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Ho Lim Lee 04/11/2016

Seneca's Claudius in *De Consolatione Ad Polybium* and *Apocolocyntosis*

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Abstract
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A notable Roman figure who suffered exile under the rule of an emperor is Seneca the Younger, a prominent Stoic philosopher, politician, and writer. This project analyzes Seneca's consolation to Emperor Claudius' freedman Polybius, *De Consolatione Ad Polybium*, written during Seneca's exile by Claudius. Following this initial analysis, the project examines how Seneca's sentiment towards the emperor differs from the consolation in his satirical work *Apocolocyntosis*, written after the death of Claudius and at the start of Emperor Nero's reign. Analyses of these works investigate the reversal of Claudius's character from possessing the characteristics of a Stoic god in *De Consolatione Ad Polybium* to manifesting disreputable flaws in *Apocolocyntosis*. While Seneca, in an effort to acquire to recall from his exile, utilized the genre of consolation to depict Claudius as a Stoic god and weave flattery of Claudius into *De Consolatione Ad Polybium*, Seneca utilized the genre of Menippean satire as a medium to deride Claudius' flaws and renounce his former portrayal of Claudius as a Stoic god.

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout the history of the Roman Empire, emperors wielded and frequently exercised the power to exile and execute any political dissenters. That is not to say that ordered exile did not occur before the institution of the emperor.[1] A notable Roman figure who did suffer exile under the rule of an emperor is Seneca the Younger, a prominent Stoic philosopher, politician, and writer. This project will analyze Seneca's consolation to Emperor Claudius' freedman Polybius, *De Consolatione Ad Polybium*, written during Seneca's exile by Claudius. Following this initial analysis, the project will examine how Seneca's sentiment towards the emperor differs between his consolation to Polybius and his later satirical work *Apocolocyntosis*, which was written after the death of Claudius and at the start of the new emperor Nero's reign.

The purpose of *Ad Polybium* is to comfort the freedman Polybius, following his brother's recent death, by presenting logical and philosophical points for him to utilize in overcoming his grief. Such points align with key elements generally associated with ancient consolations, including "topics offering and encouraging a broadly philosophical perspective on the situation" and "exhortation to respond to the loss in an appropriate way."[2] However, what is atypical about *Ad Polybium* is that, unlike Seneca's other formal consolations, *Ad Polybium* includes a eulogy to the emperor and a prayer to the gods on

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[1] Jo-Marie Claassen, *Displaced Persons* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press: 1999), 17. Cicero was exiled from 58-57 BC, as reported by Plutarch, Dio, and Aulus Gellius.

[2] J. H. D. Scourfield, "Towards a Genre of Consolation," in *Greek and Roman Consolations*, edited by Han Baltussen (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales: 2013), 5.

Emperor Claudius's behalf. Seneca was already a few years into his exile when he wrote *Ad Polybium*. Such praise in *Ad Polybium* of the emperor who exiled him can be interpreted as part of Seneca's literary efforts to appeal to Emperor Claudius as well as an attempt to acquire recall from exile. The portrayal of Emperor Claudius in *Ad Polybium* resembles the characteristics of a Stoic god. According to Seneca, Claudius takes the place of all things, and Polybius can find comfort in Claudius, who is the ultimate provision of good fortune.[3] The Stoic god as presented in Seneca's *Naturales Quaestiones* is himself alone an embodiment of all things.[4] Seneca forges a connection between Claudius and his philosophy of Stoicism, working a political agenda into philosophical points to adulate Claudius.

Contrasting the deified status of Claudius in *Ad Polybium*, Seneca's Menippean satire *Apocolocyntosis* reveals Claudius as a fool and unjust murderer upon Claudius' attempt at apotheosis. In fact, the satire mocks Claudius' physical flaw of clumsiness and also highlights his vice of cruelty by detailing the numerous men and women he executed. Whereas Seneca in exile may have been compelled to praise the ruling emperor Claudius due to fear of continued political oppression and exile, he conveyed in his later work a contrasting, more critical and derisive attitude towards Claudius.

For sources of ancient history, this paper will rely largely on the writings of Tacitus, Suetonius, and Cassius Dio. Analyses of Seneca's works will investigate the reversal of Claudius's character from possessing the characteristics of a god to manifesting disreputable flaws, which hinder Claudius' deification. The medium of satire

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[3] Seneca, *Ad Polybium* 7.4

[4] Seneca, *Naturales Quaestiones* 1.13

granted an outlet for Seneca to deride the idea of a divine Claudius, as he formerly presented in *Ad Polybium*, and furthermore, this project will argue that the Seneca utilized the genre of Menippean satire to both criticize the former emperor's faults and to renounce his former claims on Claudius' existence as a Stoic god.

CHAPTER ONE

In Exile: Seneca's Flattery of the Emperor Claudius in *De Consolatione Ad Polybium*

> *Laus vera et humili saepe contingit viro,*
> *non nisi potenti falsa.*
>
> Sincere praise often comes even to a lowly man; false praise comes only to the mighty.
>
> (*Thyestes* 1. 211-212)[5]

To examine Seneca's motivations for writing favorably of Emperor Claudius in *De Consolatione Ad Polybium* during his exile, this chapter will first discuss the circumstances surrounding Seneca's exile. After discussing the background of Seneca's consolation to Polybius, there will be an overview of Seneca's two previous consolatory works to reveal the differences between those two and the one addressed to Polybius. Finally, an analysis of *De Consolatione Ad Polybium* will look at how Seneca, using the medium of Stoic philosophy and the Stoic concept of a god, strategically incorporates praise of Claudius into the consolatory work.

Circumstances Surrounding Seneca's Exile

Seneca started his political career in his 30s, beginning upon his return to Rome from Egypt in 31AD. Soon after, he acquired the position of quaestor and began

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[5] The Latin text and corresponding English translation is from Seneca's *Thyestes* in the Loeb Classical Library's 2004 edition, translated and edited by John G. Fitch.

participating in the Senate.[6] In this way, Seneca played an active presence in the Roman political arena. In addition to his political influence, Seneca was a well-known writer and philosopher. Exile to Corsica amid Seneca's political career was significant because it not only separated Seneca from his friends and family but also, perhaps more importantly, removed him from participating directly in the conversation of Rome.

In 41AD, Seneca was accused of committing adultery with Julia Livilla, the daughter of Claudius' deceased brother Germanicus.[7] Suillius, a "terrible and venal favourite of the Claudian reign,"[8] called "Seneca the adulterer under [Claudius'] roof."[9] During the reign of the previous emperor Caligula, Julia Livilla had been exiled to the Pontine Islands with her sister Agrippina on charges of a conspiracy against her brother, the emperor Caligula, and of adultery with their brother-in-law Lepidus.[10] After the death of Caligula, Julia Livilla returned to Rome. She was, however, again charged with adultery; this time, it involved Lucius Annaeus Seneca. Cassius Dio in the *Roman History*[11] writes also that Messalina, the jealous wife of Emperor Claudius, "secured

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[6] John M. Cooper, "General Introduction," in *Seneca: Moral and Political Essays* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995), xii.

[7] Dio, *Roman History* 10.8

[8] English translations and corresponding Latin texts of Tacitus' *Annals* are from the Loeb Classical Library's 1937 edition, with translations by John Jackson.

[9] Tacitus, *Annals* 13.43

[10] James S. Romm, *Dying Every Day* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), 12.

[11] English translations and corresponding Greek texts from Cassius Dio's *Roman History* are from Loeb Classical Library's 1927 edition, with translations by Earnest Cary and Herbert B. Foster.

[Julia's] banishment by trumping up various charges against her, including that of adultery (for which Annaeus Seneca was also exiled)."[12] Details about Seneca's life prior to his exile are rare. Whether the charge of adultery was true is questionable.

In addition to identifying Suillius as a favorite of the Claudian administration, Tacitus further describes Suillius as one who "spared neither complaints nor objurgations, using the freedom natural not only to his fierce temper but to his extreme age."[13] Given the description of Sullius' character by Tacitus, Suillius' invective directed at Seneca, as reported in the *Annals*, may reflect neither Tacitus' opinion on Seneca's exile nor the true reason behind the exile.[14] However, what is evident is that Suillius, an ally of Claudius, neither empathized nor associated with Seneca, and that Seneca was exiled as an offender in the Claudian administration. It is during this time of exile, to which Emperor Claudius sentenced him in 41AD, that Seneca wrote his *De Consolatione Ad Polybium.*

Seneca was a few years into his exile when he wrote the consolatory work to Polybius.[15] Despite the fact that Claudius was ultimately responsible for sentencing him to exile, Seneca intriguingly includes praise of the emperor in his *consolatio* to Polybius.

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[12] Dio, *Roman History* 60.8.5

[13] Tacitus, *Annals* 13.42

[14] H. W. Kamp, "Concerning Seneca's Exile" in *The Classical Journal* 30, no. 2 (1934), 103. Without an account from Tacitus about the years surrounding Seneca's exile, we "cannot allow Suillius' tirade against Seneca, as reported by Tacitus, to affect our idea of what the historian himself thought about exile."

[15] James S. Romm, *Dying Every Day* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), 28. Seneca wrote first a consolation to his mother Helvia during his exile to Corsica. The second letter from exile addressed to the freedman Polybius followed one or two years after the first.

In light of the circumstances surrounding Seneca's exile, such praise of Claudius can be interpreted as a possible literary ploy to win the favor of the emperor Claudius and thereby obtain recall from exile.

When describing Seneca's recall from exile in 49 AD by Julia Augusta Agrippina, sister of Julia Livilla and Nero's mother, Tacitus writes that Agrippina considered how she and her son would profit by Seneca's advice in [their] designs upon the throne" [*consilis eiusdem ad spem dominationis*],[16] and "Seneca was… embittered against Claudius by resentment of his injury" [*Seneca… infensus Claudio dolore iniuriae credebatur*].[17] The injury mentioned here is presumed to concern Seneca's exile.[18] Regardless of whether or not the charge of adultery against Seneca was correct, Tacitus' account notes Seneca's unfavorable sentiments towards the emperor who exiled him.

The prominent status of Seneca, before and perhaps even during his exile, is demonstrated in the *Annals*, for Tacitus writes that "[Agrippina] was anxious to gain so distinguished a tutor for Domitius in his transit from boyhood to adolescence."[19] Tacitus also attributes the reason for Seneca's recall from exile by Agrippina, the mother of Nero, to the fact that "[Seneca's] literary fame… would make the act popular with the nation."[20] Thus, Seneca was a well-established writer who was very much involved in the

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[16] G. W. Clarke, "Seneca the Younger under Caligula" in *Latomus* 24, no. 1 (1965), 63.

[17] Tacitus, *Annals* 12.8

[18] H. W. Kamp, "Concerning Seneca's Exile" in *The Classical Journal* 30, no. 2 (1934), 103.

[19] Tacitus, *Annals* 12.8

[20] Tacitus, *Annals* 12.8

politics of Rome. Given the literary texts that depict the unfriendly relationship between Seneca and Claudius, praise of the emperor in *De Consolatione Ad Polybium* is conspicuous. The laudation begs further examination of Seneca's motives for writing favorably of the emperor who exiled him. The following section will illustrate how the praise of the emperor in *Ad Polybium* distinctly stands apart from Seneca's previous consolatory works.

Seneca's Previous Consolatory Works

Ad Polybium is a *consolatio*[21] formally addressed to the freedman Polybius, who had recently suffered the death of his brother. In Claudius' administration, Polybius was Claudius' highly regarded literary adviser, and according to Suetonius,[22] Polybius "often walked between the two consuls."[23] The purpose of the literary work is to comfort Polybius by presenting logical and philosophical points for him to utilize in overcoming his grief. The consolation exists third in sequence in Seneca's literary body of formal consolations. The first one is addressed to a woman named Marcia, while the second one is addressed to his mother Helvia. In *Ad Marciam*, Seneca consoles Marcia following the

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[21] J. H. D. Scourfield, "Towards a Genre of Consolation," in *Greek and Roman Consolations*, edited by Han Baltussen (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales: 2013), 2. "the word *consolatio* appears first in Cicero, who uses it both to mean 'consolation' or 'a (point of) consolation' in an abstract sense and (less commonly) to denote a kind of discourse."

[22] English translations and corresponding Latin texts from Suetonius' *Lives of the Caesars* are from Loeb Classical Library's 1914 edition, with translations by J. C. Rolfe.

[23] Suetonius, *De Vita Caesarum, Divus Claudius* 28

death of her adult son, and in *Ad Helviam Matrem*, Seneca consoles his own mother in the news of her son's exile.

De Consolatione Ad Marciam was written by Seneca, around 40AD, about a year prior to his exile.[24] He instructs Marcia that since tears and grief will not bring back her son from the dead, she should stop mourning his death.

> *si nullis planctibus defuncta revocantur, si sors immota et in aeternum fixa nulla miseria mutatur et mors tenuit, quicquid abstulit, desinat dolor qui perit.*
>
> if no wailing can recall the dead, if no distress can alter a destiny that is immutable and fixed for all eternity, and if death holds fast whatever it has once carried off, then let grief, which is futile, cease.
>
> (*Ad Marciam* 6.2)[25]

Seneca, by establishing the unchangeable state of Marcia's son's death, eliminates grief as a way to cope with death. Rather, he will console her by offering alternative solutions. Seneca suggests that she renounce grief. According to Seneca, "a false presumption, which arouses a fear of things that are not to be feared, makes a man weak and unresisting."[26] Seneca urges Marcia to cast away such fear and renounce grief out of her own will.[27] In the consolation to Marcia, Seneca teaches Marcia about central Stoic ideas

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[24] James Ker, *The Deaths of Seneca* (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2009), 92.

[25] English translations and corresponding Latin texts from Seneca's *De Consolatione Ad Polybium*, *De Consolatione Ad Helviam Matrem*, and *De Consolatione Ad Marciam* are from Loeb Classical Library's 1932 edition, with translations by John W. Basore.

[26] Seneca, *Ad Marciam* 7.4

[27] Seneca, *Ad Marciam* 8.3

to help her overcome her grief. For example, he says that "the properties that adorn life's stage have been lent, and must go back to their owners."[28] In Stoic thought, "money, honor, power, bodily health, and even the love of friends, children, and spouse… do not arrive as one wishes;" likewise, these things can leave when one does not wish them to.[29] In addition, Seneca writes that "death is a release from all suffering," and "it restores us to that peaceful state in which we lay before we were born."[30]

In his consolation to his mother Helvia, Seneca writes that he is "not going to point [her] to the expedients that [he knows] many have used."[31] These measures include travel and involving oneself in new tasks. According to Seneca, they represent mere distractions and do not exist as "remedies… of sorrow."[32] Instead, Seneca will "guide [Helvia] to that in which all who fly from Fortune must take refuge – to philosophical studies."[33] Such studies "will uproot all [of her] sadness."[34] In this way, Seneca conveys in *Ad Helviam Matrem* that the lasting solution to her sorrow is the study of philosophy and excludes any mention of Claudius.

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[28] Seneca, *Ad Marciam* 10.1

[29] Elizabeth Asmis, Shadi Bartsch, and Martha C. Nussbaum, "Seneca and His World," in *Seneca: Anger, Mercy, Revenge* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press: 2010), xii.

[30] Seneca, *Ad Marciam* 19.5

[31] Seneca, *Ad Helviam Matrem* 17.2

[32] Seneca, *Ad Helviam Matrem* 17.2

[33] Seneca, *Ad Helviam Matrem* 17.3

[34] Seneca, *Ad Helviam Matrem* 17.3

Ad Marciam also lacks any mention of the reigning emperor at the time, Caligula. *Ad Marciam* and *Ad Polybium* both present the goal of providing solace to the recipient of the respective consolation to move past the death of his or her loved one. In these two works, Seneca bases his solution of solace on the study of philosophy or Stoic ideas. In *Ad Polybium*, however, which was written after a few years into Seneca's exile, Seneca uniquely references the emperor as a source of comfort. A close reading of *De Consolatione Ad Polybium* will reveal how Seneca is able to incorporate flattery of Emperor Claudius into his consolation to Polybius.

Analysis of *De Consolatione Ad Polybium*

Seneca reveals in the beginning of the consolation to Polybius that he identifies with the grief of Polybius and Polybius' unfortunate situation. Seneca refers to his own unfortunate circumstance of exile when he says that, if sorrow accomplished anything, Seneca himself would "not refuse to shed whatever tears [his] own fortune has left [him] in regret for [Polybius']."[35] The extent of his own remorse for exile is conveyed by Seneca's description of the "eyes of [his], that have already been drained by [his] personal woes."[36] In writing a consolation in an effort to comfort Polybius, Seneca also inserts himself into the consolation by empathizing with Polybius' sorrow and misfortune. By doing this, he establishes himself as a fellow person who has similarly experienced grief and also as a legitimate source in offering consolation. Despite admitting that he too has shed tears regarding his situation, Seneca clearly states that "[Polybius'] grief can

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[35] Seneca, *Ad Polybium* 2.1

[36] Seneca, *Ad Polybium* 2.1

accomplish nothing either for [Polybius' brother] whose loss [he mourns] or for [himself]."[37] Seneca conveys that he has overcome his situation and realized that grief did not help him; since grief is not the solution, Seneca will instead offer another way for Polybius to deal with the death of his brother. The sentiment here that grief is futile is the same as that presented in Seneca's previous consolation to Marcia and his mother Helvia.

Seneca's intention to identify with Polybius at the beginning of *Ad Polybium* is further supported by the use of the hortatory clause and the first-person plural subjunctive when Seneca, referring to himself and Polybius, says, "Let us lament together, or rather I myself will bring forth this indictment as my own" [*Conqueramur, atque adeo ipse hanc litem meam faciam*].[38] The phrase here 'as my own' is ambiguous. Seneca could be making the following tirade against Fortune on behalf of Polybius, or he could be, by identifying with Polybius' suffering, opening the platform for himself to explicate his own suffering in the indictment against Fortune for his own exile. However, because of the use of the third-person in the following section that stands as Seneca's indictment against Fortune, I consider the indictment as if Seneca was speaking on Polybius' behalf.

In a series of rhetorical questions directed towards Fortune, Seneca repeatedly employs the second-person singular imperfect active subjunctive verb *eriperes* [should you have snatched away], referring to the things that Fortune did not take from Polybius in place of Polybius' brother's life.[39] There are a total of five rhetorical questions that

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[37] Seneca, *Ad Polybium* 2.1

[38] Seneca, *Ad Polybium* 2.2

[39] Seneca, *Ad Polybium* 2.3-6

include the use of this word in the same context, following the form of the verb with a different direct object each time that names the thing not taken.

> *Quid enim illi aliud faceres? Pecuniam eriperes? Numquam illi obnoxius fuit; nunc quoque, quantum potest, illam a se abigit et in tanta facilitate adquirendi nullum maiorem ex ea fructum quam contemptum eius petit.*
>
> For what other harm could you have dealt him? Should you have snatched away his money? But he was never its slave; even now he thrusts it from him as much as he can, and, though he has so many opportunities to acquire it, he seeks from it no greater gain than the power to scorn it.
>
> (*Ad Polybium* 2.3)

In this first rhetorical question, Seneca answers that Fortune did not take money because Polybius would not be affected by its absence. In the next question, Seneca asks, "Should you have snatched away his friends? But you knew that, so lovable is he, he could easily substitute others in place of those he had lost."[40] Thus, Seneca praises Polybius' likable character and claims that Fortune, knowing this, did not take away his friends. The following rhetorical questions allude to Polybius' good reputation [*illi bonam opinionem*] and good health [*bonam valetudinem*].[41] Regarding Polybius' reputation, Seneca states that it is so established even Fortune could not have moved it.[42] Lastly, Fortune did not even take Polybius' life because "Fame has promised him that the life of his genius shall

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[40] Seneca, *Ad Polybium* 2.4

[41] Seneca, *Ad Polybium* 2.5

[42] Seneca, *Ad Polybium* 2.5

be very long."[43] Later in the consolation, Seneca praises Polybius for his translations of poems into prose using his genius [*multo ingenii*].[44] This later use of the word *ingenium* to characterize Polybius in the consolation supports the argument that Seneca is speaking on behalf of Polybius against Fortune. He refers to the death of Polybius' brother when he tells Fortune, "this is the only way in which you could injure him very deeply" [*Hoc ergo unum excogitasti, quomodo maxime illi posses nocere*].[45]

In this indictment directed at Fortune, Seneca uses the word 'injury' [*iniuria*].

> *Quantulum erat tibi immunem ab hac iniuria praestare eum hominem, in quem videbatur indulgentia tua ratione certa pervenisse et non ex tuo more temere incidisse!"*
>
> How little it would have cost you to render him exempt from such an injury – a man to whom, it seemed, your favour had been extended on a fixed principle, and had not, after your usual fashion, fallen upon him at random.
>
> (*Ad Polybium* 2.7)

The word 'injury' here recalls, according to Tacitus's account in the *Annals*, the use of the same word in the description of Seneca's attitude towards Claudius. After Seneca's recall from exile, Tacitus describes Seneca as being "embittered against Claudius by resentment of his injury" [*Seneca… infensus Claudio dolore iniuriae*].[46] When Seneca is speaking on behalf of Polybius in this section of *De Consolatione Ad Polybium*, he

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[43] Seneca, *Ad Polybium* 2.6

[44] Seneca, *Ad Polybium* 11.5

[45] Seneca, *Ad Polybium* 2.7

[46] Tacitus, *Annals* 12.8

identifies Polybius' injury as Polybius' brother's death, which Fortune unpredictably inflicts. While the injury to Polybius is the death of his brother, the injury to Seneca appears to be his exile. If the death of Polybius' brother was the only way that Fortune knew to injure Polybius most deeply, likewise, Seneca's injury of exile by Fortune was the only way that Seneca could be most affected.

To emphasize later on in the consolation that Claudius is truly the only way to resolve Polybius' mourning of his brother, Seneca both highlights the inescapable, inequitable nature of Fortune and the futility of grief. He characterizes Fortune as "by the verdict of all men… most unjust"[47] and also "pitiless… always unjust to virtue."[48] Regardless, "it stands harsh and exorable; no one can move it by reproaches, no one by tears, no one by his cause; it never lets anyone off nor shows mercy."[49] In this way, Seneca conveys the idea that nothing Polybius does can justify nor explicate the actions of Fortune. Also, nothing that Polybius can do will move Fortune. By portraying Fortune as unpredictable and antagonistic to virtue, Seneca attempts to convince Polybius to ultimately set aside his grief.

> *Illud quoque te non minimum adiuverit, si cogitaveris nulli minus gratum esse dolorem tuum quam ei, cui praestari videtur; torqueri ille te aut non vult aut non intellegit. Nulla itaque eius officii ratio est, quod ei, cui praestatur, si nihil sentit, supervacuum est, si sentit, in gratum est. Neminem esse toto orbe terrarum, qui delectetur lacrimis tuis, audacter dixerim.*

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[47] Seneca, *Ad Polybium* 2.2

[48] Seneca, *Ad Polybium* 3.3

[49] Seneca, *Ad Polybium* 4.1

> And this also will give you no small help – if you reflect that there is no one who is less pleased by your grief than he to whom it seems to be offered; for he either does not wish you to suffer, or does not know that you do. There is, therefore, no sense in this service, for if he to whom it is offered lacks consciousness, it is useless, and if he has consciousness, it is displeasing to him. I may say boldly that there is no one in this whole wide world who finds pleasure in your tears.
>
> (*Ad Polybium* 5.1-5.2)

Since Fortune is merciless, grief will do nothing to change her ways. In addition, the passage above shows that mourning for the sake of the dead is purposeless as well. Seneca tells Polybius that even his brother does not appreciate his tears and, in fact, that his brother is the most displeased with them. This denunciation of grief and tears is meant to deter Polybius from continuing to mourn and builds a foundation on which Seneca will explain why Polybius should instead seek solace in Emperor Claudius.

> *Audienda sunt tot hominum milia, tot disponendi libelli; tantus rerum ex orbe toto coeuntium congestus, ut possit per ordinem suum principis maximi animo subici, exigendus est. Non licet tibi, inquam, flere; ut multos flentes audire possis, ut periclitantium et ad misericordiam mitissimi Caesaris pervenire cupientium lacrimas siccare, lacrimae tibi tuae adsiccandae sunt.*
>
> You must give audience to countless thousands of men, countless petitions must be disposed of; so great is the pile of business, accumulated from every part of the world, that must be carefully weighted in order that it may be brought to the attention of a most illustrious prince in the proper order. You, I say, are not allowed to weep; in order that you may be able to listen to the many who weep – in order that you may dry the tears of those who are in peril and desire to obtain mercy from Caesar's clemency, it is your own tears that you must dry.
>
> (*Ad Polybium* 6.5)

This passage illustrates the duties Polybius serves in Claudius' administration. According to Seneca's description of Polybius' position, Polybius looks over the submitted requests of others and presents them to the emperor's attention. Polybius receives written requests from those who seek *misericoridam* [mercy][50] from Claudius. The extent of Polybius' work for Claudius is emphasized by the repetition of the phrase "*tot hominum milia, tot… libelli*" [countless thousands of men, countless petitions].[51] Seneca suggests that Polybius, in order to fulfill his position most efficiently and cater to the needs of others, must deal with his grief by setting it aside. By referring to those who are in peril and seeking the emperor's clemency, Seneca himself may be identifying with them and imploring Claudius' mercy.

Polybius was Claudius' *procurator a studiis* [literary adviser], and Claudius held Polybius in high regard among his freedmen.[52] Polybius' position required responsibilities of guiding the cultural policy and official history.[53] In fact, in his consolation, Seneca orders Polybius to "with [his] best powers, compile an account of the deeds of [his] Caesar, so that, being heralded by one of his own household, they may be repeated throughout all ages."[54] Furthermore, Seneca praises Polybius for the "poems

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[50] Seneca, *Ad Polybium* 6.5

[51] Seneca, *Ad Polybium* 6.5

[52] Suetonius, *De Vita Caesarum, Divus Claudius* 28

[53] C. H. V. Sutherland, "The Personality of the Mints Under the Julio-Claudian Emperors" in *The American Journal of Philology* 68, no. 1 (1947), 60.

[54] Seneca, *Ad Polybium* 8.2

which the efforts of [Polybius'] genius have made famous and which [he has] turned into prose with such skill."[55] By mentioning Polybius' skilled translation of Virgil into Greek and Homer into Latin, Seneca thus acknowledges Polybius' important achievements and literary abilities.[56]

Seneca even elevates Polybius' status when he says all men owe to Polybius as much as they owe to literary greats, Homer and Virgil [*Homerus et Vergilius tam bene de humano genere meriti, quam tu et de illis et de omnibus meruisti*].[57] Homer, Virgil, and Polybius in the statement are all in the same case of the nominative, equating the revered status of the three men. Polybius had influence in Rome, both through his literary talent and close association as one of Claudius' highly regarded freedmen. Seneca may have written to Polybius with the intention of drawing attention to his consolation and distinct praise of Claudius within the consolation, given Polybius' specific responsibilities as the literary adviser.

According to Seneca, it is also not the wish of Polybius' brother that Polybius "withdraw from [his] ordinary tasks – that is, from the serving of Caesar – in order to do harm to [himself] by self-torture."[58] Mourning the death of his brother and, as a result, ignoring his duties to Emperor are not what Polybius' brother desires for Polybius.

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[55] Seneca, *Ad Polybium* 11.5

[56] Barbara M. Levick, "Claudius Speaks: Two Imperial Contretemps" in *Historia: Zeitschrift Für Alte Geschichte* 38, no. 1 (1989), 112. "Certainly Claudius' freedman Polybius is likely to have have intensified his patron's interest Homer: his (presumably prose) rendering of Homer into Latin and of Virgil into Greek is mentioned by Seneca."

[57] Seneca, *Ad Polybium* 8.2

[58] Seneca, *Ad Polybium* 5.2

Seneca has previously stated that Polybius' brother has neither appreciation nor use for Polybius' grief and tears; by indicating that Polybius' brother would prefer Polybius not to neglect his duties to the emperor and, instead of mourning, to serve Claudius, Seneca again directs Polybius' solution towards Claudius. Seneca finally reveals his ultimate solution when he says, "when you shall wish to forget everything else – think of Caesar."[59]

In the following section, Seneca writes that "in him you have all things, [and] he takes the place of all."[60] Polybius need not seek comfort in any other thing or person because Claudius ultimately provides good fortune for him. Seneca also says, *"*On the day that Caesar dedicated himself to the wide world, he robbed himself of himself."[61] The sentiments presented here bring into question whether Seneca's aims are to adulate and present Claudius to be a figure similar to the Stoic god. The fact that Seneca depicts Claudius as being in all things is similar to Seneca's conception of a god to be ""a divine breath infused in all objects, the greatest as well as the smallest, with an equal tension.""[62]

> *Quod vides totum et quod non vides totum. Sic demum magnitudo illi sua redditur, qua nihil maius cogitari potest, si solus est omnia, si opus suum et intra et extra tenet.*

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[59] Seneca, *Ad Polybium* 7.1

[60] Seneca, *Ad Polybium* 7.4

[61] Seneca, *Ad Polybium* 7.2

[62] Aldo Setaioli, "Seneca and the Divine: Stoic Tradition and Personal Developments" in *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 13, no. 3 (2007), 337.

> All that you see, all that you do not see. In short, only if he alone is all things, if he maintains his own work both from within and without, is he given due credit for his magnitude; nothing of greater magnitude than that can be contemplated.
>
> (*Naturales Quaestiones* 1.13)

The Stoic god as presented above in Seneca's *Naturales Quaestiones* is himself alone an embodiment of all things. Seneca also presents Claudius to have given himself up for the good of the world and states that Claudius is responsible for good fortune. These points seem to correspond with Seneca's definition of Stoic gods,[63] who as "glorious authors of all things… give benefits to him who knows them not, and persist in giving them to those who are ungrateful" [*omnium rerum optimi auctores, qui beneficia ignoranti dare incipiunt, ingratis perseverant*].[64] Claudius exemplifies such benefits, as "his watchfulness guards all men's sleep, his toil all men's ease, his industry all men's dissipations, his work all men's vacation" [*Omnium somnos illius vigilia defendit, omnium otium ilius labor, omnium delicias illius industria, omnium vacationem illius occupatio*].[65] In both *De Beneficiis* and *Ad Polybium*, the common use of the word *omnis* expresses the sovereignty of the Stoic god and thus Claudius. By forging a connection between Claudius and Stoicism, Seneca weaves together his philosophy with a political agenda to praise Claudius.

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[63] English translations and corresponding Latin texts from Seneca's *De Beneficiis* are from Loeb Classical Library's 1935 edition, with translations provided by John W. Basore.

[64] Seneca, *De Beneficiis* 7.31.2

[65] Seneca, *Ad Polybium* 7.2

A distinct section of *Ad Polybium* includes a eulogy to Claudius and prayer to the divine on the emperor's behalf. A part of it reads:

> *Dii illum deaeque terris diu commodent! Acta hic divi Augusti aequet, annos vincat! Quam diu inter mortales erit, nihil ex domo sua mortale esse sentiat! Rectorem Romano imperio filium longa fide approbet et ante illum consortem patris quam successorem aspiciat! Sera et nepotibus demum nostris dies nota sit, qua illum gens sua caelo asserat!*
>
> May gods and goddesses lend him long to earth! May he rival the achievements, may he surpass the years, of the deified Augustus! So long as he shall linger among mortals, may he not learn that aught of his house is mortal! By long proof may he commend his son as ruler to the Roman Empire and see his father's consort ere that he is his successor! Late be the day and known only to our grandchildren on which his kindred claim him for the skies!
>
> (*Ad Polybium* 12.5)

As mentioned previously, though both *Ad Marciam* and *Ad Polybium* share the theme of comforting someone who has recently suffered the death of a loved one, such praise of the reigning emperor is unique to the consolatory letter to Polybius. In fact, the structure of *Ad Marciam* can be organized into an introduction, examples, precepts, and a conclusion.[66] In no text throughout the consolation to Marcia is there mention of the reigning emperor. However, *Ad Polybium* contains multiple references to Caesar in addition to this particular eulogistic section.

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[66] Mary Edmond Fern, *The Latin Consolatio as a Literary Type* (Saint Louis, MO, 1941), 64.

To praise Claudius, Seneca not only connects his Stoic philosophy to connect Claudius to the Stoic god but also builds a deified image of Claudius through the use of allusion and specific word choice. The first instance is in the use of the word *numen* [divinity].[67] The word *numen* refers to Claudius, for Seneca says to Polybius, *Nam quam diu numen tuum intueberis, nullum illa ad te inveniet accessum, omnia in te Caesar tenebit* [For as long as your divinity is before your eyes, [sadness] will find no access to you, Caesar will possess all that is in you].[68] Similarly, Seneca employs the use of *numinis* [divinity] when he instructs Polybius to admire Claudius' divinity "every time that tears well up in [his] eyes" [69] "According to Seneca, "at the sight of the exceeding greatness and splendor of [Claudius'] divinity they will be dried" [*siccabuntur maximi et clarissimi conspectus numinis*].[70] By looking at Claudius in such times, Seneca says that tears will dry up at Claudius' greatness.

Seneca describes the words of Claudius as otherworldly.

> *Aliud habebunt hoc dicente pondus verba velut ab oraculo missa; omnem vim doloris tui divina eius contundet auctoritas.*
>
> Words, when he speaks, have, as if the utterances of an oracle, a different weight; his divine authority will dull all the sharpness of your grief.
>
> (*Ad Polybium* 14.2)

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[67] Seneca, *Ad Polybium* 8.1

[68] Seneca, *Ad Polybium* 8.1

[69] Seneca, *Ad Polybium* 12.3

[70] Seneca, *Ad Polybium* 12.3

The allusion to an oracle [*velut ab oraculo missa*] brings to mind the Pythia, the Oracle at Delphi, who was believed by the ancient people to be inspired by Apollo himself during her prophecies. In this way, Seneca produces a connection between the divine words of an oracle and the words of Claudius to suggest that Claudius is set apart from other men. Seneca specifically designates Claudius' authority as being divine [*divina eius… auctoritas*].

Claudius' association with light can be noted when Seneca attributes *fulgor* [brilliance][71] to Claudius. He also refers to Claudius as *Sidus hoc*, *quod praecipitato in profundum et demerso in tenebras orbi refulsit* [this sun, which has shed its light upon a world that had plunged into the abyss and was sunk in darkness].[72] In Seneca's *Epistulae Morales ad Lucilium*,[73] written closer to the end of his life, Seneca shares a point on his philosophy when he speaks of one day when "the secrets of nature shall be disclosed to you, the haze will be shaken from your eyes, and the bright light will stream in upon you from all sides" [*Aliquando naturae tibi arcana retegentur, discutietur ista claigo et lux undique clara percutiet*].[74] Here, he is writing to Lucilius about the day Lucilius will know the truth about nature and describes it with light.

The section below from *Naturales Quaestiones* above exemplifies a later instance when Seneca illustrated the deified Augustus' connection to light and radiance.

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[71] Seneca, *Ad Polybium* 12.3

[72] Seneca, *Ad Polybium* 13.1

[73] English translations and corresponding Latin texts of Seneca's *Epistulae* are from Loeb Classical Library's 1925 edition, with translations by Richard M. Gummere.

[74] Seneca, *Epistulae* 102.28

> *Memoriae proditum est, quo die Urbem divus Augustus Apollonia reversus intravit, circa solem visum coloris varii circulum, qualis esse in arcu solet.*
>
> It is recorded in history that the day the deified Augustus entered Rome on his return from Apollonia a circle of varied colors was seen around the sun, colors that usually appear in a rainbow.
>
> (*Naturales Quaestiones* 1.2.1)

In this way, Seneca elevates Claudius to both the status of desired truth and brilliance in accordance with his philosophy and the image of light acquired through divine status.

Seneca further ensures the safety of the human race under Claudius' protection.

> *illo rebus humanis praesidente non est periculum, ne quid perdidisse te sentias; in hoc uno tibi satis praesidi, solaci est.*
>
> while he presides over human affairs, there is no danger of your feeling that you have suffered any loss; in this one source you have ample protection, ample consolation.
>
> (*Ad Polybium* 12.3)

Also important in the above section is that Seneca explicitly identifies Claudius as a sufficient source of consolation for Polybius' grief towards the death of his brother.

In the consolation to Polybius, Seneca also includes circumstances of his own exile and how he feels about them.

> *quae ex virtutibus eius primum optinet locum, promittit clementia. Nec enim sic me deiecit, ut nollet erigere, immo ne deiecit quidem, sed impulsum a fortuna et cadentem sustinuit et in praeceps euntem leniter divinae manus usus*

> *moderatione deposuit; deprecatus est pro me senatum et vitam mihi non tantum dedit sed etiam petit.*
>
> his mercy, which in the list of his virtues holds the chief place, raises the hope that of these I also shall not fail to be a spectator. For he has not cast me down with no thought of ever lifting me up – nay, he has not even cast me down, but when I had been smitten by Fortune and was falling, he checked my fall, and, using the mitigating power of this divine hand, he let me down gently when I was plunging to destruction; he besought the senate in my behalf, and not only gave me my life, but even begged it.
>
> (*Ad Polybium* 13.2)

Seneca highlights mercy as Claudius' greatest virtue and emphasizes that he retains hope that Claudius will lift him up, probably referring to possible recall from exile. Interesting to note here is the mention of Claudius' beseeching the senate on behalf of Seneca. This seems to be alluding to Seneca's trial on charge of adultery, which resulted in his exile. Whether Claudius begged for Seneca's life is questionable, but regardless, Seneca shows gratitude towards Claudius.

Seneca's sense of hope in Claudius follows his representation of God in *Naturales Quaestiones*.[75] God decides when it is best for "old things to be ended and better things to begin."[76] According to Seneca's Stoicisim, "all things happen in accordance with a decree of god." Thus, complaining or disagreeing with events enacted by god's will is an act of rebellion.[77] The sentiment that we should not complain against the Stoic god is

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[75] English translations and corresponding Latin texts of Seneca's *Naturales Quaestiones* are from Loeb Classical Library's 1971 edition of Volume I and 1972 edition of Volume II, with translations by Thomas H. Corcoran.

[76] Seneca, *Naturales Quaestiones* 3.28.7

repeated in *Naturales Quaestiones* when Seneca writes "we cannot complain against god, our author, if we have corrupted his benefits and cause them to be evil."[78] While the Stoic god blesses men with things, men's own nature corrupts those gifts. Thus, men should not complain to the Stoic god for their own wrongdoings. Seneca displays faith in God's timing and authority in allowing better things to occur. Likewise, in the consolation, Seneca admits he was falling and that Claudius caught him in his wrong. As Seneca believes in the Stoic god's timing, his portrayal of Claudius as a Stoic god in *Ad Polybium* translates his faith now in Claudius' authority over his own exile.

The representation of the Stoic god in Seneca's *Naturales Quaestiones* is also all-knowing. Seneca writes that "in god there is no part other than the mind [and] he is entirely reason."[79]

> *Vel iustitia eius bonam perspiciat vel clementia faciat bonam; utrumque in aequo mihi eius beneficium erit, sive innocentem me scierit esse, sive voluerit.*
>
> Let either his justice discern that it is good, or his mercy make it good; whether he shall discern that I am innocent, or shall wish me to be so – either, in my eyes, will equally show his kindness.
>
> (*Ad Polybium* 13.3)

Continuing on, Seneca exposes the possibility of his exile on a wrong claim. However, he still leaves the ultimate decision of his innocence up to Claudius. He does

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[77] Seneca, *Naturales Quaestiones* 3.12

[78] Seneca, *Naturales Quaestiones* 5.18.13

[79] Seneca, *Naturales Quaestiones* 1.14

not claim innocence but rather shows his desire that he wishes to be seen innocent by Claudius.

> *quae cum ex ipso angulo, in quo ego defixus sum, complures multorum iam annorum ruina obrutos effoderit et in lucem reduxerit non vereror ne me unum transeat.*
>
> since even in this remote corner, in which I am planted, his mercy has unearthed many who were buried under a downfall that came long years ago, and has restored them to light, I do not fear that I shall be the only one that it will pass by.
>
> (*Ad Polybium* 13.3)

By mentioning that those who had been exiled on the island many years ago have been recalled, Seneca opens the option of recall from himself also. Recall from exile and hence acquiring the favor of Claudius are described as a return to the light. Seneca again forges an association between Claudius and light, as mentioned previously.

By advising Claudius as the source of consolation for Polybius' grief, Seneca also inserts himself into the consolation as one who is too in suffering and requires Claudius as consolation. Seneca weaves Claudius into his philosophy of Stoicism and represents Claudius as light and all-knowing.

CHAPTER TWO

After Exile: Seneca's Portrayal of Claudius in *Apocolocyntosis*

This chapter will first examine the circumstances following Seneca's recall from exile in 49 AD, which was eight years after Emperor Claudius exiled Seneca to Corsica. Upon return, Seneca served as tutor to Nero, who would become the next emperor after the death of Claudius. While the Seneca in exile wrote praise of Claudius in *Ad Polybium* in an effort to gain favor of the ruling political figure at that time, I will argue that the Seneca after exile, empowered by new ties with Agrippina and Nero, was free from compelled laudation of Claudius. A discussion about the authorship of *Apocolocyntosis* and genre of Menippean satire, which *Apocolocyntosis* falls under, will reveal that Seneca utilized the medium of Menippean satire to ridicule the many faults of Claudius and retract his former claims on Claudius as a Stoic god.

Seneca's Recall from Exile

After being exiled to the island of Corsica by Claudius for eight years, in 49AD, Seneca was recalled from exile back to Rome. This occurred also during Claudius' reign, largely executed on Agrippina's part. Agrippina was Claudius' niece and also his fourth wife, whom he had recently married; in addition, she was the mother of Domitius, who would later rise to the throne as Emperor Nero after Claudius' death. In Tacitus's *Annals*, we read that "Agrippina… procured a remission of banishment for Annaeus Seneca."[80] Further, in Dio's *Roman History*, she is described as "training her son for the throne

[80] Tacitus, *Annals* 12.8

and… entrusting his education to Seneca."[81] Though Seneca's recall from exile indeed happened during Claudius' continued reign, such texts stand as evidence to show that the recall was most likely not so much out of Claudius's volition as much as it was actually due to Agrippina's desire to acquire Seneca as Nero's tutor.

Agrippina's marriage to Claudius can be seen as part of her scheme to acquire power for herself and her son Domitius. Even before her own marriage to Emperor Claudius, Agrippina was plotting a plan to strengthen the "link between the Julian and Claudian branches of the imperial family" through the marriage between Domitius and Claudius' daughter Octavia by his previous wife Messalina.[82] To achieve this marriage, Agrippina needed to eliminate Octavia's betrothed Lucius Junius Silanus, which she accomplished by defaming Silanus with a scandal of incest. On December 29th of 48AD, Silanus lost his praetorship, and three days later on the day of Claudius and Agrippina's wedding, January 1st of 49AD, Silanus committed suicide.[83] In contrast, upon recall from exile, Seneca received his praetorship.[84] Agrippina's plan against Silanus shows the extent of careful scheming in which she engaged to gain power and rise to the throne.

Tacitus reports that Agrippina was waiting for the right moment and method to kill Claudius so that her son Domitius may usurp the throne.

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[81] Dio, *Roman History* 61.32.3

[82] Anthony Barrett, *Agrippina: Sex, Power, and Politics in the Early Empire* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), 98.

[83] Tacitus, *Annals* 12.8

[84] Tacitus, *Annals* 12.8

> *In tanta mole curarum valetudine adversa corripitur, refovendisque viribus mollitia caeli et salubritate aquarum Sineussam pergit. Tum Agrippina, sceleris olim certa et oblatae occasionis propera nec ministrorum egens, de genere veneni consultavit, ne repentino et praecipiti facinus proderetur.*
>
> Under the weight of anxiety, his health broke down, and he left for Sinuessa, to renovate his strength by the gentle climate and the medicinal springs. At once, Agrippina – long resolved on murder, eager to seize the proffered occasion, and at no lack for assistants – sought advice upon the type of poison.
>
> (*Annals* 12.66)

In Tacitus's account, Agrippina had considered the murder of Claudius and immediately seized the opportunity to poison Claudius upon the turn of his health for the worse. In contrast, Suetonius does directly not address Agrippina as Claudius' murderer but still confirms the suspicions that Agrippina was indeed involved in Claudius' death.

> *Et veneno quidem occisum convenit; ubi autem et per quem dato, discrepat. Quidam tradunt epulanti in arce cum sacerdotibus per Halotum spadonem praegustatorem; alii domestico convivio per ipsam Agrippinam, quae boletum medicatum avidissimo ciborum talium optulerat.*
>
> That Claudius was poisoned is the general belief, but when it was done and by whom is disputed. Some say that it was his taster, the eunuch Halotus, as he was banqueting on the Citadel with the priests; others that at a family dinner Agrippina served the drug to him with her own hand in mushrooms.
>
> (*De Vita Caesarum, Divus Claudius* 44.2)

Suetonius further addresses Claudius' regret towards the end of his life in marrying Agrippina and adopting Domitius as his son. He also writes of Claudius' "intention of

giving Britannicus the gown of manhood" and saying "that the Roman people may at last have a genuine Caesar" through his son Britannicus.[85] However, Agrippina stopped Claudius from pursuing Britannicus' succession any further.[86]

Similar antagonistic sentiments towards Agrippina by Claudius are depicted in Dio's *Roman History*. According to Dio, "Claudius was angered by Agrippina's actions, of which he was now becoming aware, and sought for his son Britannicus, who had purposely been kept out of his sight by her most of the time."[87] Hostility grew between the emperor and his wife towards the end of his life. Claudius became wary of Agrippina's plans for the throne following his death and deliberately sought his biological son Britannicus to succeed him.

Emperor Claudius died on October 13th of 54 AD. An announcement about Claudius' death was made only after Agrippina successfully arranged her son Nero to take the throne.[88] Following the death of Claudius, Dio writes that "Agrippina and Nero pretended to grieve for the man who they had killed."[89] Also upon Claudius' death, Nero gave a "panegyric of Claudius." This speech was written by Seneca[90] and "exhibited the

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[85] Likewise, Dio's *Roman History* 64.34.1 also describes Claudius' intention for Britannicus to acquire the *toga virilis* and make Britannicus heir, rather than Nero. Agrippina found out and stopped Claudius from seeing such plans out.

[86] Suetonius, *De Vita Caesarum, Divus Claudius* 43

[87] Dio, *Roman History* 61.34.1

[88] Michael Paschalis, "The Afterlife of Emperor Claudius in Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis*" in *Numen* 56, no. 2 (2009), 198).

[89] Dio, *Roman History* 61.35.2

degree of polish to be expected from that famous man."[91] Such efforts to honor the death of Claudius by Nero are described as "mockeries of sorrow" by Tacitus.[92] Seneca thus directly took part in Agrippina and Nero's efforts to outwardly yet superficially mourn for Claudius.

In this way, Agrippina as Claudius' wife was determined to pass the throne down to her son Domitius. Ancient sources implicate her in the death of Claudius in an attempt to fulfill this plan. In light of the circumstances surrounding Seneca's recall from exile, Seneca need not thank Claudius for his recall from exile but, rather, owed his gratitude and, as an extension, his loyalty to Agrippina. In addition, Seneca's consolatory letter to Polybius, written a few years into his exile, even with its explicit praise of Claudius, had not earned Seneca recall from exile.[93] It was through Agrippina's efforts of securing Seneca as a tutor for Nero that resulted Seneca's successful recall from exile.

Authorship of *Apocolocyntosis*

While modern scholars largely accept Seneca as the author of this literary work, the author of *Apocolocyntosis* has been a topic of debate. The following section will address the reasons why this paper supports Seneca's authorship of *Apocolocyntosis*.

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[90] Dio similarly mentions a speech, written by Seneca, that Nero gave after the death of Claudius in *Roman History* 61.35.3.

[91] Tacitus, *Annals* 13.3

[92] Tacitus, *Annals* 13.4

[93] James S. Romm, *Dying Every Day* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), 28. "Whatever Polybius made of [*De Consolatione Ad Polybium*], Claudius passed Seneca by when inviting back other exiles to share his British triumph."

According to Dio, "Seneca… composed a work that he called "Pumpkinification" – a word formed on the analogy of "deification."[94] The work, however, is under different titles by several of the best manuscripts of the Latin text. Codex Sangallensis 569 refers to the work as *Ἀποθέωσις Annaei Senecae per saturam*, translated as *Deification through satire by Annaeus Seneca.* Other codices have these titles, *Ludus de Morte Claudii* and *Ludus de Morte Claudii Caesaris*.[95]

Apocolocyntosis features a combination of prose and poetry. The poetic verses are written in dactylic hexameter, iambic *senarius*, and anapestic dimeter.[96] Specifically, in chapter 12 of *Apocolocyntosis*,[97] Seneca precedes the metrical passage by saying that people "were chanting [Claudius'] dirge in anapaests" [*Ingenti enim… nenia cantabatur anapaestis*].[98] The following passage features a chant, sung by the people present at Claudius' funeral. The passage resembles the choral mourning for the Trojan king in the Senecan tragedy *Troades*. The lines from *Apocolocyntosis* read:

> *Fundite fletus, edite planctus,*
> *resonet tristi clamore forum*

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[94] Dio, *Roman History* 61.35.3

[95] See "Introduction" to Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis* in Loeb Classical Library's 1913 edition. Codex Sangallensis 569 is the best. The other two codices, Codex Valentianensis 411 and Codex Londiniensis suppl. 11983, exist as next best.

[96] Allan Perley Ball, "Introduction," in *The Satire of Seneca on the Apotheosis of Claudius* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1902), 73.

[97] English translations and corresponding texts from Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis* are from the Loeb Classical Library's 1913 edition, with translations by W. H. D. Rouse and revisions by E. H. Warmington.

[98] Seneca, *Apocolocyntosis* 12

> Pour forth your laments, your sorrow declare,
> Let the sounds of grief rise loud in the square
>
> (*Apocolocyntosis* 12)

Similarly, the lines, mourning for Priam, from *Troades*[99] read:

> *Accipe, rector Phrygiae, planctus,*
> *accipe fletus, bis capte senex.*
>
> Receive our mourning, king of Phrygia;
> receive our tears, twice-captured old man.
>
> (*Troades* 1. 132-133)

The meter in both of these passages, anapestic dimeter, was commonly employed in choral passages in Seneca's tragedies.[100] Nussbaum also states that in addition to chapter 12's metrical passage, the passage in chapter 7 of *Apocolocyntosis* also "bears a close relationship to the diction and metrical usage in Seneca's tragedies."[101] Stylistically, the poetic verses of *Apocolocyntosis* resemble Seneca's other poetic works and support the case for Seneca's authorship of the satire.

Seneca possessed personal motivations to write *Apocolocyntosis*, a satirical work on the deification of Claudius. Claudius was still the emperor who exiled him, and Seneca, upon recall, acted as a tutor to Nero and ally of Agrippina. Recall from exile would not

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[99] English translations and corresponding texts from Seneca's *Troades* are from the Loeb Classical Library's 2002 edition, translated and edited by John G. Fitch.

[100] Allan Perley Ball, "Introduction," in *The Satire of Seneca on the Apotheosis of Claudius* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1902), 73-74.

[101] Martha C. Nussbaum, "The Pumpkinification of Claudius the God" in *Seneca: Anger, Mercy, Revenge* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press: 2010), 198.

have abated the unfriendly sentiment between Seneca and Claudius completely. In addition, *Apocolocyntosis* includes praise of the new emperor, Nero. Nero himself is noted by Dio to have mocked the death of Claudius by declaring "mushrooms to be the food of the gods, since Claudius by means of the mushroom had become a god."[102] In addition, Seneca's brother made a comparison between how Claudius was raised to the heavens with a hook and how the "bodies of those executed" were dragged with hooks to the Forum and later to the river.[103] Seneca may have had personal motivations to strengthen his association with Nero and aided Neronian regime by providing *Apocolocyntosis* as criticism on the previous emperor.

Though Claudius received divine status after his death, Barrett hypothesizes that Agrippina "would have appreciated that [Claudius' deification] gave Nero an important propaganda tool."[104] Nero could now identify himself as the son of deified Claudius. The mints during Nero's reign stand as evidence in showing how Nero used the association between divine Claudius and himself to elevate his own status. In this way, deification of Claudius upon his death appears to have occurred also as according to Agrippina's plans. *Apocolocyntosis* as a political satire with its mockery on Claudius' character and his deification has potential to have played a role in Neronian propaganda to degrade the deification of Claudius and assert Nero as a better emperor.

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[102] Dio, *Roman History* 61.35.1

[103] Dio, *Roman History* 61.35.1

[104] Anthony Barrett, *Agrippina: Sex, Power, and Politics in the Early Empire* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), 148.

Genre of Menippean Satire

It is worth discussing the genre of Menippean satire to examine why Seneca would have chosen this medium for *Apocolocyntosis*.[105] The genre is named after the Greek philosopher Menippus of the third century BC, whose works are lost. Though scholars have labeled several works of different authors as Menippean satires, the genre itself is not strictly defined with respect to its requirements. Included in those works identified as Menippean satires are Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis*, Petronius' *Satryicon*, and Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae*. Bakhtin, Frye, and Relihan are three sources for the discussion of Menippean satires. Riikonen states that, according to Bakhtin, some of the typical characteristics of a Menippean satire are "[internal] motivation by a purely ideological and philosophical end," "eccentric behavior," and contrasts.[106] According to Riikonen, a few of the features with which Frye characterizes Menippean satire is that it is a genre that "describes… incompetent representatives of various occupations" and highlights fantasy."[107] Furthermore, "according to Frye, a constant theme in the tradition of the Menippean satire is… the ridicule of various philosophical ideas and doctrines."[108] Relihan

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[105] See H.K. Riikonen's *Menippean Satire as a Literary Genre* (Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1987) for more on Menippean satire as a genre.

[106] H.K. Riikonen, *Menippean Satire as a Literary Genre* (Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1987), 23-26.

[107] H.K. Riikonen, *Menippean Satire as a Literary Genre* (Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1987), 33.

[108] H.K. Riikonen, *Menippean Satire as a Literary Genre* (Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1987), 33.

characterizes a Menippean satire as containing a mix of prose and poetry, "fantastic narrative, burlesque of language and literature, jokes at the expense of learning."[109]

A consideration of such criteria for the characterization of a Menippean satire can explain why Seneca would have written *Apocolocyntosis*. The medium enabled Seneca to portray Claudius as an unjust emperor with critical flaws, which will be detailed later in this chapter. The contrast mentioned by Bakhtin is reflected in the *Apocolocyntosis* through the portrayal of Claudius, as an emperor with faults who cannot be deified and instead becomes a slave.[110] Seneca also, in accordance with Frye's views, ridicules philosophical ideas in *Apocolocyntosis* as a way of ultimately ridiculing Claudius, for he cannot be an Epicurean or Stoic god.

Claudius in *Apocolocyntosis*

A repeated theme in *Apocolocyntosis* is the derision of Claudius' mental and physical flaws. Such derision contrasts the portrayal of Claudius in *Ad Polybium*. There, Claudius is described with "the sight of… exceeding greatness,"[111] and Seneca says to "[allow Claudius] to heal the human race, that has long been sick and in evil case."[112] In contrast, the description of Claudius in *Apocolocyntosis* is with serious physical defect and

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[109] Michael Paschalis, "Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis* and Petronius' *Satyricon*" in *Readers and Writers in the Ancient Novel* (Eelde: Barkhuis Publishing, 2009), 104.

[110] Seneca, *Apocolocyntosis* 15. *Apparuit subito C. Caesar et petere in servitutem coepit*. [All on a sudden who should turn up but Caligula, and claims the man for a slave]

[111] Seneca, *Ad Polybium* 12.3

[112] Seneca, *Ad Polybium* 13.1. The Latin reads: *Patere illum generi humano iam diu aegro et affecto mederi*. I have chosen to translate the 2nd person imperative *patere* as "allow" rather than "submit," as translated by John W. Basore.

thus himself sick. The fact that Claudius possessed such defects was widely known among Seneca's audience. For instance, when Nero was giving the panegyric of Claudius, acknowledgement of Claudius' "foresight and sagacity" incited laughter among the audience.[113] Suetonius describes in detail the mental and physical disabilities[114] that Claudius suffered from, including unbalanced gait and stuttering.[115]

In *Apocolocyntosis*, there occurs a scene in which one of the three Fates cuts the thread of Claudius' life, thereby ending his life. Seneca extends Claudius' grotesque appearance to describe Claudius' "ugly spindle," which represents his life. Claudius is also identified as the "Imperial dunce," illustrating his mental dullness.[116]

Following Claudius' arrival into the heavens, the audience reads Hercules' reaction upon seeing Claudius for the first time. Hercules' reaction to Claudius is part of a tri-level derision of Claudius' physical defects. The deriding sequence of Claudius begins with Hercules, followed by Jupiter and deified Augustus.

> *Tum Hercules primo aspectu sane perturbatus est, ut qui etiam non omnia monstra timuerit. Ut vidit novi generis faciem, insolitum incessum, vocem nullius terrestris animalis sed qualis esse marinis beluis solet, raucam et implicatam, putavit sibi tertium decimum laborem venisse. Diligentius intuenti visus est quasi homo.*

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[113] Tacitus, *Annals* 13.3

[114] See Suetonius' *De Vita Caesarum, Divus Claudius* 2.1. The following quote of English translation is from the Loeb Classical Library. "Throughout almost the whole course of [Claudius'] childhood and youth he suffered so severely from various obstinate disorders that the vigour of both his mind and his body was dulled."

[115] See Suetonius' *De Vita Caesarum, Divus Claudius* 30.

[116] Seneca, *Apocolocyntosis* 4

> Then Hercules, the first glimpse he got, was really much taken aback, being aware that he hadn't yet even by then seen all the monsters in the world that he might be afraid of; when he saw this new kind of object, with its extraordinary gait, and the voice of no terrestrial beast, but such as you might hear in the leviathans of the deep, hoarse and inarticulate, he thought his thirteenth labour had come upon him. When he looked closer, the thing seemed to be a kind of man.
>
> (*Apocolocyntosis* 5)

Initially, Hercules does not even believe Claudius to be a man. He thinks at first that Claudius is a member of some new species; later, only upon a closer look does Hercules recognize Claudius' resemblance to man. Claudius' physical flaws identified here are his abnormal gait and unintelligible speech. Important is the strong satirical tone in describing Claudius' characteristics. Rather than merely stating Claudius' physical faults, Seneca utilizes the persona of the eminent hero Hercules and his heroic feat of Twelve Labors to emphasize that even a renowned hero like Hercules becomes aghast at Claudius' appearance. Though Hercules has died and now exists in the heavens, the terror, which Claudius brings, leads Hercules to question whether Claudius is his impending thirteenth labor. Through the medium of Menippean satire, Seneca utilizes an element of fantasy and comedy by highlighting that Hercules, a hero whom the audience knows to have successfully completed his Twelve Labors, fears a new labor at the horror of Claudius.

News of Claudius' arrival in the heavens reaches Jupiter also. The portrayal of Claudius, as passed on to Jupiter, further mocks Claudius' gait and speech impediment. "[Claudius] wagged his head ceaselessly; he dragged the right foot… he answered

something in a confused mumbling voice."[117] The mockery of Claudius has ascended from the hero god Hercules to the highest god Jupiter. Seneca has further emphasized Claudius' faults.

Augustus also partakes in the mockery of Claudius' physical appearance. He describes Claudius' body as "born under the wrath of heaven" [*corpus eius dis iratis natum*] and asks, "Who will worship this god [and] who will believe in him?"[118] He also states that the deification of Claudius will result in no one's belief of the gods as gods.[119] In this way, according to Augustus, the deification of such a grotesque body and character threatens the divine status of the existing gods. He disqualifies Claudius' deification as a disgrace to the gods themselves. The tri-level mockery of Claudius through Hercules, Jupiter, and Augustus highlights the extent of Claudius' conspicuous flaws.

Seneca pokes fun at the moments just prior to Claudius' death by quoting Claudius' supposed last words.

> *Ultima vox eius haec inter homines audita est, cum maiorum sonitum emisisset illa parte, qua facilius loquebatur: "vae me, puto, concacavi me."*
>
> The last words he was heard to speak in this world were these. When [Claudius] had made a great noise with that end of him which talked easiest, he cried out, "Oh dear, oh dear! I think I have made a mess of myself."
>
> (*Apocolocyntosis* 4)

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[117] Seneca, *Apocolocyntosis* 5

[118] Seneca, *Apocolocyntosis* 11

[119] Seneca, *Apocolocyntosis* 11

The description of Claudius' last words before falling upon his death is enmeshed in an accident of flatulence or even defecation. There is an important use of the word *concacavi*, which here is in its first-person singular perfect indicative form. The definition of the verb is "to make foul with ordure, soil."[120] Not only does Seneca thus debase Claudius' image by closing off Claudius' life with a bodily mishap, but also he conveys that Claudius often engaged in acts of flatulence, unfitting to an emperor. The connection between Claudius and flatulence appears ridiculous; however, it seems to have some relevance to Claudius' life. Suetonius writes that Claudius "is even said to have thought of an edict allowing the privilege of breaking wind quietly or noisily at table."[121] In light of this connection, the description of Claudius' last words in *Apocolocyntosis* may be a way for Seneca to criticize Claudius' rendering of edicts during his administration.

Seneca's portrayal of Mercury's reception to Claudius' death in *Apocolocyntosis* differs from Seneca's reaction to Polybius' brother's death in *De Consolatione Ad Polybium*.

> *Tum Mercurius… unam e tribus Parcis seducit et ait: "Quid, femina crudelissima, hominem miserum torqueri pateris? Nec unquam tam diu cruciatus cesset? Annus sexagesimus [et] quartus est, ex quo cum anima luctatur. Quid huic et rei publicae invides? Patere mathematicos aliquando verum dicere, qui illum, ex quo princeps factus est, omnibus annis, omnibus mensibus efferunt. Et tamen non est mirum si errant et horam eius nemo novit; nemo enim unquam illum natum putavit. Fac quod faciendum est: 'Dede neci, melior vacua sine regnet in aula.'"*

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[120] The definition of the word *concacavi* was found using the Oxford Latin Dictionary under the term *concaco*.

[121] Suetonius, *De Vita Caesarum*, *Divus Claudius* 32

> Mercury… drew aside one of the three Fates, and said: "Cruel beldame, why do you let the poor wretch be tormented? After all this torture cannot he have a rest? Four and sixty years it is now since he began to pant for breath. What grudge is this you bear against him and the whole empire? Do let the astrologers tell the truth for once; since he became emperor, they have never let a year pass, never a month, without laying him out for his burial. Yet it is no wonder if they are wrong, and no one knows his hour. Nobody ever believed he was really quite born. Do what has to be done: 'Kill him, and let a better man rule in his empty court.'"
>
> (*Apocolocyntosis* 3)

Mercury spurs the Fates to end Claudius' life as a necessity. Claudius' death here is required for the opportunity for a better emperor to rise to the throne in Claudius' place. Considering that Nero immediately usurped the throne upon Claudius' death, Seneca is here referring to Nero as the better man to rule, thus implicitly lauding then-current Emperor Nero. To the Fate, Mercury states that upholding Claudius as the emperor by preserving his life means that she bears hostility towards the Roman Empire. Furthermore, Seneca argues that Claudius' own life is harmful to Claudius himself.

Mercury's beseeching Fate to end Claudius' life contrasts Seneca's indictment against Fortune for taking Polybius' brother's life. Regarding Polybius' brother, Seneca describes him as "cut off in the midst of… first growth" and worthy of being Polybius' brother.[122] Unlike Claudius who was constantly dragging himself in pain throughout life, Polybius's brother lived flourishingly, as evidenced by his growth. While Claudius is deemed an injury to himself and the empire, thus unworthy of living, Polybius' brother is characterized as being worthy to Polybius. Mercury eagerly urges Fate to end Claudius'

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[122] Seneca, *Ad Polybium* 3.1

life; Seneca, on Polybius' behalf, makes an indictment against Fortune about the death of Polybius' brother.

In addition to exposing and emphasizing Claudius' physical flaws, Seneca details Claudius' vice of murder.

> *Excandescit hoc loco Claudius et quanto potest murmure irascitur. Quid diceret, nemo intellegebat, ille autem Febrim duci iubebat, illo gestu solutae manus et ad hoc unum satis firmae, quo decollare homines sollebat, iusserat illi collum praecidi.*
>
> At this point Claudius flared up, and expressed his wrath with as big a growl as he could manage. What he said nobody understood; as a matter of fact, he was ordering my lady of Fever to be taken away, and making that sign with his trembling hand (which was always steady enough for that, if for nothing else) by which he used to decapitate men.
>
> (*Apocolocyntosis* 6)

Even in the heavens, Claudius cannot desist from his habit of using his hand to signal execution. The words *excandescit* and *irascitur* are verbs, of which the definitions are "to grow hot (with anger, etc.), burst into a rage, flare up"[123] and "to feel resentment, be angry"[124] respectively, and they characterize Claudius' anger. The customary way that Claudius coped with such anger, during his life and rule as emperor, was by killing those who displeased him. How habituated Claudius was to ordering murder is conveyed by the phrase *ad hoc unum satis firmae* [always steady enough for that one thing], which describes

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[123] The definition of the word *excandescit* was found using the Oxford Latin Dictionary under the term *excandesco*.

[124] The definition of the word *irascitur* was found using the Oxford Latin Dictionary under the term *irascor*.

how Claudius' usually shaky hand was steady for ordering murder.[125] Furthermore, Seneca writes that Claudius "who seems… as if he could not hurt a fly, used to chop off heads as readily as the dog's throw comes tumbling out."[126] Thus, while Claudius' appearance and speech problems may guise him as being unable to harm things, Seneca clarifies the extent of ease with which Claudius often decapitated people during his life.

Seneca exposes Claudius' vice of murder in order to show that Claudius was not a just ruler. When Augustus steps up to speak against the deification of Claudius, he addresses the various murders Claudius imposed, including his great-granddaughters.[127]

> *Dic mihi, dive Claudi, quare quemquam ex his, quos quasque occidisti, antequam de causa cognosceres, antequam audires, damnasti? Hoc ubi fieri solet? In caelo non fit.*
>
> Come tell me, blessed Claudius, why of all those you killed, both men and women, without a hearing, why you did not hear their side of the case first, before putting them to death? Where do we find that custom? It is not done in heaven.
>
> (*Apocolocyntosis* 10)

Augustus employs a mocking tone when he refers to Claudius as "blessed Claudius." This title opposes the point that Claudius kills people unjustly, a practice "not done in heaven." Thus, this point argues against the deification of Claudius, as his character and behavior is unfitting for how a heavenly god should behave. The unjust nature of Claudius is further

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[125] Seneca, *Apocolocyntosis* 6

[126] Seneca, *Apocolocyntosis* 10

[127] In *Apocolocyntosis* 10, Augustus says that Claudius murdered one of his great-granddaughters by sword and the other by starvation. The one, driven to death by starvation, is Julia Livilla, who was implicated in adultery with Seneca.

evidenced by Suetonius' description of Claudius' behavior in the courts. There, Claudius "showed inconsistency of temper, for he was now careful and shrewd, sometimes hasty and inconsiderate, occasionally silly and like a crazy man."[128] Claudius was thus erratic and lacked moderation in his behavior.

When Claudius at last enters the Underworld, he is excited to reunite with all those, whom he identifies as his friends. He says to them, "Friends everywhere, on my word!"[129] However, one of them in the crowd responds to Claudius, ""What, cruel man? You ask how came we here? Who but you sent us here, you, the murderer of all the friends that ever you had?"[130] This exchange illustrates the lack of basic intelligence that Claudius has; he cannot even distinguish between his friends and enemies. Even if they were his friends, Claudius has clearly turned his back on them and executed them to their deaths. The disillusionment of Claudius further imparts Claudius' unawareness of his vice of murder. Ordering murder was a habit of his that he did not recognize as being wrong and unjust. The use of the word *interfector*, meaning "a person who kills, a killer, murderer, assassin," explicitly classifies Claudius as a murderer.[131] The detachment from reality that Claudius presents is a feature of Menippean satire in that it portrays the fantastical element of Claudius' character. Despite the fact that there is a crowd of people who stand as his

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[128] Suetonius, *De Vita Caesarum*, *Divus Claudius* 15.1

[129] Seneca, *Apocolocyntosis* 13

[130] Seneca, *Apocolocyntosis* 13

[131] The definition of the word *interfector* was found using the Oxford Latin Dictionary under the term *interfector*.

enemies, Claudius mistakenly identifies them as his friends, portraying the imaginary perspective on reality the former emperor had.

The development of Claudius' vice of murder is important in exacting Claudius' punishment in *Apocolocyntosis*. Rather than being elevated as god, the uncovering of his faults, which include murder and unjust behavior as a ruler, in the heavens results in Claudius' ordered descent to the Underworld. In his denunciation of Claudius, Augustus "[proposes] that strong measure be taken against [Claudius], that he be allowed no delay of process, that immediate sentence of banishment be passed on him."[132] Furthermore, when the decision in line with Augustus to cast Claudius away from Olympus, there is no delay.

> *Nec mora, Cyllenius illum collo obtorto trahit ad inferos, [a caelo] "<illuc> unde negant redire quemquam."*
>
> Not a moment was lost: Mercury screwed his neck and haled him to the lower regions, "to that bourne from which they say no traveller returns."
>
> (*Apocolocyntosis* 11)

The punishment for Claudius reflects Seneca's sentence of exile. Claudius is banished from Olympus to a location that is described as one of no return. Seneca, though recalled from exile, owed his recall to Agrippina, not Claudius. There is also description of Seneca as being bitter towards Claudius. Thus, the punishment of banishment to the Underworld serves as a way for Seneca to exact revenge through his satirical work.

As noted previously in this chapter, Seneca alludes to Nero in *Apocolocyntosis*. A more explicit allusion to Nero is also present.

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[132] Seneca, *Apocolocyntosis* 11

> *…Sol aspicit orbem*
> *lucidus, et primos a carcere concitat axes:*
> *talis Caesar adest, talem iam Roma Neronem*
> *aspiciet. Flagrat nitidus fulgore remisso*
> *vultus…*
>
> As the bright sun looks on the world, and speeds along its way
> His rising car from morning's gates: so Caesar doth arise,
> So Nero shows his face to Rome before the people's eyes;
> His bright and shining countenance illumines all the air
>
> (*Apocolocyntosis* 4)

The praise of Nero associates Nero with light [*fulgore*]. This recalls the association of Claudius with light also in *De Consolatione Ad Polybium* when he attributes *fulgor eius* ["his light"] to Claudius.[133] Not only is Nero then the better man to rule than Claudius, but also Nero has assumed association with light and brilliance. *Apocolocyntosis* places Claudius in the darkness of the Underworld forever after death, whereas Nero is irradiating "all the air." In addition in *Ad Polybium* 13.2, Seneca had identified Claudius as *sidus hoc* ["this sun"]. Nero has seized that characterization also. In this section, Nero arises, as the "bright sun looks on the world" [*Sol aspicit orbem/lucidus*]. The shift of such association with light and the sun from Claudius to Nero shows that Seneca was well aware of the fact that Nero would read *Apocolocyntosis*. After praising Claudius as explicitly as he did in *De Consolatione Ad Polybium*, *Apocolocyntosis* served as another way for Seneca to demonstrate and solidify his loyalty to Nero and Agrippina. By directly replacing Nero in Claudius' association with light, Seneca casts away his past commendation of Claudius and places himself with Nero.

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[133] Seneca, *Ad Polybium* 12.3

Furthermore, in *De Clementia*,[134] Seneca entails why Augustus is praised and worshipped as a god.

> *Deum esse non tamquam iussi credimus; bonum fuisse principem Augustum, bene illi parentis nomen convenisse fatemur ob nullam aliam causam, quam quod contumelias quoque suas, quae acerbiores principibus solent esse quam iniuriae, nulla crudelitate exsequebatur, quod probrosis in se dictis adrisit, quod dare illum poenas apparebat*
>
> A god we believe him to be, but not because we are bidden; that Augustus was a good prince, that he well deserved the name of father, this we confess for no other reason than because he did not avenge with cruelty even the personal insults which usually sting a prince more than wrongs, because when he was the victim of lampoons he smiled, because he seemed to suffer punishment when he was exacting it
>
> (*De Clementia* 10.3)

The descriptions of Augustus as a deified emperor differ from the descriptions of Claudius in *Apocolocyntosis*.

Reversal of Claudius as a Stoic god

A crucial theme in *Apocolocyntosis* is Seneca's renunciation of Claudius as a Stoic god. Previously, in *De Consolatione Ad Polybium*, Seneca was able to praise Claudius by engaging Claudius in his Stoic argument. Claudius' depiction in the consolation as being omnipresent and omniscient translated to the portrait of a Stoic god. However, in *Apocolocyntosis*, Seneca argues that Claudius cannot be a god, even less a Stoic god.

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[134] English translations and corresponding Latin texts of Seneca the Younger's *De Clementia* are from the Loeb Classical Library's 1928 edition, with translations by John W. Basore.

> *Modo dic nobis, qualem deum istum fieri velis… Stoicus? Quomodo potest 'rotundus' esse, ut ait Varro,' sine capite, sine praeputio'? Est aliquid in illo Stoici dei, iam video: nec cor nec caput habet.*
>
> Only do say what species of god you want the fellow to be made… A Stoic, then? How can he be globular, as Varro says, without a head or any foreskin? There *is* in him something of the Stoic god, as I can see now: he has neither heart nor head.
>
> (*Apocolocyntosis* 8)

When considering the sort of god that Claudius can be, a Stoic god is included in the options. The recognition that Claudius can be a Stoic god is in a satirical tone. The only thing that qualifies Claudius to be a Stoic god is the fact that he has no heart or head. The absence of these two things highlights Claudius' mental inadequacy and unjust behavior as a ruler. In this way, through *Apocolocyntosis*, Seneca rehashes his argument that Claudius is a Stoic god to deny his previous claim. As Claudius is clearly and repeatedly presented as mentally dull in *Apocolocyntosis*, he can no longer be characterized as being wise and all-knowing, as is necessary for a Stoic god. Furthermore, as Claudius is constantly mocked in *Apocolocyntosis* and portrayed as one with several physical flaws and innate vices, Claudius embodies human flaws, including sickness and anger, and cannot be a Stoic god.

The depiction of Claudius as having no head and heart is also important, when considering the emphasis Seneca places on the two things in his later work *De Clementia*.

> *Tradetur ista animi tui mansuetudo diffundeturque paulatim per omne imperii corpus, et cuncta in similitudinem tuam formabuntur. A capite bona valetudo: inde omnia vegeta sunt atque erecta aut languore demissa, prout animus eorum vivit aut marcet.*
>
> That kindness of your heart will be recounted, will be diffused little by little throughout the whole body of the empire, and all things will be moulded into your likeness. It is from the head that comes the health of the body; it is through it that all the parts are lively and alert or languid and drooping according as their animating spirit has life or withers.
>
> (*De Clementia* 2.1)

De Clementia is directly addressed to Nero "on the subject of mercy, in order to serve in a way the purpose of a mirror, and thus reveal [Nero] to [himself] as one destined to attain to the greatest of all pleasures."[135] The work's aim is to thus to teach Nero about the importance of mercy in order that Nero displays mercy in his reign as emperor. In this quoted section, Seneca emphasizes the importance of the kindness of the emperor, as the whole empire is affected by his kindness. As the head is responsible for the overall health of the body, the kindness of the emperor at the head of the empire is crucial for the wellness of the empire. Thus, if Claudius lacked a head, he first could not provide for the well-being of his body. Furthermore, if he lacked a heart and displayed unjust, heartless behavior as emperor, he lacked the ability to care for his empire. Seneca in this way disqualifies Claudius from being a Stoic god and good emperor.

The Stoic arguments in support of Claudius' existence as a Stoic god in *De Consolatione Ad Polybium* are revoked in *Apocolocyntosis*. If the Stoic god contains no

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[135] Seneca, *De Clementia* 1.1

part other than his mind and yet Claudius is identified as not having a well-functioning mind, then Claudius is disqualified from being a Stoic god.

CONCLUSIONS

Analyses of Seneca's *De Consolatione Ad Polybium* and *Apocolocyntosis* reveal a contrasting portrayal of Emperor Claudius by Seneca. After a few years in exile, Seneca's sentiment towards exile had changed. In *De Consolatione Ad Helviam Matrem*, Seneca states that "the poverty of an exile holds no hardship; for no place of exile is so barren as not to yield ample support for a man."[136] However, in *De Consolatione Ad Polybium*, Seneca describes himself as one "with a mind now weakened and dulled by long rusting,"[137] presumably due to the harsh effects of his exile. Thus, Seneca, affected by his exile in Corsica, wrote a consolation to Polybius to appeal to Emperor Claudius by writing directly to a close adviser of Claudius. In fact, as evidenced by Seneca's own description of Polybius' responsibilities and scope of duty in Claudius' administration, Seneca may have believed that he would have the greatest possibility of attaining Claudius' good favors if he wrote to Claudius' literary adviser, Polybius. Furthermore, Seneca used the point of Stoic philosophy and the Stoic god in the consolation to appear genuine in his characterization of Claudius as a Stoic god.

In contrast, Claudius in Seneca's satirical work *Apocolocyntosis*, following Seneca's return from exile, is portrayed constantly with flaws and branded as an unjust murderer and unworthy emperor. Given that Seneca was recalled on account of Agrippina to assume the role of Nero's tutor and that, furthermore, Claudius had already died when Seneca wrote *Apocolocyntosis*, Seneca no longer felt pressured to gain the favor of

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[136] Seneca, *Ad Helviam Matrem* 10.11

[137] Seneca, *Ad Polybium* 18.9

Claudius as he did before. With Agrippina and his pupil Nero in charge of the throne, Seneca was free from praise of Claudius and would have had personal motivations to write mockingly of Claudius. The distinct genre of Menippean satire granted Seneca the literary liberty to write fantastically of Claudius' post-mortem attempt at apotheosis as well as Claudius' eternal banishment in the Underworld. Furthermore, according to a scholar, the Menippean satire includes a constant theme of ridicule of philosophical doctrines. I believe that Seneca does not try to refute his own Stoic philosophy but, rather, by mocking Claudius as someone cannot be a Stoic god, attempts to repudiate his own claim from exile that Claudius is a Stoic god. The reversal of Claudius as a Stoic god was detailed in Chapter 2 of this paper. Casting aside Claudius' previous association with light in *Ad Polybium*, Seneca elevates Nero, in place of Claudius, as the brilliant figure, to whom all should look towards.

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