

MARCUS AURELIUS

(26 April, 121 AD – 17 March 180 AD)

106 – 43 BC	Life of Cicero, orator, politician, and philosopher
4 BC – 65 AD	Life of Seneca, orator, politician, and philosopher
55 AD – c.135	Life of Epictetus, Stoic philosophical teacher
95 AD – c.167	Life of Fronto, orator, politician, tutor to Marcus Aurelius

(Dates below are AD)

- 121 Marcus born (as M. Annius Verus) in Rome
- 124 Death of natural father of Marcus; adopted by his grandfather
- 138 Adopted (with Lucius Ceionius Commodus) by Antoninus, who became emperor after Hadrian
 - Engaged to marry Faustina (daughter of Antoninus)
- 140 & 145 Marcus is made consul
- 145 Marries Faustina
- 147 Birth of first child, a girl (the first of at least 13 children, including two sets of twins, that Faustina would bear over the next 23 years, only 2 survive to adult)
 - Marcus receives tribunician power and imperium
- 155 – 61 (uncertain date) Death of Marcus' mother, Domitia Lucilla
- 161 Death of Antoninus Pius
 - Marcus and Lucius become joint emperors
 - Faustina gives birth to Commodus and his twin, Titus (who died in childhood)
 - Parthians invade eastern part of empire
- 162– 6 Lucius directs successful campaign against Parthians
- 166– 7 Plague in Rome and throughout the empire
- 168– 80 Marcus spends most of these years on campaign, on northern frontier
- 168 Danube frontier of empire invaded; emperors reinforce the border
- 169 Death of Lucius from illness
- 170 German tribes defeat Marcus and invade the north of the empire, advancing into northern Italy
- 172– 4 Marcus leads successful campaigns against German tribes, including the Marcomanni and Quadi (172– 3) and Sarmatians (174); to mark his victories, he takes the titles Germanicus (172) and Sarmaticus
- 175 Unsuccessful rebellion of Avidius Cassius, governor of Syria
 - Marcus tours the east of the empire with Faustina and Commodus
 - Death of Faustina in Cappadocia
- 176 Commodus (aged 15), Marcus' only surviving son, made joint emperor
- 178– 80 Marcus campaigns against the Germans, after renewed warfare
- 180 Death of Marcus near Sirmium in Pannonia; Commodus now sole emperor

“Antoninus,” said Renan, “would have been without competition for the reputation of being the best of sovereigns, had he not designated Marcus Aurelius as his heir.”

“If,” said Gibbon, “a man were called upon 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 accession of Nerva to the death of Aurelius. Their united reigns are possibly the only period of history in which the happiness of a great people was the sole object of government.”