Roman Civilization

25: Marcus Aurelius
Homework

Paper III:

• Topic Sentences
• Concluding Sentences
Administrative Stuff

Paper III Outline

Return

Midterm II

• Next Thursday, April 28

Paper III

• Due: May 10, 5:30 p.m.

Fall Semester:

• Greek Civilization
  • MW 5:30-6:45
  • Registration is open
Five Good Emperors

Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius
“If a man were called to fix the period in the history of the world, during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would, without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus.”

—Edward Gibbon

*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*
Hadrian

Imperator Caesar Divi Traiani filius Traianus Hadrianus Augustus
Travels

- Gaul
- Britain
- Spain
- Sicily
- Africa
- Egypt
- Greece (Philhellene)
Temple of Olympian Zeus
Temple of Olympian Zeus
Hadrian's Arch, Athens, Greece
ΑΙΔ' ΕΙΣΙΝ ΑΘΗΝΑΙ ΘΗΣΕΩΣ Η ΠΡΙΝ ΠΟΛΙΣ
ΑΙΔΕ ΑΔΡΙΑΝΟΥ ΚΟΥΧΙ ΘΗΣΕΩΣ ΠΟΛΙΣ
Contraction of the Empire

- The size of the Empire was becoming costly and problematic
- Wanted to strengthen the empire from within
- Rome withdrew from Armenia, Mesopotamia, Assyria
- Stopped expanding north and instead focused on protecting the empire
Hadrian’s Wall
Hadrian's Wall
Hadrian’s Wall
Hadrian
Caesar Publius Aelius Traianus Hadrianus Augustus

Heirs

- Adopted: Titus Aurelius Fulvus Boionius Arrius Antoninus (Antoninus Pius)
  - Adopted: Marcus Annius Verus (Marcus Aurelius)
  - Adopted: Lucius Aelius Aurelius Commodus (Lucius Verus)
Life of Hadrian

- Reigned: August 7, 117 - July 10, 138
- Death: July 10, 138
  - Natural Causes
- Deified in 139 by successor Antoninus Pius
Antoninus Pius
Caesar Titus Aelius Hadrianus
Antoninus Augustus Pius
Antoninus Pius

Caesar Titus Aelius Hadrianus Antoninus Augustus Pius

Early Life

- Born: September 16, 86
Antoninus Pius

Caesar Titus Aelius Hadrianus Antoninus Augustus Pius

Accession

- Adopted by Hadrian in 138
- Forced to adopt Marcus Annius Verus and Lucius Aelius
- Imperator Caesar Titus Aelius Hadrianus Antoninus Augustus Pius
- First Act: Deified Hadrian
Antoninus Pius
Antoninus Pius
Caesar Titus Aelius Hadrianus Antoninus Augustus Pius

Public Works

- Built temples, theaters, mausoleums
- Promoted Arts and Sciences
- Encouraged philosophy and rhetoric
Antoninus Pius
Caesar Titus Aelius Hadrianus Antoninus Augustus Pius

War

- None
- “Throughout the twenty-three years of his reign, he never went within five hundred miles of a legion”
Conquests

- Invasion of Scotland
- Antonine Wall (abandoned)
Death

- Died: March 7, 161
- Succeeded by Marcus Aurelius
Marcus Aurelius

Caesar Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Augustus
Early Life

- Born: April 26, 121
- Educated in literature, rhetoric, and law
  - Alexander of Catiaeum, a leading Homeric scholar
  - Herodes Atticus
Marcus Aurelius
Caesar Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Augustus

Marriage

- Married Annia Galeria Faustina Minor (Faustina the Younger)
- Thirteen Children
  - Annia Aurelia Galeria Faustina (147 – after 165)
  - Gemellus Lucillae (died around 150), twin brother of Lucilla
  - Annia Aurelia Galeria Lucilla (148/50–182), twin sister of Gemellus, married her father's co-ruler Lucius Verus
  - Titus Aelius Antoninus (born after 150, died before 7 March 161)
  - Titus Aelius Aurelius (born after 150, died before 7 March 161)
  - Hadrianus (152–157)
  - Domitia Faustina (born after 150, died before 7 March 161)
  - Annia Aurelia Fadilla (159–after 211)
  - Annia Cornificia Faustina Minor (160 – after 211)
  - Titus Aurelius Fulvus Antoninus (161–165), twin brother of Commodus
  - Lucius Aurelius Commodus Antoninus (Commodus) (161–192), twin brother of Titus
  - Marcus Annius Verus Caesar (162–169)
  - Vibia Aurelia Sabina (170 – died before 217)
Marcus Aurelius

Caesar Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Augustus

Accession

• Followed will of Hadrian
• Marcus Aurelius became emperor
• Refused to take office unless accompanied by Lucius Verus
Two Emperors

- Imperator Caesar Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Augustus
- Imperator Caesar Lucius Aurelius Verus Augustus
- Marcus gave his daughter, Lucilla, to Lucius in marriage
Lucius Verus

Caesar Lucius Aurelius Verus Augustus
Marcus Aurelius

Caesar Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Augustus

War

• Parthia
• Britain
• Germania
Marcus Aurelius

Parthian War (161-166)

- Marcus and Lucius were victorious
- Triumphal parade in Rome
- Commodus (5) and Annius Verus (3) were declared Caesars
  - “Caesar” is sub-emperor to “Augustus”
Marcus Aurelius

Caesar Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Augustus

Plague

- Returning army brought back plagues, smallpox or measles
- Antonine Plague
- Eventually killed Lucius Verus and Marcus Aurelius
Marcus Aurelius

Caesar Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Augustus

Administration

- Wanted good relationship with senate
- Focused on:
  - Manumission of slaves
  - Care of orphans
  - Election of city councillors
Marcus Aurelius
Caesar Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Augustus

War with Germanic Tribes (166-180)

- Attacks on norther borders: Marcomanni, Lombards, Sarmatians
- Death of Lucius Verus in 169
- Marcus Aurelius led the troops for much of the rest of his life
- Column of Marcus Aurelius
Column of Marcus Aurelius
SIXTVS · V · PONT · MAX
COVMNAM · HANC
COCHLIDEM · IMP
ANTONINO · DICATAM
MISER · LACERAM
RVINOSAMQ(UE) · PRIMAE
FORMAE · RESTITVIT
A · MDLXXXIX · PONT · IV
External Threats

- More invasions from the east into Macedonia, Greece
- Invasions were put down
- Marcus Aurelius tours the east
- Protector of Philosophy
Succession

- Started planning for succession in 175
- Commodus, his only surviving son, was only 13
- Commodus was co-emperor in 177, age 15
Death

- Died: March 17, 180 in Vindabona (Vienna)
- Possibly from the plague named after his family
- Ashes in Hadrian’s Mausoleum in Rome
Marcus Aurelius (replica), Piazza del Campidoglio, Rome
Marcus Aurelius, Capitoline Museum, Rome
Marcus Aurelius

The Philosopher King
Meditations

- Written between 170-180
- Written while on campaign
- Τὰ εἰς ἑαυτόν
“We should not say ‘I am an Athenian’ or ‘I am a Roman’ but ‘I am a citizen of the Universe.’

—Marcus Aurelius

Meditations
“Time is a sort of river of passing events, and strong is its current; no sooner is a thing brought to sight than it is swept by and another takes its place, and this too will be swept away.”

—Marcus Aurelius

Meditations
“The universal order and the personal order are nothing but different expressions and manifestations of a common underlying principle.”

—Marcus Aurelius

Meditations
"The universe is transformation; our life is what our thoughts make it."

—Marcus Aurelius

Meditations
"You have power over your mind—not outside events. Realize this, and you will find strength."

—Marcus Aurelius

Meditations
"Accept the things to which fate binds you, and love the people with whom fate brings you together, but do so with all your heart."

—Marcus Aurelius

Meditations
"Never let the future disturb you. You will meet it, if you have to, with the same weapons of reason which today arm you against the present."

—Marcus Aurelius

Meditations
"Execute every act of thy life as though it were thy last."

—Marcus Aurelius

Meditations
"Death is a release from the impressions of the senses, and from desires that make us their puppets, and from the vagaries of the mind, and from the hard service of the flesh."

—Marcus Aurelius
Meditations
"Despise not death, but welcome it, for nature wills it like all else."

—Marcus Aurelius
Meditations
"It is not death that a man should fear, but he should fear never beginning to live."

—Marcus Aurelius

Meditations
“A man should be upright, not be kept upright.”

—Marcus Aurelius

Meditations
"Because your own strength is unequal to the task, do not assume that it is beyond the powers of man; but if anything is within the powers and province of man, believe that it is within your own compass also."

—Marcus Aurelius

Meditations
"How ridiculous and how strange to be surprised at anything that happens in life!"

—Marcus Aurelius
Meditations
"Everything that happens happens as it should, and if you observe carefully, you will find this to be so."

—Marcus Aurelius

Meditations
"Nothing happens to any man that he is not formed by nature to bear."

—Marcus Aurelius

Meditations
How would you describe the philosophy of Marcus Aurelius?
Stoicism

Philosophy

History

• Founded by Zeno of Athens in 301 BCE
• Zeno taught at the Stoa Poikile
• Adherents:
  • Cato the Younger
  • Seneca
  • Epictetus
  • Marcus Aurelius
Stoicism

Cardinal Virtues

- Wisdom
- Courage
- Justice
- Temperance
Stoicism

Beliefs

• Free from passions
• Each person is “citizen of the world”
• Emphasis on duty, public service
• Uphold traditional morality
• Uphold established authority
• Wise are naturally fit to rule

• “Stoic”
Last Words of Marcus Aurelius, Eugene Delacroix, 1844
The Death of Socrates, Jacques-Louis David, 1787
“...[Marcus] did not meet with the good fortune that he deserved, for he was not strong in body and was involved in a multitude of troubles throughout practically his entire reign. But for my part, I admire him all the more for this very reason, that amid unusual and extraordinary difficulties he both survived himself and preserved the empire.

—Cassius Dio
71.36.3-4
“...[Marcus] did not meet with the good fortune that he deserved, for he was not strong in body and was involved in a multitude of troubles throughout practically his entire reign. But for my part, I admire him all the more for this very reason, that amid unusual and extraordinary difficulties he both survived himself and preserved the empire. Just one thing prevented him from being completely happy, namely, that after rearing and educating his son in the best possible way he was vastly disappointed in him. This matter must be our next topic; for our history now descends from a kingdom of gold to one of iron and rust, as affairs did for the Romans of that day.”

—Cassius Dio

71.36.3-4
Commodus
Caesar Marcus Aurelius
Commodus Antoninus Augustus
Commodus
Caesar Marcus Aurelius Commodus Antoninus Augustus

Early Life

- Born: August 31, 161
- Born in the purple
Commodus
Caesar Marcus Aurelius Commodus Antoninus Augustus

Obsession with Gladiator Games

• Megalomania: dressed as Hercules to fight gladiators and animals
• Fixed matches
• 620 Wins
• Drained the treasury surplus with games
• Gladiator Emperor
Commodus
Caesar Marcus Aurelius Commodus Antoninus Augustus

Death

• Assassinated in 192
• Strangled by an athlete
• Drunk in Bed
• Mistress was conspirator
Life in the Roman Empire

Entertainment
Theaters and Processions

Theater

- 102 days a year are theater days
- Men, women, slaves, freed men all attended the theater
- Ovid: Great place to pick up a date
- Actors were considered disreputable
Circuses and Chariot Races

- Circus Maximus
  - Rape of the Sabine Women
  - Ovid: Great place to pick up a date
  - The palace of Augustus overlooked the Circus Maximus

- “Political” Place
  - Interaction between emperor and people
  - Tiberius didn’t attend
Gladiator Games

Are you not entertained?

Three Types of Games

- Beast ‘Hunts’
- Dramatic Executions
- Gladiator Fights
Gladiator Games

Are you not entertained?

History

- First gladiator match in 264 BCE
- Originally, part of funerary rites
- Eventually, put on by emperor
Gladiator Games

Are you not entertained?

Participants

- Criminals
- Slaves
- Prisoners of War
Gladiator Games

Are you not entertained?

The Appeal

- Fame
- Fortune
- Sex
- Money
- Superstars but also lowest class
Gladiator Games
Are you not entertained?

Life as a Gladiator

- Gladiator Troupe
- State-supported gladiator school
  - Training
  - Food
  - Medicine
- 2-3 Fights per year
- 1-on-1, 2-on-2, equally matched
Gladiator Games

Are you not entertained?

Gladiator Games

- Gladiator games banned by Theodosius in 407
- Beast fights banned in 523
The Colosseum
The Colosseum
Are you not entertained?
"What we do in life, echoes in eternity."

—Maximus
Gladiator