

# Marcus Aurelius: Beyond the Historia Augusta

Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Augustus (121-180 CE) was a Roman emperor from 161 to 180 CE and a Stoic philosopher. He is best known for his writings, particularly the *Meditations*, which have been a source of inspiration and guidance for centuries. Marcus Aurelius was born in Rome to a wealthy equestrian family. His father, Annius Verus, was a praetor, and his mother, Domitia Lucilla, was a daughter of the consul Lucius Domitius Lucanus. Marcus Aurelius was a precocious child and began studying philosophy at a young age. He was particularly drawn to Stoicism, which taught that the key to happiness was to live in accordance with nature and to accept the things that we cannot change.

In 140 CE, Marcus Aurelius was adopted by the emperor Antoninus Pius and became his heir. He was given the name Marcus Aurelius Antoninus and was granted the title of Caesar. Marcus Aurelius served as co-ruler with Antoninus Pius for the next 23 years. During this time, he gained valuable experience in government and military affairs. In 161 CE, Antoninus Pius died and Marcus Aurelius became emperor.



## Marcus Aurelius in the Historia Augusta and Beyond

by Geoff W. Adams

★★★★☆ 4 out of 5

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Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

Print length : 345 pages



Marcus Aurelius' reign was marked by both great triumphs and personal tragedies. He led the Roman army to victory over the Parthians and the Marcomanni, but he also had to deal with the devastating Antonine Plague, which killed an estimated 5 million people. Marcus Aurelius was a compassionate and just ruler, and he was deeply concerned with the welfare of his subjects. He passed laws to protect the poor and the weak, and he promoted education and culture.

Marcus Aurelius was also a prolific writer. His most famous work is the *Meditations*, a collection of philosophical reflections on life, death, and the nature of the universe. The *Meditations* are a valuable source of wisdom and guidance, and they have been a source of inspiration for centuries. Marcus Aurelius died in 180 CE, at the age of 58. He was succeeded by his son, Commodus.

### **The Historia Augusta**

The *Historia Augusta* is a late Roman work that provides us with some information about the life and reign of Marcus Aurelius. However, the *Historia Augusta* is often unreliable and biased. It was written by a group of authors in the 4th century CE, and it is clear that they had a political agenda. The *Historia Augusta* is full of gossip and scandal, and it is often difficult to separate fact from fiction.

Despite its shortcomings, the *Historia Augusta* does provide us with some valuable information about Marcus Aurelius. For example, the *Historia Augusta* tells us that Marcus Aurelius was a kind and compassionate ruler,

and that he was deeply concerned with the welfare of his subjects. The *Historia Augusta* also tells us that Marcus Aurelius was a prolific writer, and that he wrote extensively on philosophy and ethics.

## **Beyond the *Historia Augusta***

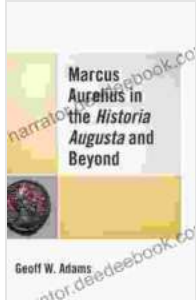
In order to gain a more complete picture of Marcus Aurelius, we need to look beyond the *Historia Augusta*. There are a number of other sources that can provide us with information about his life and reign. These sources include:

- **The Meditations:** Marcus Aurelius' own writings are the most valuable source of information about his life and philosophy.
- **Aurelius Victor:** Aurelius Victor was a Roman historian who wrote a brief biography of Marcus Aurelius in the 4th century CE.
- **Dio Cassius:** Dio Cassius was a Roman historian who wrote a detailed history of Rome in the 3rd century CE.
- **Herodian:** Herodian was a Greek historian who wrote a history of the Roman Empire from 180 to 238 CE.
- **The inscriptions and coins:** Inscriptions and coins can provide us with valuable information about Marcus Aurelius' reign.

These sources can help us to piece together a more complete picture of Marcus Aurelius. They show us that he was a complex and fascinating figure who was both a great emperor and a great philosopher.

Marcus Aurelius was one of the most important figures of ancient Rome. He was a great emperor, a great philosopher, and a great man. His

writings, particularly the Meditations, have been a source of inspiration and guidance for centuries. Marcus Aurelius is a reminder that even in the darkest of times, it is possible to find light and hope.



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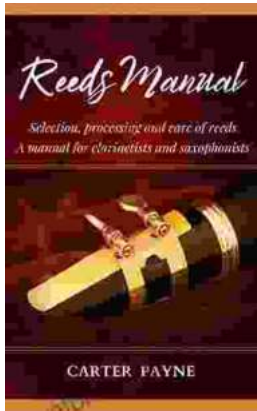
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