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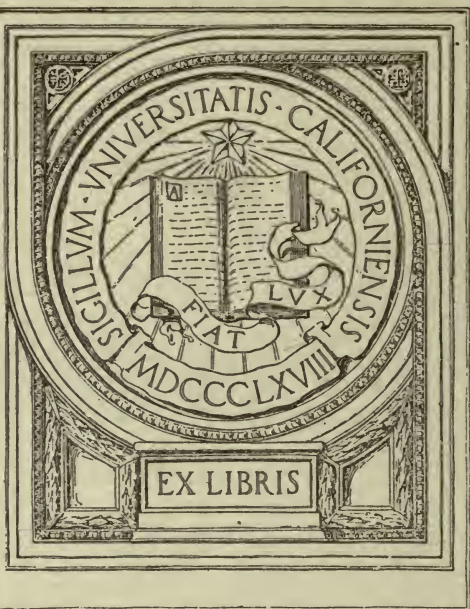


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# SENECA IN CORSICA

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ELI EDWARD BURRISS

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## INTRODUCTION

The inconsistent and tragic career of Nero's mentor will always pique the interest of the student of the temperamental genius. On the score of "temperament" much atrocious viciousness has been sugared over. Inconsistency and lack of moral fibre are often yoke-fellows of brilliant creative ability, but art *per se* is unmoral, and a work of art, the coinage of one's brain, should be judged on its own merits.

Seneca was monstrously inconsistent, guilty of indirection, a lover of the pomp and purple of the court, per-adventure even morally oblique from the view-point of those trained to the home-bred virtues, at least his reputation at Rome was ragged; but we must remember that Seneca never posed as a paragon of virtue. Not infrequently in his "Letters to Lucilius" he confesses past lapses: "non de me nunc tecum loquor, qui multum ab homine tolerabili, nedum a perfecto absum, sed de illo, in quem fortuna ius perdidit:" (Epist. lvii. 3.)

Maugre all this, he was a man of surprisingly fresh intellect, of glittering attainments, a creator of many golden opinions, a master of sparkling rhetoric, and a philosopher and ethical teacher of no mean water—all of which has rightly guaranteed for him a passport to fame.

In this dissertation, I shall limit myself to the period from the time when the poignant jealousy of Valeria Messalina drove both Seneca and Julia Livilla, the lovely, albeit dissolute sister of Caligula, into exile (41 A. D.), until the ambitious Agrippina effected Seneca's recall, after the murder of Messalina (49 A. D.).

While by no means overlooking modern works, I have spared no pains in examining the ancient source material; and wherever possible, I have had Seneca speak for himself.

The principal ancient sources for the exile period are: Seneca's "Ad Polybium De Consolatione," "Ad Helviam De Consolatione," "Epigrammata," many of which were written in Corsica, the "Naturales Quaestiones," (Lib.

iv. a Praef. 13—16), the "History of Rome" of Dio Cassius, the "Annales" of Tacitus, the "De Vita Caesarum," of Suetonius, and the scholion on Juvenal v. 109.

For the account of the island of Corsica, I have made much use of Seneca's own record in the "Ad Helviam" and the "Ad Polybium," and that of Strabo in his "Geography," with historical references culled from Herodotus. Justinian's "Digest" is the source for the Roman law on "relegatio."

Of modern works, Sihler's "Testimonium Animae" treats of the philosopher from the view-point of the scholar in quest of the spiritual elements in classical civilization; the chapters in Dean Farrar's "Seekers After God" are full, but Farrar's tendency is to exculpate Seneca's offences; Holland has one excellent chapter and a part of a second, keeping the general reader, not the scholar in mind. The dissertation of Leopold on the exiles of Cicero, Ovid, and Seneca is often suggestive. Lehmann's volume on "Claudius und Nero" is especially helpful for the historical background. Dr. Jahn's doctorate dissertation is important for evaluating the ancient sources. Most of the other modern works which, for completeness sake, I have listed in my bibliography, treat of Seneca as part of a larger theme—the history, literature, political or social life of the age in which he lived.



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## 1

## SENECA RELEGATED TO CORSICA

Claudius, in the first year of his reign (41 A. D.), recalled Caligula's sisters, Julia Livilla and Agrippina, from an exile into which their insane brother had whimsically sent them (Dio 60.4). Probably toward the close of 41 A. D., he relegated the courtier-philosopher, Lucius Annaeus Seneca, to Corsica, and banished Livilla on a charge of *liaison* with Seneca (ib. 60.8). It may be that Messalina persuaded Claudius to have Julia banished because Julia's husband had been mentioned as a possible successor to Caligula (Jos. Ant. Jud. xix. 4). That Seneca was banished in 41 A. D. is conjecture; and there is reason to believe that his relegation did not take place until the beginning of 42 A. D. Julia Livilla's banishment seems to have taken place toward the end of 41 A. D. (Dio 60.8). Seneca's sentence probably did not follow at once for Seneca's own words: "deprecatus est (Claudius) pro me senatum, etc." (ad Polyb. xiii. 2) suggests proceedings of some length. Feodor Gloecker (Rhein. Mus. 35. p. 485), following this reasoning, places the beginning of the exile early in 42. He considers the scholion to Juvenal sat. v. 109, which, in the commentator, G. Valla, is as follows: "Hic (Seneca), ut inquit Probus, sub Claudio quasi conscius adulteriorum Iuliae Germanici filiae in Corsicam relegatus post triennium revocatus est." That Seneca was in exile only three years is manifestly an error. Gloeckner thinks the error can be explained easily: in the original, which served Valla as a source, or in one of the older manuscripts, Probus, for example, the numeral vii. was found and changed to iii.; and the original reading of the scholion was: "post septuennium."

Of this emendation Jonas (p. 13) writes: "Scio iam diu emendatum esse eum non per annos iii. sed per vii. annos in exilio versatum esse, sed quamquam verisimile esse non nego eodem anno, quo Iulia necata est, Senecam quoque esse expulsum, tamen haudquam Cassius Dio id tam aperte scripsit, quam omnes, qui de exilio Senecae scripserunt, iudicasse videntur."

It would seem that Valerius Messala Barbatus, the father of Messalina, appeared as his accuser, and that



Narcissus, the freedman of Claudius, turned against him at the trial: "Messala (Messallina?) et Narcissus,— propositum meum potuerunt evertere": Seneca's account, which follows, is vague: "cervicem pro fide opposui, nullum verbum mihi, quod non salva bona conscientia procederet, excussum est; pro amicis omnia timui, pro me nihil, nisi ne parum bonus amicus fuisset. non mihi muliebres fluxere lacrimae, non e manibus ullius supplex pependi, nihil indecorum nec bono nec viro feci" (N. Q. Lib. iv. a Praef. 15.16).

Seneca is silent on the charge brought against him, but Dio (60.8) acquaints us with the court gossip that Valeria Messalina, the slatternly wife of Claudius, took umbrage at her niece, Julia Livilla, because Julia neither honored nor flattered her; that Messalina's jealousy was fired by Julia's engaging loveliness and because she found favor in the eyes of Claudius; and that she therefore had her banished for adultery, a charge for which the philosopher was also brought to book. Subsequently, she compassed the hapless girl's death by starvation (Seneca Ludus x. 4).

It seems odd that Seneca, nowhere in his writings, mentions anything damaging against Messalina. Farrar (p. 110) believes that Seneca felt that Messalina had been judged already by a "higher Power" and had received sufficient punishment in her death. Suetonius states that Julia had been put to death on an unsupported charge, having been given no opportunity to defend herself: "—Germanici filiam, crimine incerto nec defensione ulla data occidit,—" (Claud. 29.1). In view of what Seneca writes in ad Polyb. xiii. 2, there seems to be no compelling reason for the assumption that these words, "nec defensione ulla data," may be applied to Seneca as well.

That Claudius submitted tamely to the control of his freedmen and wives we know from Suetonius: "his (i. e. libertis), ut dixi, uxoribusque addictus, non principem (se), sed ministrum egit" (Claud. 29.1) and from Tacitus: "Matios posthac et Vedios et cetera equitum Romanorum praevalida nomina, referre nihil attinuerit, cum Claudius libertos quos rei familiari praefecerat sibi et legibus adaequaverit" (Ann. xii. 60). Claudius

so disrelished the irksome details of government that he was glad enough to turn them over to the court junto, of which Messalina was the leading spirit. "sed et haec et cetera totumque adeo ex parte magna principatum non tam suo quam uxorum libertorumque arbitrio administravit, talis ubique plerumque, qualem esse eum aut expediret illis aut liberet" (Suet. Claud. 25.5). The wishes of the man whom the courtiers considered a tedious old fool inclined rather toward books (cf. *ib.* 41-42) and his favorite dissipations. He wished to be left to his own devices. The appearance of Claudius before the Senate to plead for a change of Seneca's penalty from death to relegation would lead one to suppose that the whole matter had been effected without the cognizance of Claudius, through the machinations of Messalina; and that when he had learned the truth, he tried to undo something of what he had unwittingly done. Dio (60.18) states that Claudius had been unaware of the licentious acts of Messalina for a long time. This is in consonance with the character of the man who: "occisa Messalina, paulo post quam in triclinio decubuit, cur domina non veniret, requisivit" (Suet. Claud. 39.1). We know that Claudius was fearful and suspicious to a degree. On learning of Caligula's death, "exterritus prorepsit ad solarium proximum interque praetenta foribus vela se abdidit—forte gregarius miles, animadversis pedibus, (e) studio sciscitandi quisnam esset, ad (co) gnovit extractumque et prae metu ad genua sibi addidentem imperatorem salutavit" (*ib.* 10.1-2). It was only too patent that Messalina and the freedmen battered on his weaknesses.

Tacitus tells of one Publilius Suius, who, during the principate of Claudius, had been a source of terror and notorious for his venality, and albeit his fortunes had suffered a marked declension, his enemies, desiring to crush him still further, caused a decree to be passed (58 A. D.), reviving the Cincian laws, imposing fines on those who took fees for pleading cases. Suius, relying on his years, upraided Seneca as the foe of all the friends of Claudius: "—Senecam increpans infensum amicis Claudii, sub quo iustissimum exilium pertulisset. simul studiis inertibus et iuvenum imperitiae suetum



livere iis qui vividam et incorruptam eloquentiam tuendis civibus exercerent. se quaestorem Germanici, illum domus eius adulterum fuisse. an gravius aestimandum sponte litigatoris praemium honestae operae adsequi quam corrumpere cubicula principum feminarum?" (Ann. xiii. 42) Suilius, in addition, charges Seneca with amassing a fortune of 300,000,000 sesterces, of having wills made out in his favor, of draining the provinces by his exorbitant usury. He blames Seneca's hatred of Claudius and all associated with him for his own accusation—revenge on Seneca's part for his banishment to Corsica. It was Suilius, who, as a tool of Messalina, brought charges against Valerius Asiaticus and others in the reign of Claudius. As a result of the trial, a part of the property of Suilius was confiscated and he was banished to the Balearic islands (ib. xiiii. 43).

Whether Seneca was really guilty of the charge is a vexed question. The beautiful devotion of his second wife, Paulina, in essaying to share death with her husband when Nero's order came, indicates the probability of Seneca's freedom from domestic baseness: "illa (Paulina) contra sibi quoque destinatam mortem adseverat manumque percussoris exposcit.—post quae eodem ictu brachia ferro exolvunt" (Tac. Ann. xv. 73).

Seneca had been married prior to his exile, for he had lost a son on the twentieth day before his exile (ad Helv. ii. 5), and was survived by another, Marcus (ib. xviii. 4). It seems probable that she was not the Paulina whom Tacitus records as essaying death with Seneca in 65 A. D., for in Epist. 104.2 he speaks of his wife Paulina as being quite young, and the letters were composed in Seneca's later years. There are two possibilities. Either she was dead at the time of the relegation, or she accompanied him to Corsica. The latter is improbable, as Seneca nowhere mentions her in the letter addressed to his mother. And Tacitus would have noted such devotion on the part of his wife, as he did in the case of Artoria Flacilla and Egnatia Maximilla, who accompanied their husbands into exile (Ann. xv. 71).

The fact that Seneca was banished by a decree of the Senate is not sufficient proof of his guilt, for we know that the Senate, under the principate, did not dare to

act counter to the wishes of the emperor. Nor does the fact that Claudius sanctioned the relegation prove Seneca's guilt, for Claudius's eccentric interpretation of justice was notorious (Suet. Claud. 15).

Seneca, in the evening of his years, when the uncertainty of life had forced him to take sanctuary in his inmost self, has these significant observations to make about sins—echoes, doubtless, from his own past: "salutares admonitiones, velut medicamentorum utilium compositiones, litteris mando, esse illas efficaces in meis ulceribus expertus, quae etiam si persanata non sunt, serpere desierunt. rectum iter, quod sero cognovi et lassus errando, aliis monstro" (Epist. viii. 2). Seneca here admits that he has erred in his past life and that he found the "straight path" only as he neared the shadows. Again: "vix effici toto saeculo potest, ut vitia tam longa licentia tumida subigantur—" (Epist. lxxix. 5). In answering the charge of Lucilius, that Seneca was trying to reform him, while unreformed himself, the philosopher says: "non sum tam improbus, ut curationes aeger obeam, sed tamquam in eodem valitudinario iaceam, de communi tecum malo conloquor et remedia communico—clamo mihi ipse: "numera annos tuos, et pudebit te eadem velle, quae volueras puer,—dimitte istas voluptates turbidas, magno luendas: non venturae tantum, sed praeteritae nocent'" (Epist. xxvii. 1.2).

The greatest evan-gels of our day have often been the deepest dyed sinners in earlier days. Ancient preachers, too, have frequently learned their lessons from personal contact with evil. The gentle Persius, to all seeming, a model of perfect Stoic manhood, died in the blossom of youth of a disaffection of the stomach, not usually associated with abstemiousness. It is significant that he had as one of his teachers the shady Remmius Palaemon. Sallust, in a fit of revulsion, when he had become sated with excess, penned his immortal "Catilina." Juvenal's pungent satires do not smack of the *vita umbratilis*. His sermons in verse are all the more valuable because of this. Seneca is of their ilk.

Butler (Post-Augustan Poetry, p. 33) says: "Seneca's banishment on the charge of an intrigue with Livilla is not seriously damaging. The accusation *may* have been



true: it is at least as likely to have been false, for it was instigated by Messalina."

Baring-Gould (vol. ii. p. 482) writes: "—we are perhaps justified in suspecting that the real cause of his removal was that his upright mind and clear sense of the duties of government obtained recognition from Claudius, and that the prince was inclined to follow his advice."

Ball (Essays of Seneca, p. xii.) suggests the possibility of the banishment's being "the result of one of Claudius's ill-directed efforts at old-fashioned Roman severity."

Dill (Roman Society, etc. p. 14) makes no effort to mitigate Seneca's offence: "Prurient slander was rife in those days, and we are not bound to accept all its tales about Seneca. Yet there are passages in his writings which leave the impression, that although he may have cultivated a Pythagorean asceticism in his youth, he did not altogether escape the taint of his time."

Sihler (Testimonium Animae, p. 405) and Holland (Seneca, p. 35) state the charge, without venturing an opinion as to its truth or falsity.

Teuffel (R. L. G. 287.1) suggests the possibility of the banishment's being due to political motives. The upbraiding of Seneca by Suilius, after Claudius's death lends force to this possibility. It was probably true that Seneca, after Gaius's death, emerged from the political eclipse under which he had been forced to hide during the reign of Caligula. He may have joined the rivals of Messalina through hatred of her. (cf. Farrar, p. 78).

We know that Seneca opened not his mouth in self-defense at the trial, fearing to incriminate friends (N. Q. Lib. iv. a Praef. 15).

There was good-will between the house of Germanicus and Seneca: "—Seneca fidus in Agrippinam memoria beneficii et infensus Claudio dolore iniuriae credebatur" (Tac. Ann. xii. 8). Seneca, while in Corsica, addressed an epigram to Crispus Passienus, the husband of Agrippina. (See IV. "The Recall.")

The scholiast on Juvenal iv. 81 tells us that Crispus Passienus died through the wiles of Agrippina when Nero had grown up (c. 55). At that period Seneca wrote the following epigram:



"De amico mortuo  
 Ablatus mihi Crispus est amicus,  
 Pro quo si pretium dari liceret,  
 Nostros dividerem libenter annos.  
 Nunc pars optima me mei reliquit,  
 Crispus, præsidium meum, voluptas,  
 Portus, deliciae: nihil sine illo  
 Laetum mens mea iam putabit esse.  
 Consumptus male debilisque vivam:  
 Plus quam dimidium mei recessit"

(P. L. M. vol. iv. 55).

Seneca, in his later years, fondly recalls Crispus: "Crispus Passienus, quo ego nil cognovi subtilius in omnibus quidem rebus, maxime in distinguendis et curandis vitiis, saepe dicebat adulationi *nos* non claudere ostium sed operire et quidem sic, quemadmodum opponi amicæ solet: quae si impulit, grata est; gratior, si effregit" (N. Q. Lib. iv. a Praef. 6). See also Sen. de Benef. 1.15.5).

There seems small reason to doubt Seneca's innocence of the charge. The purity of his home relations as recorded in other situations; the servility of the Senate which decreed his banishment; the absurdity of Claudius's efforts at dispensing justice; the fact that Messalina was the well-spring of the charge; the possibility of the exile's being a political move—all point in this direction. Moreover, the charge is recorded in Dio, whose *penchant* for a good story led to much garbling of the truth. (see Jahn, p. 33) Suilius' attack on Seneca, as recorded in Tacitus, loses some of its potency when we remember that he had been a tool of the trollop, Messalina, during Claudius's reign. Against this we must weigh the persistence of the charge, the silence of Seneca (albeit his loyalty to Germanicus's family may have been the occasion for this), and his own post-exilian confessions of past sins, in the letters addressed to Lucilius.

## 2

## SENECA IN EXILE

Seneca (ad Helv. x. 2) asserts that banishment has deprived him of his occupations. He means here his "wonted" occupations, for we know that he addressed himself zealously at first to a practical Stoicism (ib. pass.); that he was broad awake to the peculiarities of the language and customs of the Corsicans (ib. vii. 9); that he composed three letters, two of which have been preserved: "Ad Helviam Matrem De Consolatione," "Ad Polybium De Consolatione;" a third, addressed to Messalina and the imperial freedmen, a performance of which he was subsequently ashamed (Dio 60.10); and a series of epigrams (P. L. M. vol. iv. 1-73), and Teuffel thinks also a part of his tragedies (R. L. G. 288.2). Butler (p. 43) professes that it is a mystery to him why the view should be held so widely that Seneca composed his tragedies in Corsica. He undoubtedly also wrote letters to his brother, Novatus, after his adoption by Gallio (Jonas, p. 33).

He had a free mind and leisure for study and verse writing (Baehrens P. L. M. vol. iv. p. 35).

"remotus inter Corsici rupes maris,  
ubi liber animus et sui iuris mihi  
semper vacabat studia recolenti mea."

(Octavia 382 ff Leo)

His interest in natural science was great: "proinde, dum oculi mei ab illo spectaculo, cuius insatiabiles sunt, non abucantur, dum mihi solem lunamque intueri liceat, dum ceteris inhaerere sideribus, dum ortus eorum occasusque et intervalla et causas investigare vel ocius meandi vel tardius,—dum animum ad cognatarum rerum conspectum tendentem in sublimi semper habeam: quantum refert mea, quid calcem?" (Ad Helv. viii. 6).

"laetum et alacrem velut optimis rebus. sunt enim optimae, quoniam animus omnis occupationis expers operibus suis vacat et modo se levioribus studiis oblectat, modo ad considerandam suam universique naturam veri avidus insurgit" (ad Helv. xx. 1.2).

He did much reading. In seeking material with which to console his mother he says: "praeterea cum omnia clarissimorum ingeniorum monimenta ad compescendos moderandosque luctus composita evolverem, non inveniebam exemplum eius, qui consolatus suos esset, cum ipse ab illis comploraretur:" (ad Helv. i. 1. 2).

Much of his time was used in his efforts to secure a recall. (See chapter "The Recall.")

His resentment of the hostile thrusts of a certain Maximus found expression in several bitter epigrams:

"Parcendum misero

Occisum iugulum quisquis scrutare inimicus,

Tu miserum necdum me satis esse putas?

Desere confossum! victori vulnus iniquo

Mortiferum impressit mortua saepe manus"

(P. L. M. vol. iv. 6).

"Ad malivolum

Invisus tibi sum: peream si, Maxime, miror:

Odi te et, si vis, accipe cur faciam.

Famam temptasti nostram sermone maligno

Laedere fellitis, invidiose, iocis.

Contra rem nuper pugnasti, livide, parvam:

Tu tamen in magna te nocuisse putas.

Haec peream nisi sunt animi *in* te, Maxime, causae:

Odi, nec mentem res magis ulla iuvat,

Inque vicem ut facias oro pereoque timore,

Ne minus invisus sim tibi quam videor"

(P. L. M. vol. iv. 26).

No sooner had Seneca arrived at Corsica than his thoughts began to turn homeward. His first letter was a "consolatio" addressed to his mother, apparently intended to be circulated and read at Rome. It was written several months after his arrival in Corsica (cf. "modo modo," ii. 5; "recens vulnus," iii. 1). The letter is valuable as an autobiographical document, especially on account of the light it sheds on the earlier exile period, while Seneca was still practicing Stoicism. Many considerations urged Seneca to write the letter: "primum videbar depositurus omnia incommoda, cum lacrimas



tuas,—absterissem; deinde plus habiturum me auctoritatis non dubitabam ad excitandam te, si prior ipse consurrexissem; praeterea timebam, ne a me victa fortuna aliquem meorum vinceret:" (ad Helv. i. 1).

In the opening lines of the "ad Helviam," Seneca tells his mother that he has often felt an impulse to write a "consolatio," but held back. It may be that he is here trying to cloak his real grief. He describes himself as experiencing mere "incommoda," but goes on to say: "itaque utcumque conabar manu super piagam meam inposita ad obliganda vulnera vestra reptare" (ib. i. 1). His use of the verb "consurrexissem" implies that he had something from which to arouse himself. So while the letter as a whole is permeated with Stoic sentiments, here and there his partially suppressed feelings crop to the surface.

Seneca dispells all fears that his mother may have as to his being wretched in exile: "vincam autem (i. e. dolorem tuum) puto, primum si ostendero nihil me pati, propter quod ipse dici possim miser,—" (ib. iv. 1).

"Hoc prius adgrediar,—nihil mihi mali esse" (ib. iv. 2).

Seneca reiterates the assurance that his exile is not wretched: "indico me non esse miserum. adiciam, quo securior sis, ne fieri quidem me posse miserum" (ad Helv. iv. 3).

"nam id quidem si profiteri possem, non tantum negarem miserum esse me, sed omnium fortunatissimum et in vicinum deo perductum praedicarem:" (ib. v. 2).

The lot of the exile under Claudius was better than under Gaius, if we may credit what Seneca says of Claudius in "ad Polyb. xiii.4": "o felicem clementiam tuam, Caesar, quae efficit, ut quietiorem sub te agant vitam exules, quam nuper sub Gaio egere principes! non trepidant nec per singulas horas gladium expectant nec ad omnem navium conspectum pavent; per te habent ut fortunae saevientis modum ita spem quoque melioris eiusdem ac praesentis quietem." Seneca intended that these lines should be read by Claudius.

Seneca analyses exile. It is a change of place, attended with certain inconveniences: "paupertas, ignominia, contemptus" (ib. vi. 1). Men say: "'Carere patria intolerabile est.'" Yet many people in Rome, which has scarce

shelter for all, are without a *patria*. They hail from all quarters with varying purposes: "alios adduxit ambitio, alios necessitas officii publici, alios inposita legatio, alios luxuria—alios liberalium studiorum cupiditas, alios spectacula; quosdam traxit amicitia,—quidam venalem formam attulerunt, quidam venalem eloquentiam—:" (ib. vi. 2)—all of them setting a high price on their virtues and vices.

In his reminiscent period, Seneca classified exile as one of the *indifferentia*: "tamquam indifferentia esse dico, id est nec bona nec mala, morbum, dolorem, paupertatem, exilium, mortem" (Epist. lxxxii. 10). Exile, like the other *indifferentia* is not glorious; but nothing can be glorious apart from them. We do not laud poverty, but the man: "*quem paupertas non summittit nec incurvat.*" Just so: "laudatur non exilium (sed ille qui in exilium) iit quam misisset" (ib. 11). Even desert places have some persons there *animi causa*.

Seneca tells us how exile should be borne, suggestions which do not conform to his own subsequent actions: "alacres itaque et erecti, quocumque res tulerit, intrepido gradu properemus, emetiamur quascumque terras: nullum inveniri exilium intra mundum *potest; nihil enim, quod intra mundum est, alienum homini est*" (ad Helv. viii. 5). (cf. also the lines quoted above: "dum oculi mei—" (ib. viii. 6).

Other objections raised against exile are that the land is unproductive, has no navigable rivers, has scarce enough products for the sustenance of the inhabitants, produces no valuable stone, no gold nor silver. Seneca's retort is: "angustus animus est, quem terrena delectant:" —(ad Helv. ix. 2).

No exile is grievous in which the banished has as companions: "iustitia — continentia — prudentia, pietas, omnium officiorum recte dispensandorum ratio, humanorum divinorumque scientia (ib. ix. 3), even though poverty (ib. x. 11), and a lack of fine raiment and a home are concomitants (ib. xi. 1).

He tells how Marcellus comported himself in exile at Mytilene, engaged in liberal studies, and how that Brutus, who visited him there, felt, on leaving, that his own home-going was more like exile than the real exile of



Marcellus, and how the great Julius avoided Mytilene lest he be compelled to witness the happiness of Marcellus (ib. ix. 4-7).

To the suggestion that "ignominia" attends exile, Seneca, with his usual verbal felicity, answers: "exilium saepe contemptione omni carere: si magnus vir cecidit, magnus iacuit, non magis illum contemni, quam aedium sacrarum ruinae calcantur, quas religiosi aequae ac stantis adorant" (ib. xiii. 8).

His mother should comfort herself on having her other sons, Novatus and Mela: "respice fratres meos, quibus salvus fas tibi non est accusare fortunam" (ib. xviii. 1). She has also "Marcum blandissimum puerum, ad cuius conspectum nulla potest durare tristitia;" (ib. xviii. 4). This Marcus was either Seneca's son, or Marcus Lucanus, the son of Seneca's younger brother, Mela. Seneca had lost a son a short time before his relegation: "intra vicesimum diem, quam filium meum in manibus et in oculis tuis mortuum funeraveras, raptum me audisti:" (ad Helv. ii. 5). He points to Novatilla, the daughter of Novatus, as an additional source of comfort: "tene in gremio—Novatillam,—" (ib. xviii.7). As a parting consolation, he urges his mother: "qualem me cogites accipe: laetum et alacrem velut optimis rebus" (ad Helv. xx. 1).

I have allocated to a separate chapter ("The Recall.") Seneca's bootless efforts to secure a recall through the flattery of Polybius and Claudius. In the "ad Polybium" is revealed a state of soul at antipodes to that of the "ad Helviam," and the character of the exile as revealed in the former is none too noble.

"nam si quicquam tristitia profecturi sumus, non recuso quicquid lacrimarum fortunae meae superfuit tuae fundere; inveniam etiam nunc per hos exhaustos iam fletibus domesticis oculos quod effluat, si modo id tibi futurum bono est" (ad Polyb. ii. 1).

That Seneca's exile was not borne as lightly as he would have his mother believe in the "ad Helviam" is further evidenced by two epigrams of the exile period. In the one he likens his own suffering to that of his native Corduba; in the other he pours out his anguish in bitterness against Corsica.

"De se ad patriam

Corduba, solve comas et tristes indue vultus,  
 Inlacrimans cineri munera mitte meo.  
 Nunc longinqua tuum deplora, Corduba, vatem,  
 Corduba non alio tempore maesta magis:  
 Tempore non illo, quo versis viribus orbis  
 Incubuit belli tota ruina tibi,  
 Cum geminis oppressa malis utrimque peribas  
 Et tibi Pompeius, Caesar et hostis erat;  
 Tempore non illo, quo ter tibi funera centum  
 Heu nox una dedit, quae tibi summa fuit;  
 Non, Lusitanus quateret cum moenia latro,  
 Figeret et portas lancea torta tuas.  
 Ille tuus quondam magnus, tua gloria, civis  
 Infigor scopulo: Corduba, solve comas!  
 Set gratare tibi, quod te natura supremo  
 Addidit Oceano: tardius ista doles!"

(P. L. M. vol. iv. 19).

Jonas (p. 29) thinks that this epigram was written immediately after his arrival at Corsica. This seems hardly possible in view of the Stoical attitude of the "ad Helviam," written soon after his arrival at the island. (See Sihler: T. A. pp. 405-7).

"Corsica terribilis, cum primum incanduit aestas,  
 Saevior, ostendit cum ferus ora Canis:  
 Parce relegatis, hoc est, iam parce solutis:  
 Vivorum cineri sit tua terra levis!"

(P. L. M. vol. iv. 2).

That Seneca projected a trip to Athens we learn from the scholiast on Juvenal v. 109: "revocatus—etsi magno desiderio Athenas contenderet, ab Agrippina tamen erudiendo Neroni in palatium adductus."

Dio (61.10) tells us that Seneca, not content with a *liaison* with Julia, made tender of his affection to Agrippina. We may question these spittings of the scandal-monger.

While Seneca was in exile, he wavered as to whether, in case of recall, he should return to public life or not:

"alios praetura sequatur—  
 alios gloria magna iuvet" (P. L. M. vol. iv. 5).

“Ingentes dominos et famae nomina clarae  
 Inlustrique graves nobilitate domos  
 Devita et longe tutus cole;—  
 ex alto magna ruina venit” (ib. 17).

“Vive et amicitias omnes fuge:  
 turba cavenda simul” (ib. 18).

“Castra alios operosa vocent sellæque curlues  
 Et quicquid vana gaudia mente movet.  
 Pars ego sim plebis, nullo conspectus honore,  
 Dum vivam, dominus temporis ipse mei” (ib. 43).

#### THE EPIGRAMMATA

While it is not my purpose to discuss at length the authenticity of the epigrams attributed to Seneca (P. L. M. vol. iv. 1-73), the subject cannot be pretermitted entirely. The probability of Seneca's authorship is handled adequately, I feel, in Prof. Harrington's paper (T. A. P. A. vol. xlvi. 1915), and nothing would be gained by traversing the same field again. H. E. Butler, in his "Post-Augustan Poetry," has treated the "epigrammata" at some length. His conclusion is: "We can claim no certainty for the view that all these poems are by Seneca, but there is a general resemblance of style throughout, and probability points to the whole collection being by the same author" (p. 37). See also: Baehrens, P. L. M. vol. iv. pp. 34-36). The epigrams which bear the *cachet* of the exile are: 1, 2, 5, 15, 17, 19, 22, 25, 26, 29-36, 43, 51. Baehrens' list is as follows: 1-3, 6-36, 51, 52, 57, 71-73.

I have already quoted excerpts from the epigrams bearing on the exile period, and shall here give a *precis* of a few not mentioned elsewhere, or briefly alluded to.

The first epigram is in harmony with the mood one might naturally look for in one in exile, although it cannot be, with certainty, ascribed to the exile years. 'Corroding time feeds on everything; nothing is permitted to exist for a long time; rivers, the sea, mountains pass away. Even the sky and earth will suddenly be consumed in fire.'



The second and third epigrams "de Corsica," obviously penned in exile, are bitter execrations of his place of exile. They were written after his Stoic ardor had been dampened by *ennui* and yearning for the home-city.

The fifth, "De quieta vita," appeals to Phoebus to ward off riches. Seneca bids others seek praetorships, renown, commands of fleets, camps, a province. He will be content with poverty and verse. No day shall be without his brother. His wish is that his two brothers may survive him. (Seneca had held the quaestorship before his exile).

The sixth, "Parcendum misero," is an appeal to a personal enemy to have done with his mordant attacks upon one already buried.

The fifteenth, "Ad amicum optimum," is addressed to Crispus, flattering him, with a view to using his influence to secure a recall. (See chapter "The Recall.")

In the seventeenth and eighteenth, Seneca counsels the shunning of friendship with kings, mighty masters, and persons of note. The words "Maximus hic scopulus" and the general nature of the two poems point to the exile period.

I have already quoted the nineteenth, in which he compares his own suffering to that experienced by his own native Corduba.

Verses excoriating Seneca give occasion for the twenty-second epigram "In eum qui maligne iocatur." Seneca says that his defamer's verses are filled with deadly poison, but that the heart of the writer is even blacker than his verses. It is no jest to be "malignus."

The longest of the epigrams, the twenty-fifth, "De spe," reads like practise verse of the exile, playing about the hope of his own recall, without, however, specifically mentioning it.

The twenty-sixth is another rejoinder "Ad malivolum."

Epigrams twenty-nine to thirty-six, I shall discuss in the chapter on "The Recall."

Epigram forty-three previsions his home-going. 'He will seek the country, shun warfare, the "sellae curules." He will be one of the people, seeking no honor, a master of his own time.'

In the fifty-first, "De fratris filio parvulo," he voices

the wish that his brothers may survive him, and may feel no grief for him except for his death; that they may rival one another in affection, and that the little Marcus may emulate his uncles in eloquence. Palpably, the brothers are Mela and Novatus, and Marcus the son of the philosopher himself.

A minor problem in connection with Seneca's exile is whether Caesennius (Caesonius) Maximus accompanied the philosopher into exile. The passage in Martial from which the conjecture is made is as follows:

"Maximus ille tuus, Ovidi, Caesonius hic est,  
 cuius adhuc vultum vivida cera tenet.  
 hunc Nero damnavit: sed tu damnare Neronem  
 ausus es et profugi, non tua, fata sequi:  
 aequora per Scyllae magnus comes exulis isti,  
 qui modo nolueras consulis ire comes.  
 Si victura meis mandantur nomina chartis  
 et fas est cineri me superesse meo:  
 audiet hoc praesens, venturaque turba fuisse  
 illi te, Senecae quod fuit ille suo" (vii. xlv.)

Compare also:

"Facundi Senecae potens amicus,  
 caro proximus aut prior Sereno,  
 hic est Maximus ille, quem frequenti  
 felix littera pagina salutat" (ib. xlv.)

From these epigrams we gather that Caesonius was not only a very dear friend of Seneca, but that very many letters were written to him, which, when published, attracted much notice. (See Leopold p. 140).

What Martial says about the intimacy between Seneca and Caesonius is corroborated by Tacitus, who says that Caesonius was kept from Italy as being a "consciis" of the Pisonian conspiracy, and by Seneca himself (Epist. 87.2) who tells of a journey taken by him with a "Maximum suum" (cf. also the epigrams on Caesonius).

Teuffel (R. L. G. 287.1) thinks it is possible that Caesonius accompanied Seneca to Corsica. Lehmann (p. 156) assumes that it is true: "Caesonius Maximus begleitete ihn an den Schauplatz seines Elendes und blieb dort sein treuer Gefährte." Friedländer (on Martial, vii. 44) disagrees with Teuffel and considers it very unlikely, as does Schanz (R. L. G. 452).



## 3

## THE TECHNICAL NATURE OF SENECA'S EXILE

Seneca's exile, like that of Ovid, was technically "relegatio," that is, "deportatio ad insulam," without the loss of civil rights, and with or without the loss of property. That Seneca's exile was "relegatio" is certain. He himself says: "intellego me non opes—perdidisse" (ad Helv. x. 2). The scholiast on Juvenal v. 109 uses the verb "relegatus—est." However, whether Seneca's property was confiscated or not, as a result of relegation, is not clear. The words of Seneca, quoted above, would lead one to suppose that he had retained his property; moreover, elsewhere (ad Helv. xii. 4), he says: "me quidem, quotiens ad antiqua exempla respexi, paupertatis uti solaciis pudet, quoniam quidem eo temporum luxuria prolapsa est, ut maius viaticum exulum sit, quam olim patrimonium principum fuit." This may have been written in the hope that it reach the eyes of the Emperor. Farrar (p. 84) thinks that his property was not confiscated; Leopold (pp. 145-7) that it was. Seneca's exile was at least accompanied with the loss of "pecunia." "omnia illa, quae in me indulgentissime conferebat, pecuniam, honores, gratiam, eo loco posui, unde posset sine motu meo repetere.—itaque abstulit illa, non avolsit" (ad Helv. v. 4).

Note also the lines: "nullum ergo paupertas exulis incommodum habet; nullum enim tam inops exilium est, quod non alendo homini abunde fertile sit" (ib. x. 11).

The decree against Seneca was passed by the Senate, and at first involved the death penalty; but through the offices of Claudius it was changed to relegation to Corsica: "deprecatus (Claudius) est pro me senatum et vitam mihi non tantum dedit sed etiam petiit" (ad Polyb. xiii. 2). Claudius may have changed the sentence, because of his *penchant* for literature; or Agrippina or one of the freedmen may have interceded for him (Farrar p. 84).

Ovid (Trist. v. 11) describes himself as "relegatus." He uses language similar to that of Seneca: "nec vitam, nec opes, nec ius mihi civis ademit." (cf. also ad Helv. x. 2).



The nature of "relgatio" is made clear in Justinian, quoting Marcianus: "Relegati in insulam in potestate sua liberos retinent, quia et alia omnia iura sua retinent: tantum enim insula eis egredi non licet. et bona quoque sua omnia retinent praeter ea, si qua eis adempta sunt: nam eorum qui in perpetuum exilium dati sunt vel relegati, potest quis sententia partem bonorum adimere" (Digesta xxxviii. XXII. 4 p. 859, vol. ii. Mommsen).

Again, quoting Ulpianus: "et multum interest inter relegationem et deportationem: nam deportatio et civitatem et bona adimit, relegatio utrumque conservat, nisi bona publicentur" (ib. 14, p. 861).

## 4

## CORSICA

It is not within the purview of this work to descant on the history of Corsica. What Seneca, however, during his exile, and the contemporary of his boyhood, the geographer, Strabo, have to say of the island is pat to the subject.

In determining the earliest peoples we are handicapped because we have no inscriptional evidence until the middle ages (Pigorini *Bullet. di. paletnol. ital.* 1877, 178-185).

Huelsen (Pauly-Wissowa: Corsica) thinks that the original inhabitants were of Iberian stock. Gaius Julius Solinus (*Collectanea Rerum Memorabilium*, 3, p. 49, Mommsen), whose source, according to Huelsen, may be Suetonius, ascribes the earliest inhabitants to the Ligurians. This seems probable, and gives point to the story of the Ligurian woman, named Corsa, who noted that a bull in the herd under her care on the coast was accustomed to swim over the sea, and return with an increase of flesh. She followed it the next time it left the herd, and arrived in a skiff at the island, to which the bull had swum. The Ligurians then went over to the island, naming it Corsica after her (Sallust: *Historiarum Fragmenta Lib. ii.* Kritzius, p. 129, note). The story was invented, of course, to explain the name and the people. The Greeks called the island Cynos.

Seneca informs us that the Ligurians came to the

islands after the Phocaeans left for Massilia. He admits that knowledge of the earliest inhabitants is clouded by antiquity. I quote his own words: *haec ipsa insula saepe iam cultores mutavit. ut antiquiora, quae vetustas obduxit, transeam, Phocide relicta Graii, qui nunc Massiliam incolunt, prius in hac insula conederunt, ex qua quid eos fugaverit, incertum est.—transierunt deinde Ligures in eam, transierunt et Hispani,—* (ad Helv. vii. 8.9). Note: "Corsica Phocaico tellus habitata colono" (P. L. M. vol. iv. 2).

The Phocaeans visited the island on two occasions. On their first visit, they founded the city of Alalia (564 B. C.), and twenty years afterward, in consequence of the Chians' refusal to sell them the Cenyssae islands, set out for Cynrus (Corsica). Half their number defected, but the remainder lived in Corsica for five years, until the Carthaginians and Etruscans made common cause against them, when they sailed away, first to Rhegium (Herod. 1.165-7), and then to Hyela in Oenotria.

Strabo, quoting Antiochus, states that when Harpagus, the general of Cyrus, took Phocaea, those who could, sailed away, first to Corsica, then to Massilia, but being driven from there, founded Elea (or Velia, founded 532 B. C., mentioned by Horace Epist. 1 xv. 1).

We are left in no uncertainty as to the character of the natives. The mountain dwellers, according to Strabo (224.7), were more savage than beasts. Their truculence was remarked when they appeared in Rome as slaves. They made their livelihood by brigandage. Strabo tries to soften the picture by mentioning some habitable cities. Seneca strengthens the picture: "quid ad homines inmansuetius?" (ad Helv. vi. 5).

The people spoke a *patois*, as we should naturally suspect where the population was changing all the time. Seneca, a Spaniard by birth, noted Spanish elements in it, and remarked Spanish dress and rites among his neighbors: "—transierunt et Hispani, quod ex similitudine ritus apparet: eadem enim tegmenta capitum idemque genus calciamenti quod Cantabris est, et verba quaedam; nam totus sermo conversatione Graecorum Ligurumque a patrio descivit" (ad Helv. vii. 9).

Seneca's curiosity during the earlier days of the exile,



was aroused by the novelty of the language; but this curiosity had already become moribund at the time of the writing of the "ad Polybium": "*—cogita,—quam non facile latina ei homini verba succurrant, quem barbarorum inconditus et barbaris quoque humanioribus gravis fremitus circumsonat*" (ad Polyb. xviii. 9).

Foreign peoples had some reason for their reluctance to linger at Corsica. The Phocaeans, to be sure, had good reason to leave, albeit they had a nominal victory over the Carthago-Etruscan coalition. Seneca expresses his uncertainty as to why they left: "*incertum est, utrum caeli gravitas an praepotentis Italiae conspectus an natura inportuosi maris; nam in causa non fuisse feritatem accolarum eo apparet, quod maxime tunc trucibus et inconditis Galliae populis se interposuerunt*" (ad Helv. vii. 8).

As in our day, so in Seneca's, cattle raising was the occupation of the people, while husbandry was neglected. Seneca, whose statements of the productivity of the island do not square with those who Pliny (N. H. 16 71), places Corsica cheek-by-jowl with Sciathus, Seriphus, and Gyarus as "*deserta loca et asperrimas insulas,—quid tam nudum inveniri potest, quid tam abruptum undique quam hoc saxum? quid ad copias respicienti ieiunius?*" (ad Helv. vi. 4.5).

"*at non est haec terra frugiferarum aut laetarum arborum ferax; non magnis nec navigalibus fluminum alveis inrigatur; nihil gignit, quod aliae gentes petant, vix ad tutelam incolentium fertilis;*" (ad Helv. ix. 1).

"*Barbara praeruptis inclusa est Corsica saxis,*

*Horrida, desertis undique vasta locis.*

*Non poma autumnus, segetes non educat aestas*

*Canaque Palladio munere bruma caret.*

*Imbriferarum nullo ver est laetabile fetu*

*Nullaque in infausto nascitur horba solo.*

*Non panis, non haustus aquae, non ultimus ignis:*

*Hic sola haec duo sunt, exul et exilium"*

(P. L. M. vol. iv. 3).

Elsewhere he speaks of Corsica as an: "*aridum et spinosum saxum*" (ad Helv. vii. 9). "*quid ad ipsum loci situm horridius? quid ad caeli naturam intemperantius?*"



(ad Helv. vi. 5). We must remember that these words were colored by the tedium of exile.

## 5

## THE RECALL

After a few months of Stoic fortitude, Seneca began to play lick-spittle to the powerful Polybius to effect his recall. Of Polybius, Suetonius (Claud. 28) writes: "ac super hos Polybium ab studiis, qui saepe inter duos consules ambulabat;" He was, therefore, a fitting subject for Seneca's flatteries, intended ultimately to reach the eyes of Caesar also. Canon Farrar (p. 103) thinks that it is very improbable that Seneca intended the letter (ad Polybium) to be published.

Dio (60.10) mentions a letter, sent from Corsica, cringing to Messalina and the freedmen of Claudius. Seneca was latterly so ashamed of it that he suppressed it. Jonas (De Ordine Librorum L. Annaei Senecae Philosophi p. 33) has this to say of the passage in Dio: "Saepius iam viri docti inter se disputaverunt, utrum Cassius Dio hic ad consolationem ad Polybium datam spectaverit, an Seneca plures libellos supplices, ut ita dicam, ad Claudii libertos ex Corsica miserit, neque ego rem diiudicare audeo. Nam initio consolationis ad Polybium scriptæ amisso utrum in ea Messalinam quoque et praeter Polybium alios libertos Claudii adulatus sit necne, haud facile decernas. Quod autem Seneca scriptum a Dione commemoratum, ut adulationis suæ documenta exstingueret, ipse delevisse dicitur, salva Dionis fide ut unum exemplar commune excidium effugeret fieri potuit. Sed quod potuit fieri, id factum esse necesse non est. Itaque satis habeo exposuisse, quam argutiores diiudicent."

The adulatory passages in the "ad Polybium" are many. I shall note the more striking. It is for the death of Polybius's brother that Seneca would console him: "luget Polybius, et in uno fratre quid de reliquis possit metuere admonitus etiam de ipsis doloris sui solaciis timet. facinus indignum! luget Polybius et aliquid propitio dolet Caesare! hoc sine dubio, impotens fortuna, captasti, ut ostenderes neminem contra te ne a Caesare quidem posse defendi" (ad Polyb. iii. 5).

“non licet tibi, inquam, flere: ut multos flentes audire possis, ut periclitantium et ad misericordiam mitissimi Cæsaris pervenire cupientium *lacrimas siccare*, lacrimæ tibi tuæ adsiccandæ sunt” (ib. vi. 5).

“cum voles omnium rerum oblivisci, Caesarem cogita” (ib. vii. 1).

“fas tibi non est salvo Caesare de fortuna queri: hoc incolumni salvi tibi sunt tui, nihil perdidisti, non tantum siccus oculos tuos esse sed etiam laetos oportet;—” (ib. vii. 4).

When Polybius returns home, his sadness will prey upon him, but “—quam diu numen tuum (i. e. Claudium) intueberis, nullum illa ad te inveniet accessum, omnia in te Caesar tenebit;—” (ib. viii. 1). He reaches the nadir of self-abasement in the lines: “attolle te et quotiens lacrimae suboriuntur oculis tuis, totiens illos in Caesarem derige: siccabuntur maximi et clarissimi conspectu numinis;—” (ib. xii. 3).

Seneca’s mention of Claudius’s “tenacissima memoria” (ib. xiv. 1) might lead one to suppose that Seneca wrote the letter to jest at the Emperor’s expense; but the general tone of the letter is against this interpretation.

Seneca hopes to be a spectator of the triumph of Claudius: “quorum me quoque spectatorem futurum, quae ex virtutibus eius primum optinet locum, promittit clementia. nec enim sic me deiecit, ut nollet erigere, immo ne deiecit quidem sed impulsus a fortuna et cadentem sustinuit et in praeceps euntem leniter divinae manus usus moderatione deposuit:” (ad Polyb. xiii. 2). We know from Suetonius that Claudius allowed certain exiles to return to Rome for the triumph: “ad cuius spectaculum commeare in urbem—etiam exulibus quibusdam;—” (Claud. 17.3).

Seneca has no fear that Claudius’s compassion will pass him by:—“quae cum ex ipso angulo, in quo ego defixus sum, complures multorum iam annorum ruina obrutos effoderit et in lucem reduxerit, non vereor ne me unum transeat” (ad Polyb. xiii. 3).

Lehmann (Claudius und Nero, p. 10) sets the date of the “ad Polybium” toward the close of 43 A. D. or the beginning of 44 A. D., on the ground that Seneca hoped to see the triumph for the military victories in Britain:



"hic Germaniam pacet, Britanniam aperiat, et patrios triumphos ducat et novos:" (ad Polyb. xiii. 2). It is difficult to quadrature this conclusion with the lines occurring at the end of the letter: "Haec, utcumque potui, longo iam situ obsoleto et hebetato animo composui" (ad Polyb. xviii. 9). The exile may have seemed long to Seneca after so short a time, but it may be rather that Seneca composed the earlier part of the letter in 43 A. D., and added the conclusion later. Jonas (p. 31) says of this: "Neque vero illa Senecae verba ad initium bellorum cum Germanis Britannisque gestorum referri necesse est. Nam quod optat Seneca, ut Claudius 'Germaniam pacet—novos,' hoc unum probat eo tempore, quo haec scripta sunt, nondum ista bella finita fuisse neque triumphos actos esse. Atqui triumphavit Claudius anno quadragesimo quarto p. Chr. n. hoc est tribus fere annis post Senecam in exilium eiectum. Quare omnia plena atque dilucida mihi esse videntur. Quibus temporibus aptum est etiam, quod in fine consolationis eam se 'longo iam situ etc.' composuisse ait."

Contrast these quotations with the "take-off" of Claudius by Seneca in the "Ludus," written after Claudius's death. The emperor's arrival into Heaven is announced: "Nuntiatur Iovi venisse quendam bonæ staturæ, bene canum; nescio quid illum minari, adsidue enim caput movere; pedem dextrum trahere. Quaesisse se, cuius nationis esset: respondisse nescio quid perturbato sono et voce confusa; non intellegere se linguam eius, nec Graecum esse nec Romanum nec ullius gentis notæ" (Apocolocyntosis v. 2).

Augustus addresses Claudius and the gods thus: "Tu Messalinam,—occidisti.—C. Cæsarem non desiit mortuum persequi. Occiderat ille socerum: hic et generum. Gaius Crassi filium vetuit Magnum vocari: hic nomen illi redditit, caput tulit.—Hunc nunc deum facere vultis? Videte corpus eius dis iratis natum" (ib. xi. 1.2.3).

Seneca's flatteries of Polybius are concerned mainly with his literary gifts:

"quam diu fuerit ullus litteris honor, quam diu steterit aut Latinae linguae potentia aut Graecae gratia, vigebit cum maximis viris, quorum se ingeniis vel contulit vel, si hoc verecundia eius recusat, applicuit" (ad Polyb. ii. 6).



He flatters Polybius by touching upon his influence with the Emperor: "numquam ille (i. e. Polybi frater) te fratrem ulli minatus est; ad exemplum se modestiæ tuæ formaverat cogitabatque, quantum tu et ornamentum tuorum esse et onus: suffecit ille huic sarcinae" (ib. iii. 2).

"neminem esse toto orbe terrarum, qui delectetur lacrimis tuis, audacter dixerim" (ib. v. 2.)

"magnam tibi personam hominum consensus imposuit" (ib. vi. 1).

"in multa luce fortuna te posuit;" (ib. vi. 2).

"olim te in altiorem ordinem et amor Caesaris extulit et tua studia eduxerunt. nihil te plebeium decet, nihil humile" (ib. vi. 2).

"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" (ib. vi. 5).

"tunc Homerus et Vergilius tam bene de humano genere meriti, quam tu et de illis et de omnibus meruisti, quos pluribus notos esse voluisti quam scripserant, multum tecum morentur:" (ib. viii. 2).

Seneca requests Polybius to compile an account of Caesar's deeds, that they may be read by all future ages. He suggests the writing, in Polybius's elegant style, of a version of the fables of Aesop (ib. viii. 2.3).

Polybius intrigued with the Empress Messalina, who finally turned against him and effected his death (Dio lx. 31.2).

It is tempting to try to palliate Seneca's flatteries and whinings. He had lost his wife; one of his sons had died a few weeks before his exile (ad Helv. ii. 5); he had suffered from illness from childhood (Epist. liiii. ff.); his political career had been beshadowed by the jealousy of Gaius. If we compare Seneca's indecorous complaints and cringing with the laments of Ovid from Tomi or the letters of Cicero during the exile period, the philosopher suffers little.

Eight of the epigrams attributed to Seneca trumpet the praises of Claudius for the conquest of Britain (P. L. M. vol. iv 29-36), a feat which Suetonius assures us was nothing remarkable (Claud. 17.1).

The language of the epigrams is extravagant. 'A land never before outraged by Ausonian triumphs, falls, struck by Caesar's bolts; a fabulous land; hidden in mid-ocean' (29). 'Britain is fortunate in sharing Caesar with the Romans' (32). He invokes Mars, Quirinus, and the two Caesars to behold Britain under Latin sway (34), conquered at the sight of Caesar (36).

Seneca hoped to enlist for his recall the favor of his friend, the orator, Passienus Crispus, the husband of Agrippina. He composed an epigram, the purport of which is patent:

"Ad amicum optimum

Crispe, meae vires lapsarumque ancora rerum,

Crispe, vel antiquo conspiciende foro,

Crispe, potens numquam, nisi cum prodesse volebas,

Naufragio litus tutaque terra meo,

Solus honor nobis, arx et tutissima nobis

Et nunc afflicto sola quies animo,

Crispe, fides dulcis, placideque acerrima virtus,

Cuius Cecropio pectora melle madent,

Maxima facundo vel avo vel gloria patri,

Quo solo careat si quis, in exilio est:

Incultae iaceo saxis telluris adhaerens,

Mens tecum est, nulla quae cohibetur humo"

(P. L. M. vol. iv. 15).

Jonas (p. 30) dates this epigram in the consulship of Passienus Crispus, 44 A. D. Passienus was hardly in a position to help, as his consulship lasted but a few months. Furthermore, his wife, Agrippina, was looked upon with suspicion in the court circles.

Seneca's recall was not expedited by these studied flatteries, but came by a good turn of fate. An unheard of thing happened. Messalina, with heady recklessness, had so far debased herself as to have a marriage ceremony performed (48 A. D.) with the fascinating young consul-elect, Gaius Silius, while Claudius was at Osia, assisting at a sacrifice (Tac. Ann. ii. 37), or inspecting a grain supply (Dio 60.48). It would seem that Claudius was privy to the irregularity, had divorced Messalina, and had actually signed the legal papers transferring her dowry to Silius, on the ground that the marriage was a feigned one and was necessary to avert some danger from



himself: "nam illud omnem fidem excesserit quod nuptiis, quas Messalina cum adultero Silio fecerat, tabellas dotis et ipse consignaverit,—” (Suet. Claud. 29.3).

Tacitus (Ann. ix. 27) expresses his own consciousness of the fictitious character of the story.

Baring-Gould (vol. ii. p. 498) gives this explanation: "Messalina from first to last had believed that in herself lay a higher right to represent the Caesars than rested in Claudius, in that two streams of the Julian blood met in her veins. She was weary and disgusted with her half-witted old husband, and she was well aware that a large party among the nobles was impatient of his rule. She was madly in love with C. Silius, consul-designate for the ensuing year, and she determined by a bold stroke to cause a revolution. Whilst her husband was from Rome, she hoped to rouse the people and the guards, place herself and Silius at their head, and put Claudius to death. But in order that this should be effected it was necessary that her lover should be united to her legally."

Claudius was terrified at Narcissus's suggestion that Messalina purposed to make way with him and set up Silius as emperor: "Messalinae—amorem—periculi metu abiecit, cum adultero Silio adquiri imperium credidisset;—” (Suet. Claud. 36). Silius was put to death. Narcissus, knowing well his imperial master, engineered the murder of Messalina before the amorous Claudius, in his cups, should experience a renaissance of his passion for his wife. Had Claudius been given an opportunity of hearing Messalina's account—that it was a mere escapade—Seneca might not have been recalled.

The choice of a wife for Claudius was a determining factor in the recall of Seneca. The selection lay between Lollia Paulina, a daughter of Marcus Lollius, and for a short time the wife of Gaius (Suet. Calig. 25.2), the choice of Callistus; Julia Agrippina, the daughter of Germanicus, sister of Gaius and Julia Livilla, the choice of Pallas; and Aelia Paetina, a former wife of Claudius (Suet. Claud. 26.2), the choice of Narcissus. Agrippina, with settled purpose to carve a passage to the throne for her son, hung out lures for Claudius (Dio 60.51). Of this Suetonius writes: "verum inlecebris Agrippinae, Germanici fratris sui filiæ, per ius osculi et blanditiarum



occasiones plectus in amorem,—” (Claud. 26.3). A law was passed, making it legal for an uncle to marry his niece (Tac. Ann. xii. 1.2.3; Suet. Claud. 26.3). Claudius married Agrippina, and soon afterward, her son, Domitian, was adopted by the Emperor as Nero.

The year of the recall was 49 A. D., for Nero was placed under Seneca’s care six years before his accession (54 A. D.): “quartus decimus annus est, Caesar, ex quo spei tuae admotus sum, octavus ut imperium obtines:” (Seneca in Tac. Ann. xiv. 53). The scholiast on Juvenal v. 109 makes the exile period three years in length. This is clearly incorrect. (See chapter “Seneca Relegated To Corsica”).

Of Seneca’s recall Tacitus writes: “at Agrippina ne malis tantum facinoribus notesceret veniam exilii pro Annaeo Seneca, simul praeturam impetrat, laetum in publicum rata ob claritudinem studiorum eius, utque Domitii pueritia tali magistro adolesceret et consiliis eiusdem ad spem dominationis uterentur, quia Seneca fidus in Agrippinam memoria beneficii et infensus Claudio dolore iniurias credebatur” (Ann. xii. 8).

Suetonius places the appointment after the adoption in 50 A. D.: “undecimo aetatis anno a Claudio adoptatus est Annaeque Senecae iam tunc senatori in disciplinam traditus” (Nero 7.1).

There were cogent reasons for Agrippina’s interest in the recall of Seneca. She was already planning to secure the throne for her son, Domitian, and saw in Seneca the most suitable person to aid her cause. Nero, up to this time, had been ill-tutored, for a barber and a dancer were hardly fitted to train a potential emperor. Seneca was acknowledged the most striking figure in the capital—the greatest philosopher, author, orator. Who could better fill the position as mentor of the young Nero? The furtherance of her designs necessitated getting Claudius out of the way. Despite Seneca’s unctuous flatteries in the “ad Polybium,” he, with good reason, loathed Claudius and his courtiers; so, by recalling Seneca, she would have him bound to her by obligations. Furthermore, Seneca’s relegation had passed as a political move at Rome, and to recall him would be a wise step, especially since her cruelties were arousing uneasiness and

dread in the city. It must not be forgotten, too, that it was on account of Julia, Agrippina's sister, that he had been banished, and that he had always been a friend of the household, against which he had refused to say a word at the trial.

Canon Farrar has suggested: "It might perhaps have been better for Seneca's happiness if he had never left Corsica, or set his foot again in that Circean and blood-stained court" (p. 115). We might add "for his reputation also," for still uglier charges came to be attached to the name of Seneca after he had become the adviser of the young Domitius—charges which are harder to exculpate than that which ostensibly caused his exile.





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