

The Advice of Marcus The Golden

Post by "Cassius" of June 10, 2019 at 7:35 AM



Thanks to Nate for helping me express in one graphic what I have spilled weeks of time writing in much less effective form.

Post by "Martin" of June 10, 2019 at 8:51 AM

As mentioned on FB already, "golden" is much more fitting to Plato, in particular because Epicurus used "the golden" as reference to Plato.

Marcus Aurelius' Meditations are rather eclectic than plainly stoic. So, using him as a representative for stoicism/virtue does not fit that well.

Moreover, "golden" does not fit to an emperor who himself lead his army to battles and who died of typhoid on the way back from his last battle.

Post by "Cassius" of June 10, 2019 at 9:07 AM

Yes I agree it is more fitting to Plato, but is not "Aurelius" a given name that means "golden", so that he was EXPLICITLY called golden and specifically because he was such a philosopher?

The main reason I fudged the name is because the statement in the balloon is not a quote, and I didn't want to be accused of misquoting.

I'm no fan of Marcus Aurelius, but the only reason I picked him for the graphic rather than someone else is that Nate gave the perfect blank form. On the other hand he is an icon of the Stoics so makes a perfect foil for Epicurus that many modern readers will recognizing. Actually this graphic looks to me more like a typical 60's college professor than he does Marcus Aurelius anything. Anyway thanks for the feedback I have changed it around several times already and may again.

One more comment -- I am a HUGE fan of ancient Rome so I don't lightly make fun of the Romans. I agree too that Aurelius is more eclectic than stoic, but the modern stoics have adopted him as their patron saint so for effectiveness of graphics his image is hard to beat as a stand-in for Stoicism. Zeno or Chryssipus would be better, but no one would recognize them.

Post by "Cassius" of June 10, 2019 at 9:11 AM

Actually I wonder who gave the name "golden" to the son of [Marcus Annus Verus](#), That sounds like it could be a much later development. Anyone know?

Wikipedia says "Marcus was born to Marcus Annus Verus, a praetor and the great-great-nephew of Emperor Trajan, and Domitia Lucilla, a wealthy noblewoman and heiress."

So sounds like the family name was Verus? And that Aurelius might not ever have been used while he was alive? Would be interesting to track down but Wikipedia doesn't seem to say. Seems possible that it was a later addition by philosophers specifically remarking on his

philosophy.

Post by “Martin” of June 10, 2019 at 9:14 AM

Aurelius was apparently Marcus' family name and not an attribute given to him. I just read that Marcus Aurelius' father got this attribute and this apparently became then the family name but the reference gave no details.

Post by “Cassius” of June 10, 2019 at 9:17 AM

(I think Martin and I crossposted.) If someone has good info on the family name and origin of "Aurelius" please post. I kind of think given his temperament he might not have accepted people calling him "the golden" in his lifetime. Maybe so, maybe not.

IT would be a very interesting aspect of his character if Marcus DID ask for, or accept as part of his official title, the word "Aurelius" if that was not already associated with his family.

Post by “Cassius” of June 10, 2019 at 9:30 AM

This describes the system but doesn't address our guy --
http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman...GRA*/Nomen.html

Post by “Cassius” of June 10, 2019 at 9:37 AM

Introduction & Quick Facts

Youth and apprenticeship

Roman emperor

The *Meditations*

Legacy

Marcus Aurelius

EMPEROR OF ROME

WRITTEN BY: John Anthony Crook

LAST UPDATED: Jun 7, 2019 See Article History

Alternative Titles: Caesar Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Augustus, Marcus Annus Verus

Marcus Aurelius, in full **Caesar Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Augustus**, original name (until 161 CE)

Marcus Annus Verus, (born April 26, 121 CE, [Rome](#) [Italy]—died March 17, 180, Vindobona [Vienna, Austria] or Sirmium, Pannonia), Roman [emperor](#) (161–180 CE), best known for his *Meditations* on [Stoic](#) philosophy.

Marcus Aurelius has symbolized for many generations in the West the Golden Age of the [Roman Empire](#).

If this from Britannica is correct, then our humble virtuous philosopher Marcus DID start to adopt the name "Golden" during his reign.

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Marc...s-Roman-emperor>

If I were more familiar with MEDITATIONS I would look for a quote on modesty and paste it into one of Nate's graphics with something like "Preached Modesty" << >> "Called himself 'Golden'" 😊

Post by “Joshua” of June 10, 2019 at 10:21 AM

The best clues will be on his coinage, as the inscription in the Piazza Colonna is not original.

<https://coinweek.com/ancient-coins/...arcus-aurelius/>

It seems he was given the name upon his adoption by Antoninus Pius, well before he became emperor. Perhaps with the meaning of something like Hadrian's "Golden Boy"?

My interest in Roman history is mostly confined to the period of the Late Republic; I don't think I've ever read a biography of him.

Post by “Cassius” of June 10, 2019 at 10:29 AM

Very very interesting and thank you Joshua! And I think you are right to suspect that some people might have seen it as a golden boy inside joke!

But how in the world does a Stoic philosopher wind up with that name UNLESS it is an explicit reference to Plato????? This is weird and I hope we can track down something that shows more light on this.

The coinage is an excellent path!

Post by “Joshua” of June 10, 2019 at 10:46 AM

I'd be curious to know more as well, Cassius. I used to work in the restaurant industry alongside a lot of teenagers, and there was one group of three or four friends that stands out in my mind. They were all rather sporty (football mostly), but one of them, with a particularly winning smile, also played cello, got good grades, and conversed easily with boys and girls, young people and old. There was a bit of 'golden boy' teasing there; and I can imagine if one of your buddies was hand-picked by the emperor of Rome, it might earn him a nickname.

It's very strange; when I get to the victory of Octavian at the Battle of Actium, it's as if a switch gets flipped in my brain. Rome stops being "Rome", even though all of the notable surviving architecture dates to the Imperial period. I most recently felt this when listening to S.P.Q.R. by Mary Beard. I finished it, but it was a bit of a slog.

Post by “Cassius” of June 10, 2019 at 11:11 AM

Joshua your last comment is a subject on which I am intensely interested as well.

I largely agree with what I perceive Gibbon says that it was the influence of Judeo/Christian/Eastern religions that was one of the most important destructive forces, but if we use the civil war as a dividing line that's presumably a little too early --- however the problems in the empire with various Jewish rebellions may have been spreading the eastern influence well before Christ --- as I recall one of Cicero's speeches talks about Jewish movement of goods to Jerusalem from other places, and governors trying to clamp down on that, as well as references to Jewish moneyed influence in Rome. And those factors don't even address philosophical changes.

I hope you will post any thoughts that you think are relevant in any thread or subforum that seems appropriate, or we can set up another one something like "How The Ancient World Came to An End" or whatever you wish.

Post by “bradley.whitley” of June 13, 2019 at 11:07 AM

Excellent posts here!