

Henry More as Reader of Marcus Aurelius

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ABSTRACT: I examine Henry More's engagement with Stoicism in general, and Marcus Aurelius in particular, in his *Enchiridion Ethicum*. More quotes from Marcus's *Meditations* throughout the *Enchiridion*, leading one commentator to note that More 'mined the *Meditations*' when writing his book. Yet More's general attitude towards Stoicism is more often than not critical, especially when it comes to the passions. I shall argue that while More was clearly an avid reader of the *Meditations* he read Marcus not as a Stoic but as a 'non-denominational' ancient moralist who confirms a range of doctrines that More finds elsewhere in ancient philosophy. In this sense More continues the Neoplatonic practice of downplaying doctrinal differences between ancient philosophers in order to construct a single ancient philosophical tradition. This is quite different from the approach of his contemporary and fellow Cambridge Platonist, Ralph Cudworth, who was keen to highlight doctrinal differences between ancient philosophers.

Henry More's *Enchiridion Ethicum*, first published in 1668 and translated into English as *An Account of Virtue* in 1690,¹ is rich in references to ancient philosophical authors. Among these Aristotle is probably the most prominent, but a casual reader of the work cannot help be struck by the frequency with which More quotes from or refers to the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius. Indeed, the frequency led one recent commentator to claim that More 'mined the *Meditations*' when writing the work.² More was by no means alone in being captivated by the *Meditations* during this period. In 1634 Meric Casaubon translated the *Meditations* into English for the first time, coining the title by which it is usually known in the process, and he went on to produce an edition

¹ The *Enchiridion Ethicum* (hereafter abbreviated to *EE*) was first published in 1668 and reprinted in 1669, 1679 (in More's *Opera Omnia*), and 1685. It was translated into English under the title *An Account of Virtue* (hereafter *AV*) in 1690, with a second edition in 1701. In what follows I rely on the first editions of each version. 'EE 2.8.2' refers to book 2, chapter 8, numbered section 2. For convenience I also include the pagination of *AV*. I have also consulted the version of *EE* printed in More's *Opera Omnia*, which differs from the first edition at various points.

² See Brooke, *Philosophic Pride*, 110.

of the Greek text, published in 1643.³ At the same time Thomas Gataker, vicar of Rotherhithe, was preparing his own edition of the text with extensive commentary, which was published in Cambridge in 1652.⁴ It seems likely that More read Marcus in Gataker's edition, which would have come out not long before the time More was composing the *Enchiridion Ethicum*.⁵ More is one of the earliest authors to refer extensively to the *Meditations* and so deserves a place in the history of the reception of Marcus Aurelius and, by extension, in the wider narrative of the reception of Stoicism.⁶

In order to put what follows into that wider context, it may be helpful to say something about the reception of Stoicism up to the time that More was writing.⁷ In the Latin West, knowledge of Stoicism derived primarily from the works of Seneca and Cicero, both of whom were read widely during the Middle Ages and early Renaissance. Seneca was often regarded as the leading Stoic philosopher and, although a pagan, as a thinker not incompatible with Christian principles – a judgement shaped by St Jerome's sympathetic attitude and by the

³ Casaubon's 1634 translation, *Marcus Aurelius Antoninus the Roman Emperor, his Meditations Concerning Himselfe*, was reprinted in 1635, 1663, 1673, and 1692. His 1643 edition of the Greek text (with a facing Latin translation), *Marci Antonini Imperatoris De Seipso Et Ad Seipsum libri XII*, appears not to have been reprinted at all. See further Wickham Legg, 'A Bibliography', 26-7.

⁴ Gataker's 1652 edition, *Marci Antonini Imperatoris de rebus suis, sive de eis qae [sic] ad se pertinere censebat, Libri XII*, was reprinted in 1697 and 1707. See again Wickham Legg.

⁵ More quotes from the *Meditations* using Gataker's section numbering of the text. For example in *EE* 2.1.6 he cites *Meditations* 7.55; Casaubon's Book 7 only has 47 sections, whereas Gataker's Book 7 is divided into 75 sections. Modern editions (by e.g. Haines, Farquharson, Dalfen) all follow Gataker's division of the text.

⁶ There is no mention of More in Krayer, "Ethnicorum omnium sanctissimus" (or in the later revised version, 'Marcus Aurelius and Neostoicism in Early Modern Philosophy').

⁷ For general accounts of the reception of Stoicism see e.g. Spanneut, *Permanence du Stoicisme*, Neymeyr, Schmidt, and Zimmermann, eds, *Stoizismus*, and, most recently, Sellars, ed., *The Routledge Handbook of the Stoic Tradition*. On the Renaissance reception briefly outlined here see Sellars 'Stoicism'.

existence of a correspondence between Seneca and St Paul, which was only dismissed as spurious in the fifteenth century.

The fifteenth century also saw the rediscovery of further sources for Stoicism, not least the *Vitae philosophorum* of Diogenes Laertius and the *Enchiridion* of Epictetus, although the latter was read through the lens of Simplicius' Neoplatonic commentary. However Seneca remained a central point of reference throughout the sixteenth century and attracted the attention of Erasmus, Calvin, and Lipsius.⁸ The *Dissertationes* of Epictetus were first printed in 1535 and they too became an important point of reference in discussions of Stoicism, especially in the hands of Montaigne, Du Vair, and, a little later, Pascal.

Marcus Aurelius, by contrast, barely figured in Renaissance discussions of Stoicism. Some excerpts from the *Meditations* did circulate in manuscript but Marcus only really found a wider readership after the relatively late *editio princeps* of the *Meditations* in 1559.⁹ The text, along with a translation into Latin by Xylander, was reprinted a number of times in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries (1568, 1590, 1626), suggesting that it quickly became popular. That interest culminated in the mid-seventeenth century with the editions by Casaubon and Gataker mentioned earlier.

The reception of the *Meditations* began quite late, then, and More was one of the first philosophers to draw on the work;¹⁰ Marcus Aurelius is rarely mentioned, if at all, by the so-called 'Neostoic' authors of the late sixteenth

⁸ On the reception of Seneca in the sixteenth century, including ongoing debates regarding the authenticity of the correspondence with St Paul, see Krayer, 'The Humanist as Moral Philosopher'.

⁹ On the circulation of the *Meditations* in the Renaissance see Farquharson, *The Meditations*, xx-xxviii.

¹⁰ One of the few people to engage with Marcus before More was Jean Reuchlin (1455-1522) who, writing before the *editio princeps* of 1559, drew on a manuscript copy of the *Meditations*. See further Ceporina and Vesperini, 'Quinze citations de Marc Aurèle dans Reuchlin'.

century.¹¹ More was followed in the eighteenth century by figures such as the third Earl of Shaftesbury, who drew on the *Meditations* extensively in his *Askêmata* notebooks,¹² and Francis Hutcheson, who translated the *Meditations* in collaboration with James Moor.¹³ Given that More was the first person to draw at any length on the *Meditations*, it seems worth examining in detail his use of Marcus Aurelius in his *Enchiridion Ethicum*. Do More's frequent references to the *Meditations* indicate an interest in or debt to Stoicism? What else, if anything, does More have to say about Stoicism along the way? In what follows I shall examine More's references to both Marcus Aurelius and other Stoic sources in order to try to answer these questions. I begin with his few passing references to 'the Stoics', then the slightly more frequent places where he refers to Epictetus, before turning to his far more numerous mentions of the *Meditations*. After having assessed the evidence I shall offer some conclusions about More's use of Marcus Aurelius and his attitude towards Stoicism. As we shall see, these are largely negative. However I shall also comment on what all this tells us about More's approach to the historiography of philosophy and how it differs from that of his fellow Cambridge Platonist Ralph Cudworth.

1. More on Stoicism

I begin by considering More's very general references to the Stoics. There are only a handful of explicit references. At *EE* 1.3.6 (*AV* 16) More mentions the

¹¹ The label 'Neostoic' is a modern invention used to refer to a brand of Christianized Stoicism popular in the wake of Justus Lipsius. See further Lagrée, *Le néostoïcisme*.

¹² Recently re-edited for the 'Standard Edition' of Shaftesbury's works in 2011 and reviewed in this journal, *BJHP* 21/3 (2013), 613-16.

¹³ The translation was published anonymously in 1742; it has recently been re-edited in Hutcheson and Moor, *The Meditations*.

Stoics alongside Aristotle and the Pythagoreans as all being in agreement that to follow God means to follow Nature, which in turn means to follow right reason (*recta ratio*). A similar point is made at *EE* 2.3.3 (*AV* 106) where More cites Diogenes Laertius (7.88) on the Stoic view that there is a right reason pervading all things that is identified with God. More refers back to this passage a little later at *EE* 2.4.5 (*AV* 114). He refers to this idea as ‘from Zeno’ – that is, Zeno of Citium, founder of Stoicism – but by this it seems likely that he simply means from the ‘Life of Zeno’ in Diogenes Laertius, in which Diogenes included his general doxography of Stoic doctrine, so we ought not to place too much weight on the mention of Zeno himself. At *EE* 3.7.4 (*AV* 233) More mentions the Stoics alongside Socrates as proponents of the claim that wrongdoing is the product of ignorance. (This reference follows a quotation from Marcus although the connection between the two is not explicitly made.) In these passing references to the Stoics, then, More appears sympathetic, often citing them alongside and in agreement with other ancient philosophers whom he admires.

Elsewhere, however, More is far less sympathetic. At *EE* 1.6.2 (*AV* 34) he opposes the Stoic claim that the passions are by their own nature bad: ‘we must maintain it against the *Stoicks*, that of their own Nature they [the passions] are good’.¹⁴ Further on, at *EE* 1.12.10 (*AV* 83), he insists again that the passions are by nature good and that the (Aristotelian) doctrine of moderated passions (*metriopatheia*) is much better than the Stoic doctrine of *apatheia*. His

¹⁴ I quote the English printed in *AV*. In fact this comment is not in the first edition of *EE*. It is however in the version of *EE* printed in More’s *Opera Omnia* II.1, 25: *De quibus omnibus contra Stoicos statuendum est, quod sunt sua natura bonae*. Evidently *EE* was revised by More between 1668 and 1679. A quick glance at the second edition of 1669 reveals that this reference to the Stoics was already present then, so More must have revised the text almost immediately after first publication. Indeed, he revised it substantially: in the 1668 edition Book 1 has 8 chapters, while the 1669 edition is expanded to 13 chapters. All this highlights the need for a modern critical edition of the text.

argument, implicitly challenging the Stoics on their own ground, rests on the claim that the passions are themselves natural (see *EE* 1.12.1, *AV* 79), and so a life in accord with Nature will embrace the passions, at least in moderation. They offer useful guides to conduct when interpreted properly and are closely connected to virtue (*EE* 1.12.9, *AV* 83). Presumably he has in mind the way in which anger in the face of injustice is sometimes said to spur people on to intervene. In short, so long as the passions are not out of control, they can offer useful natural guides to behaviour. More concludes, ‘Surely this Temperament sounds better than what the *Stoicks*, and even some *Platonists*, do present us with’ (*EE* 1.12.10, *AV* 83).¹⁵

Taking these sympathetic and critical references to the Stoics together, we can note the following: More is happy to refer to the Stoics when he can use them as another useful example of an ancient philosophical school that shares a widely held view he wants to defend; however he is far less well disposed to them when it comes to distinctively Stoic doctrines, such as their attitude towards the passions. Indeed, when it comes to distinctively Stoic views, such as the doctrine of *apatheia*, he is highly critical. Elsewhere in his works More refers to what he calls ‘sullen and inconsiderate Stoicism’.¹⁶

¹⁵ This entire chapter is absent from the first edition of *EE* (see previous note). The Latin in the *Opera Omnia* II.1, 39 reads: *Quae certe sunt multo aequiora atque humaniora quam quae reperias apud Stoicos & quosdam Platonicos.*

¹⁶ See *Enthusiasmus Triumphatus* § 59, as printed in More’s *Opera Omnia* II.2, 216: *obstinatum inconsideratumque Stoicismum*. The original English version published in 1656 does not mention the Stoics here. The English ‘sullen and inconsiderate Stoicism’ comes from *Enthusiasm Explained* of 1739 (‘Extracted from a Learned Piece of a late Eminent Writer’), 25.

2. More on Epictetus

Given this hostility towards distinctively Stoic ideas it is perhaps striking, then, to find More citing from Stoic texts as often as he does. Marcus Aurelius dominates but he turns to Epictetus a number of times too. The bulk of these come from the *Enchiridion* although there is one reference to the *Dissertationes*.¹⁷ Most of these comprise of fairly generic moral advice rather than anything distinctively Stoic. At the risk of tediousness, I shall briefly run through all of the places that More draws on Epictetus in order to give a comprehensive overview of the evidence.

At *EE* 1.3.5 (*AV* 15) More cites the *Enchiridion* (no reference given but in fact 51.2): do what appears to be best. At *EE* 2.3.7 (*AV* 108) he mentions the well-known saying attributed to Epictetus by Aulus Gellius (*Noctes Atticae* 17.19), 'bear and forbear'.¹⁸ At *EE* 2.10.17 (*AV* 169) he cites *Enchiridion* 75 (i.e. 51.2) on fortitude in the face of present difficulties. Shortly after, in *EE* 2.10.19 (*AV* 171), More cites *Ench.* 79 (i.e. 53.3-4) where Epictetus quotes from Socrates in the *Crito* (43d) and the *Apology* (30c-d). These Socratic passages taken from Epictetus form the closing lines of More's discussion of external goods, to which we shall return later.

In *EE* 3.3-4 we find a cluster of references to Epictetus in quick succession. At 3.3.20 (*AV* 204) More cites Epictetus twice, the first unidentified, the second *Enchiridion* 75 (i.e. 51.2). These come after a similar quotation from Marcus.

¹⁷ More's references to the *Enchiridion* follow the divisions of the text used in the seventeenth century that divided it into 79 chapters. In 1741 John Upton introduced a new division of the text in 52 chapters and then in 1798 Johannes Schweighäuser subdivided one of these to generate the 53 chapter division that has been used ever since. Here I provide More's original reference followed by its equivalent in the current system.

¹⁸ *EE* quotes the Greek *anechou kai apechou*; *AV* has it in Latin: *sustine et abstine*.

They all form part of a series of ‘rules’ that can guide us towards virtue: do not act rashly, do not act against what one thinks best, and so on. These are used as generic moral guidance rather than explicitly Stoic doctrines. At 3.3.23 (*AV* 205) Epictetus is mentioned alongside Plato and Marcus with reference to piety and here (*AV* 206) More cites *Dissertationes* 2.18 (i.e. 2.18.28-9): when battling with powerful impressions and passions always remember God and ‘call upon Him to help you and stand by your side’.¹⁹ More cites this as one in a list of classical quotations on the same point. Then in 3.4.2 (*AV* 209-10) he cites *Enchiridion* 35 and 36 (i.e. 29.2 and 29.5) on the importance of considering both the nature of tasks being undertaken and one’s own nature, as examples of prudence. Finally, at *EE* 3.10.8 (*AV* 260) More cites one of the most famous lines in the *Enchiridion* (cap. 10; i.e. 5): people are disturbed not by things but by their judgements about things.

Once again, most of More’s references to Epictetus are to generic moral advice rather than anything distinctively Stoic, notwithstanding the final famous quotation, which is sandwiched between a wide array of quotations from Cicero. As we can see most come from just a few sections of the *Enchiridion* (esp. chs 29, 51, 53) and so do not presuppose any deep familiarity with Epictetus’s work as a whole.

3. More on Marcus Aurelius

When we turn to Marcus Aurelius, however, the situation is quite different. More mentions or quotes from Marcus some 40 times. These references are focused in two places: towards the beginning of Book 2 (*EE* 2.1-4) and towards

¹⁹ I quote from Oldfather’s translation of Epictetus; the version in *AV* reads ‘Wherefore think upon God, and call upon his Holy Aid and Assistance’.

the beginning of Book 3 (esp. *EE* 3.3). I shall not go through all of these references here; they are all listed in the Appendix below with a brief summary of their content and context. Instead, I shall pull out some of the common threads.

More often cites Marcus as an authority for the view that one ought to act in accord with Reason and in obedience to God, and that these two amount to the same thing. Indeed they are also equivalent to the Stoic injunction to live in accord with Nature, understood in the sense of acting in accord with our own rational nature. Thus More cites Marcus's statement in *Meditations* 7.11 that 'to act according to Nature or according to Reason, is in a rational Creature the same thing' (*EE* 1.2.4, *AV* 6).²⁰ More goes on to identify this with acting according to virtue and locates both of these claims within a broadly Aristotelian discussion of pleasure (citing the *Magna Moralia* 2.7): pleasure is the product of a creature's restitution to its own proper nature which, in the case of humans, is that of a naturally rational and virtuous animal. Marcus, then, is but one ancient authority among others for the point More wants to make.

Later, in a discussion of the virtues, More again turns to Marcus for an identification between sacrifice to reason and sacrifice to God (*EE* 2.1.6, *AV* 95). This is one of a dozen or so references to Marcus occupying *EE* 2.1.5-10, among which More quotes *Meditations* 10.25:

To obey the common Reason, that is in God; nay, which is little less than God himself. For he is the living Law, in whose Administration the whole Universe remains; and he who bestows on every Man,

²⁰ Here and in what follows I quote from the translations of the *Meditations* in *AV*.

what he, in his Wisdom thinks fit and competent for him (*EE* 2.1.7, *AV* 95).

This translation, from *AV*, is based on the Greek printed in *EE*, which reads: *ho ta panta dioikôn theos nomos esti nemôn osa hekastôi epiballei*. The relevant part of *Meditations* 10.25, as printed in both Gataker's edition used by More and modern editions reads: *ta panta dioikountos tetagmenôn, hos esti nomos nemôn, osa hekastôi epiballei*. Marcus identifies law (*nomos*) as that which controls all things; he makes no mention of God. More has rewritten the text, inserting a reference to *theos*, to make it suit his purposes.

After a couple of further quotations from Marcus (*Meditations* 8.52 and 7.9) More sums up what he takes to have learned from him by saying, 'Thus it is plainly his Sense, that one common Rule and Constitution runs through every intellectual Substance' (*EE* 1.2.9, *AV* 96). Now this is not quite what Marcus says: in *Meditations* 7.9, which More quotes immediately beforehand, Marcus says that God permeates all things (*theos heis dia pantôn*), following standard Stoic doctrine. But More glosses this in a way to suit his own philosophical purposes. There is nothing wrong in this of course, but it does illustrate the fact that More is making use of Marcus for his own ends rather than paying close attention to the distinctively Stoic doctrines that we find in the *Meditations*.

In a similar spirit More also quotes from Marcus on the topic of natural religion (*Meditations* 10.8) – 'To remember God, and to know that he abhors all Hypocrisie, and will not be served but with what is rational and like to himself' (*EE* 2.5.8, *AV* 121) – silently amending Marcus's plural 'Gods' to the singular 'God'.²¹ As before, the letter of the text is less important than putting Marcus to

²¹ Gataker's edition of the *Meditations* prints *to memnêsthai theôn* (the parallel Latin translation reads *meminisse Deorum*), as do modern editions of the text. In the first edition of *EE* More

work in the service of More's own philosophical project. More does the same at *EE* 3.9.18 (*AV* 251) when he quotes Marcus as saying 'O thou vast and Beautiful Universe, created and supported by God, let every thing be delightful to me, that is pleasing and congruous to thy self' (*Meditations* 4.23). Marcus does indeed address the universe (*ô kosme*) but the phrase 'created and supported by God' is More's own addition.²² For Marcus the Stoic, of course, the universe *is* God rather than something created by God.²³ Once again, More is indifferent to both the content and the letter of Marcus's text, transforming it as he sees fit. He admires Marcus's descriptions of the rationality and orderliness of the universe but rather than leave it at that he takes it upon himself to rewrite his quotations from the *Meditations* to make them more theological and to remove any traces of pantheism. While we should hardly be surprised by More's philosophical preferences here, his disregard for the letter of Marcus's text is somewhat surprising.

Perhaps More had other motivations for reading Marcus; perhaps he was drawn more to his ethics than his natural theology. Indeed More regularly refers to Marcus when discussing specific virtues such as kindness, humility, piety, and prudence.²⁴ Yet the overall impression is simply admiration for a nice turn of phrase that illustrates a feature More would like to highlight. Marcus is regularly praised for the clarity and quality of his ethical guidance (e.g. *EE* 2.8.16, *AV* 143)

prints *to memnêsthai theou*; in the *Opera Omnia* version of *EE* (II.1, 51) this is translated into Latin as *Meminisse Dei*.

²² In *AV* this is presented as part of the passage from the *Meditations*. In the text of *EE* printed in More's *Opera Omnia* (II.1, 89) it is simply a gloss (prefaced with 'i.e.'). It is absent in the first edition of *EE*.

²³ Strictly speaking the Stoic God is one of two corporeal principles that constitute the cosmos.

²⁴ See e.g. *EE* 2.8.16 (*AV* 143) citing *Meditations* 6.47; *EE* 2.8.20 (*AV* 145) citing *Meditations* 12.27; *EE* 3.3.23 (*AV* 205); *EE* 3.4.2 (*AV* 209) citing *Meditations* 7.54 (not '2.54' misprinted in *AV*) and 3.11 respectively. Note also (on kindness) *EE* 3.7.4 (*AV* 233) citing *Meditations* 11.18.9 (not '10.18' in *EE* or '1.18' in *AV*),

but there is little in the way of close attention to the details of what he is saying. Marcus's comments about the virtues function more as ornamentations rather than contributions to More's extended account of the virtues.

One feature that does pervade More's use of Marcus is syncretism. We repeatedly see Marcus referred to alongside other ancient philosophers and presented as in agreement with them. For instance, in *EE* 2.1 More opens by distinguishing between three kinds of primitive virtues: prudence, sincerity, and patience. More wants to claim that this is a natural division rather than being arbitrary and so he wants to show that ancient thinkers came independently to the same division. He begins by referring to Pythagorean and Platonic examples – Metopus and the Pseudo-Platonic dialogue *Theages*. He then turns to Marcus, claiming that he too offers evidence for this division and is in agreement with the Pythagoreans and Platonists. In fact the text that More quotes, *Meditations* 2.17, makes no such threefold distinction, although More does his best to read one into it.

Further on More draws from Cicero's *De legibus* for the notion of a law of nature and he notes that Cicero's account agrees with earlier passages quoted from Marcus and (Diogenes Laertius's life of) Zeno (*EE* 2.4.5, *AV* 114). Indeed, the relevant passage from the *De legibus* (2.4.8) was excerpted by Hans von Arnim as a Stoic testimonium (*SVF* 3.316). Immediately afterwards More expands on his rationale for these references to Stoic material: 'all men do agree that the supreme law is right reason' and this reason is a divine thing (*EE* 2.4.6, *AV* 114). More's aim here, then, is not merely to show that all ancient philosophers agree on this point, but that all humankind agrees. This echoes the argumentative strategy in the last example: ancient philosophers, of which Marcus is but one, simply offer testimony for the universal truth of the moral claims More wants to make. A few pages later we find a similar case of syncretism, this time on the

nature of the soul. In *EE* 2.5.7 (*AV* 120) More cites *Meditations* 12.19, 8.2, and 5.27 all on the divinity of the human soul, after similar quotes from Plato and Cicero to show general agreement on the topic. Any philosophical differences between Plato and Marcus are passed over in silence.

More is also prepared to downplay the extent of the difference between Stoic and Aristotelian ethics. In so doing he stands within a long line of interpreters stretching back to Antiochus of Ascalon. In *EE* 2.10.3 (*AV* 161) he cites *Meditations* 7.67 during a discussion of the value of external goods. Following his broadly Aristotelian approach throughout the work as a whole, More asserts that some externals are genuine goods, although he qualifies this to suggest that many make little or no difference in comparison with virtue:

Scarce do those things add unto Happiness while present, or retrench from it when absent; inasmuch as they hold no Proportion with complete and perfect Virtue.²⁵

It is at this point that he cites Marcus saying that a happy life requires very few things beyond virtue. This might suggest some sympathy with a moderate form of Stoicism; indeed straight after it is Aristotle who is said to agree with Marcus rather than the other way around. It is also worth noting that later in this chapter More cites Epictetus twice expressing indifference towards external situations (*Ench.* 75 (i.e. 51.2) and 79 (i.e. 53.3-4), discussed above). In the opening line of the next section, *EE* 3.1.1 (*AV* 172), More summarizes the preceding discussion by describing virtue as ‘the principal part of Happiness, if

²⁵ I quote the English version in *AV* 161. The Latin in *EE* 2.10.2 reads: *Sic istiusmodi bonorum praesentia nihil fere addit, nec detrahit quicquam ipsorum absentia Beatitudinis perfectioni; quandoquidem cum Virtutis perfectione comparata nullam ad eam proportionem habere planeprehenduntur.*

not its full Perfection' (*Beatitudinis pars praecipua est, vel potius Summa*). For More, then, the distance between Stoic and Peripatetic ethics on this issue is minimal, echoing Cicero's famous statement that Zeno agreed in substance with Aristotle while differing only in words (see *De finibus* 4.72).

One final example of syncretism touches on divine intelligence. In *EE* 3.3.11 (*AV* 198) More cites *Meditations* 8.54 on the intelligence infusing all things. Marcus compares this 'power of mind' (*hê noera dunamis*) to the air we breathe, making both a point about its omnipresence and a nod to the formal Stoic theory of divine intelligence as *pneuma* pervading all things. More cites Marcus here alongside Plato and the Neoplatonist Hierocles, seemingly unconcerned by the quite different metaphysical theories underpinning the views of these authors. Marcus has been co-opted to support a Platonist project alien to his own philosophical commitment to immanent pantheism.

Lastly, there are places where More cites Marcus for his own purposes, taking him out of context altogether. In particular we might note *EE* 3.1.8 (*AV* 177) where More mentions Marcus and (in *EE*, not reproduced in *AV*) quotes without reference the word *neurospastos* (from either *Meditations* 6.28 or 7.29): a puppet controlled by the emotions.²⁶ More is following Marcus in saying that we ought to avoid becoming a mere puppet and instead exercise self-control. But the context in which this reference is made is striking. Having argued for the centrality of virtue in the pursuit of happiness, More now argues in favour of free will, without which he says 'all Exhortation to Virtue seems but in vain' (*EE* 3.1.2, *AV* 172). His explicit target is Hobbes's account of necessity. More counters this by asserting the existence of a free will that he defines as 'a Power to Act or not Act within our selves' (*EE* 3.1.8, *AV* 176). However he also acknowledges that

²⁶ On this notion in Marcus Aurelius see Berryman, 'The Puppet and the Sage'.

a virtuous person will inevitably act virtuously, unable, for instance, to commit acts of injustice against the innocent. Although the virtuous person has the ability to commit such acts, by his nature he will be unable to will them. There is of course much in Stoicism that overlaps with More's philosophical concerns here, along with a number of points of contact with Cudworth's reflections on free will that engage explicitly with Stoicism.²⁷ But More pays scant attention to any of that or to the wider context of Marcus's comment. He simply likes the image he finds in the *Meditations* and borrows it for a different end.

4. More's Use of Stoicism

Despite his extensive references to and quotations from Marcus Aurelius and, to a lesser extent, Epictetus, More pays limited attention to specifically Stoic doctrines. On the few occasions where he does, he tends to be critical. This may have been deliberate misdirection, aimed at distancing More from Stoicism.²⁸ Whatever doubts More may have had about, for instance, the Stoic attitude towards the passions, he nevertheless shared with them the view that reason can and ought to be a guide for living. That view attracted strong criticism in theological circles, both Calvinist and Augustinian. Writing just a decade or so before More, Pascal had attacked the Stoicism of Epictetus as 'wickedly proud' for suggesting that reason alone, without divine grace, could lead to a happy

²⁷ Cudworth's material on free will was intended to become the third part of *The True Intellectual System* but was never published. It survives in a series of manuscripts now in the British Library (BL Addit. 4978-82), one of which (4978) was published posthumously in 1838 as *A Treatise of Freewill*. On Cudworth's engagement with Stoicism in this text see Sellars, 'Stoics Against Stoics' in Cudworth's *A Treatise of Freewill*.

²⁸ I thank an anonymous reviewer for this suggestion.

life.²⁹ Calvin had been equally critical of Stoicism in the realm of ethics; when it came to issues surrounding fate, he repeatedly tried to distance himself from Stoicism in order to undermine the accusation he was himself a Stoic.³⁰ Was More doing something similar himself? I am inclined to doubt it, because the same charge would equally apply to the other ancient philosophies that More openly embraced. His critical comments directed towards certain Stoic doctrines in the *Enchiridion Ethicum* appear within the context of a debate between ancient philosophical schools with little regard for contemporary theological disputes (even if those debates preoccupied him elsewhere). At the same time, More was happy to use Stoic material from Marcus Aurelius where it could be cited as simply another example of an ancient author who agreed with a view that More wanted to show is universally held by respected authorities. More certainly read his *Meditations* but he made little philosophical use of what he found there, either constructively or critically.

5. More's Historiography of Philosophy

Although the conclusion regarding More's use of Stoicism is largely negative – both in terms of the extent of his philosophical use of Stoicism and the quality of his scholarship – there are other conclusions we can draw from examining his references to Stoic texts. As we have seen, More's approach to Marcus Aurelius was often shaped by syncretism. In this he followed a well established approach to ancient philosophy dating back ultimately to Antiochus who, as reported in Cicero's philosophical works, downplayed the differences between Academics,

²⁹ See Pascal's *Entretien avec M. de Saci* (*Oeuvres complètes*, 560-74, esp. 563).

³⁰ On these two points see Pitkin, 'Erasmus, Calvin, and the Faces of Stoicism', 150-54.

Peripatetics, and Stoics, and in the process laid the foundations for the syncretism of late ancient Platonism.³¹ That approach was taken up much later by Florentine Platonists such as Marsilio Ficino who proposed a single, unified tradition of speculative thought.³² More's own approach to the historiography of ancient philosophy stands within this tradition. For a precursor treating a Roman Stoic text in this manner we might point to Simplicius's commentary on the *Enchiridion* of Epictetus, in which Simplicius co-opts Epictetus's short text into the Neoplatonic educational curriculum by downplaying its explicit Stoic content and treating it as a source of generic moral guidance. Simplicius's approach to Epictetus was admired by Angelo Poliziano (closely associated with the Florentine Platonists) and drawn on by the Cambridge Platonist John Smith.³³ More's use of Marcus Aurelius takes a broadly similar approach.

This is in marked contrast to the approach to the history of ancient philosophy adopted by his fellow Cambridge Platonist Ralph Cudworth,³⁴ whose *modus operandi* in *The True Intellectual System* was to distinguish sharply between different ancient philosophical schools and even to note disputes within schools, such as debates within the Stoa.³⁵ From our perspective it is

³¹ See Sedley, *The Philosophy of Antiochus*, 80-103, for Antiochus's role as historian of philosophy and 334-46 for the ancient evidence for his views. On the subsequent development of this approach see Karamanolis, *Plato and Aristotle in Agreement?*

³² See further Santinello, *Models of the History of Philosophy*, 14-25.

³³ For the reception of Simplicius's commentary see Hadot, 'La survie du commentaire de Simplicius', discussing both Poliziano and Smith.

³⁴ Hall, in his *Henry More*, 71, comments that Cudworth's approach 'paralleled that of his friend Henry More' (although Hall qualifies this by saying that he makes 'no pretence here of examining Cudworth's possible role as an historian of philosophy'). By contrast, Santinello, *Models of the History of Philosophy*, 282-5, highlights the differences between the approaches of More and Cudworth, especially with reference to their focus on the occult and scholarship respectively.

³⁵ See Sellars, 'Is God a Mindless Vegetable?' on Cudworth's approach to the history of philosophy and, 131, his attention to disputes within the Stoa.

tempting to say that Cudworth's fine-grained scholarship pre-empts subsequent developments in the historiography of philosophy while More's approach harks back to an ancient model that was increasingly out of fashion.³⁶

This contrast between a progressive Cudworth and a traditionalist More also helps to bring into focus their differing approaches to Stoicism. During the course of the seventeenth century the Stoics underwent a dramatic transformation in public image. At the end of the sixteenth century it was not uncommon for readers of the later Roman Stoics to present Stoicism as a natural ally of Christianity. Thomas James, the first Librarian at the Bodleian in Oxford, wrote in 1598 that 'no kinde of philosophie is more profitable and nearer approaching unto Christianitie [...] than the philosophie of the Stoicks'.³⁷ By the early eighteenth century, however, the Stoics were being attacked in some quarters as atheists and the Spinozists of antiquity.³⁸ The reason for this change of image was a shift of attention away from the works of Seneca and Epictetus and a new focus on the doxographical evidence for the early Stoics Zeno and Chrysippus. This in turn led to significantly greater attention being paid to Stoic physics, and many readers did not like what they found. More was himself one of those readers. In his *The Immortality of the Soul* of 1659 More made one of his few other remarks about Stoicism:

But how coursly the Stoicks Philosophize when they are once turned out of their rode-way of moral Sentences, any one but

³⁶ More's traditionalism here, if we can call it that, may in part simply reflect the fact that he was writing a textbook rather than attempting to offer anything radically new. I thank an anonymous reviewer for this suggestion.

³⁷ This comes from James's preface to his translation of Guillaume Du Vair, *The Moral Philosophie of the Stoicks*, 45.

³⁸ See further Brooke, *Philosophic Pride*, 127-48, and Sellars, 'Is God a Mindless Vegetable?'

moderately skilled in Nature and Metaphysics may easily discern. For what Errors can be more gross then those that they entertain of *God*, of the *Soul*, and of the *Stars*, they making the two former Corporeal Substances [...].³⁹

The context of this remark is a discussion about the Stoic doctrine of eternal recurrence. Here More displays the critical attitude towards Stoicism that we also find in Cudworth and later critics such as Johann Franz Buddeus. But his use of Marcus Aurelius in the *Enchiridion Ethicum* is quite different in character. There he is happy to draw on the ‘moral Sentences’ of the Emperor, indifferent to or unaware of what he elsewhere took to be the unpalatable features of Stoic physics. His main aim was to try to show a wide consensus among ancient philosophers for a number of foundational ethical claims, and Marcus is just one more source for this among many. Marcus’s Stoic credentials seem irrelevant and count neither for nor against him in the *Enchiridion Ethicum*. More’s approach to Marcus, then, was also increasingly out of fashion, despite the fact that he was one of the first people to quote from the *Meditations* extensively. Subsequent readers of the *Meditations*, most notably Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, took Marcus’s Stoicism, and indeed Stoicism as a whole, far more seriously.⁴⁰

³⁹ More, *The Immortality of the Soul* (1659), 3.18.12, p. 534 (cf. *Immortalitas Animae*, in *Opera Omnia* II.2, p. 454).

⁴⁰ Both Shaftesbury and Hutcheson are discussed in relation to Stoicism in Maurer, ‘Stoicism and the Scottish Enlightenment’.

Appendix: References to Marcus Aurelius in More's *Enchiridion Ethicum*

1. *EE* 1.2.4 (*AV* 6) cites *Med.* 7.11: to act in accord with nature is the same as acting in accord with reason (for a rational creature).
2. *EE* 2.1.5 (*AV* 94) cites *Med.* 2.17: Marcus offers a definition of philosophy, which More presents as an account of three types of virtue.
- 3-6. *EE* 2.1.6 (*AV* 94-5) cites *Med.* 7.55, then two unidentified passages followed by a reference to *Med.* 8.26: we have a duty to mankind and we ought to submit to God.
- 7-8. *EE* 2.1.7 (*AV* 95) cites *Med.* 10.8 and then 10.25 on both the divisions of virtue and obedience to God.
- 9-13. *EE* 2.1.8 (*AV* 96) cites from *Med.* 8.52 and 7.9; 2.1.9 (*AV* 96) cites *Med.* 2.4.4 and 12.23; 2.1.10 (*AV* 97) cites *Med.* 10.8. More cites Marcus seemingly for his ability to make a point with a striking phrase, rather than for anything philosophically distinctive.
14. *EE* 2.2.3 (*AV* 99) cites without reference *Med.* 8.51: the prudent man is master of his affections, used to make an un-Stoic point.
15. *EE* 2.3.1 (*AV* 104) cites *Med.* 12.29 on definition of perfection of soul.
- 16-17. *EE* 2.3.2 (*AV* 105) cites *Med.* 10.1 and 4.26 on simplicity of the soul.
18. *EE* 2.3.4 (*AV* 106) cites *Med.* 8.54 on unity with God, following after a Stoic quote from Diogenes Laertius (7.88).
19. *EE* 2.3.8 (*AV* 108) cites *Med.* 7.29 taken somewhat out of context.
20. *EE* 2.4.5 (*AV* 114) refers back to earlier mentions of Marcus and Zeno when quoting from Cicero's *De legibus* 2.4.8.
21. *EE* 2.4.6 (*AV* 115) a passing mention of Marcus.

- 22-24. *EE* 2.5.7 (*AV* 120) cites *Med.* 12.19, 8.2, and 5.27 all on the divinity of the human soul, after similar quotes from Plato and Cicero.
- 25-26. *EE* 2.5.8 (*AV* 121) cites *Med.* 10[.8] and 6.7, silently changing a reference to 'the gods' to one to 'God'.
27. *EE* 2.8.16 (*AV* 143) cites *Med.* 6.47, a general comment on the virtue of lenity/kindness (*eumenes*).
28. *EE* 2.8.20 (*AV* 145) cites *Med.* 12.27 on the virtue of humility.
29. *EE* 2.10.3 (*AV* 161) cites *Med.* 7.67 in a discussion of the value of external goods.
30. *EE* 3.1.8 (*AV* 177) mentions Marcus and (in *EE*; not reproduced in *AV*) quotes *neurospastos* (from either *Med.* 6.28 or 7.29), a puppet controlled by the emotions.
31. *EE* 3.3.10 (*AV* 197) paraphrases Marcus, probably *Med.* 8.54, 'that Intellectual Spirit, which replenishes every Thing'.
32. *EE* 3.3.11 (*AV* 198) cites *Med.* 8.54 on intelligence infusing all things, alongside Plato.
33. *EE* 3.3.17 (*AV* 202) mentions, but does not cite, Marcus.
34. *EE* 3.3.19 (*AV* 204) cites an unidentified passage from Marcus as a rule to guide us: 'that we never meddle with any thing rashly', followed by two passages from Epictetus (one unidentified, the other *Ench.* 51.2) also cited as rules.
35. *EE* 3.3.23 (*AV* 205) mentions Marcus with reference to piety.
- 36-37. *EE* 3.4.2 (*AV* 209) cites *Med.* 7.54 (not '2.54' misprinted in *AV*) and 3.11 as examples of prudence, followed by further examples from Epictetus (*Ench.* 29.2 and 29.5).
38. *EE* 3.7.4 (*AV* 233) cites *Med.* 11.18.9 (not '10.18' in *EE* or '1.18' in *AV*) on the virtue of lenity/kindness (*eumenes*).

39. *EE* 3.9.12 (*AV* 248) cites *Med.* 11.15 (not '10.15') on bodily expressions of virtue.
40. *EE* 3.9.18 (*AV* 251) cites *Med.* 4.23 on harmony with Nature.

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