘state’ was for some Greeks the kingdom of Alexander the Great. Plutarch, living under Trajan, saw in Alexander the ruler whose aim was to unify mankind. But again, the Macedonian king was for the Greek moralist and practical philosopher. From a different angle, this theme was discussed by A. Erskine, *The Hellenistic Stoa. Political Thought and Action*, London 2011, esp. ch. 8, p. 181ff. Erskine is mainly interested in the problem how did the Stoics justify the existence of the Roman empire.

is to the benefit of all, why are you nonetheless inclined to the Greeks, even in less honourable matters?'²³ But what does here that enigmatic *Romanitas* mean?

As it often happens with abstract terms, no simple definition is obtainable but it may be useful to remind that by this term the bellicose Christian thinker meant, broadly speaking, ideas and practices of the Romans, as opposed to the Christians. Regrettably, the term is not found in P.W. Glare's dictionary²⁴, nor does it appear in Ernout & Meillet' *Dictionnaire*. General rendering would be thus 'Roman colour' or 'Roman mentality', if not 'Roman spirit'. Adopting the last understanding, it appears obvious that this Roman mentality takes in Marcus' *Meditations* a place much more privileged and exposed that it was often thought. It is true, as Professor A. Birley stated (*Marcus Aurelius. A Biography*, Routledge 2000, p. 25) that 'the *Meditations* as a whole are informative about the inner life of Marcus, rather than his actions'²⁵. Never the less, there are also many hints that hard (Roman) realities form a foundation for the monarch's most sublime, noble and generous perceptions – even when he appears to be totally disgusted and disillusioned with earthly, social phenomenons of everyday life, with his compatriots or, generally, with mankind as such (e.g. at 4. 32; 5. 33; 6. 12²⁶; 7. 3; cf. Brunt, *Marcus Aurelius*, p. 10–11). One cannot be misled by depreciating remarks the monarch expresses so often in his work, since what he is contempting remains in fact not a decorative appendix to his noble thoughts: it is the Roman empire on which he can build his Olympic tower of indifference.

In his highly useful *Index nominum et locorum* the Teubner editor H. Schenkl²⁷ notes only three places where the term 'Roman' appears. These are: *Medit.* 2. 5; 3. 5 and 3. 14, while the noun 'Rome' occurs only once – in *Medit.* 6. 44. Statistically, it is a small number, true, but it would be a serious mistake to miss the very significance of the passages.

We may begin from a famous statement expressed in *Medit.* 6. 44; it looks as his true credo: ἡ δὲ ἐμὴ φύσις λογικὴ καὶ πολιτικὴ. Πόλις καὶ πατρις ὡς μὲν Ἀντωνίνῳ μοι ἡ Ῥώμη, ὡς δὲ ἀνθρώπῳ ὁ κόσμος. τὰ ταῖς πόλεσιν οὖν ταῦτα ὠφέλιμα μόνα ἐστὶ μοι ἀγαθὰ ('But my nature is rational and civic; my city and country, as Antoninus, is Rome; as a man, the world. The things then that are of advantage to these communities, these, and no other, are good for me')²⁸. It is tempting to take this

²³ Edited and translated by V. H u n i n k, *Tertulian, De Pallio. A Commentary*, Amsterdam 2005.

²⁴ P.W. G l a r e, *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, Oxford 1968, p. 1660; nor is the word found in the standard Polish dictionary (*Słownik łacińsko-polski*), edited by M. Plezia.

²⁵ Rutherford, *Meditations*, p. 3 says of 'allusions to the actions'; cf. Ch. P a r a i n, *Marek Aureliusz*, tł. J. Rogoziński, Polish edn. Warszawa 1962, p. 81.

²⁶ This passage is particularly suggestive: a stepmother is compared to the imperial court life (ἡ ἀλλή), while a mother is like philosophy (ἡ φιλοσοφία): although it remains obvious that the latter has for the monarch a greater, *personal* value, it is equally plain that he does not condemn the former: he just cannot do so.

²⁷ *Marci Antonini Imperatoris in semet ipsum libri XII*, Lipsiae 1913, p. 197.

²⁸ Ed. A.S.L. F a r q u h a r s o n, *The Meditations of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius I*, Oxford 1944; on this passage see E. Z e l l e r, *The Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics*, London 1880, pp. 325–326. C.R. Haines' rendering of πόλις καὶ πατρις as 'city and country' is not particularly

confession at face value, as expressing Stoic duality of earthly fatherland and the whole ‘world inhabited’ (*oikoumene*; cf. Strabo, *Geogr.* 1. 1. 8), peopled by all the human beings, regardless of their origins and ethnicity, with an additional and apparent suggestion that the latter is more important²⁹. Generally, it seems to be right, but this does not mean that the monarch diminishes his sense of Roman-ness. Contrary to this: what may strike the modern reader in this passage is a clear exposition, if not priority, of the Roman pride³⁰. Such was the interpretation of G.R. Stanton in his 1969 paper (see n. 17, above)³¹. We may add that the best explanation to it is to assume that Marcus was conscious of the lack of contradiction between *πατρίς* and *κόσμος*. Another claim from *Medit.* 4. 12 is equally emphatic here: the writer is saying of *ὁ τῆς βασιλικῆς καὶ νομοθετικῆς λόγος* (‘thy reason in its royal and law-making capacity’), and it is its presence that guarantees him to operate ‘for the good of mankind’ (*ἐπ’ ὠφελείᾳ ἀνθρώπων*)³².

Likewise, it is just the same Roman pride that finds its realization elsewhere in the *Meditations* – at 2. 5. Here the monarch gives the following advice: ‘Every hour make up thy mind sturdily as a Roman and a man to do what thou hast in hand with scrupulous and unaffected dignity and love of thy kind and independence and justice’ (Πάσης ὥρας φρόντιζε στιβαρῶς ὡς Ῥωμαῖος καὶ ἄρρην τὸ ἐν χερσὶ μετὰ τῆς ἀκριβοῦς ... καὶ ἀπλάστου σεμνότητος καὶ φιλοστοργίας καὶ ἐλευθερίας καὶ δικαιοσύνης πράσσειν)³³. As the case indicates, only a few students will wonder if the exposition of *Ῥωμαῖος* is accidental; conversely, many will certainly note that ‘Roman-ness’ is proudly identified with masculinity³⁴, an old Roman virtue.

Nor is also cursory the remark in *Medit.* 3. 5. This time the suggestion is that the strength of a man as a true philosopher takes its beginning from the fact that he is ‘manly, and full of age, and concerned with statecraft, and a Roman, and a ruler’ (ζῶου ἄρρενος καὶ πρεσβύτου καὶ πολιτικοῦ καὶ Ῥωμαίου καὶ ἄρχοντος) – a clear evidence that we are reading the words of a man of action, being thus far from

helpful (*The Communings with Himself of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, Emperor of Rome. Together with His Speeches and Sayings*, London – Cambridge (MA) 1953 [reprinted]; all the quotations from *Meditations* are taken from this edition). Yet, for my purposes the literary understanding of *patris* is here crucial: it is not mere a ‘country’ but something more important: the Roman fatherland, rather than an indefinite place with its physical environment.

²⁹ To this idea an important book by M. Schofield is devoted: *The Stoic Idea of City*, Cambridge 1991.

³⁰ See C.F. N o r e ñ a, *The Ethics of Autocracy in the Roman World*, [in:] *A Companion to Greek and Roman Political Thought*, ed. R.K. Balot, Malden (MA) – Oxford 2009, pp. 272–274.

³¹ Cf. M. J ó z e f o w i c z, *Les idées politiques dans la morale stoïcienne de Marc-Aurèle*, *Eos* 59 (1971), pp. 241–254.

³² At 11. 18. 1, using a comparison known also to Dio of Prusa, or. 2. 97, he calls himself ‘a ram over a flock or a bull over a herd’ (*krios poimenes – tauros ageles*); the same public sense of duty is seen at 1. 16; cf. my paper *The Emperor’s Old Clothes: Marcus Aurelius’ Attitude towards the Christians Again*, *SE* 12 (2011), p. 162.

³³ Cf. P.A. B r u n t, *Marcus Aurelius*, p. 9.

³⁴ Cf. R. A l s t o n, *Arms and the Man: Soldiers, Masculinity and Power in Republican and Imperial Rome*, [in:] *When Men Were Men. Masculinity, Power and Identity in Classical Antiquity*, eds. L. Foxhall and J. Salmon, London – New York 1999, p. 205ff.

the Epicurean advice λάθε βιώσας, 'live unnoticed' (Plutarch, *De latenter vivendo*, 1128c; Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii*, 8. 28. 12).

Only these four passages indicate that the alleged opposition between *philosophia* and *imperium* (to borrow the terms from the *SHA*, *Antoninus Pius*, 10. 5) was in Stoic learning not so sharp as it is usually believed. But there are other examples in the *Meditations*.

At 3. 16 Marcus mentions of those who deny the existence of the gods (καὶ τῶν θεοῦς μὴ νομιζόντων; cf. generally Rutherford, *Meditations*, ch. V, p. 192ff.; Brunt, *Marcus Aurelius*, p. 14ff.). Why is this claim so important? The reasoning is simple: such men betray their fatherland (καὶ τῶν τὴν πατρίδα ἐγκαταλείπόντων). In arguing so, the emperor appears to continue an old *topos* of the Roman ideology, known from Livy, Horace or Virgil, in which piety was typically identified with patriotism (see too *Medit.* 12. 28)³⁵.

As a perfect example of the strict vicinity of the Roman cosmopolitan pride serves the passage from *Medit.* 4. 4. Here the argument runs: πολῖται ἔσμεν; πολιτεύματός τινος μετέχομεν; ὁ κόσμος ὡσανεὶ πόλις ἐστί; τὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων πᾶν γένος κοινοῦ πολιτεύματος μετέχειν; ἐκείθεν δέ, ἐκ τῆς κοινῆς ταύτης πόλεως, καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ νοερόν καὶ λογικὸν καὶ νομικὸν ἡμῶν ('we are citizens. If so, we are fellow-members of an organised community. If so, **the Universe is as it were a state**³⁶ – for of what other single polity can the whole race of mankind be said to be fellow-members? – and from it, this common State, we get the intellectual, the rational, and the legal instinct')³⁷. The same deep sense of Roman civic mentality pervades another observation, at 4. 12. The emperor writes that Δύο ταύτας ἐτοιμότητας ἔχειν αἰεὶ δεῖ· τὴν μὲν πρὸς τὸ πρᾶξι μόνον ὄπερ ἂν ὁ τῆς βασιλικῆς καὶ νομοθετικῆς λόγος ὑποβάλλη ἐπ' ὠφελείᾳ ἀνθρώπων· τὴν δὲ πρὸς τὸ μεταθέσθαι, εἰ ἄρα τις παρῆ διορθῶν καὶ μετᾶγων ἀπὸ τινος οἰήσεως. τὴν μέντοι μετὰ γωγῆν αἰεὶ ἀπὸ τινος πιθανότητος, ὡς δικαίου ἢ κοινωφελοῦς, γίνεσθαι καὶ τὰ προηγμένα τοιαῦτα μόνον εἶναι δεῖ, οὐχ ὅτι ἡδὺ ἢ ἔνδοξον ἐφάνη³⁸. The next opinion in *Medit.*, 4. 29 (φυγὰς ὁ φεῦγων τὸν

³⁵ Cf. N. B e l a y c h e, *Religious Actors in Daily Life: Practices and Related Beliefs*, [in:] *A Companion to Roman Religion*, ed. J. Rüpke, Malden (MA) – Oxford 2007, p. 279; also V.M. W a r r i o r, *Roman Religion*, Cambridge 2006, p. 7; cf. especially H. W a g e n v o r t, *Pietas*, [in:] *Pietas. Selected Studies in Roman Religion*, Leiden 1980, p. 7.

³⁶ I am convinced that this famous exposition of Stoic doctrine was rooted in the Roman imperial mentality; it was possible to formulate it thanks to a long-drawn rule of the Romans over the *oikoumene*: the process, most probably having taken its origin in the teaching of Posidonius, is visible in Seneca; elsewhere, at 3. 11, *kosmos* is identified with 'the highest state' which contains other states 'as households' – could this claim arise from the observation how the Roman subjugated other states?

³⁷ E. B r o w n, *Hellenistic Cosmopolitanism*, [in:] *A Companion to Ancient Philosophy*, eds. M.L. Gill and J. Pellegrin, Malden (MA) – Oxford 2009, p. 552ff.; cf. R u t h e r f o r d, *Meditations*, p. 239, citing Cicero, *Fin.* 4. 7.

³⁸ 'Thou shouldst have these two readinnesses always at hand; the one which prompts thee to **do only what thy reason in its royal and law-making capacity shall suggest for the good of mankind**; the other to change thy mind, if one be near to set thee right, and convert thee from some vain conceit. But this conversion should be the outcome of a persuasion in every case that the thing is just or to the common interest – and some such cause should be the only one – not because it is seemingly pleasant or popular'; here and elsewhere emphasis mine – B.B.

πολιτικὸν λόγον, to be read with 12. 13), is analyzed by Rutherford (*Meditations*, p. 239) who finds Epictetus (Arrian, *Epicteti Diss.* 2. 13. 6) a forerunner of the way the Antonine monarch is arguing. The common theme in both thinkers is the need of being involved in state affairs and to participate in public life (cf. *Medit.* 6. 23). With this demand comes a critique of those who escape civic activity and the two types of characters are aligned: as the one is who does not understand what happens in the universe is an alien (*xenos*), in the same mode a man who does not participate in social machinery is ‘an exile’ (*phygas*), because he ‘exiles himself from civic reason’ (*ho pheugon ton politikon logon*). A little further the emperor uses even more radical language: the first type of man is called ἀπόστημα κόσμου (‘an imposthume on the Universe’), as he is ὁ ἀφιστάμενος καὶ χωρίζων ἑαυτὸν τοῦ τῆς κοινῆς φύσεως (‘who renounces, and severs himself from, the reason of our common Nature’); the second type of man is like ‘a limb cut off from the community’ (*apochisma poleos*); see also especially 9. 9. 2; 9. 23; 5. 8. 5; and 11. 8³⁹).

An interesting line of argumentation is found at 4. 32–33. This time the topic is the usual, Heraclitean motif of vanity; as a warning example, the previous generations of the (happy) Romans, living and acting under Vespasian and Trajan (the ‘good’ emperors), are revoked: all their passions and problems – Marcus observes – simply disappeared, the men do not exist yet⁴⁰. But again, characteristically, such sad reflection is followed by a remarkable note (*Medit.* 4. 33) that this does not mean a total despair: even then one must try to act in such a way as to be useful to the community (πράξεις κοινωνικαί; cf. 6. 2; 6. 16; 6. 30⁴¹). This last duty of living for others occupies a central theme of the first chapter in the Book V, whose suggestion is that man is born to a hard work for the good of the others (*epi anthropou ergon egeiromai*); such working is then man’s destiny (*poreuomai epi to ponein, hon heneken gegona*; an aphorismm repeated at 11. 18: ἀλλήλων ἔνεκεν γεγόναμεν; cf. 6. 23: χρῶ κοινωνικῶς; and 1. 16); it constitutes the essence of *ta anthropika* (‘the work of a man’). Similar sentiments occur at 5. 6. 2: here we read that ἴδιον γάρ, φησί, “τοῦ κοινωνικοῦ τὸ αἰσθάνεσθαι ὅτι κοινωνικῶς ἐνεργεῖ (‘for it is, we are told, the peculiar character of the man of true neighbourly instincts to be aware that he puts such instincts into practice’); it may be compared with 5. 9, being an appeal to acting ὀρθῶν ἕκαστα πράσσειν (see also 6. 30. 1 on τὰ πρέποντα ἔργα).

Elsewhere (at 5. 16) it is also explicitly said that τὸ ἄρα ἀγαθὸν τοῦ λογικοῦ ζῴου κοινωνία. ὅτι γὰρ πρὸς κοινωνίαν γεγόναμεν (‘The Good then, for a rational creature, is fellowship with others. For it has been made clear long ago that we were

³⁹ A beautiful metaphor where a man separated from others and living in a margin of society is compared to a branch cut off from the tree; cf. Rutherford, *Meditations*, p. 122.

⁴⁰ By the way, this passage has a uniquely strong association with Thackeray’s philosophy of life as interpreted by Stanley Kubrick in his wonderful *Barry Lyndon* (1975). In the Epilogue of Kubrick’s masterpiece the Narrator says something that sounds as if was taken directly from Marcus Aurelius’ treatise: ‘It was in the reign of King George III that the aforesaid personages lived and quarreled; good or bad, handsome or ugly, rich or poor, they are all equal now’.

⁴¹ At 4. 33 Haines’ rendering is ‘in act unselfishness’; at 6. 30.1: ‘social acts’; cf. Brunt, *Stoicism and the Principate*, Proceedings of the British School at Rome (PBSR) 30 (1975), p. 22.

constituted for fellowship')⁴². This statement does not contradict the ruler's other claim, expressed at §20, according to which a man is to him at both close (ἡμῖν ἔστιν οικειότατον ἄνθρωπος) and indifferrent (see note 42, below). He is close, if he remembers that 'we must do him good and forbear' (καθ' ὅσον εὖ ποιητέον αὐτοῦς καὶ ἀνεκτέον)⁴³. At the same time he remains 'one of things indifferrent' (ἐν τι τῶν ἀδιαφόρων) – like sun, wind or beast – 'so far as any stand in the way of those acts which concern us closely'.

At other place, where the emperor's social (in its Stoic meaning, cf. n. 22, above) thinking is visible, at 5. 22, we are told 'That which is not hurtful to the community cannot hurt individual' ('Ὁ τῇ πόλει οὐκ ἔστι βλαβερόν, οὐδὲ τὸν πολίτην βλάπτει). In the same vein, a similar 'social' perception of reality may be detected at 5. 29: 'Ὁ τοῦ ὅλου νοῦς κοινωνικός. This last statement – a particularly important and unequivocal passage – has been understood by Haines as 'The intelligence of the Universe is social', and again, it permits us to observe that a hard difference between κόσμος and πόλις/πατρις is an exaggeration, at best. This social, civic ideology is not denied by advices like that famous at 6. 30. 1, where the ruler warns himself: 'Ὅρα μὴ ἀποκαισαρωθῆς' ('See thou be not Caesarified'; cf. Rutherford, *Meditations*, p. 65)⁴⁴. Some scholars took it as the evidence for Marcus' contempt of power and empire. But the impression is misleading, as the problem concerns the form only: very existence of Roman rule is not undermined, so would be misleading to infer about the monarch' scorning the legitimacy or righteousness of the Roman domination over the world. Marcus' deep connection with others as members of the same community is pointed out at 7. 13, when adducing a metaphor of human body; it gives him the opportunity to confess that there is necessity 'to work in conjunction', like in a body, since 'I am a limb of the organized body of rational beings' (cf. 6. 48: *symbiountes*;

⁴² Also meaningful is the question stated in *Medit.* 5. 31: Πῶς προσενήνεξαι μέχρι νῦν θεοῖς, γονεῦσιν, ἀδελφῶ, γυναικί, τέκνοις, διδασκάλοις, τροφεῦσι, φίλοις, οικείοις, οἰκέταις; ('How hast thou borne thyself heretofore towards Gods, parents, brethen, wife, children, teachers, tutors, friends, relations, household?'). To such statements a different, on first look at least, judgment might be withstood: that from 7. 48. He suggests that one should look at humanity from a cosmic perspective, without emotion, taking 'a bird's-eye view' (ὡσπερ ποθὲν ἄνωθεν κάτω; see also 7. 25 and 9. 30). But, of course, the discrepancy is virtual, cf. 5. 1. Although the ruler says at 7. 31 of the need of loving human race (φιλεῖσιν τὸ ἀνθρώπινον γένος), it is of course not a love in a most common sense of this word: for Marcus to be engaged in social life did not mean loving men in such a way; rather, his 'love' was rational (cf. 9. 27: *physei philoi*) and resulted from the process of a constant rethinking the world, that's, it was essentially based on reasonable grounds (cf. 8. 2: τὸ παρὸν ἔργον ζῶου νοεοῦ καὶ κοινωνικοῦ; see especially 9. 27 and 11. 1. 1: ἴδιον δὲ λογικῆς ψυχῆς καὶ τὸ φιλεῖν τοὺς πλησίον; cf. 1. 16); cf. P. V e y n e, *Humanitas. Rzymianie i nie-Rzymianie*, [in:] *Człowiek Rzymu*, red. A. Giardina, tr. P. Bravo, Polish edn. Warszawa 2000, pp. 438–439; cf. M. S c h n e i d e w i n, *Die antike Humanität*, Berlin 1897, p. 10.

⁴³ T. I r w i n, *Socratic Paradox and Stoic Theory*, [in:] *Companions to Ancient Thought 4. Ethics*, ed. S. Everson, Cambridge 1998, p. 154; cf. M. C a n t o-S p e r b e r, *Ethics*, [in:] *Greek Thought. A Guide to Classical Knowledge*, eds. J. Brunschvig, G.E.R. Lloyd and P. Pellegrin, Cambridge (MA) – London 2000, pp. 114ff.

⁴⁴ Rutherford, *ibid.*, rightly reminds that 'Marcus, like the first-century Stoics, notably Seneca, was opposed not of monarchy as an institution, but to the corrupt form of tyranny'; cf. *Medit.* 1. 14 – a crucial passage, in which the emperor confesses that the core of just democratic regime is justice and equality, while kingship rests on the tolerance of the freedom of his subjects.

10. 36: *koinonoi*). Another congruent passage, that from 10. 6. 2, announces in turn that ‘the life flow smoothly of a citizen who goes steadily on in a course of action beneficial to his fellow-citizens and cheerfully accepts whatever is assigned him by the State’ (πολίτου βίον εὔρου ἐπινοήσεως προϊόντος διὰ πράξεων τοῖς πολίταις λυσιτελῶν καὶ ὅπερ ἂν ἡ πόλις ἀπονέμη, τοῦτο ἀσπαζομένου). It may be set together with the statement at 10.33.4, where the importance of laws is emphasized⁴⁵: τὸν φύσει πολίτην οὐδὲν βλάπτει ὁ πόλιν οὐ βλάπτει, οὐδὲ γε πόλιν βλάπτει ὁ νόμον οὐ βλάπτει· τούτων δὲ τῶν καλουμένων ἀκληρημάτων οὐδὲν βλάπτει νόμον. ὁ τοίνυν νόμον οὐ βλάπτει, οὔτε πόλιν οὔτε πολίτην. This last sentence is worth of remembering – ‘nothing that harms not the city can harm him whom Nature has made a citizen’.

As we have seen, the passages gathered above, by necessity selected, stress out the significance of ‘society’ in Marcus’ *ethical* thinking (cf. n. 22, above). This must be stressed out: all of all, he was a type of introvert, constantly seeking his own ‘inner citadel’ (in P. Hadot’s famous term). This being so, by the same we cannot mistake his deeply personal feelings about men with his (equally deep) conviction that he must live among them and act *for* them: even if men did irritate and jar him, they still were his fellow country-men and members of the same (Roman) *oikoumene*. Such observation, trivial otherwise as it is, in one respect remains exceptionally important. It shows that Marcus’ Stoic social and political thoughts were rooted in his *a priori* Roman imperial thinking. Such kind of perceiving reality was under constant exercising of Roman power, taken in both literally as metaphorically, in spatial and spiritual terms. As the Rome extended her power on the Eastern provinces and Egypt, for many generations of its inhabitants its territorial (worldwide) range became something persistent and immutable. Roman power constituted thus a constant point of departure for men of letters and philosophers, and this was of course Marcus’ case: it was just the presence of the empire that along the lecture of Stoic writings influenced his more general, say, metaphysical consideration about *kosmos*.

In order of reinforcing this line of argumentation, let me adduce another kind of examples from Marcus’ work. They reveal a thoroughly Roman mentality of its author – despite of the fact that they usually serve him as an occasion to express disdain and similar feelings. Nevertheless, they are telling as they provide the priority of emperor’s Roman standpoint (cf. many dispersed remarks, e. g., 6. 20 on Ἐν τοῖς γυμνασίοις and 11. 20 on παγκρατίου; 12. 36 on praetor; see sepecially sentiments from *Medit.* quoted by Brunt, *Marcus Aurelius*, p. 10–11: 5. 33; 7. 3; 9. 24).

Take a representative example. As every student of the *Mediations* knows, at 2. 17 the emperor famously remarks that ὁ δὲ βίος is πόλεμος. All (or almost all) scholars would certainly see in this sentence an allusion to the famous aphorism of Heraclitus (Diels & Kranz, *FVS*, 22B, F53)⁴⁶. This is essentially right, yet by the same we cannot reject the possibility that emperor’s personal war experience played cru-

⁴⁵ Accordingly, some historians devote interesting passages to the Stoic aspect of the Roman law, cf. especially the valuable study by M.L. C o l i s h, *The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages* I, Leiden 1985, pp. 341–388.

⁴⁶ See the comment of W.K.Ch. G u t h r i e, *A History of Greek Philosophy* I, *The Earlier Pre-socratics and the Pythagoreans*, Cambridge 1962, pp. 446–447 and 453.

cial role here. In fact, I suspect that his acquaintance with war atrocities was prior. If this is the case, the same may be also said of other noble, philosophical remarks in the treatise. And again: what I am going to suggest is that in this second type of cases Roman reality pervades the work, being its real background, not 'an addition'.

For the sake of the present study, I shall call this Marcus' sense of reality a 'Roman eye'⁴⁷, a term, by which I mean that extraordinary gift of observation of the day-to-day particulars. Concerning this aspect, his notebook is an astonishing piece of literature⁴⁸. It is the monarch's 'Roman eye' and his gift to record the details, by which the ruler appears to be a man of concretes, in a mode of physician observing the *minutiae* of the natural world. Again, this feature of his handbook cannot be treated in a cursory way as an insignificant adornment or mere attachment to the noble considerations; rather, it constitutes a basis that seems to have inspired author's generalizing speculations. Let us recall another forgotten example, albeit certainly drastic. At 8. 34 the emperor wishes to instruct his imaginary student that since the man is a part of nature, so it would be ridiculous to make efforts to detach him from society. Yet the example explaining this truth, taken certainly from autopsy, remains really shocking: 'Thou hast seen a hand cut off or a foot, or a head severed from the trunk, and lying at some distance from the rest of the body'⁴⁹. This brutal reminiscence, occasional as it stands, allows us to inquire into the world that differs essentially from that of the philosophical climate, known the diatribes of Plutarch, or even Epictetus. Below I adduce some further examples from Roman life, not referring to the author's apparent lack of enthusiasm for them (this seems to be beyond the doubt). The aim of such contamination is purely practical: to show that despite of his disaffection of Roman customs and institutions, Marcus remained, first and foremost, a flesh-and-bone Roman, with that peculiar Roman gift of 'sharp' insight (the ancients writers has called it *enargeia*) and judgment.

To continue the rare topic of war (see also a brief remark about 'in wars treaties and armistices' at 9. 9), other mention of it appears at 10. 10, where the emperor alludes to the capturing of the Sarmatians (μέγα φρονεῖ, ἄνθρωπος... ἄλλος Σαρμάτας). Expressing Stoic disregard for war, he thinks it is just a robbery. Yet, if his hint refers to the famous victory celebrated in the year 175 (R.B. Rutherford, *Meditations*, p. 116 doubts this⁵⁰), the fact itself remains telling, as it shows that emperor's disdain for such and similar military actions did not led to abandoning the Roman imperial principles. Other glimpses of *Romanitas* abound in the treatise too⁵¹.

⁴⁷ A term borrowed from J. Elsner's book, see. n. 92, below.

⁴⁸ See Rutherford, *Meditations*, p. 147ff. on imaginery.

⁴⁹ The example has us to remember of the scenes from the famous Column of Marcus, cf. note 92, below. Rutherford, *Meditations*, p. 115–116 thinks on this occasion that in Marcus 'Warfare is a topic used only as a metaphor'; also he sees the present example as an exception to the rule that war is omitted in the treatise.

⁵⁰ But earlier on, at p. 2–3, citing *CIL* VIII. 2276, Rutherford seems to accept that here Marcus alludes to his military success over the Sarmatians.

⁵¹ Rutherford, *Meditations*, p. 115 seems to argue differently: he points out 'what is excluded from the *Meditations*, for it is illuminating to appreciate how wide a range of subjects Marcus does not discuss' (author's italics). This statement, however, is based on a *a priori* assumption and one may wonder, why should be more themes be discussed in the treatise? It was not historical work, so eve-

To begin with, as the first come various aspects of the Roman public life. At 1. 5 he makes mention of the horse races: circus factions of ‘the Greek Jacket’ (Πρασιανός), ‘the Blue’ (Βενετιανός), ‘the Light-Shield Champion’ (Παλμουλάριος; *palmularius*), ‘the Heavy-Shield’ (Σκουτάριος; *scutarius*) appear⁵²; occasionally Marcus focuses on a detail, writing unexpectedly of ‘the whip of the charioteer’ (τοῦ μαστιγίου τῷ ἡνιόχῳ: 10. 38). Other remarks revoke the most spectacular and bloody institution of Roman culture – gladiator games⁵³. Of course, the readers are already prepared that Marcus betrays no enthusiasm for the *panem et circenses* spectacles; nevertheless, his familiarity with the widespread Roman phenomenon is clear. Gladiators seem to be despised by him (12. 9), as it was the case of other representatives of the Roman upper classes (cf. Juvenalis, 6), but for a strange (non Stoic, non-Senecan) reason: the brutal shows bring a monotony (6. 46; with Rutherford, *Meditations*, p. 117). But even in this case ambiguity appears, and the passages in *Medit.* 7. 68 and 10. 8. 1 are here typical. The emperor’s vivid attention is laid both on the beasts tearing ‘limb from limb’ as on the act of ‘half-devouring’ of the fighters (the suggestive τοῖς ἡμιβρώτοις θηριομάχοις; they are μεστοὶ τραυμάτων καὶ λύθρου) in the arena by carnivores. The scenes serve as negative illustrations in Marcus’ argumentation, but by the same the details do reveal – small wonder – a mentality of an astute spectator who finds pleasure in gazing such games. Animals, both wild (5. 20; 6. 16; 10. 10: hare and bear) and domestic (6. 14; 6. 16; 7. 3: cows), great and small (e. g. mice at 11. 22; including also insects, like ants, 5. 1; 7. 3; flies and bees, 10. 10; also spiders, 5. 1; fishes, 7. 3; or shell-fish, 6. 13), were certainly the object of the emperor’s great interest, if sometimes not fascination (at 11. 1 he writes of the parts of animals). But in the case of wild beasts, again, great emotion, seen e. g. at 3. 2, is typically Roman in its manner, not Stoic. The episode concerns an aesthetic pleasure when viewing fighting predators⁵⁴. Read what called the attention of our fragile Stoic: τὸ τοῦ λέοντος ἐπισκύνιον καὶ ὁ τῶν συῶν ἐκ τοῦ στόματος ῥέων ἀφρὸς (‘the lion’s beetling brows, and the foam dripping from the jaws of the wild-boar’ – perhaps a remembrance of the Roman peculiarity, *venationes*; but see Fronto, *Epist.* 1. 178), for such scenes have ‘an added charm and entice our admiration’. No wonder, then, that the passage was commented by Guilielmus Xylander (Wilhelm Holtzmann) in his *M. Antonini Philosophi Imp. Romani, de vita sua Libri XIII* (Basileae 1563, p. 332)⁵⁵. Later on, at 3. 2. 2, we are also told that it is nice to ‘look on the actual gaping jaws of wild beasts’ (θηρίων ἀληθῆ χάσματα οὐχ ἥσσαν ἠδέως ὄψεται) – the evidence I again find highly ‘Roman’ in its curiosity, rather than Stoic; it agrees also with a highly contemptuous, ‘Roman’ tone in *Medit.* 9. 39. Dogs, especially hunting

rything that concerns Roman realities, although priceless for our understanding Roman mentality, was of course less important for the author’s purposes.

⁵² See generally A. C a m e r o n, *Circus Factions. Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium*, Oxford 1976.

⁵³ Cf. E. K ö h n e, *The Politics of Entertainment*, [in:] *Gladiators and Caesars. The Power of Spectacle in Ancient Rome*, eds. E. Köhne and C. Ewigleben, Berkeley – Los Angeles 2000, p. 8ff.

⁵⁴ Cf. B. B u r l i g a, *The Aristocratic Aspect of Hunting in Arrian’s Cynegeticus*, *Fasciculi Archaeologiae Historicae* 22 (2009), p. 35ff.

⁵⁵ Edited together with the works of Antoninus Liberalis and Phlegon of Thralles. It is striking that the passage was associated by Xylander with Homeric descriptions of this beast.

ones, are listed several times: at 5. 3; 5. 6 (κύων ιχνεύσας; cf. 6. 16 on 'the keeper of the kennel'); 5. 33 (at 7. 3 he even does not forget to say of 'a bone thrown to lap-dogs': κυνιδίους ὀσάριον ἐρριμμένον). An effective (Homeric?) metaphor is used at 11. 15, where a false friendship is called 'wolfish' – οὐδέν ἐστιν αἴσχιον λυκοφιλίας⁵⁶ ('There is nothing more hateful than the friendship of the wolf for the lamb'). Another gruesome picture is at 10. 28, where the monarch mingles a typical Roman cruelty with a desired Stoic *apatheia* – plausibly explaining how close is man showing affects and hopelessly fighting the fate to an idly kicking animal victim (the pig) – just before being slaughtered at the altar.

To this short overview of the imperial fauna, a few words may be added on Marcus 'the gardener's' flora and the allure of it. He evidently was impressed by the beauty of nature⁵⁷, of which he inserts a laudatory remark at 11. 10 (cf. his amenable mentioning of greenery, 10. 35; of leaves, 10. 34; or, of gardens, 11. 8 and 12. 27); his look and mentality was that of physician (cf. 8. 50. 1: ἀνθρώπου φυσιολόγου). And it is astonishing to observe how acute and sensitive observer of the natural world was this busy man – say, in the best tradition of the great Roman natural writers (Cato, Varro, Cicero, Virgil or Columella) on agriculture. Let us only note that his imperial gaze focuses on 'tiny plant' (5. 1); 'grape-cluster' (6. 13); 'figs, vines, olives' (6. 14; cf. 8. 15); 'the vines' (6. 16; see 6. 13 on *Phalernum*); 'the gherkin' (8. 50. 1); 'branches of trees' (11. 8); 'corn' (11. 34); 'grape dried' (11. 35).

So much with Marcus' imperial sight ('eye') which, as I have tried to show, in itself significantly betrays Roman mentality and way of thinking. The interest of the Antonine ruler in physical environment as well his previous remarks concerning war or animal world leave little doubts that we are dealing with Roman, not purely dry, theoretical treatise. As it appears (again), the Roman-ness of the book becomes thus plain, and this is even clearer, when taken together with author's previous instances of 'social' thinking about community, that's – in fact – not about a fictitious community but his imperial ethical care of the empire and his subjects⁵⁸. In sum, all that we do have constitutes a very basis of Marcus' treatise. I think this argument is not only a necessary step in further investigation, as its importance lies in the fact that it does affect our interpretation of the 'strictly' philosophical passages in the work. Most of all, it enables thus adopting a slightly different look at the phenomenon of the so-called 'Roman' Stoicism in his book.

⁵⁶ As *LSJ Lexicon* (ad loc.) informs, this word was in use only by Plato, *Ep.* 318e.

⁵⁷ This does not stand in contradiction to the fact that he used many examples from natural life to stress out vanity of human efforts; on the conception of nature in ancient philosophy, especially in Pliny, see R. F r e n c h, *Ancient Natural History*, London – New York 1994, pp. 166ff.

⁵⁸ By the way of comparison, the opinion of K. Kumaniecki about Cicero's treatise *De re publica*, may be adduced: Kumaniecki rightly points out that it is not an abstract work on an ideal constitution but the *Roman* constitution (*Literatura rzymska. Okres cyceński*, Warszawa 1977, p. 324).

III. ROMAN STOICISM AT WORK

Having already suggested in the 'Introduction' that there was no direct connection between Stoic doctrines on the ruling and administrating the Roman empire, time has come to try to qualify how should be the term 'Roman Stoicism' understood.

As the acknowledged French historian, P. Veyne once observed in his famous chapter on *Cesarstwo Rzymskie* ([in:] *Historia życia prywatnego I: Od cesarstwa rzymskiego do roku tysięcznego*, red. idem, Polish edn. Wrocław 2005², p. 238) that for many observers in the second century AD to be a Stoic meant not so much belonging to Stoic school (this was the privilege of the addicted disciples), but more loosely, a be a man of culture, cultivated in the famous Greek *paideia*.

Examining the problem of Stoic thought in writers such as Seneca and other Roman authors (cf. the study of M.L. Colish, n. 45, above), it may be often read that the doctrines of this sect constituted an unofficial philosophy of the Roman intellectuals and elite involved in state affairs⁵⁹. Suffice it to say that almost all modern experts agree. For instance, in an excellent paper by P.A. Brunt we are told that 'The wide circulation of Stoic ideas among the Romans of the upper class from the time of Panaetius in the second century B.C. to the reign of Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 161–180) is a familiar fact' (*Stoicism and the Principate*, p. 7, see n. 41, above)⁶⁰. Of the same opinion was another leading authority, A.A. Long, who maintains that 'For the Roman elite during the first century of the Christian era Stoicism remained the dominant philosophy'⁶¹. Accordingly, one may often read that 'Roman Stoicism' was affected by Roman values.

Among the students of ancient philosophy agreement prevails that in Rome Stoicism reached its third (and last) phase. In the *urbs aeterna* this old Greek philosophical school (Reale, *Hist. filoz. staroż.* III, p. 329 and IV, p. 95ff.) has found its ideal place, having become a doctrine highly attractive to some of the representatives of the Roman ruling class⁶², gradually becoming an expression of the Roman 'national' spirit that was, in turn, allegedly well suited to Stoic high ethical requirements. To quote the judgment of P. Garnsey and R.P. Saller, 'Stoicism dominated the world of

⁵⁹ On this M. Griffin, *Seneca. A Philosopher in Politics*, Oxford 1992; cf. G. Reydams-Schils, *The Roman Stoics. Self, Responsibility, and Affection*, Chicago (IL) – London 2005, p. 20; above all, consult M. Pohlenz, *Die Stoa. Geschichte einer geistigen Bewegung*, Göttingen 1992 (seventh edn.), p. 257ff.; also Ch. Gill, *The School in the Roman Imperial Period*, [in:] *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics*, ed. B. Inwood, Cambridge 2003, p. 34.

⁶⁰ E.V. Arnold, *Roman Stoicism*, Cambridge 1911, pp. 101–102, calls Panaetius 'the founder of Roman stoicism', cf. M.L. Colish, *Stoic Tradition*, pp. 10–1, with L. Edelstein, *The Philosophical System of Posidonius*, *American Journal of Philology* 57 (1936), pp. 286–325; cf. generally R.W. Sharples, *Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics. An Introduction to Hellenistic Philosophy*, London – New York 1996, p. 8.

⁶¹ *Roman Philosophy*, [in:] *The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman Philosophy*, ed. D. Sedley, Cambridge 2003, p. 207; also A.A. Long's, *Hellenistic Philosophy. Stoics, Epicureans*, Berkeley – Los Angeles 1986, pp. 232–235.

⁶² See W.W. Batstone, *Literature*, [in:] *A Companion to the Roman Republic*, eds. N. Rosenstein and R. Morstein-Marx, Malden (MA) – Oxford 2007, p. 560ff (on „Roman Philosophy” – author's inverted commas).

ideas for much of our period. It was the ethical system, not the theoretical speculations, of Stoicism that appealed to Romans' (*The Roman Empire. Economy, Society, and Culture*, Berkeley – Los Angeles 1987, p. 179). Not different was the verdict of C.R. Haines in the Loeb series: 'In spite of its origin Stoicism has appeared to be ideally adapted by the practical Roman character'⁶³. Such views were endorsed nowadays by the authoritative treatments by Professors Max Pohlenz in his pathbreaking study on *Die Stoa*⁶⁴, and the quoted above Giovanni Reale⁶⁵. Concerning our philosopher on the throne, the German scholar maintained even that not only Marcus confessed Stoicism but he *acted* like a Stoic (italics mine – B.B.). Additionally (and understandably), such impression certainly has been confirmed by one fundamental fact, namely that for the European culture Stoic doctrines were essentially saved by the Roman philosophers and writers – entirely they came down to us thanks to the Romans⁶⁶.

As I have said, if one seeks to find out any connection between Stoic ideals and ruling Roman state, its politics or administrative machinery, suspenses arise. Thinking of such kind presupposes that ideas cultivated in the circle of Stoic devotees might have had such great power as to influence, affect or change Romans' mind so far as it had left visible traces in collective political decisions. What more, such claim is based on the other assumption that there was in the *Stoa Poecile* ('Painted Porch') an elaborated political theory (of course, in a very general sense of this word). These presuppositions, plausible enough, are highly doubtful. We cannot imagine that such 'theory' has been 'invented' in order to be employed later in practice (that was, in some sense, Plato's case). I think that from its beginnings political thinking occupied no privileged place in Stoa and that in this sense the school created no 'political' theory. To be sure, its masters wrote the books on state (*politeia*; Latin: *res publica*) – apparently as a continuation of the Platonic interests – but actual Stoic philosophical discussions were thought to be comments on states, governments or powerful, influential individuals. In a word: Stoics discussed some themes in response to political problems they actually were facing (Seneca on his own exile etc.), and this means that it was political context that generated their reactions, or more refined, 'theoretical' considerations. The adjective 'political' could not be maintained as referring to actual events or controversies. The majority of Stoics were 'above' them (although Thræsea Paetus might be seen as an exception). What constituted this 'political' context?

Many scholars discussing the topic 'Stoics and politics' inevitably say of 'cosmopolitanism'; such type of 'global' thinking became a benchmark of the Hellenistic political thought at all (cf. Brown, [in:] op. cit.; cf. n. 37, above), and was

⁶³ *The Communings with Himself*, p. xxi; cf. an earlier opinion of Ch.H.S. Davis, *Greek and Roman Stoicism and Its Disciples*, Boston 1903, p. 89: 'At Rome Stoicism fell upon congenial soil'.

⁶⁴ See n. 59, above.

⁶⁵ The latter popular in Poland due to the translation of his fifth-volume *Storia della filosofia antica (Historia filozofii starożytnej)*, t. I–V, Lublin 1993–2002 (quoted subsequently after Polish edn.).

⁶⁶ So M. Morford, *Stoicism*, [in:] *The Classical Tradition*, eds. A. Grafton, G.W. Most and S. Settis, Cambridge (MA) – London 2010, p. 908; cf. G. Reale, *Hist. filozofii staroż.* IV, Lublin 1999, p. 95.

the philosophical response of the intellectuals to the decline of the classical *polis*, with its narrow, civic ideology. It is doubtful, if an old thesis on the decline of *polis* is right, but what remains of crucial importance here is the observation that for the understanding Stoic ideas the primacy of the socio-political factors must be pointed out: from the beginnings, i. e. after the conquests of Alexander the Great, it was the actual political situation in which Stoic philosophers operated and responded to. Vast kingdoms that arose on the ruins of Alexander's 'world-empire' project provided this context (so Reale, with Hadot's reserved voice in *The Inner Citadel*) and this, among others, explains the uncommon, later popularity of the kingship-literature, the subject-matter of Stoic thinkers too⁶⁷. The kingship writings were a kind of the theoretical response to the actual political realities in mainland Greece (the Antigonid monarchy), Ptolemaic Egypt and the kingdoms of Seleucids or Pergamum. But soon, however, the political situation has been changed: there came the descendants of she-wolf, who conquered the Graeco-Oriental world (cf. A.-M. Wittke, E. Olshausen u. R. Szydlak, *Historischer Atlas der antiken Welt* [Der Neue Pauly Suppl. Band 3], Stuttgart 2007, pp. 116–117).

Space forbids me to retell the story of how did Rome made the conquest of the Mediterranean world. This still is a fascinating theme and from the outset it was the subject-matter of great interest of many ancient historians and philosophers who sought to explain the sources of the unique Roman success. Not only was the Romanized Greek Polybius a most renowned example of such investigation, of course; also many generations of the ancient and later thinkers responded to this question and variously interpreted the phenomenon, but for my purposes one thing remains here fundamental: these theoretical speculations were second to the newly created political situation. So we came to the case of the Roman Stoicism.

When did the Romans encounter the Greek Stoics? Again, the story is relatively well known. To put it briefly, the precepts of the first Stoic masters, identified today as representatives of the so called Old Stoa (IV–III centuries BC, mainly: Zeno, Cleanthes, Chrysippus), were introduced to the Roman nobility by the teachers representing the group that nowadays is known as 'the Middle Stoa' (Pohlenz' 'die mittlere Stoa'; II–I centuries BC) – especially Panaetius of Rhodes (about 190–100 BC; cf. n. 60, above) and his pupil, Posidonius of Apamea (ca 140–50 BC), the author of the famous Stoic bible – *Peri Kathekontos* (cf. L. Edelstein and I.G. Kidd, *Posidonius, The Fragments* I, Cambridge 1972, F39–41, pp. 56–57). The former made several visits in Rome between 140–139, and was a companion to Scipio Aemilianus in his journey to the East. The latter became even more important figure: he knew influential Roman aristocrats. As a teacher he settled at Rhodes and stayed many of them, most famously Pompey and Cicero, a well known translator of the Posidonian treatise.

The influence of the two Greek thinkers on the Roman mentality hardly can be overestimated. Without going into the history of development of their thought, we

⁶⁷ More information on the nature of the kingship literature (*Peri basileias*) can be found in my paper *Do the Kings Lie? Royal Authority and Historian's Objectivity in Arrian's Anabasis*, [in:] *Leadership in Antiquity. Language – Institutions – Representations* [Classica Cracoviensia 15], eds. J. Janik and S. Sprawski, Cracow 2012 (forthcoming).

only should observe that both philosophers worked in concrete circumstances – the established Roman world-order (it was Posidonius who identified the ‘world-state’ with Roman republic). Many of the conclusions from their works must have been formulated with regard to the situation when Roman state extended its rule over the world. It was then this Roman power that provided an earthly equivalent of the philosophical *cosmopolis*. The transition from the Roman republic to the principate of Augustus and the fully developed, ‘high’ empire did not change in the eyes of its inhabitants this way of understanding the Rome’s worldwide (sometimes mystical) importance. As it was in the days of the late republic, the imperial Rome under the caesars still represented the sole, all embracing world-power. After the annexion of Egypt in 30 BC it might have been a common impression that the great kingdoms of the Diadochs had been definitely replaced by one political entity. Additionally, political power has been transformed on this occasion in what Virgil has boastfully called *novus ordo saeculorum*, an entity that during the Flavians and the Antonines gave ‘nourishment’ for Stoic thinking.

A brief look at the Roman empire at its peak is certainly helpful for understanding this factor – for this article’s sake here I must refer to the map in the standard monument of modern learning, *The Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World* (ed. R.J. Talbert, Princeton 2000). The map 100 (‘Provinces of the Roman Empire at the Death of Trajan (AD 117), by R.S. Bagnall, J.F. Drinkwater, C.B. Welles & others, gives us some idea about the feelings of the ancients. Both this map as the comment by Polish historian, E. Wipszycka (*Cywilizacja starożytna*, Warszawa 1998, p. 75) that Roman empire – while occupying an area of the modern 17 European states – was administrated from one center, act quite refreshingly on the modern student. But now we only may try to *understand* what for many (but not all, of course) ancient observers was an overwhelming, yet perhaps slightly disturbing reality.

In a paper *The Emperor’s Old Clothes: Marcus Aurelius’ Attitude towards the Christians Again* (see n. 32, above), I quoted the famous Roman legacy as transmitted by the great Virgil (some scholars saw in him a writer under Stoic influence) in the *Aeneid*, 6. 851–853. This half-mythical ‘testament’ must be repeated here. In the edition of Otto Ribbeck it runs:

*Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento
(hae tibi erunt artes), pacique imponere morem,
Parcere subiectis et debellare superbos*⁶⁸.

Naturally, Virgil’s words are proud, and by the same hybristic. But they are also revealing, as do they show a common attitude, certainly shared by the Roman elite. Seneca, the typical Roman (and Stoic, in second sequence) views the Roman rule as salutary, beneficial and necessary to the rest of the world. He straightforwardly confesses that it was (Stoic) providence that brought the empire to the Romans (*De*

⁶⁸ This proud legacy was quoted also by Professor E.S. Gruen in his classic book *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome I*, Berkeley – Los Angeles – London 1984, p. 276, n. 18; Gruen adds also Livy’s ‘testament’: 30. 42. 17; consult especially: W.V. Harris, *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome 327–70 BC*, Oxford 1985.

benef. 2. 23. 2; 3. 33. 2); elsewhere, adducing many examples (*De brevit.* 18. 3; *Cons. Helv.* 9. 7; *Cons. Marc.* 14. 3; *De ira.* 1. 11. 7), he several times repeats that Roman conquests and rule are watched for the good of the subjects. Professor Colin B. Wells in his monograph on the Roman Empire⁶⁹ reminds another priceless phrase from Pliny the Elder's encyclopaedia, *Historia naturalis*. In the Book XXVII, 1. 3 the Flavian compiler proudly says of *immensa Romanae pacis maiestate*, a never-ending time of prosperity and happiness (views also shared by many Greeks: Plutarch, Arrian and Aelius Aristides). Is Pliny's confession political? Of course, on the fundamental level it is. But should we confine it to the 'political' aspect (that's Roman power) only? Not necessarily. For my purposes, the most interesting is the context of this statement. Let us observe that when Pliny praises the famous *pax Romana* (a continuation of *pax Augusta*), he connects it with a harmony in nature, that's, his argumentation runs that peace brought by the Roman empire carries also *pax* to the natural world, so to speak – plants and animals; political security guarantees thus the prosperity of the natural (that's, still Roman) environment: we are suggested that even flora and fauna blossomed under the Roman imperial peace (!)⁷⁰. Pliny's argumentation is so striking that it is worth of quoting in full: *immensa Romanae pacis maiestate non homines modo diversis inter se terris gentibusque, verum etiam montes et excedentia in nubes iuga partusque eorum et herbas quoque invicem ostentante! aeternum, quaeso, deorum sit munus istud! adeo Romanos velut alteram lucem dedisse rebus humanis videntur*. A remarkable passage, indeed, which in the translation of J. Bostock and H.T. Riley (*Pliny the Elder, The Natural History*, London 1855) runs: 'the peace that reigns under the majestic sway of the Roman power, a peace which brings in presence of each other, not individuals only, belonging to lands and nations far separate, but mountains even, and heights towering above the clouds, their plants and their various productions! That this great bounteousness of the gods may know no end, is my prayer, a bounteousness which seems to have granted the Roman sway as a second luminary for the benefit of mankind.' The same idea appears in Plutarch's diatribe *De tranquillitate animi*, 9 (= *Mor.* 469d) when writing: ζῶμεν ὑγιαίνομεν τὸν ἥλιον ὀρώμεν· οὐ πόλεμος οὐ στάσις ἐστίν ('we live, we are of good health, we look at the sun, there is neither war, nor civil discord') – otherwise older (political) idea anticipated already in Virgil's first eclogue (*Ecl.* 1.)⁷¹.

To sum up this section, I wish to quote the words of the modern authority, sufficiently explaining the phenomenon: 'Landscapes exist differently for different cultures and for different groups within a society', wrote Graham Shipley in his *Preface* to the collection of papers on ancient landscapes⁷². In the times of Marcus the process of transforming of Rome from purely political power to the more meta-

⁶⁹ In Polish translation: *Cesarstwo rzymskie*, tr. T. Duliński, p. 265.

⁷⁰ Cf. the excellent treatment of M. B e a g o n, *Roman Nature. The Thought of Pliny the Elder*, Oxford 1992; also H. S i d e b o t t o m, *Philosophers' Attitude to War under the Principate*, [in:] *War and Society in the Roman World*, eds. J. Rich and G. Shipley, London – New York 1993, p. 243.

⁷¹ Cf. S.E. A l c o c k, *Graecia capta. The Landscapes of Roman Greece*, Cambridge 1993, p. 17.

⁷² G. S h i p l e y, *Preface*, [in:] *Human Landscapes in Classical Antiquity. Environment and Culture*, eds. G. Shipley and J. Salmon, London – New York 1996, p. 12.

phorical 'landscape', all-embracing counter-part of divinely inspired nature, let us say, the philosophical *kosmos*, has reached its zenith.

IV. ROMA SEMPER AETERNA

The modern experience of Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* is not a time easily spent: the first impression is that this is a book of a grumpy, growing old man. Soon the reader discovers, however, that the author was not only a very tender observer (cf. Philostratus, *Vit. Soph.* 2. 69⁷³) but brave man, who had courage to face heroically the tragedy of human existence (cf. 8. 1; 8. 38; 8. 52). To him, a true devotee of the Stoic doctrine, all around remained or certainly should have remain indifferent. From this point of view the message the reader receives from the lecture of *Meditations* is relatively clear. Marcus plays on the Heraclitean tones conceding that everything in this world passes on (cf. esp. 2. 12; 4. 19; 4. 46; 6. 36; 6. 47; 7. 10; 10. 34⁷⁴; 11. 18; 12. 32); all is vane (4. 33: *holon kenon*; 4. 19; 7. 58); all is thus really ephemeral and unimportant (cf. 8. 3; 8. 5; 8. 8. 21; 8. 25; 8. 31; 8. 37; 9. 30; 9. 33; 10. 27; 10. 31)⁷⁵ – a point stressed out by many later thinkers, to begin with Blaise Pascal's pessimistic speculations in his *Pensées*⁷⁶. Giovanni Reale usefully collects in his fourth volume of the history of philosophy these 'Heraclitean' (broadly speaking) and somewhat wearisome passages in the *Meditations*⁷⁷. These are: 2. 12; 2. 14; 2. 17; 4. 33; 4. 35; 4. 43; 4. 48; 5. 23; 6. 15; 6. 36; 7. 1; 9. 19; 9. 29; 9. 33; 9. 36. In the same vein, in the Book III of the *Meditations* one can read a famous, beautiful and apt comparison, so often used in later literature (and sometimes abused in the modern popular culture): life is a trip, in fact (cf. 3. 3. 2). To live simply means to go aboard; to live is to 'set sail'; and finally, to live means touching land and going ashore (another evident echo of Heraclitean themes like Πάντα ῥεῖ, or πάντα χωρεῖ καὶ οὐδὲν μένει, or δις ἐς τὸν αὐτὸν ποταμὸν οὐκ ἄν ἐμβαίης; cf. Rutherford, *Meditations*, p. 148). Do such statements sound sadly? Certainly. Do they bring a gloomy perspective, expressing a *taedium vitae*?⁷⁸ Surely. All of all, 'Death and Oblivion' always await, as R.B. Rutherford (*Meditations*, p. 161–162) aptly interprets this clue. But behind statements that ring for the modern ear somewhat nihilistically and desperately (see *Medit.*

⁷³ In his famous essay *Marcus Aurelius* (in: *Essays in Criticism. First Series*, London 1865, pp. 217–241), the Victorian critic T. Arnold has even emphatically called Marcus 'perhaps the most beautiful figure in history' (Arnold's essay was reprinted in the book *Marcus Aurelius, Meditations*, introduction Ch. Gill; translated R. Hard, Hertfordshire 1997, p. 164).

⁷⁴ A beautiful literary *topos*, comparing the fate of men to the leaves on the wind – known from many other writers, e. g. Horace, or Clement of Alexandria.

⁷⁵ In Polish edition, Warszawa 1989 (tr. T. Boy-Żeleński) pp. 163, 169, 390; cf. also A.A. Long, *Stoic Studies*, Berkeley – Los Angeles 2001, p. 56; cf. D. Clay, *Introduction*, [in:] *Marcus Aurelius, Meditations*, tr. M. Hammond, London 2006, pp. xi–xiv.

⁷⁶ Cf. S. Blackburn, *Oksfordzki słownik filozoficzny*, Polish edn. Warszawa 1997, pp. 378–379; V.J. Bourke, *Historia etyki*, tr. A. Białek, Polish edn. Warszawa 1994, p. 35.

⁷⁷ *Medit.* 3. 3.

⁷⁸ Cf. M.L. Clark, *Roman Mind*, p. 127.

8. 3) – like *sententiae* drawn from the Book of Quohalet (Ecl 1–2)⁷⁹ or the medieval *vanitas vanitatum*-lamentations – there remains something else and something more important. One type of remedy was the defense attitude of ‘cultivating *apatheia*’ (in S. Asbell-Rappe’s words⁸⁰). The second was more human – a pride. For what underlies almost all considerations put by Marcus into papyrus is just pride and almost every chart of his *Meditations* supports such interpretation. Nihilistic tones prevail in the book, it is true, but they are alleviated by this peculiar sense of being a Roman. This pride is quite unmasked to be passed over unnoticed by any reader of the treatise. Being Roman, belonging to-, and representing or leading the Roman community – these were Marcus’ priorities on his earthly ‘post’. Such conclusion by no means could be surprising. The *Meditations* are deeply embedded in a serious conviction that to be a Roman means to stand on his/her ‘station’⁸¹, to practice his own Stoic destiny, his own καθῆκον⁸², his *officium* (see B. Inwood and C. Donini’ chapter on *Stoic Ethics*, p. 697)⁸³. But in the *Meditations* it just means as if simply confessing that Rome is a Roman’s *kathekon*⁸⁴.

Let us quote here the voice of the modern authority. ‘Physisch wie geistig kann der Mensch nur innerhalb der Gemeinschaft existieren’, observed Pohlenz in his great book (*Die Stoa* I, p. 131; cf. p. 134), and this reflection echoes John Donne’s *Meditation XVII*, immortalized by Hemingway’ novel: ‘No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main’. The truth of this statement is particularly visible in the *Meditations*, but there remains one additional point of great importance, omitted by Pohlenz in his analysis: the emperor’s pride is stressed out not *despite of* the conviction that *officium* constitutes a nasty burden which necessarily must be worn; on the contrary – such pride appears so evident just *because of* the profound belief that duty must be filled – most often against all odds, as if the essence of life is to bear his own burden. In other words, here a straightforward impression inevitably arises that although in Marcus’ attitude all in human life is *at the end unimportant*⁸⁵, one thing constitutes certainly an exception that cannot be discussed, contested or doubted: it is the eternity of Rome, followed by a glory, whose source is the well-being of the Roman empire. In fact, it is the sense of *Ro-*

⁷⁹ Cf. C. Wells, *Cesarstwo rzymskie*, tr. T. Duliński, Polish edn. Warszawa 2004, p. 290.

⁸⁰ S. Asbell-Rappe, *Philosophy in the Roman Empire*, [in:] *A Companion to the Roman Empire*, ed. D.S. Potter, Malden (MA) – Oxford 2006, p. 531.

⁸¹ A list of relevant passages in *Medit.* is cited by Rutherford, *Meditations*, p. 148: 3. 5; 3. 6. 1; 5. 27; 11. 20.

⁸² [in:] *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy*, eds. K. Algra, J. Barnes, J. Mansfeld and M. Schofield, Cambridge 2002; cf. the emperor’s *credo* from *Medit.* 6. 22: Ἐγὼ τὸ ἐμᾶντοῦ καθῆκον ποιῶ. A next beautiful passage may be here cited: it is found in Robert Graves’ *Claudius and Messalina*, in the last scene in which the dead emperor talks to Sybilla; ending the dialogue, she requests him to close eyes, enter the Charon’s boat and sail to his own destiny.

⁸³ Cf. N. Spivey and M. Squire, *Panorama of the Classical World*, London 2004, p. 238.

⁸⁴ On the importance of *kathekon* see R. Bett, *Stoic Ethics*, [in:] *Comp. Ancient Philosophy*, p. 541.

⁸⁵ See P. Veyne, *Seneca. The Life of a Stoic*, London 2003, p. 31, quoting Seneca’s *De benef.* 7.

*manitas*⁸⁶, that remains thus the earthly framework of all activity a Stoic philosopher or Stoic ruler undertakes.

Such interpretation of Stoic thought in the *Meditations* has serious consequences for us: it means that we cannot interpret it in the terms of 'a by-product' which Stoic thinkers tolerated in their isolated mental rooms. To the contrary – this Roman context provided the necessary circumstances, which enabled to be a Stoic and formulate more general, abstract considerations concerning cosmos, world, nature, social life and so on. Bearing this in mind it is also obvious that general political circumstances were thus prior to the ideas⁸⁷, as the latter appear a response (a kind of explanation or understanding) to the former. The whole treatise remains deeply imbued in such deep thinking and his author seems to suggest it quite clearly to his (Roman) addressee: sooner or later, each human trip always finds its end but the trip of (our) *Romanitas* must go on⁸⁸. Reading the handbook in such a way may also be proven and strengthened by confronting the contents of the notices with their another sibling monument from the reign of Marcus⁸⁹ – that famous column, erected at Rome, in Piazza Colonna, on the occasion of the emperor's victories over the Marcomanni and Sarmati. As for the present paper, it must be observed that this monument constitutes a very valuable 'companion' to the emperor's literary notices. If anything, it is just this column that may be seen as the most evident realization of a proud homage the victorious monarch has paid to his *urbs aeterna*. Along the Trajan column it remains today certainly one of the most boastful monuments to the Roman power at all⁹⁰, showing its *imperator triumphans*, that's, realizing his Stoic (i. e. Roman) duties⁹¹.

⁸⁶ As far as it can be stated, this idea goes back to the second century BC, when Polybius wrote his history. Many times he stresses out the pervasive, all-embracing nature of the Roman power, e. g.: 1. 1. 5; 3. 1. 4; 3. 2. 6 – with F.W. Walbank's remarks, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius I*, Oxford 1957, pp. 40, 297–298; cf. D. H a h m, *Polybius' Applied Political Theory*, [in:] *Justice and Generosity. Studies in Hellenistic Social and Political Philosophy*, eds. A. Laks and M. Schofield, Cambridge 1995, pp. 7–8; see also Gruen, *Hellenistic World and Coming I*, p. 316, citing Polybius, 3. 3. 9. Later on, of similar opinion were Appian, *Praef.* 8–9, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, 1. 2. 1–4.

⁸⁷ Cf. K. von F r i t z, *Influence of Ideas upon Ancient Historiography*, [in:] *Dictionary of History of Ideas II*, ed. P.P. Wiener, New York 1973, p. 449.

⁸⁸ Cf. Jane L. Lightfoot's remark that the imperial Greek literature is 'the record of the winners' (*Romanized Greeks, Hellenized Romans: Later Greek Literature*, [in:] *Literature in the Greek and Roman Worlds*, ed. O. Taplin, Oxford 2000, p. 284) may be also referred to the *Meditations*, despite of melancholy pervading the work.

⁸⁹ Its construction has begun in AD 175 and was ended during the reign of Septimius Severus.

⁹⁰ As T.W. A f r i c a, *The Opium Addiction of Marcus Aurelius*, *Journal of History of Ideas* 22 (1961), pp. 97, believes, 'The testimony of his physician and his notebooks suggest that a wall of narcotics insulated the emperor from family disorders and all but public calamities'. Avoiding the entering the discussion (see the reserved voice of Rutherford, *Meditations*, p. 118), one of Africa's arguments for emperor's alleged addiction to drugs seems to be mistaken: his supposition that Marcus was mild toward the enemies. The famous column provides a quite different picture: it is just very doubtful, if Marcus really favoured a politics of clemency toward 'the enemies of the Roman order' (Professor R. MacMullen's phrase').

⁹¹ See F. L e p p e r and S. F r e r e, *Trajan's Column*, Gloucester – Wolfboro 1988, s. 15. The authors rightly think that Marcus' Column was an imitation of the Trajan's monument.

Viewing the column essentially does overlap with the message found in the *Meditations*⁹², as the small booklet substantially remains also the same manifestation of Roman imperial power. The difference between the two is that of a degree. Bearing in mind the monarch's memorable confession from *Medit.* 1. 16. 3 about his τὸ φυλακτικὸν αἰεὶ τῶν ἀναγκαίων τῆ ἀρχῆς ('unsleeping attention to the needs of the empire')⁹³, we may say that Roman reality incessantly knocks at the *Meditations'* door.

⁹² Cf. the studies of G. B e c a t t i, *La Colonna di Marco Aurelio*, Milan 1957 and I. F e r r i s, *Hate and War. The Column of Marcus Aurelius*, Stroud 2009); consult also M. B e c k m a n n, *The Column of Marcus Aurelius*, [in:] *Comp. Marcus Aurelius*, p. 251ff (with the same author's *The Column of Marcus Aurelius. The Genesis & Meaning of a Roman Imperial Monument*, Chapel Hill 2011, with excellent photos). Of this masterpiece of the Roman art and testimony to the victory over the barbarians, the acknowledged French historian Paul Veyne wrote that it was meant to reflect not only pathetic triumph (what is obvious) but an ambiguous delight. Veyne does not fail to add that it is a paradox: the Roman killers on the monument are by the same defenders of the civilization, representatives of the *humanitas* (*Humanitas: Rzymianie i nie-Rzymianie*, [in:] op. cit., pp. 439–440); cf. also I.M. F e r r i s, *The Pity of War. Representations of Gauls and Germans in the Roman Art*, [in:] *Cultural Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean*, ed. E.S. Gruen, Los Angeles 2011, p. 185 and 193ff. A. G o l d s w o r t h y' s, *Roman Warfare*, London 2000, p. 160 contains an excellent photo of the famous, impressive relief-scene presenting the emperor Marcus who, sitting on a horse, is triumphantly about to decide what to do with the captive Germans (tellingly, the relief picturing the emperor receiving act of surrender from the barbarians, opens also Haines' Loeb edition) – a picture proved by Cassius Dio, 72. 11. 1. Especially helpful in explaining the ideological aspect of such representations in Roman art remains the book by J. E l s n e r, *Roman Eyes. Visuality & Subjectivity in Roman Art & Text*, Princeton 2007, p. 3ff., that may be usefully read together with an excellent paper by T. H ö l s c h e r, *Images of War in Greece and Rome: between Military Practice, Public Memory, and Cultural Symbolism*, *Journal of Roman Studies* 93 (2003), pp. 2–3, and M.T. B o a t w r i g h t, *Antonine Rome: Security in the Homeland*, [in:] *The Emperor and Rome. Space, Representation, and Ritual* [Yale Classical Studies 35] eds. B.Ch. Ewald and C.F. Noreña, Cambridge 2010, p. 192ff.; at p. 12 Hölscher gives the following description: 'A peak of brutality and de-humanization is reached in the well-known scene on the Column of Marcus Aurelius where the brutality of punishment and slaughter is enhanced by the symbolic position of the Romans above their victims and by the expressive physiognomies of the defeated, distorted by pain and despair'. Sallust's words from *Bellum Catilinum*, 7. 3, on the Roman reasons for wars (quoted by W.V. H a r r i s, *War and Imperialism*, pp. 16–18) might be also relevant here.

⁹³ See G i b b o n' s (*Zmierzch cesarstwa rzymskiego I*, tr. St. Kryński, Polish edn. Warszawa 1995, p. 69) comment upon Cassius Dios' information (71. 23): after the death of Avidius Cassius, the rebellious commander in Syria, Marcus was to have told that he regrets from having lost opportunity to transform his enemy into a friend. No one can now verify the emperor's noble and honest attitude (it seems to me to be a typically apocryphal story), but every student of the Roman history realizes that it was Marcus himself who quickly decided to led an army to Syria in order to prevent the mutiny of Cassius: all of all – *ordo Romanus* must have been restored. Yet, a small (rhetorical) question arises: was it the decision undertaken by the Roman ruler, above all guarding the unity of the empire, or the deed of Stoic disciple, fulfilling his *kathekon*?

ROMANITAS „ROZMYŚLAŃ” MARKA AURELIUSZA

STRESZCZENIE

Uczeni zajmujący się *Rozmyślaniami* – sławym dziełem rzymskiego cesarza Marka Aureliusza (w greckim rękopisie zatytułowanym: *Do siebie samego*) – zwracają najczęściej uwagę na ich filozoficzny i religijny wymiar. Jest to w pełni zrozumiałe, skoro zapiski tego władcy miały charakter prywatnego duchowego pamiętnika, a ich celem było – zgodnie z regułami etyki stoickiej – znalezienie pocieszenia i szczęścia.

W artykule poruszono jednak nieco inny od podnoszonych dotychczas problem: kwestię ‘rzymkości’, to jest, rzymskiego charakteru (łac. *Romanitas*) tego niezwykłego zabytku literackiego.

Punktem wyjścia jest obserwacja, że jest to dzieło napisane przez tradycyjnie myślącego, i hołdującego dawnym wartościom, Rzymianina, który przez blisko 20 lat życia (panował w latach 161–180 po Chr.) zajmował w dodatku najwyższe stanowisko w imperium rzymskim (*Imperium Romanum*). Oznacza to, iż na równi z filozoficznym odczytaniem traktatu (taki zaś dominował w przez wiele lat w badaniach naukowych, szczególnie zaś w pracach z zakresu historii filozofii), w pełni uzasadniona jest polityczna interpretacja tego pisma. Przymiotnika ‘polityczny’ nie należy tu, rzecz jasna, rozumieć w dzisiejszym, wąsko rozumianym znaczeniu tego terminu, ile raczej w jego greckim sensie, oznaczającym całokształt spraw związanych z państwem.

Artykuł podzielony został na cztery części. Pierwsza jest rodzajem ‘Wprowadzenia’ do tematu. Problem przedstawia się następująco: Marek Aureliusz był stoikiem; świadomość tego sprawiła, że w wielu opracowaniach współczesnych filozoficzne zagadnienia rozpatrywane są w izolacji od faktu, że jego życie upłynęło na zarządzaniu olbrzymim imperium i prowadzeniu wojen z germańskimi plemionami Kwadów i Markomanów. Interesujące pytanie, które w związku z tym stawia obecnie wielu uczonych, ogniskuje się wobec kwestii, czy możliwe jest w takim razie, aby określić wpływ nauk stoickich na funkcjonowanie cesarstwa? Argumentuję, że takiego bezpośredniego wpływu nie było, a kwestię ‘rzymkości’ należy rozumieć inaczej: odgrywała ona w rzymskiej myśli stoickiej (co widoczne jest doskonale w traktacie cesarza) fundamentalną rolę, ponieważ to istnienie *Imperium Romanum* stanowiło niezbędne polityczne tło dla rozwoju filozofii nad Tybrem. W tym właśnie sensie można mówić o ‘rzymskim stoicyzmie’.

W części drugiej (‘Spojrzenie na „rzymkość” [*Romanitas*]’) starałem się zebrać te miejsca z pamiętnika cesarza, które potwierdzają jego na wskroś rzymską mentalność: są to zarówno wypowiedzi, gdzie pisze on o konieczności poświęcenia się dla innych, jak i uwagi, w których zdradza on typowe dla Rzymianina zainteresowanie szczegółami z życia społecznego i przyrodniczego. Ponownie staram się zwrócić uwagę na fakt, że wzmianki te nie mogą być traktowane jako zwykłe dodatki do filozoficznych rozważań cesarza, ile dowód, iż stoickie rozważania czerpały inspirację z ideologii rzymskiej: wynika to przeświadczenia, że kilkusetletnie trwanie światowego *Imperium Romanum* (które zastąpiło imperia monarchii hellenistycznych) i niezwykłej potęgi stało się niepisany paradygmatem w stoickich rozważaniach o państwie ogólnoswiatowym, niezmiennej naturze świata, przeznaczeniu, nieuchronności praw przyrody.

Część trzecia (‘Stoicyzm rzymski w praktyce’) jest próbą rozwinięcia i interpretacji poprzedniej tezy. Jej zasadniczym elementem jest przypomnienie, w jaki sposób Rzym stał na kilkaset lat się światową potęgą polityczną, oraz jak fakt ten wpłynął na popularność i rozwój doktryn stoickich w Rzymie. Nacisk został położony na fakt samego istnienia światowego imperium, które w decydującej mierze zadecydowało o przyjęciu i późniejszej atrakcyjności filozofii stoickiej nad Tybrem.

Wnioski z poprzednich części zostały podsumowane w części IV ('Roma semper aeterna'). Ponownie zwracam w niej uwagę na fakt, że idea wieczności Rzymu nie jest zanegowana przez cesarza w jego pamiętniku. Pomimo obecności myśli o przemijaniu i znikomości ludzkiego życia, staram się wskazać, iż tym egzystencjalnym przemyśleniom cesarza towarzyszyło niepisane, dumne przeświadczenie o wieczności Rzymu i rzymskiej potęgi – odczucia te nadają charakterystyczny rys filozoficznemu traktatowi imperatora rzymskiego.

ROMANITAS „BETRACHTUNGEN” VON MARK AURELIUS

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die sich mit den „Betrachtungen” beschäftigenden Gelehrten – dem berühmten Werk des römischen Kaisers Mark Aurelius (griechisch handschriftlich betitelt: *An sich selbst*) – heben vor allem ihre philosophische und religiöse Dimension hervor. Dies ist voll verständlich, da die Notizen dieses Herrschers die Form privater geistiger Memoiren hatten, und ihr Ziel war es – gemäß Regeln der stoischen Ethik – Trost und Glück zu finden.

In diesem Beitrag wurde etwas anderes angesprochen als bisher – nämlich das Problem des 'Römertums', also des römischen Charakters (lat. *Romanitas*) dieses ungewöhnlichen literarischen Denkmals.

Ausgangspunkt ist die Beobachtung, dass dieses Werk geschrieben wurde von einem traditionell denkenden, und herkömmlichen Werten huldigenden Römer, der fast 20 Jahre seines Lebens regierte (161–180 nach Chr.) also den höchsten Posten im römischen Imperium (*Imperium Romanum*) innehatte. Dies bedeutet, dass der philosophischen Wertung der Abhandlung gleich (solch eine dominierte während vieler Jahre in wissenschaftlichen Forschungen, besonders in Arbeiten aus dem Bereich der Philosophiegeschichte), eine politische Interpretation dieser Schrift voll begründet ist.

Das Eigenschaftswort 'politisch' ist hier natürlich nicht im heutigen engen Sinne zu verstehen, sondern eher in seinem griechischen Sinne, der das Gesamtbild mit dem Staat verbundener Angelegenheiten bedeutete.

Der Artikel ist in vier Teile aufgeteilt worden. Der Erste davon ist eine Art 'Einführung' ins Thema. Das Problem stellt sich folgendermaßen dar: Mark Aurelius war Stoiker; das Wissen darüber hat verursacht, dass in zahlreichen zeitgenössischen Bearbeitungen philosophische Probleme von der Tatsache isoliert erwogen werden, dass sein Leben beim Regieren über ein riesengroßes Imperium und der Kriegsführung gegen germanische Stämme der Quaden und Markomannen abgelaufen ist. Die interessante Frage, die zurzeit im Zusammenhang damit zahlreiche Wissenschaftler stellen, konzentriert sich dem Problem gegenüber, ob es in diesem Falle möglich sei, den Einfluss stoischer Wissenschaften aufs Funktionieren des Kaiserreiches zu bestimmen? Ich meine, dass es keinen solchen direkten Einfluss gab, und die Frage des 'Römertums' ist anders zu verstehen: Sie spielte im römischen stoischen Gedanken (was in des Kaisers Abhandlung gut erkennbar ist) eine fundamentale Rolle, weil die Existenz des *Imperium Romanum* den unerlässlichen politischen Hintergrund für die Entwicklung der Philosophie am Tiber bildete. In eben diesem Sinn kann über 'römischen Stoizismus' gesprochen werden.

Im zweiten Teil ('Blick aufs „Römertum" [*Romanitas*]') bemühte ich mich diese Gedanken der Memoiren des Kaisers zusammenzustellen, die seine durch und durch römische Mentalität bestätigen: Es sind sowohl Äußerungen über die Notwendigkeit des sich Aufopfrens für andere, wie auch Bemerkungen, in denen er für die Römer typische Interessen an Einzelheiten aus gesellschaftlichem und naturwissenschaftlichem Leben verrät. Erneut bemühe ich mich, die Aufmerksamkeit auf die Tatsache zu richten, dass diese Notizen nicht als gewöhnliche

Zulagen zu philosophischen Überlegungen des Kaisers behandelt werden können, als vielmehr als Beweis, dass die stoischen Überlegungen Inspirationen aus der römischen Ideologie bezogen haben: Dies ergibt sich aus der Überzeugung, dass das jahrhundertlange Bestehen des *Weltimperium Romanum* (welches die Imperien hellenistischer Monarchien ersetzt hatte) und der unbesiegtten Macht, zum ungeschriebenen Paradigma in den stoischen Überlegungen über einen weltweiten Staat, die unveränderliche Natur der Welt, das Schicksal und die Unabwendbarkeiten von Naturgesetzen geworden war.

Der dritte Teil ('Römischer Stoizismus in der Praxis') ist ein Versuch die vorherige These zu entwickeln und zu interpretieren. Darin wird erinnert, auf welche Art Rom für einige Hundert Jahre zur politischen Weltmacht geworden ist, und wie diese Tatsache die Beliebtheit und die Entwicklung der stoischen Doktrinen in Rom beeinflusste. Betont wurde vor allem die Tatsache der Existenz des weltweiten Imperiums selbst, welche im entscheidenden Maße über die Aneignung und spätere Attraktivität der stoischen Philosophie am Tiber entschied.

Die Schlußfolgerungen wurden in Teil IV ('Roma semper aeterna') zusammengestellt. Erneut weise ich auf die Tatsache hin, dass die Idee von Roms Ewigkeit vom Kaiser in seinen Memoiren nicht bestritten wurde. Trotz der Gedanken an das Verrinnen und die Geringfügigkeit des menschlichen Lebens bemühe ich mich darauf hinzuweisen, dass die ungeschriebene, stolze Überzeugung des Kaisers über Roms Ewigkeit und die römische Macht begleitet wurde von existentiellen Überlegungen – und diese Eindrücke geben den philosophischen Betrachtungen des römischen Imperators ihren charakteristischen Wesenszug.