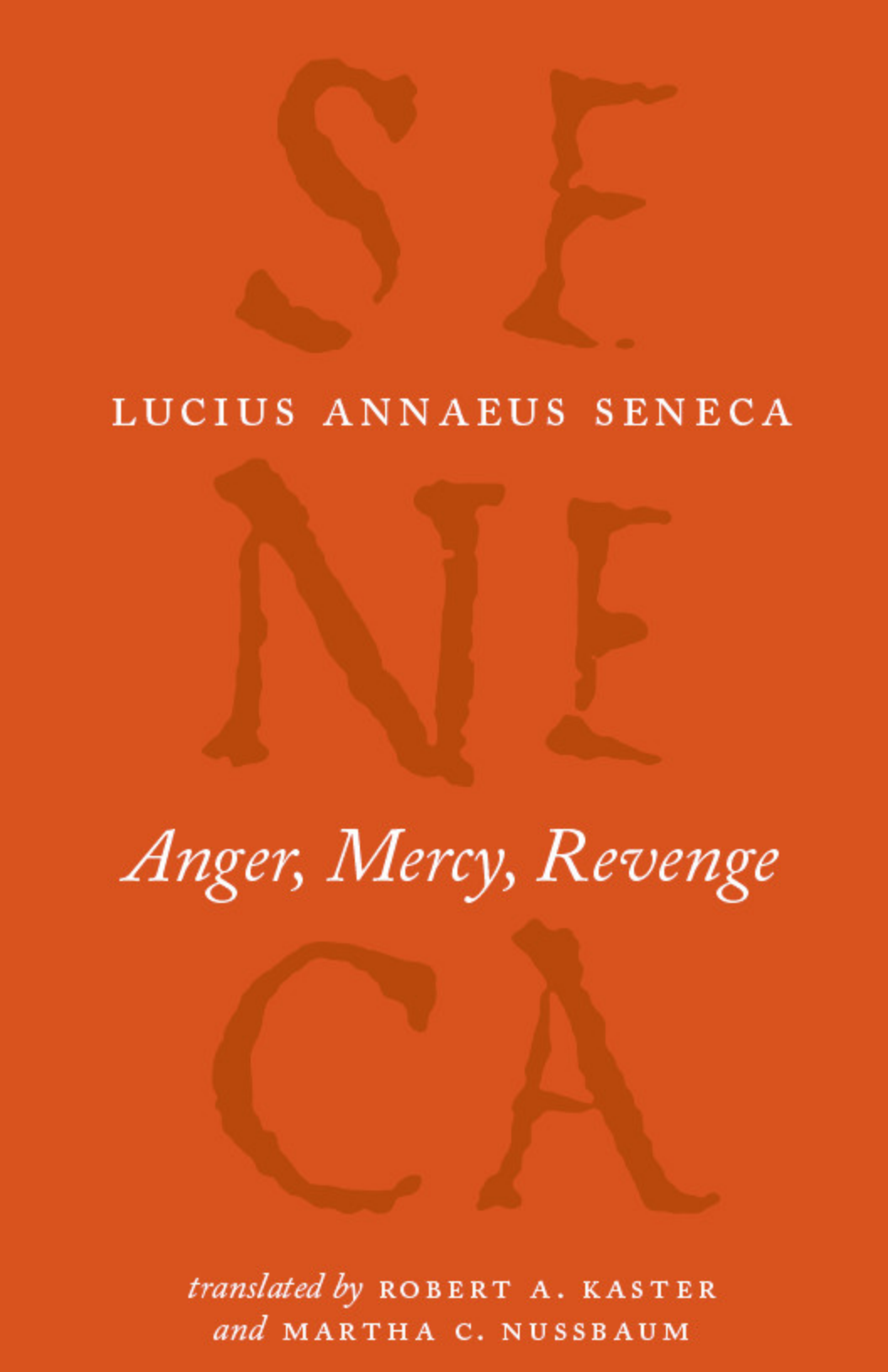


LUCIUS ANNAEUS SENECA

Anger, Mercy, Revenge

translated by ROBERT A. KASTER
and MARTHA C. NUSSBAUM

Anger, Mercy, Revenge

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF LUCIUS ANNAEUS SENECA

Edited by Elizabeth Asmis, Shadi Bartsch, and Martha C. Nussbaum

Seneca

Anger, Mercy, Revenge

TRANSLATED BY
ROBERT A. KASTER AND
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Seneca once remarked of Socrates that it was his death by hemlock that made him great (*Letter* 13.14). With reason: Socrates' death demonstrated the steadfastness of his philosophical principles and his belief that death offered nothing to fear. When Seneca himself, then, was ordered to commit suicide by Nero in 65 CE, we might well believe Tacitus's account in his *Annals* (15.63) that the Roman Stoic modeled his death on that of Socrates, discoursing calmly about philosophy with his friends as the blood drained out of his veins. In Tacitus's depiction we see, for once, a much-criticized figure living up to the principles he preached.

Seneca's life was mired in political advancement and disappointment, shaped by the effects of exile and return, and compromised by his relationship with the emperor Nero—first his pupil, then his advisee, and finally his murderer. But his many writings say little about his political career and almost nothing about his relationship with Nero except for what can be gleaned from his essay *On Clemency*, leaving us to turn to later sources for information—Tacitus, Suetonius, and Dio Cassius in particular. We know that Seneca was born to a prominent equestrian family in Corduba, Spain, some time between 4 and 1 BCE. He was the second of three sons of Helvia and Lucius Annaeus Seneca (the youngest son, Annaeus Mela, was the father of the poet Lucan). The elder Seneca had spent much of his life in Rome, and Seneca himself was brought to Rome as a young boy. There he was educated in rhetoric and later became a student of the philosopher Sextius. But his entry into political life was delayed, and when he did enter upon the *cursus honorum* late in Tiberius's reign, his ill health (he had asthma and possibly tuberculosis) was a source of difficulty. In any case his career was cut short. He survived Caligula's hostility, which the sources tell us was thanks to his talents in oratory, but was sent into exile on Corsica by Claudius shortly after Caligula's death in 41 CE. The charge, almost certainly false, was adultery with Caligula's younger sister, Julia Livilla. Seneca spent his time in exile in philosophical and natural study and wrote

the *Consolations* to Helvia (his mother) and to Polybius (Claudius's freedman secretary), revealing in the latter how desperately he hoped to be recalled to Rome.

When Seneca did return in 49 CE, it was under different auspices. Claudius had recently remarried, to Germanicus's daughter Agrippina, and she urged him to recall Seneca as tutor to her son, the twelve-year-old Nero. Claudius already had a younger son, Britannicus, but it was clear that the wily Agrippina wished to see her own flesh and blood on the throne. When Claudius died five years later, Agrippina was able to maneuver Nero into position as emperor—and Britannicus was dispatched by poison shortly after, in 55 CE.

From 54 until his influence waned at the end of the decade, Seneca acted as Nero's advisor, together with the praetorian prefect Sextus Afranius Burrus. We know he wrote a speech on clemency for Nero to deliver to the Senate soon after his accession, and Seneca's own essay *On Clemency* may contain some inkling of his strategy to keep the young emperor from running amok. Seneca's use of the term *rex*, or king, applied to Nero by analogy in this piece, is surprising from a Roman senator, but he seems to have hoped that flattering Nero by pointing to his limitless power and the value of clemency would be one way to keep him from abusing that power. Both Seneca and Burrus also helped with the civil and judicial administration of the empire.

Many historians, ancient and modern, feel that this early part of Nero's reign, moderated by Seneca and Burrus, represented a period of comparative good rule and harmony (the "*quinquennium Neronis*"). The decline started in 59 CE with Nero's murder of Agrippina, after which Seneca wrote the emperor's speech of self-exculpation—perhaps the most famous example of how the philosopher found himself increasingly compromised in his position as Nero's chief counsel. Certainly as a Stoic, Seneca cuts an ambiguous figure next to the others who made their opposition to Nero clear, such as Thrasea Paetus and Helvidius Priscus. His participation in court politics probably led him to believe that he could do more good from where he stood than by abandoning Nero to his own devices—if he even had this choice.

In any case, Seneca's influence over Nero seems to have been considerably etiolated after the death of Burrus in 62. According

to Tacitus, Seneca tried to retire from his position twice, in 62 and 64. Although Nero refused him on both occasions, Seneca seems to have largely absented himself from the court after 64. In 65 CE came the Pisonian conspiracy, a plot to kill Nero and replace him with the ringleader, C. Calpurnius Piso. Although Seneca's nephew Lucan was implicated in this assassination attempt, Seneca himself was probably innocent. Nonetheless, Nero seized the opportunity to order his old advisor to kill himself. Seneca cut his own veins, but (so Tacitus tells us) his thinness and advanced age hindered the flow of blood. When a dose of poison also failed to kill him, he finally sat in a hot bath to make the blood flow faster. His wife, Pompeia Paulina, also tried to commit suicide but was saved on orders from Nero.

Because of his ethical writings, Seneca fared well with the early Christians—hence the later forging of a fake correspondence with St. Paul—but already in antiquity he had his fair share of critics, the main charge arising from the apparent contradiction between his Stoic teachings on the unimportance of "externals" and his own amassing of huge wealth. Perhaps for this reason he never gained the respect accorded the "Roman Socrates," the Stoic C. Musonius Rufus, banished by Nero in 65, even though Seneca's writings have had far more influence over the centuries. In Seneca's own lifetime one P. Suillius attacked him on the grounds that, since Nero's rise to power, he had piled up some 300 million sesterces by charging high interest on loans in Italy and the provinces—though Suillius himself was no angel and was banished to the Balearic Islands for being an embezzler and informant. In Seneca's defense, he seems to have engaged in ascetic habits throughout his life and despite his wealth. In fact, his essay *On the Happy Life (De vita beata)* takes the position that a philosopher may be rich as long as his wealth is properly gained and spent and his attitude to it is appropriately detached. Where Seneca finally ranks in our estimation may rest on our ability to tolerate the various contradictions posed by the life of this philosopher in politics.

A Short Introduction to Stoicism

Stoicism is one of the world's most influential philosophical movements. Starting from the works and teaching of the three original heads of the Greek Stoic school—Zeno of Citium (335–263 BCE),

Cleanthes (331–232 BCE), and Chrysippus (ca. 280–207 BCE)—it became the leading philosophical movement of the ancient Greco-Roman world, shaping the development of thought well into the Christian era. Later Greek Stoics Panaetius (ca. 185–109 BCE) and Posidonius (ca. 135–51 BCE) modified some features of Stoic doctrine. Roman thinkers then took up the cause, and Stoicism became the semiofficial creed of the Roman political and literary world. Cicero (106–43 BCE) does not agree with the Stoics on metaphysical and epistemological matters, but his ethical and political positions lie close to theirs, and even when he does not agree, he makes a concerted effort to report their positions sympathetically. Roman Stoics Seneca, Epictetus (mid-first to early second century CE), Musonius Rufus (ca. 30–ca. 102 CE), and the emperor Marcus Aurelius (121–80 CE, emperor 161–80) produced Stoic works of their own (the last three writing in Greek).

The philosophical achievement of the Greek Stoics, and especially that of Chrysippus, was enormous: the invention of propositional logic, the invention of the philosophy of language, unprecedented achievements in moral psychology, distinction in areas ranging from metaphysics and epistemology to moral and political philosophy. Through an accident of history, however, all the works of all the major Greek Stoics have been lost, and we must recover their thoughts through fragments, reports (particularly the lengthy accounts in Diogenes Laertius's *Lives of the Philosophers*, in Cicero, and in Sextus Empiricus's skeptical writings, since the Stoics are his primary target), and the works of the Roman thinkers—who often are adjusting Stoic doctrines to fit Roman reality and probably contributing creative insights of their own. This also means that we know somewhat less about Stoic logic or physics than about Stoic ethics, since the Romans took a particular interest in the practical domain.

The goal of Stoic philosophy, like that of other philosophical schools of the Hellenistic era, was to give the pupil a flourishing life free from the forms of distress and moral failure that the Stoics thought ubiquitous in their societies. Unlike some of their competitor schools, however, they emphasized the need to study all parts of their threefold system—logic, physics, and ethics—in order to understand the universe and its interconnections. To the extent that a

Roman such as Cicero believed he could uphold the moral truths of Stoicism without a confident belief in a rationally ordered universe, he held a heretical position (one shared many centuries later by Immanuel Kant).

Stoic physics held that the universe is a rationally ordered whole, and that everything that happens in it happens for the best of reasons. (It is this position, in its Leibnizian incarnation, that is pilloried in Voltaire's *Candide*.) Rejecting traditional anthropomorphic religion, the Stoics gave the name Zeus to the rational and providential principle animating the universe as a whole, and they could find even in the most trivial or distressing events (such as earthquakes and thunderbolts) signs of the universe's overall good order. This order was also a moral order based on the inherent dignity and worth of the moral capacities of each and every rational being. The Stoics believed that this order was deterministic: everything happens of necessity. But they were also "compatibilists," believing that human free will was compatible with the truth of determinism. They engaged in spirited debates with "incompatibilist" Aristotelians, making lasting contributions to the free will controversy.

Stoic ethics begins from the idea of the boundless worth of the rational capacity in each and every human being. The Roman Stoics understood this capacity to be centrally practical and moral. (Thus, unlike Plato, they did not think that people who had a natural talent for mathematics were better than people who didn't, and they became more and more skeptical that even the study of logic had much practical value.) They held that all human beings were equal in worth by virtue of their possession of the precious capacity to choose and direct their lives, ranking some ends ahead of others. This, they said, was what distinguished human beings from animals: this power of selection and rejection. (Unlike most other ancient schools, they had little concern for the morality of animal treatment, since they thought that only moral capacity entitled a being to respect and good treatment.) Children, they said, came into the world like little animals, with a natural orientation toward self-preservation but no understanding of true worth. Later, however, a remarkable shift would take place, already set up by their possession of innate human nature: they would become able to appreciate the beauty of the capacity for choice and the way in which moral reason had shaped the entire

universe. This recognition, they said, should lead people to respect both self and others in an entirely new way. Stoics were serious about (human) equality: they urged the equal education of both slaves and women. Epictetus himself was a former slave.

Stoicism looks thus far like an ethical view with radical political consequences, and so it became during the Enlightenment, when its distinctive emphases were used to argue in favor of equal political rights and more nearly equal economic opportunities. However, the original Stoics maintain a claim of great significance for politics: moral capacity is the only thing that has intrinsic worth. Money, honor, power, bodily health, and even the love of friends, children, and spouse—all these are held to be things that one may reasonably pursue if nothing impedes (they are called "preferred indifferents"), but they have no true intrinsic worth. They should not even be seen as commensurate with moral worth. So when they do not arrive as one wishes, it is wrong to be distressed.

This was the context in which the Stoics introduced their famous doctrine of *apatheia*, freedom from the passions. Defining the major emotions or passions as all involving a high valuation of "external goods," they argue that the good Stoic will not have any of these disturbances of the personality. Realizing that chance events lie beyond our control, the Stoic will find it unnecessary to experience grief, anger, fear, or even hope: all of these are characteristic of a mind that waits in suspense, awestruck by things indifferent. We can have a life that truly involves joy (of the right sort) if we appreciate that the most precious thing of all, and the only truly precious thing, lies within our control at all times.

Stoics do not think that it is at all easy to get rid of the cultural errors that are the basis of the rejected passions: thus a Stoic life is a constant therapeutic process in which mental exercises are devised to wean the mind from its unwise attachments. Their works depict processes of therapy through which the reader may make progress in the direction of Stoic virtue, and they often engage their reader in just such a process. Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius describe processes of repeated meditation; Seneca (in *On Anger*) describes his own nightly self-examination. Seneca's *Letters* show the role that a wiser teacher can play in such a therapeutic process, but Seneca evidently does not think that even he himself is free from erroneous attachments. The

"wise man" is in that sense a distant ideal, not a worldly reality, particularly for the Roman Stoics. A large aid in the therapeutic process is the study of the horrible deformities that societies (including one's own) suffer by caring too much about external goods. If one sees the ugly face of power, honor, and even love clearly enough, this may assist one in making the progress toward true virtue. Thus Seneca's *On Anger* is an example of a genre that we know to have been common in Stoicism.

Because of their doctrine of value, the Stoics actually do not propose radical changes in the distribution of worldly goods, as one might suppose equal regard for the dignity of all human beings would require. They think that equal respect does require dignified treatment of each person; thus Seneca urges masters not to beat their slaves or use them as sexual tools. About the institution of slavery, however, there is silence, and worse than silence: Seneca argues that true freedom is internal freedom, so the external sort does not really matter. Musonius, similarly, advocates respectful treatment for women, including access to a Stoic education. But as for changes in the legal arrangements that confined women to a domestic role and gave males power of life and death over them, he too is silent, arguing that women will manifest their Stoic virtue in the domestic context. Some Roman Stoics do appear to have thought that political liberty was a part of dignity, and thus died supporting republican institutions, but whether this attention to external conditions was consistent with Stoicism remains unclear. (Certainly Cicero's profound grief over the loss of political freedom was not the attitude of a Stoic, any more than was his agonizing grief over his daughter's death.)

There was also much debate about whether the Stoic norm of *apatheia* encouraged people to detach themselves from bad political events in a way that gave aid and comfort to bad politics. Certainly Stoics were known to counsel retirement from politics (a theme in Seneca's own life as he sought Nero's permission for retirement, unsuccessfully), and they were thought to believe that upheaval was worse than lawless tyranny. Plutarch reports that Brutus (a Platonist) questioned potential coconspirators in the assassination of Julius Caesar by trying to determine whether they accepted that Stoic norm or believed, with him, that lawless tyranny was worse than civil strife; only non-Stoics were selected for the group of assassins.

During Nero's reign, however, several prominent Stoics—including Seneca and his nephew, Lucan—joined republican political movements aimed at overthrowing Nero, and lost their lives for their efforts, by politically ordered suicide.

Stoics believed that from the moral point of view, national boundaries were as irrelevant as honor, wealth, gender, and birth. They held that we are, first and foremost, citizens of the universe as a whole. (The term *kosmou polites*, citizen of the universe, was apparently first used by Diogenes the Cynic, but the Stoics took it up and were the real forefathers of modern cosmopolitanism.) What cosmopolitanism meant in practical terms was unclear, for the reasons already given—but Cicero thinks, at any rate (in *On Duties*, a highly Stoic work), that our common human dignity entails some very strict limits on the reasons for going to war and the sort of conduct that is permissible in it. He thus adumbrated the basis of the modern law of war. Cicero denied, however, that our common humanity entailed any duty to distribute material goods beyond our own borders, thus displaying the unfortunate capacity of Stoic doctrine to support the status quo. Cicero's *On Duties* has had such an enormous influence on posterity in this that it is scarcely an exaggeration to blame the Stoics for the fact that we have well worked-out doctrines of international law in the area of war and peace, but no well-established understanding of our material duties to one another.

Stoicism's influence on the development of the entire Western intellectual tradition cannot be underestimated. Christian thought owes it a large debt. Clement of Alexandria is just one example of a Christian thinker steeped in Stoicism; even a thinker such as Augustine, who contests many Stoic theses, finds it natural to begin from Stoic positions. Even more strikingly, many philosophers of the early modern era turn to Stoicism for guidance—far more often than they turn to Aristotle or Plato. Descartes' ethical ideas are built largely on Stoic models; Spinoza is steeped in Stoicism at every point; Leibniz's teleology is essentially Stoic; Hugo Grotius bases his ideas of international morality and law on Stoic models; Adam Smith draws more from the Stoics than from other ancient schools of thought; Rousseau's ideas of education are in essence based on Stoic models; Kant finds inspiration in the Stoic ideas of human dignity and the peaceful world community; and the American founders

are steeped in Stoic ideas, including the ideas of equal dignity and cosmopolitanism, which also deeply influence the American transcendentalists Emerson and Thoreau. Because the leading works of Greek Stoicism had long been lost, all these thinkers were reading the Roman Stoics. Because many of them read little Greek, they were primarily reading Cicero and Seneca.

The Stoic influence on the history of literature has also been immense. In the Roman world, all the major poets, like other educated Romans, were acquainted with Stoic ideas and alluded to them often in their work. Virgil and Lucan are perhaps particularly significant in this regard. Later European literary traditions also show marked traces of Stoic influence—in part via the influence of Roman literature, and in part through the influence of philosophers in their own time who were themselves influenced by Stoic thought, but often also through their own reading of the influential works of Cicero, Seneca, and Marcus Aurelius.

Seneca's Stoicism

Seneca identifies himself as a Stoic. He declares his allegiance by repeatedly referring to "our people" (*nostri*)—the Stoics—in his writings. Yet he exercises considerable independence in relation to other Stoics. While he is committed to upholding basic Stoic doctrines, he recasts them on the basis of his own experience as a Roman and a wide reading of other philosophers. In this respect he follows a tradition of Stoic philosophical innovation exemplified most clearly by Panaetius and Posidonius, who introduced some Platonic and Aristotelian elements while adapting Stoicism to Roman circumstances. Seneca differs from previous Stoics by welcoming some aspects of Epicurean philosophy along with other influences.

Seneca is concerned above all with applying Stoic ethical principles to his life and to the lives of others like him. The question that dominates his philosophical writings is how an individual can achieve a good life. In his eyes, the quest for virtue and happiness is a heroic endeavor that places the successful person above the assaults of fortune and on a level with god. To this end, Seneca transforms the sage into an inspirational figure who can motivate others to become like him by his gentle humanity and joyful tranquility. Key topics are how to reconcile adversity with providence, how to free oneself from

passions (particularly anger and grief), how to face death, how to disengage oneself from political involvement, how to practice poverty and use wealth, and how to benefit others. All of these endeavors are viewed within the context of a supreme, perfectly rational and virtuous deity who looks with favor on the efforts of humans to attain the same condition of virtue. In the field of politics, Seneca argues for clemency on the part of the supreme ruler, Nero. In human relations, he pays special attention to friendship and the position of slaves. Overall, he aims to replace social hierarchies, with their dependence on fortune, with a moral hierarchy arranged according to proximity to the goal of being a sage.

Seneca's own concerns and personality permeate his writings. The modern reader learns much about the life of an aristocrat in the time of Claudius and Nero, and much about Seneca's personal strengths and weaknesses. At the same time, there is also much in the work that transcends the immediate concerns of Seneca and his period. Some topics that resonate especially with a modern audience are his vision of humans as members of a universal community of mankind, the respect he demands for slaves, his concern with human emotions, and, in general, his insistence on looking within oneself to find happiness. What is perhaps less appealing to the modern reader is the rhetorical elaboration of his message, which features an undeniable tendency toward hyperbole. Most of all, Seneca's own character strikes many readers as problematic. From his own time on, he was perceived by some as a hypocrite who was far from practicing what he preached. Some of Seneca's writings (in particular, his *Consolations* to Polybius and his mother Helvia, and his essay *On the Happy Life*) are obviously self-serving. As Seneca himself suggests (*Letters* 84), he has transformed the teachings he has culled, in the manner of bees, into a whole that reflects his own complex character.

The Stoics divided logic into dialectic (short argument) and rhetoric (continuous exposition). There is not much to be said on dialectic in Seneca's writings except that he shuns it, along with formal logic in general. Every so often, however, he engages in a satirical display of fine-grained Stoic-type reasoning. The point is that carrying logical precision to excess is futile: it does not make a person any better. Quibbles of all kinds should be avoided, whether they involve carrying through a minute line of argument, making overly subtle

verbal distinctions, or indulging in abstruse philological interpretation. While making the point, Seneca makes sure the reader knows he could beat the quibbler at his own game if he wanted to.

We have only sparse details about how the Stoics viewed rhetoric. What is clear about Seneca, however, is that he used the full panoply of Roman rhetorical methods to persuade readers of his philosophical message. His writings are full of vivid examples, stunning metaphors, pointed sayings, ringing sound effects. He knows how to vary his tone, from casual conversation to soaring exhortation and bitter denunciation. He peoples his text with a varied cast of characters: the addressee, the implied audience, hypothetical objectors, friends, opponents, historical figures. He himself hovers over the proceedings as watchful friend and sometime foe. Following Cleanthes, he intersperses poetry into his prose to impel the reader even more forcefully toward the task of self-improvement.

Given Seneca's ethical aims, it is perhaps surprising that he devotes a large work, *Natural Questions*, to physics. Yet the entire work has an overarching ethical aim. As Seneca insists repeatedly, the mind is uplifted by venturing beyond narrowly human concerns to survey the world as a whole. The contemplation of the physical world complements moral action by showing the full context of human action: we see god in his full glory, caring for human lives as he administers the world as a whole. In the spirit of Lucretius (who championed a rival philosophy), Seneca also intersperses ethical messages throughout his physical inquiries. Thus he emphasizes that humans must confront natural events, such as death and natural disasters, with courage and gratitude to god; and he warns against human misuse of natural resources and the decadence that accompanies progress. Of all areas of inquiry, physics affords Seneca the greatest scope for making additions and corrections to Stoic doctrine. He ranges over the whole history of physical inquiries, from the Presocratics to his own time, to improve upon the Stoics.

Seneca writes (*Letters* 45.4) that while he believes "in the judgment of great men," he also claims something for his own judgment: previous philosophers left some things to be investigated by us, which they might indeed have discovered for themselves if they hadn't engaged in useless quibbles. Granted that Seneca shows special investigative fervor in his cosmological inquiries, his moral teachings too are a

product of his own judgment and innovation. What he contributes is a new vision rather than new theories. Using certain strict Stoic distinctions as a basis, he paints a new picture of the challenges that humans face and the happiness that awaits those who practice the correct philosophy. In agreement with Stoic orthodoxy, Seneca is uncompromising about differentiating between external advantages and the good, about the need to eradicate the passions, about the perfect rationality of the wise person, about the identity of god with Fate. What he adds is a moral fervor, joined by a highly poetic sensibility, that turns these distinctions into springboards for action.

The Stoic sage was generally viewed by critics as a forbidding figure, outside the reach of human capabilities and immune to human feeling. Seneca concedes, or rather emphasizes, that the sage is indeed rare; he remarks that the sage is like a phoenix, appearing perhaps every five hundred years (*Letters* 42.1). As he sees it, the sage's exceptional status is not a barrier to improvement; it inspires. Seneca gives real-life immediacy to the sage by citing the younger Cato, opponent of Julius Caesar, as an example. Cato, indeed, is not just any sage; Seneca says he is not sure whether Cato might even surpass *him* (*On Constancy* 7.1). In this he is not blurring Stoic distinctions, but highlighting the indomitable moral strength of a sage. Through Cato and numerous other examples from the Roman past, Seneca fuses the Stoic sage with the traditional image of a Roman hero, thus spurring his Roman readers to fulfill their duties by emulating both at once.

Below the level of sage, Seneca outlines three stages of moral progress, demarcated according to our vulnerability to irrational emotions (*Letters* 75). There is the condition very near to that of being a sage, in which a person is not yet confident of being able to withstand irrational emotions (the so-called passions, *pathê*). Just below it is the stage in which a person is still capable of lapsing, and at the lowest level of progress a person can avoid most irrational emotions, but not all. Below these are the innumerable people who have yet to make progress. Seneca has nothing to say to them; he wants to avoid them, lest he be contaminated. What he does allow is that persons who are still struggling to become good may give way to grief initially; but he insists that this period must be brief. The Stoics talk "big words," he says, when they forbid moans and groans; he'll

adopt a more gentle tone (*Letters* 23.4). Still, he insists, these words are "true"; and his aim is to lead, as much as he can, to the goal of a dispassionate attitude toward externals. Like everyone, the wise person is prone to initial shocks—reactions that look momentarily like irrational emotions—but these are involuntary responses to be succeeded immediately by the calmness of judgment. Seneca's sage is kind to others and is filled with a serene joy that has nothing to do with the ephemeral pleasure that other people take in externals.

Looking toward Roman heroism, Seneca portrays moral progress as an arduous struggle, like a military campaign or the uphill storming of an enemy's position. The enemy is fortune, viciously attacking her victim in the form of the most cruel disasters. Her opponent may succumb, but he will have conquered fortune if he resists to the end. In reality, the disasters come from other people or simply from circumstances. Seneca commonly cites death (whether one's own or that of a loved one), exile, torture, and illness. His own life is rich with examples. He goes so far as to advocate adversity as a means of making moral progress, but he also allows (with a view to his own wealth) that favorable circumstances are a help to the person who is still struggling to make progress.

To make progress, a person must not only confront externals but also, above all, look within oneself. Drawing inspiration from Plato, Seneca tells us there is a god inside; there is a soul that seeks to free itself from the dross of the body. Seneca invites the reader to withdraw into this inner self, so as to both meditate on one's particular condition and take flight in the contemplation of god. This withdrawal can occur in the press of a very active life. But it's easier when one is no longer fully caught up in politics, and so Seneca associates moral withdrawal with his own attempt to withdraw from politics toward the end of his life. He insists that he will continue to help others through his philosophical teachings, like other Stoics.

Senecan Tragedy

From Seneca's hand there survive eight tragedies (*Agamemnon*, *Thyestes*, *Oedipus*, *Medea*, *Phaedra*, *Phoenissae*, *Troades*, *Hercules Furens*), not including the spurious *Octavia* and the probably spurious *Hercules Oetaeus*; of the *Phoenissae* there remain only fragments. These dramas have undergone many vicissitudes in fortune throughout

the centuries; however, they are no longer criticized as being mere flawed versions of the older Greek dramas in which much of Seneca's subject matter had already been treated. While Seneca's plays were once mined only for the light they shed on Roman Stoic philosophy, for examples of rhetorical extravagance, or for the reconstruction of missing plays by Sophocles and his fellows, the traits that once marked the dramas as unworthy of critical attention now engage us in their own right. Indeed, they are the only extant versions of any Roman tragedy, the writings of other dramatists such as Marcus Pacuvius (ca. 220–130 BCE) and Lucius Accius (ca. 170–86 BCE) having been lost to posterity. It is thus only Seneca's version of Roman drama, translated into English as the *Tenne Tragedies* in 1581, that so influenced the tragedians of the Elizabethan era.

Seneca may have turned his hand to writing drama as early as the reign of Caligula (37–41 CE), although there is no way of determining exactly when he began. Our first reference to the plays comes from a famous graffito from the *Agamemnon* preserved on a wall in Pompeii, but we can only deduce that this was written before the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 CE; it is of little actual use in trying to date the dramas. Stylistic analysis has not provided us with a sure order of composition, though scholars seem to agree that the *Thyestes* and the *Phoenissae* are late efforts. Certainly we are unable to make claims about their dating with respect to the *Essays* and *Letters*, despite the very different tones of Seneca's prose and his poetry—a difference that led some readers, including the fifth-century churchman and orator Sidonius Apollinaris and after him Erasmus and Diderot, to speculate (erroneously) that there might have been two Lucius Annaeus Senecas at work on them rather than one.

This confusion about the authorship of Seneca's writing may seem natural, given the argument that Stoicism fails as a way of life in the dramas. Whether it fails because its adherents are too weak to resist the pull of desire or emotion, because Stoicism itself is too difficult to practice successfully, because the universe is not the locus of a divine Providence, or because the protagonists are so evil that they fail to see Providence in action, is open to argument; a metaliterary view might even suggest that plotlines inherited from mythology provide the force that condemns a Cassandra or a Polyxena to death at the hands of a Clytemnestra or a Ulysses, with Seneca taking

advantage of this dramatic fact to suggest the inexorable workings of Fate and the futility of struggle against it. Consider the *Thyestes* (a topic often dramatized in the Late Republic, though Seneca's version is the only one we have). We meet the eponymous exile as he praises the pauper's life to his children—only the man who drinks out of earthenware cups can be truly happy and without fear, he reminds them—but when invited to return to the palace at Argos by his conniving brother Atreus, the source of his exile, he allows himself to be lured back after only a token hesitation about giving up his newfound equanimity. "Sequor," he says to his son, "I follow you"; but in following his appetite for the luxurious life he does the opposite of the good Stoic.

The rest is, well, the stuff of myth. Dressed in royal regalia, Thyestes sits down to enjoy a hearty stew and some fine red wine, but his satiated belches soon turn into howls of horror as the delighted Atreus informs him of his dinner's provenance: the meal is made up of the dismembered bodies of Thyestes' own sons. Is there an explicit ethical or philosophical message here? If we followed the view of another Stoic, Epictetus (ca. 55–ca. 135 CE), who defined tragedy as what happens "when chance events befall fools" (*Discourses* 2.26.31), we might conclude that the story of Thyestes precisely illustrates the folly of giving in to a desire for power (or haute cuisine). In Seneca's treatment, however, such a clear object lesson seems undermined by a number of factors: the fact that Atreus reigns triumphant as the drama ends; the undeniable echoes of Stoic exhortation in the impotent counsels of Atreus's adviser; and the fragility of civic and religious values—the hellish scene in which Atreus sacrifices the children represents precisely a travesty of sacrifice itself, while *xenia* (the ancient tradition of hospitality) fares still worse. The adviser or a nurse mouthing Stoic platitudes without effect is featured in many of the plays: Phaedra, Clytemnestra, and Medea all have nurses to counsel them against their paths of action, even though their advice is invariably distorted and thrown back in their faces. Creon plays a similar role in the *Agamemnon*.

Other Senecan protagonists have more lasting doubts than Thyestes about the value of earthly success. Oedipus asks: "Joys any man in power?" And unlike his more confident Sophoclean manifestation, he feels the answer is clearly no. From the beginning of

the play, the *Oedipus* provides striking contrasts to its Greek precedent, whose emphasis on the discovery of identity yields here to the overwhelming sense of pollution affecting Oedipus. The king, anxious even as the drama opens, worries that he will not escape the prophecy of his parricide, and suspects he is responsible for the plague ravaging Thebes. Despondent, he hopes for immediate death; his emotional state is far different from that of the character at the center of Sophocles' play. Seneca's version also features Creon's report of the long necromantic invocation of Laius's ghost in a dark grove, something absent in Sophocles. Even the sense that the characters' interaction onstage fails to drive the drama makes sense in the context of Seneca's forbidding and inexorable dramatic world. Causality and *anagnorisis* (dramatic recognition) are put aside in favor of the individual's helplessness before what awaits him, and the characters' speeches react to the violence rather than motivate it.

The pollution of the heavens by humans goes against Stoic physics but finds its place in the plays. The Stoics posited a tensional relationship between the cosmos and its parts; according to this view, the *pneuma* or vital spirit that subtends all matter results in a cosmic sympathy of the parts with the whole. "All things are united together . . . and earthly things feel the influence of heavenly ones," as Epictetus (*Discourses* 1.4.1) puts it. But what we see in the dramas is a disquieting manifestation of this *sympatheia*: the idea that the wickedness of one or a few could disrupt the rational and harmonic logos of the entire cosmos represents a reversal of the more orthodox Stoic viewpoint that the world is accessible to understanding and to reason. Thus we see the universe trembling at Medea's words, and the law of heaven in disorder. In the *Thyestes*, the sun hides its face in response to Atreus's crime; in the *Phaedra*, the chorus notes an eclipse after Phaedra's secret passion is unveiled. Horrific portents presage what is to come in the *Troades*. In Seneca's dramas, unlike in Greek tragedy, there is no role for civic institutions or the city to intervene in this relationship. The treatment of the gods is similarly unorthodox. Although Jason calls upon Medea to witness that there are no gods in the heavens, the very chariot in which she flies away is evidence of the assistance given her by her divine father. The gods are there; the problem is that they are unrecognizable.

Seneca's great antiheroes like Medea and Thyestes are troubling

not only because they often triumph, but because the manner of their triumph can resemble the goal point of the aspiring Stoic: in exhorting themselves to take up a certain stance towards the world, in abandoning familial and social ties, in rejecting the moral order of the world around them, and in trying to live up to a form of selfhood they have judged to be "better," Seneca's tyrants, just like his sages, construct a private and autonomous world around themselves which nothing can penetrate. Not only do they borrow the self-exhortations and self-reproving of the Stoic's arsenal, in which the dialogue conducted with the self suggests a split between a first-order desiring self and a second-order judging self, but they also adopt the consideration of what befits or is worthy of them as a guiding principle—always with a negative outcome.

This leads in turn to a metatheatrical tinge in several of the plays. In the *Medea*, for example, Medea seems to look to prior versions of her own story to discover what exactly is appropriate for her persona, in the same way that Oedipus, after putting out his eyes, remarks that "*This* face befits (an) Oedipus" (*Oedipus* 1000) or that Atreus says of his recipe, "This is a crime that befits Thyestes—and befits Atreus" (*Thyestes* 271). Such metatheatricality seems to draw upon the concern of the traditional Roman elite to perform exemplary actions for an approving audience, to generate one's ethical exemplarity by making sure that spectators for it exist.

And spectators do exist—we, the theater audience or the recitation audience. Scholars have long debated the question of whether Seneca's dramas were staged in antiquity. It is possible, as argued by the nineteenth-century German scholar Friedrich Leo, the tragedies were written for recitation only; inter alia, it would be unusual (but not impossible) to represent animal sacrifice and murder on stage. The question is unresolvable, but whether the original audiences were in the theater or in the recitation room, they shared with us the full knowledge of how the story would turn out, and in this they uncomfortably resembled some of the plotting antiheroes themselves. Indeed, our pleasure in watching Senecan tragedy unfold might seem to assimilate us to the pleasure these characters take in inflicting suffering on one another. In a famous line from the *Troades*, the messenger who brings news of Astyanax's murder reports of the scene of his death—which he has already compared to a theater—that "The

greater part of the fickle crowd abhors the crime—and watches it" (1128–29). Here, in the tension between sadistic voyeurism and horror at what the drama unfolds, we can recognize the uncomfortable position of the spectator of Seneca's despairing plays.

Senecan Drama after the Classical Period

The fortunes of Senecan drama have crested twice: once during the Elizabethan period, and again in our own day. Although Seneca himself never refers to his tragedies, they were known in antiquity at least until Boethius (ca. 480–524 CE), whose *Consolation of Philosophy* draws on the themes of Seneca's choral odes. The dramas then largely dropped from sight, to reemerge in 1300 in a popular edition and commentary by Nicholas Trevet, a Dominican scholar at Oxford. Trevet's work was followed by vernacular translations in Spain, Italy, and France over the next two centuries. In Italy, an early imitator was Albertino Mussato (1261–1329), who wrote his tragic drama *Ecerinis* to alert his fellow Paduans to the danger presented by the tyrant of Verona. In England, the Jesuit priest and poet Jasper Heywood (1535–1598) produced translations of three of the plays; these were followed by Thomas Newton's *Seneca His Tenne Tragedies Translated into English* in 1581—of which one tragedy was Newton's own *Thebais*. The dramas were considered to be no mere pale shadow of their Greek predecessors: Petrarch, Salutati, and Scaliger all held Seneca inferior to none on the classical stage. In Scaliger's influential treatise on poetry, the *Poetices libri septem* (1561), he ranks Seneca as the equal of the Greek dramatists in solemnity and superior to Euripides in elegance and polish (6.6).

The Elizabethan playwrights in particular took up Seneca as a model for translation or imitation. T. S. Eliot claimed that "No author exercised a wider or deeper influence upon the Elizabethan mind or upon the Elizabethan form of tragedy than did Seneca," and the consensus is that he was right. It is perhaps little wonder that Seneca appealed to an age in which tragedy was seen as the correct vehicle for the representation of "haughtinesse, arrogancy, ambition, pride, iniury, anger, wrath, envy, hatred, contention, warre, murther, cruelty, rapine, incest, rovings, depredations, piracyes, spoyles, robberies, rebellions, treasons, killings, hewing, stabbing, dagger-drawing, fight-

ing, butchery, treachery, villainy, etc., and all kind of heroyicke evils whatsoever" (John Greene, *A Refutation of the Apology for Actors*, 1615, p.56). Kyd, Marlowe, Marston, and Shakespeare all read Seneca in Latin at school, and much of their drama shows his influence in one form or another. The itinerant players at Elsinore in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* famously opine that "Seneca cannot be too heavy nor Plautus too light" (2.2.400–401), but it is Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* that shows the greatest Senecan influence with its taste for revenge, rape, decapitation, human cookery, and insanity. Richard III and Macbeth, on the other hand, exemplify the presence of unrestrained, brooding ambition in the power-hungry protagonist. Similarly, in such plays as Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* and John Marston's *Antonio's Revenge* we see the influence of such Senecan fixtures as ghosts speaking from beyond the grave, graphic violence, obsession with revenge, and even structural features such as choruses, use of stichomythia, and division into five acts.

The bleak content of the dramas was often tied to the notion of a moral lesson. Already Trevet's preface to the *Thyestes* argued that the play taught the correction of morals by example, as well as simply offering the audience enjoyment. The Jesuit Martín Antonio Delrio (1551–1608) defended the use of Roman drama in a Christian education by suggesting that it provided a masked instruction in wisdom, as did Mussato before him. Nonetheless, after the middle of the seventeenth century Seneca's drama fell largely into disrepute. The Restoration poet John Dryden (1631–1700) took the opportunity in the preface to his own *Oedipus* to criticize both Seneca's and Corneille's versions; of the former, he wrote that "Seneca [. . .] is always running after pompous expression, pointed sentences, and Philosophical notions, more proper for the Study than the Stage." The French dramatist Jean Racine (1639–1699) used Seneca as a model for his *Phèdre*, but at the same time claimed that his main debt was to Euripides. Not surprisingly, the Romantics did not find much to like in Seneca. Recently, however, an efflorescence of interest in both the literary and the performance aspects of Senecan drama has produced new editions, scholarly monographs, and the staging of some of the plays. Noteworthy here are Sarah Kane's adaptation *Phaedra's Love*, performed in New York in May 1996; Michael Elliot

Rutenberg's May 2005 dramatization of a post-holocaust *Oedipus* at Haifa University in Israel; and a 2007 Joanne Akalaitis production of the *Thyestes* at the Court Theater in Chicago.

A note on the translations: they are designed to be faithful to the Latin while reading idiomatically in English. The focus is on high standards of accuracy, clarity, and style in both the prose and the poetry. As such, the translations are intended to provide a basis for interpretive work rather than to convey personal interpretations. They eschew terminology that would imply a Judeo-Christian moral framework (e.g., "sin"). Where needed, notes have been supplied to explain proper names in mythology and geography.

For further information

On Seneca's life: Miriam T. Griffin, *Seneca: A Philosopher in Politics* (Oxford: 1976) and Paul Veyne, *Seneca: The Life of a Stoic*, translated from the French by David Sullivan (New York: 2003). On his philosophical thought: Brad Inwood, *Seneca: Stoic Philosophy at Rome* (Oxford: 2005), and Shadi Bartsch and David Wray, *Seneca and the Self* (Cambridge: 2009). On the dramas: A. J. Boyle, *Tragic Seneca: An Essay in the Theatrical Tradition* (New York and London: 1997); C. A. J. Littlewood, *Self-Representation and Illusion in Senecan Tragedy* (Oxford: 2004); and Thomas G. Rosenmeyer, *Senecan Drama and Stoic Cosmology* (Berkeley: 1989). On Seneca and Shakespeare: Robert S. Miola, *Shakespeare and Classical Tragedy: The Influence of Seneca* (Oxford: 1992) and Henry B. Charlton, *The Senecan Tradition in Renaissance Tragedy* (Manchester: 1946).

On Anger

Introduction

ROBERT A. KASTER

The Treatise

Sometime near the middle of the first century CE, Seneca's brother Annaeus Novatus asked him to "prescribe a way of soothing anger" (1.1.1). That, at any rate, is Seneca's claim in the first sentence of On *Anger*.[1] Writing—or purporting to write—in response to such a request was a long-established convention of polite letters, and it would be understood that the "you" whom Seneca addresses throughout the treatise represents a broad group of people beyond Novatus himself. Also conventional is the form that Seneca gave his response, a combination of theory and therapy in which the latter presupposes the former. Within the Stoic tradition that Seneca followed, the great philosopher Chrysippus (ca. 280–207 BCE) had written on the passions in four books that similarly presented his understanding of what the passions were before giving advice on how to cure them; and not quite one hundred years before Seneca took up the topic of anger, Cicero had done the like in the *Tusculan Disputations*—the only discussion of the passions in classical Latin more extensive than Seneca's—when he explained and assuaged grief in particular (Book 3) and the passions more generally (Book 4).[2]

The idea that our affective responses to life might require "therapy" will not seem odd in our own therapy-conscious culture, nor was it unique to the Stoics in antiquity: for example, the Epicurean Philodemus, in the first century BCE, included a therapeutic section in his own *On Anger*, and Plutarch, an adherent of Plato, wrote *On Controlling Anger* two generations after Seneca. But the Stoics took up the topic with special urgency, because alone among all ancient philosophical sects they believed (for reasons we will consider below) that the passions as we commonly know them are an evil per se. For the Stoics, the only sure therapy for the passions is their eradication. Following this doctrine, and focusing on anger because of its especially dreadful effects, Seneca divides his three books almost exactly in half: in Book 1 and the first half of Book 2 he defines

anger in orthodox Stoic terms, defends that conception of anger against objections, and analyzes the sequence of perceptions and judgments that constitute the passion; he then turns to anger's therapy in the rest of Book 2 and all of Book 3.[3] We can take a similar line, addressing first the theory and then the therapy in the two sections following. At the end we can briefly consider Seneca's conception of his audience and the way he speaks in trying to heal them.

The Theory

Stoicism treats the passions as central to ethics in a way and to a degree unparalleled in other ancient philosophical systems: one would not go too far to say that thoroughly understanding Stoic views on the passions requires thoroughly understanding Stoic views on being human. Fortunately, we do not need to attempt that thorough understanding for the purposes at hand, because Seneca's *On Anger* is itself far from being a thorough Stoic account of the passions.[4] Because Seneca is concerned less with the theory for its own sake than with the therapy based upon it, he gives only as much of the former as he considers necessary for the latter.[5] We can follow suit, first sketching some general principles in fairly broad strokes before concentrating on the points that Seneca treats as essential.

To start, let's consider the normative human beings who represent the Stoic ideal, the people understood to live the best human life: the wise. If such people happened to exist (and they are, at best, extraordinarily rare), they would live exactly as nature—which is to say, the providential god who orders the universe—equipped them to live: hence the Stoic doctrine that the best human life is the life "according to nature." Two elements of that natural equipment are especially important in themselves and in their bearing on the passions. The first is an innate impulse that we would probably call the "survival instinct" and that the Stoics called "appropriation" (*oikeiosis*): from earliest childhood we naturally regard ourselves as proper objects of our own concern, and that concern impels us to seek what promotes our health and well-being.[6] Second, and most important of all nature's endowments, there is the capacity for reason that mature human beings, alone of all animals, have in common with the gods. To a significant degree, the best human life simply consists

in combining these two elements of our natural makeup, using our reason to seek what is good for ourselves.

But the matter is not as simple as that formulation makes it seem, because—here the brushstrokes must be especially broad—most of us have great difficulty recognizing that what is good for us is not just what is good for us as living creatures (the "creature comforts"), but what is good for us specifically as human beings with the special capacities humans have. Just because of those capacities, the only thing that is truly good and choiceworthy in itself is virtue, and virtue is nothing other than the mind's sure and consistent exercise of reason (conversely, the only thing that is truly evil in itself is vice, which is nothing other than the failure of reason). If our minds always conformed to this good, all our judgments would be valid and all our beliefs would be true, consistent, and mutually supporting: we would have not merely beliefs but knowledge. A rational mind of that sort, consistently making its sure judgments and right choices, acts "according to nature," and that action just is the final good, which just is virtue: traits like courage or temperance or loyalty that are called virtues are just the capacities of the rational mind to make right choices in particular circumstances. And because these are the actions of our own minds, they are always under our own control. As the Stoics put it, they are always "up to us"—in fact, they are the only things that are always "up to us." Hence, the only thing that is truly and always good in itself is also the only thing that is truly and always up to us; and the same is true of the only thing that is truly evil in itself. All other things external to our minds' movements—health and sickness, wealth and poverty, love and loss—are, strictly speaking, indifferent: they have no necessary bearing on the best human life. To be sure, we can appropriately prefer health to sickness and do what we reasonably can to acquire what we prefer. But we must never mistake what we prefer for what is good in itself, or seek what we prefer as though it were an end in itself.

That the unique good is also uniquely in our control is fundamentally good news, and in that respect Stoicism is fundamentally optimistic. But for virtually all of us there is, as I have noted, a difficulty: because our intellectual development is incomplete, and because that development tends to be debased or misdirected by our upbringing and by broader cultural influences, we almost certainly

will misidentify external objects as genuine goods or evils, and we will therefore make choices—at least very regularly, and in most cases almost always—unmindful of what is truly good. In that respect Stoicism is fundamentally pessimistic.

To put the matter in more specific terms that also bring us directly to the subject of the passions, we can consider the following syllogism:

A: When a good for me is present, it is appropriate for my mind to expand (Stoic terminology for what we call "elation" or "delight").
B: A thing of the sort *n* is a good for me.
C: A thing of the sort *n* is now present.
Conclusion: It is now appropriate for my mind to expand.[7]

In the Stoic view, this conclusion is false when any thing other than virtue is present, because premise B is true only when the predicate "is a good for me" has "virtue" as its subject. We, however, very likely take that premise to be valid for any number of things—money, sex, power, prestige, and the like—that are commonly but falsely accounted as goods. As a consequence, we assent to conclusions that are false,[8] and our minds expand irrationally and excessively in the presence of false goods. Such is our common experience of vibrant happiness, and in Stoic terms that experience is simply founded on error: it is nothing but the action of a mind modified in the direction of unreason.[9] And what is true of delight is also true of all other common passions that we experience in response to the presence or prospect of false goods or false evils: they are all the consequence of assenting to impressions from which we should instead withhold our assent.[10] Further, because properly giving or withholding assent is "up to us" as rational creatures, our passions are not just deformations of reason; they are voluntary deformations. In short, we are morally responsible for our common passions and any actions we perform when in their grip, and our common passions testify to how often we fail to measure up to that responsibility.[11] That is why Stoicism famously seeks to rid us of all the passions that shape our daily lives: the shape is warped, the passions themselves nothing but wrong judgments made one after the other.

This brings us to anger, which Seneca—following Stoic tradition—defined as a strong desire for revenge when you judge

that you have been unjustly harmed ("wronged").[12] Here is Seneca's most complete statement of how the passion works (2.4.1):

> There's [an] initial involuntary movement—a preparation for the passion, as it were, and a kind of threatening signal; there's a second movement accompanied by an expression of will not yet stubbornly resolved, to the effect that "I should be avenged, since I've been harmed" or "this man should be punished, since he's committed a crime"; the third movement's already out of control, it desires vengeance not if it's appropriate but come what may, having overthrown reason.

The "movements" that Seneca speaks of are movements of the mind, and it is important to note that only one of them is under our control. As Seneca has explained just previously (2.2.1–3.5), the initial movement—a mental "blow" or "jolt" (*ictus*)—provides the first intimation that something has happened to cause a change in our psychic and physical state. We experience it involuntarily—Seneca compares it, for example, to shivering when splashed with cold water, or to blushing—and it is in fact both involuntary and an ineradicable part of our natural makeup; it is therefore experienced even by someone of perfect reason, the wise man.[13] The second movement then attaches an apparent cause to the initial, involuntary "blow," perceiving it as "a wrong" (rather than, say, "a splash of cold water"), and conceives an action appropriate to that cause (taking revenge, rather than grabbing a towel): it is at this stage that the crucial granting or withholding of assent occurs. If we grant assent, we experience the third movement—anger proper—which has "overthrown reason": at this stage, our mind has been wholly modified in the direction of vice, and its movement is no more under our control than was the first "jolt." Indeed, at one point Seneca, again following a long Stoic tradition, compares the movement to hurling oneself off a cliff.[14]

Clearly, then, it is crucial to get right that second, voluntary movement, when "someone has reckoned he was harmed [and] wants to take revenge" but is still capable of withholding assent because his "mind [is] still obedient to reason" (2.3.4). Equally clearly, getting that movement right means getting right the thought that is involved: "I should be avenged, since I've been harmed." If we unpack that thought and express it as a syllogism, it should look something like this:

A: Seeking what is good for me is appropriate.
B: Revenge for being wronged is a good for me.
C: I have just been wronged.
Conclusion: It is appropriate that I now seek revenge.

The thought labeled "conclusion" here corresponds to the impression that gives anger its driving impulse: if I assent to that impression—if I commit myself to its truth—I will seek revenge, irresistibly, as Seneca says.[15] Withholding assent therefore should first of all depend on recognizing as false one or more of the premises on which the conclusion rests—propositions A, B, and C—and these, quite clearly, are themselves a rather diverse lot. Proposition C corresponds to another sort of impression, an evaluative perception (not just "I have been hurt" but "I have been hurt unjustly = wronged") arising from some fresh event. Propositions A and B, by contrast, are plainly not fresh impressions but settled beliefs, convictions acquired long before the relevant event. They are also, plainly, different sorts of belief. Proposition A is in fact a true belief, arising from the self-"appropriation" already noted as part of our human makeup: it might even be called a "natural belief." Proposition B, by contrast, is clearly a product of culture, and in Stoic terms it is dead wrong, twice over: it forgets that only virtue is "according to nature" and thus can be labeled "a good for me," and it transfers the label instead to an act of unreasoning payback that mistakes the nature of just punishment.[16] Withholding assent, therefore, should leave proposition A unshaken but depend either on recognizing that the cultural belief (B) is false, or on recognizing that the fresh impression (C) is unfounded, unreliable, or possibly both. Accordingly, when Seneca tries to cure us of our vulnerability to anger, his therapy should proceed by attacking the same elements; optimally, it should succeed in destroying the false belief. Whether and how his therapy does these things are the questions to which we can now turn.

The Therapy

Midway through Book 2, Seneca signals that we have completed the theoretical part of the discussion—on "the questions anger raises"—and are about to begin our therapy: "Let's move on to its

cures" (2.18.1). He first defines "two main aims: that we not fall into anger, and that we not do wrong while angry," and these aims are immediately glossed as "resist[ing] anger" and "restrain[ing] anger" (ibid.); the second aim at once strikes something of a foreboding note, insofar as its description suggests—accurately, as we shall see—that here the aim is really not so much cure, in the sense of reversing a diseased condition, as damage control. Then, in the balance of the book, Seneca offers advice on ways to avoid anger (we will consider the nature of the advice below). Satisfied that the first aim has been achieved, we turn to Book 3 expecting it to address the remaining aim—that of "restraining anger"—and that expectation seems confirmed by the book's first sentence: "Now, Novatus, we'll try to do what you chiefly wanted: excise anger from our minds, or at least rein it in and slow its assaults" (3.1.1).

But matters are not so straightforward. Before turning to the argument proper, Seneca reminds us once again, and at some length, how fearsome anger is.[17] When he and we pick up the discussion's thread, we find that the book's purpose is now differently conceived (3.5.2):[18] "Since the first goal is not to become angry, the second is to cease when angered, and the third is to cure another's anger too, I shall first tell how to avoid succumbing to anger, then how to free ourselves from it, and finally how to restrain an angry person, calm him, and lead him back to sanity."

Thus the first segment, on avoiding anger (3.5.3–9.5), addresses the aim already treated in 2.18–36—but then so too, in the event, does the second, longer segment (3.10–38). There Seneca begins by addressing the need to "rein in" anger—by recognizing its onset and stifling it (3.10.1–2, 12.5–13.5)—and he offers both practical advice for doing so (3.13.3–5) and historical examples to demonstrate that it can be done (3.14.1–15.2). But the distinction between stifling anger at its onset and keeping it from starting is perhaps too slender to maintain: for much in 3.10–15, and virtually everything thereafter that is not merely tangential, resumes the advice that Seneca has already given for preventing anger.[19] It is only at the very end of the book, when he turns to the topic of treating another person's anger (3.39–40), that our attention is reclaimed by cure, properly so-called, now aided by the detachment that is possible when the sufferer is not oneself.

And no doubt this imbalance between prevention and cure is only what we should expect: if surrendering to anger is indeed like throwing yourself off a cliff (1.7.4), there really should be no cure, beyond the slender hope of grabbing some random outcropping just as you go over the chasm's rim.

If prevention, then, is vastly the more important goal of Seneca's "therapy," we should consider the main lines of the advice he gives and, in particular, the way that advice responds to the critical elements of anger's syllogism:

A: Seeking what is good for me is appropriate.
B: Revenge for being wronged is a good for me.
C: I have just been wronged.
Conclusion: It is appropriate that I now seek revenge.

Sorting the relevant bits of advice into several broad categories, we find the following:[20]

Avoid people, activities, and circumstances that provoke anger: 3.6.3–9.5, 10.4–11.1, 37.1.

Judge others' acts and intentions fairly, accurately, and with a proper sense of proportion: 2.22.2–27.4, 2.29–31.5, 3.12.1–4, 26.1, 26.3–5, 28.4–30.2, 32.2–34.2.

Make allowances for others and consider grounds for excusing them: 3.24.3–4, 25.2–3, 27.2–3.

Justly assess yourself and your actions, accurately gauge who you are and what you are due:[21] 2.28, 3.12.1, 24.1–2, 25.1, 30.3–31.3, 35, 36.4, 37.5.

Regard matters with the calm forbearance or humor that perspective brings: 3.5.8–6.2, 11.2–4, 13.6, 22.1–23.8, 37.2–4, 38.

Anger is inexpedient, with material or reputational consequences, so consider its costs:[22] 2.33.1–36.6, 3.5.3–7, 25.4, 27.1, 27.4–28.3, 32.1.

Recognize that the wrongdoer suffers by doing the wrong: 2.30.2, 3.26.2.

Recognize that doing harm to another is contrary to human nature: 2.31.6–32.3.

Comparing those categories with the elements of the syllogism that therapy should target—the false (to a Stoic) cultural belief that

revenge is a good, and the fresh impression that one has suffered a wrong—produces clear and striking results. Apart from the first category of advice, which comprises various ways to avoid occasions where the syllogism must be confronted at all, most of the advice attacks the fresh impression, not the underlying, ingrained cultural belief. Judging the apparent offender fairly, seeking reasons to excuse him, having a properly measured sense of one's own deserts or blamelessness, maintaining the perspective of the "great-spirited" man who can regard apparent slights as trivial or as occasions for a joke: these are all plainly aimed at negating, qualifying, or suspending the thought "have just been wronged,"and they are the tactics that Seneca highlights near the end of Book 3, when he offers as a model for his readers the nightly exercise of self-examination that he performs (3.36–38).[23] Very little indeed seeks to subvert the core belief that vengeance is a good, and—perhaps most strikingly—most of that little attacks the belief on prudential grounds by stressing anger's costs: vengeance is a time-consuming and tiring business (3.27.1), or in smashing someone's mouth you might snag your hand on a broken tooth (3.28.3). Only very rarely is moral argument offered as therapy to counter the cultural value placed on revenge: there is the thought, first importantly advanced by the Socrates of Plato, that it is worse for one to do wrong than to suffer it; and—for the space of a paragraph late in Book 2—there is the Stoic doctrine that revenge is contrary to human nature.[24]

Taken as a whole, Seneca's therapy is as sensible and humane as his goal. But beyond its firmly cognitive starting point—the view that any passion just is the mind as it has been modified by a judgment that is "up to us"—scarcely any of it is specifically Stoic. Much the largest part seeks in various commonsense ways to moderate the way we respond to impressions, while it fights shy of what a Stoic should regard as the fundamental issue and the real evil: the deeply ingrained cultural belief that vengeance is a good.

Yet to say this is not to fault Seneca. Rather, if we bear in mind that he was not just a philosopher but also a consummate rhetorician, we might infer that he had a rhetorician's shrewd sense of the audience he was trying to reach. That sense would have told him that in trying to reach such an audience it was unwise to bet too much on the power of philosophy.

The Therapist and His Audience

That audience surely formed what a stand-up comic would call a "tough room." The "you" whom Seneca spies when he glances over his brother's shoulder to address the wider world is a wealthy man, socially well-connected and supremely spoiled, leading a life of fabulous privilege and comfort in a world of desperate squalor: he expects his drinks to be cooled by snow carted down from distant mountains (2.26.4), he expects the furnishings and appointments of his home to be just so (3.35.5), he expects others to pay him every ounce of respect he believes he deserves (2.24.1), he expects his slaves to be nimble in attending to his wants (2.25.1), he expects any number of other things that serve his pleasure and his will—and he expects it all right now and all the time. Granted, a fair number of the details that Seneca deploys in sketching his implied audience are familiar from the quasi-satirical conventions of Roman moralizing, and some of what he says must be discounted for that reason. But probably not very much, for the overall picture is completely consistent with Seneca's dicta on child-rearing (2.18.2ff., esp. 2.21), which are offered in a sober, non-satirical mode and—because they mostly stress what should not be done as a matter of principle—can reasonably be taken to show what was often done as a matter of fact. Children of the elite from an early age had their parents' wealth spread out before them, had their slightest disappointments anxiously assuaged, and had exceptional power over others (they might, for example, have a slave beaten on a whim). That environment must have produced countless proud princes, each raised to believe that the world revolved around him and his wants, and that "no" was not a word to be used in his presence.[25] No wonder such people needed help in calibrating their judgment of what constituted a slight.

Seneca is, of course, capable of approaching the job in the austerely analytic manner expected of a philosopher. Book 2, in particular, shows him in this mode, carefully discussing the cognitive sequence involved in anger at the book's beginning (2.1–4) and regularly marking out formal divisions of the discussion in its second half.[26] But it is not the mode that he finds most congenial (cf. esp. 2.1.1–2), or useful. Much of the time he prefers to take "you" by the shoulders and give a good shake.

Hence the forceful gestures that are the hallmarks of Seneca's homiletic style: the heated, highly detailed portraits of rage that open Books 1 and 3, the tone that inclines toward sarcasm or hectoring (e.g., 3.26.1f., 32.1, 35), his responses to supposed objections and assertions (e.g., 1.3.1–2, 1.6.1, 1.8.4), his playing the ventriloquist by putting words in historical actors' mouths (e.g., 1.18.6, 3.40.4), the frequent repetition of points or arguments already made,[27] the catalogs of faults and their effects that aim to impress with their sheer weight (e.g., 1.2.1, 2.9.3, 3.2.3f.), the heaping up of historical examples,[28] and the willingness both to sacrifice facts for the sake of a pithy and striking phrase and to use commonsense language to make his points in terms that, taken strictly, contradict Stoic doctrine.[29] The last habit, especially, has sometimes caused Seneca to be criticized or misunderstood, but it is surely right to regard it as his way of getting his teaching launched so that it will reach his audience and speak to it in its own language.[30]

And if we take Seneca to mean what he says, he had to regard the need to reach that audience as a moral imperative no less urgent than the obligation to rescue a man drowning an arm's length away. Anger's evil, both moral and mundane, was patent; Seneca was sure he knew its cause and its cure, and he was tied to the sufferers by links that—as a matter of Stoic doctrine—were no less strong than those that tied him to Novatus.[31] We are all bound to each other, the Stoics held, as our limbs are bound to our bodies, and the same innate impulse that moves us from birth to seek the good for ourselves should, as we come to better understanding, move us to seek the good for all others, too. In attempting to "prescribe a way of soothing anger" for his brother, Seneca is doing just what a Stoic should, however narrowly or broadly the term "brother" is understood.[32]

Selected Reading

Martha Nussbaum. 1994. The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 316–401.

Tad Brennan. 2005. The Stoic Life: Emotions, Duties, and Fate. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

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To Novatus on Anger: Book 1
Book 3 of the Dialogues

1 You've pressed me, Novatus, to prescribe a way of soothing anger: from this I infer that you've rightly come to fear this passion, especially and above all, as foul and frenzied.[33] All other passions have something calm and quiet about them; this one consists entirely in aroused assault.[34] Raging with an inhuman desire to inflict pain in combat and shed blood in punishment, it cares nothing for itself provided it can harm the other: it throws itself upon the very weapons raised against it, hungry for a vengeance that will bring down the avenger too.[35]

(2) Accordingly, some wise men have said that anger is a brief madness:[36] for it's no less lacking in self-control, forgetful of decency, unmindful of personal ties, unrelentingly intent on its goal, shut off from rational deliberation, stirred for no substantial reason, unsuited to discerning what's fair and true, just like a collapsing building that's reduced to rubble even as it crushes what it falls upon. **(3)** Moreover, you can tell that the people whom anger seizes aren't sane by considering their very demeanor. As madmen exhibit specific symptoms—a bold and threatening expression, a knitted brow, a fierce set of the features, a quickened step, restless hands, a changed complexion, frequent, very forceful sighing—so do angry people show the same symptoms: **(4)** their eyes blaze and flicker, their faces flush deeply as the blood surges up from the depths of the heart,[37] their lips quiver and their teeth grind, their hair bristles and stands on end, their breathing is forced and ragged, their joints crack as they're wrenched,[38] they groan and bellow, their speech is inarticulate and halting, they repeatedly clap their hands together and stamp the ground, their entire bodies are aroused as they "act out anger's massive menace,"[39] they have the repellent and terrifying features of people who are deformed and bloated—it would be hard to say whether the vice is more abhorrent or disfiguring.

(5) All other passions you can hide away and nurse in secret, but anger thrusts itself forward and becomes visible in your features, seething all the more plainly the greater it grows. Surely you're familiar with the way all animals behave, how they give off telltale signs once they've been roused to do harm, as their entire bodies pass out of their customary, calm condition and exaggerate their natural ferocity. **(6)** Boars foam at the mouth and grind their tusks to sharpen them, bulls toss their horns about in the empty air and scatter the sand with their stamping hoofs, lions roar, snakes make their necks flare when they're provoked, rabid dogs glower: no animal is naturally so terrifying and dangerous but that its ferocity increases visibly once anger has assailed it.[40] **(7)** Of course I'm not unaware that the rest of the passions, too, are difficult to hide, that lust and fear and recklessness signal their presence and can be recognized in advance. Any unusually forceful disturbance inevitably causes a stir in one's expression. What's the difference, then? Other passions are visible, but anger makes itself obvious.

2 With regard now to its damaging effects: no pestilence has been more costly for the human race.[41] Butchery and poisoning, suits and countersuits,[42] cities destroyed, entire nations wiped out, leading citizens sold on the auction block,[43] dwellings put to the torch, then the blaze, unchecked by the city walls, turning vast tracts of land bright with the attacking flame. **(2)** Consider the cities of vast renown whose foundation stones can now hardly be made out: anger cast these cities down.[44] Consider the wastelands, deserted, without an inhabitant for many miles: anger emptied them. Consider the many leaders known to history as examples of grim destiny: anger ran one through in his bed, struck another dead (sacrilege!) at the dinner table,[45] tore another limb from limb in full view of the crowded forum, the very bosom of the law.[46] It caused one man to shed his blood as his son's victim, another to expose his royal throat to a slave's armed hand, another to splay his limbs on the cross. **(3)** And I'm still talking about punishments visited on individuals; now set aside those whom blazing anger assailed one man at a time and consider whole assemblies mowed down, the common folk butchered when an army was loosed upon them, whole peoples condemned to die in promiscuous slaughter * * * ?[47]

(3a) Anger turns everything from what is best and most righteous

to the opposite. It causes whoever has come into its clutches to forget his duty: make a father angry, he's an enemy; make a son angry, he's a parricide. Anger makes a mother a stepmother,[48] a fellow-citizen a foreign enemy, a king a tyrant. (Martin of Braga, *On Anger* 2)

(3b) Anger is the desire to take vengeance for a wrong or, as Posidonius says, the desire to punish the person by whom you reckon you were unjustly harmed. Some have defined it this way: anger is the arousal of the mind to harm the person who has either harmed oneself or wished to do so. (Lactantius, *On the Anger of God* 17.13)[49]

(4) * * * as though they're failing to show concern for us or disdaining our authority.[50] Why else does the crowd become angry with gladiators, and so unfairly that it thinks it an offence that they're not glad to die? The crowd judges that it's being treated with contempt, and it changes—in its looks and gestures and passion—from spectator to opponent. **(5)** Whatever that sort of thing is, it's not anger but quasi-anger,[51] like that of children who want to pummel the ground if they've fallen and often don't even know why they're angry: they just are, without a reason and without being wronged—yet not without a certain impression of being wronged,[52] and not without some desire for payback. Accordingly, they beguile themselves with make-believe blows and are appeased when people beg their pardon with a tearful pretense: their grievance, which is not true grievance, is removed by a vengeance that is not true vengeance.

3 An objection: "we become angry, often, not with people who have harmed us but with those who intend to harm us: from this it's clear that anger is not the product of a wrong." It's true that we become angry with those who intend to harm us, but they harm us by that very intention: one who intends to commit a wrong is already committing it.[53] **(2)** Another objection: "it's clear that anger is not a desire for payback, because the very weakest people are often angry at the most powerful: they don't desire a payback they have no hope of achieving." In the first place, I said that it's the desire for exacting a payback, not the capacity to do so; and people desire even things they cannot achieve. In the second place, no one is so lowly that he cannot conceive a hope of making even the loftiest pay: we are all quite capable[54] when it comes to doing harm.

(3) Aristotle's definition is not very different from ours:[55] he says that anger is the strong desire to return pain for pain. (The

difference between his definition and ours cannot be explained briefly.)[56] Against both definitions it's objected that wild animals become angry, but without the provocation of being wronged and not for the sake of payback or causing another pain; even if such is the effect of their behavior, it's not their aim. **(4)** But it must be said that wild animals—and all creatures save the human being—are without anger: though anger is reason's enemy, it comes into being only where reason resides.[57] Wild animals have impulses—frenzy, ferocity, aggression—but they no more have anger than they have luxury, even though they're less self-controlled than humans when it comes to certain pleasures. **(5)** There's no reason to believe the person who says:[58]

> The boar forgets to grow angry, the hind, to trust
> in flight, the bear to attack hardy herds.

By "grow angry" he means "be stirred up," "be goaded"; they no more know how to "grow angry" than they know how to "forgive." **(6)** Animals incapable of speech lack human passions, though they have certain impulses that resemble passions. Were that not the case, if they knew love and hate, they would also know friendship and animosity, disagreement and harmony. And though some traces of these things exist even in animals, they're the proper possession—for good and ill alike—of human hearts. **(7)** Only the human being has been allotted practical wisdom, foresight, scrupulousness, deliberation: animals are barred not only from human virtues, but also from human vices. Their entire constitution, inside and out, is unlike the human: their ruling principle[59] is differently fashioned. Just as they have a voice—but one that is inarticulate and confused and incapable of forming words—and just as they have a tongue—but one that is strictly constrained and not free to perform varied movements—so also that ruling principle is coarse and unrefined. Accordingly, it grasps the visible presentations of things that provoke its impulsive behavior, but in murky and confused form. **(8)** Consequently, animals' attacks and alarms are vigorous, but they're not fear and anxiety and sadness and anger; merely certain states similar to those passions. For that reason they quickly pass away and are transformed into their opposites: animals that have just been in a rage and a panic now graze quietly; restful sleep follows immediately on bellowing stampedes.

4 What anger is has been sufficiently explained, and how it differs from "wrathfulness" is plain:[60] the same way that being "drunk" differs from being "a drunkard," and being "afraid" differs from being "fearful." Someone who is "angry" might not be "wrathful"; someone who is "wrathful" might sometimes not be "angry." **(2)** All the other categories that distinguish different kinds of anger with a differentiated terminology in Greek lack their own labels in Latin, and so I'll pass them by[61]—though it's true that we use the terms *amarus* [bitter] and *acerbus* [harsh], as also *stomachosus* [testy] and *rabiosus* [frenzied] and *clamosus* [ranting] and *difficilis* [difficult] and *asper* [prickly], which are all different forms of anger; you can also include among these *morosus* [peevish], a hypersensitive sort of wrathfulness. **(3)** Indeed, there are certain forms of anger that simmer down short of shouting, some that are both frequent and difficult to shake, some that are savagely physical and not very verbal, some that are let loose in a torrent of bitter abuse and curses; some forms don't go beyond complaining and sulking, some are deep and weighty and inward-turning. There are a thousand other varieties of this polymorphous evil.

5 So far we've considered what anger is, whether it befalls any animal save a human, how it differs from wrathfulness, and how many types there are. Now let's consider whether anger is in accord with nature, and whether it's useful and thus should be retained to some degree.[62]

(2) Whether it is in accord with nature will be evident if we consider the human person closely.[63] What is milder, when its mental condition is not warped? What, on the other hand, is crueler than anger? What is more inclined to love others than a human? What is more hostile than anger? The human is born to give and receive assistance—anger, to destroy. The one wants to form associations, the other, to secede; the one wants to be of benefit, the other, to do harm; the one wants to aid even strangers, the other, to assault even the nearest and dearest. Human beings are prepared even to sacrifice themselves for the sake of others' advantage; anger is prepared to plunge into danger, provided it drags the other down. **(3)** Does anyone, then, show greater ignorance of the nature of things than the person who ascribes this bestial, destructive vice to nature's best and most polished creation? Anger (as I said)[64] is hungry for payback; the presence of this lust in a human being's utterly peaceful breast

in no way accords with nature. Human life is constituted by the harmonious exchange of benefits, and is held fast in a pact of mutual assistance not by fear but by mutual affection.

6 An objection: "Surely scolding is sometimes needed, no?" Of course! But reasoned scolding, without anger; for the point is not to do harm, but to heal under the guise of harming. For just as we heat some twisted metal shafts to straighten them, and use wedges to apply pressure not to shatter them but to remove the warp, so we straighten out people's characters with physical pain and mental distress once they've been warped by vice.[65] **(2)** To be sure, a physician, when faced with mild disorders, at first tries a slight modification of the daily regimen: he imposes some order on food, drink, and exercise and thereby tries to build up the person's health simply by making his way of life coherent. The next thing is to let moderation do some good. If moderation and order do no good, the physician prunes some elements of the regimen away; if the patient still doesn't respond, the physician forbids him food and tries to unburden his body with fasting. If these gentler measures get nowhere, he has recourse to bleeding and—if limbs do harm by spreading the disease through their attachment to the body—amputation. No treatment that has a healthful outcome is deemed harsh.[66] **(3)** In the same way it's appropriate that a person who administers the laws and guides a civil community should seek to heal people's characters with words for as long as he can, and rather gentle words at that, to urge the proper course of action and instill in their minds a desire for what is honorable and fair, so that they will hate vice and value virtue.[67] At the next stage he should adopt a more severe way of speaking, but one that still only warns and reproves. Finally, he should have recourse to penalties, of a sort that are still fairly mild and not irrevocable: he should impose the worst penalties on the worst crimes, on the principle that no one should die save in a case where death is a favor even to the one who is dying.[68] **(4)** In this one respect will he differ from physicians: whereas they provide an easy escape to those on whom they cannot bestow life, he compels the condemned to depart from life scorned and covered in disgrace, not because he takes pleasure in any man's punishment—such inhuman bestiality is far removed from the wise—but so that it might be a lesson to all, as the commonwealth benefits from the death of those who didn't wish to benefit it while alive.

A human being's nature, then, doesn't seek payback;[69] it follows that anger itself is not in accord with nature, since it does seek payback. **(5)** I shall also adduce an argument from Plato—what harm can it do to use others' belongings, when they overlap with what is our own?—who says, "A good man causes no harm."[70] Payback harms: therefore, payback doesn't suit a good man, and for the same reason neither does anger, to which payback is suited. If a good man takes no delight in payback, neither will he take any delight in the passion that finds pleasure in payback. Anger, therefore, is not natural.

7 "Isn't it possible that we ought to take on anger as an ally, even though it's not natural, because it has often been useful? It raises our spirits and spurs us on; without it courage accomplishes nothing splendid in warfare: it needs that flame set to the kindling, that goad to stir the bold and send them into harm's way. That's the reason some people think it best to control anger, not do away with it, and to reduce it to a healthy mean by stripping away the excess while retaining the element that prevents action from turning feeble and the mind's vivid energy from being sapped."[71] **(2)** In the first place, it's easier to keep harmful agents out and not admit them than to direct and control them once they've been admitted; for when they've taken up tenancy they're more powerful than the one who would rule them, and they tolerate no cutbacks or diminution.[72] **(3)** In the second place, reason itself, which is entrusted with the reins,[73] is in control only so long as it's kept separate from the passions; once it has mingled with them and become polluted, it cannot keep them in check, though it could have kept them out. Thought, once it has been shaken and dislodged from its proper footing, becomes a slave of the thing that shoves it along. **(4)** Certain things are within our control at first, whereas the subsequent stages carry us along with a force all their own and leave us no way back. People who have jumped off a cliff retain no independent judgment and cannot offer resistance or slow the descent of their bodies in freefall: that irrevocable leap strips away all deliberation and regret, and they cannot help but arrive at an outcome they would have been free to reject at the outset.[74] Just so, once the mind has submitted to anger, love, and the other passions, it's not allowed to check its onrush: its own weight and the downward-tending nature of vices must—must—carry it along and drive it down to the depths.

8 The best course is to reject straightway the initial prickings of anger, to fight against its first sparks, and to struggle not to succumb to it.[75] Once it has begun to carry us off course it's difficult to sail back to safety, since not a jot of reason remains once the passion has been let in and some sovereign right has been granted to it by our own will:[76] it will thereafter do not what you allow but what it wants. **(2)** The enemy—I stress this point—must be held at bay on the first frontier; when it has entered and made its way through the gates, it accepts no limits from those it has taken captive. Indeed, the mind is not sequestered, keeping a watch for the passions as things external and apart, so that it can keep them from going farther than they ought. Rather, the mind itself turns into the passion:[77] that is why it cannot summon back its useful, healthy vigor once it has been betrayed and weakened. **(3)** Reason and passion, as I said, don't have separate and distinct dwelling places but are the mind's transformation to a better and worse condition. How then will a reason that has been seized and overwhelmed by vices resurrect itself once it has yielded to anger? Or how will it free itself from a murky state in which the admixture of baser elements predominates?

(4) An objection: "But some people control themselves when they're angry." Is it the case, then, that they do nothing that anger dictates, or something? If nothing, then clearly anger is not needed for getting things done—the reason that you were summoning its assistance, as though it had some capacity more robust than reason. **(5)** Next, I put this question: is anger more powerful than reason, or weaker? If stronger, how will reason be able to set a limit on it, since as a rule only weaker entities are obedient? If weaker, then reason is sufficient in itself to get things done, without anger, and doesn't look for the weaker party's aid. **(6)** "But some people, when they're angry, behave consistently and control themselves." When? When anger is already at the vanishing point and is withdrawing of its own accord, not when it's actually on the boil; for then it's stronger. **(7)** "But surely sometimes, even in anger, people let off those whom they hate, unhurt and untouched, and restrain themselves from doing harm." They do: when? When one passion has collided with another and either fear or desire has had its way.[78] Anger then has been stilled not through reason's favor, but through the passions' wicked, treacherous entente.[79]

9 Furthermore, anger has nothing useful about it and doesn't stir the mind to warlike deeds. Virtue should never be assisted by vice, but is sufficient in itself. Whenever there's need of aggressive action, virtue doesn't grow angry but rises up and is stirred only so much as it reckons necessary, then grows calm, just as missiles let fly by catapults are in the control of the artillerymen who calibrate the catapults' torque. **(2)** Aristotle says:[80] "Anger is necessary, nor can any struggle be carried to victory without it: it must fill the mind and kindle the spirit, but it must be employed as a foot soldier, not the general." That's wrong: if it listens to reason and follows where it leads, it's no longer anger, which has defiance as its defining trait; but if it fights against reason, is not still when ordered, and is carried forward by ferocious desire, it's as useless as the mind's servant as a soldier who ignores the signal for retreat. **(3)** Hence, if it allows itself to be limited, it should be called by some other name: it has ceased to be anger, which I take to be unbridled and untamed. If on the other hand it doesn't tolerate a limit, it's destructive and shouldn't be counted among the auxiliaries. Thus it either is not anger or is useless.[81] **(4)** For if someone exacts a penalty, not because he's eager to punish but because it's the right thing, he shouldn't be counted among the angry. A useful soldier will know how to act in accordance with the strategy; passions, for their part, are equally bad as soldier and as generals.

10 Accordingly, reason will never add imprudent and violent impulses to its armory: over these reason itself has no authority, and it could never restrain them without setting similar counter-impulses against them, like fear against anger, anger against sluggishness, desire against fear. **(2)** May virtue be far removed from this evil, that reason should ever take refuge in vice! A mind in this state—protected by its own failings, unable to be brave except when angry, or energetic except when desirous, or quiet except when afraid—can find no reliable tranquility but is necessarily shaken and tossed about: a mind that becomes a slave to some passion must exist as though in a tyrant's realm. Isn't it shameful to make virtues depend upon the patronage of vices? **(3)** Furthermore, reason ceases to be capable of anything if it's capable of nothing without passion; it begins to be passion's twin, its match. What difference does it make if passion without reason is as ill-considered as reason without passion is impotent? The two are

equal where one cannot exist without the other. Yet who could stand to equate passion with reason? **(4)** An assertion: "Passion is useful if and only if it's moderate." No: if and only if it's useful by nature.[82] But if it shrugs off reason's commands, it will achieve by its "moderation" only this: the less there is of it, the less harm it will do. A moderate passion is simply a moderate evil.[83]

11 An assertion: "But when faced by the enemy we need anger."[84] Nowhere do we need it less: that's when our aggressive actions must be controlled and obedient to commands, not given free play. For example: what does in the barbarians, who are physically so much sturdier and inured to toil, except anger, which is its own worst enemy? Gladiators too—their skill protects them, anger leaves them exposed. **(2)** Furthermore, what need is there of anger, when reason gains the same end? Do you suppose that a hunter feels anger toward wild beasts? Yet he both faces them as they approach and pursues them as they flee, and reason accomplishes all of this, without anger. When so many thousands of Cimbri and Teutoni[85] poured over the Alps, what destroyed them—so utterly that their people back home learned the news only by rumor, since not even a messenger escaped—what destroyed them if not the fact they had anger instead of virtue?[86] And just as anger sometimes has been known to provide momentum and lay low the things in its path, so it has more often been self-destructive. **(3)** Is there anything more spirited than the Germans? Anything keener on the attack? Anything more eager for the arms of war that they know from birth, that nurture and sustain them, that they have as their sole passion, turning their backs on all else? Anything tougher when it comes to enduring harsh conditions, thanks to the fact that they mostly leave their bodies uncovered and take no shelter from their unendingly freezing climate? **(4)** Yet Spaniards and Gauls and men of Asia and Syria (virtually women when it comes to war) cut them down, before one of our legions is even in sight,[87] when their inclination to anger—and nothing else—makes them easy prey. Imagine adding reason and discipline to those bodies and minds that have not known pampering, luxury, wealth: to say the least, we will certainly have to revive our old Roman ways! **(5)** How else did Fabius restore our dominion's shaken forces than by knowing how to take his time and drag things out and delay, all things that angry people don't know how to do?[88] Our dominion would have been lost had Fabius

dared to do all that anger urged: he took thought for our common fortunes and—having judged our strength to be such that any loss meant total loss—he set aside his sense of grievance and desire for revenge and focused solely on expedient opportunities. He vanquished his anger before he vanquished Hannibal. **(6)** What about Scipio?[89] Didn't he leave behind Hannibal, the Carthaginian army, all the things that should have roused his anger, and carry the war into Africa, taking his time in a way that made his enemies think it evidence of self-indulgent sloth?[90] **(7)** What about the second Scipio?[91] Didn't he keep Numantia under siege a very long time, regarding with equanimity this spur to resentment—his own and the commonwealth's at once—that Numantia was taking longer to vanquish than Carthage had? While shutting the enemy in with his siege works he drove them to fall on their own swords. **(8)** So you can see that anger is not expedient even in battles and wars: it's given to rashness, and its desire to bring others into peril makes it careless of its own. The virtue that's most reliable has looked guardedly about a good long time, has exercised self-control, and has advanced slowly toward a determinate goal.

12 An objection: "Are you telling me that a good man doesn't become angry if he sees his father being murdered, his mother raped?" No, he will not become angry, but he'll be their champion and defender. Why are you afraid that a proper sense of devotion won't goad him sufficiently, even without anger? Or to follow out your same line of reasoning: "Are you telling me that when he sees his father or son being stabbed, a good man will not weep and faint?"—that is, the things we see happen to women whenever the slight hint of danger strikes them. **(2)** A good man will follow up his obligations undisturbed and undeterred, and in doing the things worthy of a good man he will do nothing unworthy of a man. If my father is being killed, I will defend him; if he has been killed, I will see the matter to a proper conclusion—because I know that's right, not because I feel a grievance. **(3)** "Good men become angry when their friends and family are wronged." When you plead your case this way, Theophrastus,[92] you try to discredit more robust teachings, offering claptrap to the spectators while ignoring the judge: because each and every one of them becomes angry when that sort of misfortune befalls his family and friends, you suppose that people will reckon that what they do ought to be done, since practically everyone reckons righteous the

feeling he recognizes in himself. **(4)** But they do the same thing if their hot bath is not properly prepared, if a glass gets broken, if their shoe is spattered with mud. It's not a sense of devotion that stirs that kind of anger, it's weakness—the sort proper to children, who weep just as much whether they've lost their parents or some hazelnuts. **(5)** To become angry on behalf of one's friends and family is the mark of a weak mind, not a mind devoted to duty. The fine and worthy thing is to come forward in defense of one's parents, children, friends, and fellow citizens with one's sense of obligation actually leading the way, and to do so willingly, deliberately, and prudently, not impulsively and furiously. For no passion desires vengeance more earnestly than anger, and for that very reason it's unsuited to take revenge: too hasty and witless, like virtually every form of desire, it gets in its own way as it hurries toward its goal. For that reason it has never done any good in either peace or war: it makes peace look like war, whereas under arms it forgets that "the god of War is impartial"[93] and falls into another's clutches while failing to get a grip on itself.

(6) Furthermore, vicious forms of behavior shouldn't be deemed acceptable just because they've been effective in some way at some time. Fevers, too, relieve certain kinds of illness, but that doesn't mean it's not preferable to be free of them entirely: it's an abominable sort of cure that puts health in disease's debt. In a similar way, even if anger—like poison or falling off a cliff or shipwreck—has at some time been unexpectedly helpful, it shouldn't be judged healthy; for often the results have been pestilential.

13 Another point to consider: the things worth having are better and more desirable the more of them we have. If justice is a good, no one will assert that it will be better if something is subtracted from it; if courage is a good, no one will want it to be diminished in some respect. **(2)** It follows, then, that anger too should be better the greater it is; for who would reject the increase of any good? Yet it's inexpedient for anger to be made greater. It follows, then, that it's also inexpedient for it to exist: there's no good that becomes an evil by becoming larger.

(3) An assertion: "Anger is useful because it puts more fight in people." Drunkenness can be regarded in the same way: it makes people aggressive and reckless, and many have been better at handling a blade when they're tipsy. Claim, too, that delirium and insan-

ity are necessary for strength, because madness often makes people more powerful! **(4)** Or consider this: hasn't fear sometimes had the contrary effect of making someone reckless? Hasn't fear of death roused even the most sluggish to battle? But anger, drunkenness, fear, and other things of this sort are foul and futile stimulants: they give no tools to virtue, which needs nothing that vices can give, they just give a little lift to a mind otherwise supine and abject. **(5)** No one becomes braver by becoming angry except the sort of person who wouldn't have been brave without being angry: anger thus doesn't assist virtue; it substitutes for virtue. What of the fact that anger, were it a good, would attend all the most highly developed people—whereas those who are most inclined to anger are babies and the aged and the sick?[94] Everything weak is by nature given to complaint.

14 Theophrastus objects:[95] "A good man cannot help but be angered by evils." According to that line of thought, the better a person is, the more inclined to anger he will be—though isn't it rather the reverse: the more calm he will be, the more free of passions, hating no one? **(2)** Indeed, what reason does the good man have to hate wrongdoers, since it's error that drives them to such failings? Moreover, hating those who go astray is not the trait of a prudent man; otherwise he will have to hate himself. Let him ponder how many offenses against good behavior he commits, how many of the things he's done call for pardon:[96] presently he'll be angry even at himself. For a fair judge doesn't give one verdict in his own case and another in someone else's. **(3)** No one, I say, will be found who can absolve himself; anyone who claims he's innocent isn't thinking of his own conscience, only whether his behavior had a witness. How much more truly human to regard wrongdoers with a gentle and paternal cast of mind, not to persecute them but to summon them back. When a person is wandering through the fields in ignorance of the way, it's better to guide him to the right path than to banish him.

15 And so the wrongdoer should be corrected both by admonition and by force, softly and roughly, and he must be made better for his own sake as much as for that of others, not without scolding but without anger. For who feels angry at the one he's healing? But suppose that they cannot be set straight, that nothing in them is gentle or offers ground for hope: those who are going to make worse all they touch should be removed from the company of mortals, so

that the only means available might put a stop to their wickedness—but this should be done without hatred. **(2)** For why should I hate the person whom I most benefit at the very moment when I separate him from himself? Surely no one hates his own limbs when he amputates them, does he?[97] That's not anger but a pitiable form of healing. We destroy rabid dogs and kill a fierce and untamable ox and slaughter sick livestock, lest they infect the herd; we snuff out monstrous births and drown children too, if they're born crippled or deformed. It's not anger but reason to segregate the useless from the sound. **(3)** Nothing is less appropriate to one meting out punishment than anger, since punishment is all the more conducive to correction if it's imposed as an act of considered judgment.[98] That's the reason Socrates said to a slave, "I would beat you, if I weren't angry."[99] He put off admonishing the slave to a moment when he was more himself, but he admonished himself at that moment. Who in the world will have his passion under control when Socrates didn't dare entrust himself to anger?

16 When it comes to restraining those who stray and commit crimes, then, there's no need for the agent of punishment to be angry: since anger is a failure of the mind, a wrongdoer shouldn't be the one to set wrongdoing right. "Shall I not be angry at a bandit, then? Shall I not be angry at a poisoner?" No; nor do I become angry with myself, when I let my own blood.[100] **(2)** Every kind of punishment I apply, I apply by way of a remedy.[101] "You're still in the first stages of going wrong, and your slips aren't serious but frequent: reproof, first in private and then published abroad, will try to correct you. You have already gone too far to be healed just by words: disgrace will keep you in check. You have to have something stronger burned into you, something you'll feel: you'll be sent into exile in regions unknown. In your case the wickedness is already firmly set and needs harsher remedies; both the public stocks and prison will be brought to bear. **(3)** Your mind, which weaves a growing web of crime, is beyond healing; already you need no motives (which the wicked will never lack) to set you off, but wrongdoing itself is a sufficiently strong motive for doing wrong. You have drunk deep of wickedness and so steeped your guts in it that it cannot be expelled save with those very guts. Long since have you been seeking to die in your wretchedness: we will earn your thanks by ridding you of that insanity by which you bedevil others and are bedeviled yourself. Now that you have been

wholly immersed in the torments that you have suffered and have caused others to suffer, we will at once put at your disposal the only good that remains for you: death." Why should I be angry with the man whom I'm doing the greatest good? At times, killing is the best sort of pity. **(4)** If I had entered an army's infirmary or a rich man's house as a medical expert,[102] I would not have prescribed the same remedy for all those suffering from diverse ailments. Now I've been recruited to heal the community, I see that so many minds offer a range of vices. Medication should be sought according to each individual's illness: let this man be healed by a modest sense of restraint, that man by some time spent abroad, another by pain, yet another by deprivation, and this one by the sword. **(5)** So too, if I must reverse my magistrate's garment and summon the assembly with the war trumpet's call,[103] I shall mount the tribunal neither in a rage nor with feelings of hostility but with an expression as neutral as the law, I shall recite those formal words in a voice more gentle and solemn than furious, and I shall order—not angrily but strictly—that the procedures prescribed by law be carried out. And when I command that the guilty man's head be cut off, and sew up in a sack men who killed their fathers, and dispatch others to a soldier's punishment, and place a traitor or public enemy on the Tarpeian rock,[104] I shall be free of anger, with the same expression and cast of mind as when I kill snakes and poisonous creatures. **(6)** "Anger is needed to inflict punishment." Do you mean that the law strikes you as angry at those whom it doesn't know, whom it hasn't seen, who it hopes will not exist? No, we must take on the cast of mind proper to the law, which is not wrathful but resolved. For if it's appropriate for a good man to become angry at wicked deeds, it will also be appropriate to become indignant at the good fortunes of wicked men. Indeed, what's more worthy of indignation than the fact that certain people flourish and abuse the kindness of fortune when no fortune bad enough to suit them can be found? But the good man will regard their advantage without indignation, just as he will regard their crimes without anger: a good judge condemns things worthy of reproof, he doesn't hate them. **(7)** "Do you mean to say that when a wise man is confronted with something of that sort, his mind will be unfazed, and stirred no more than usual?" I grant that he'll feel a certain slight and delicate stirring.[105] For as Zeno says, in the wise man's mind too the scar will

remain even when the wound has healed. He will therefore feel some hints and shadows of the passions, but he will be free of the passions themselves.

17 Aristotle says that some passions, if used well, serve as weapons.[106] That would be true if, like the arms of war, they could be taken up and put off at the judgment of the one who dons them. But these weapons that Aristotle gives to virtue fight all on their own; they don't wait for the hand that wields them, they're not possessed, they do the possessing. **(2)** There's no need for other arms: nature has armed us sufficiently with reason, a missile that's sure, ever ready, and obedient, neither double-edged nor capable of being sent back against its master. Reason suffices, in and of itself, not only for planning ahead but also for the conduct of affairs. Indeed, what's more foolish than for reason to seek protection from anger, a stable, trusty, and healthy thing from one that is wavering, untrustworthy, and sickly? **(3)** What of the fact, too, that reason, by itself, is much sturdier when it comes to getting things done—the only area in which anger's assistance seems necessary? For when it has judged that something should be done, reason perseveres in doing it: because it's going to find nothing better than itself that should cause it to change, it stands firm once it's made its decisions. **(4)** Pity has often turned anger back because, being empty and swollen, it lacks a solid core. It enjoys a violent onset, just like onshore winds and those that arise over rivers and marshes, strong but short-lived:[107] **(5)** after an initial massive assault it droops, prematurely wearied, and the anger that had contemplated nothing but cruelty and novel penalties is already broken and tamed when the punishment must be imposed. **(6)** Passion quickly fades, reason is well-balanced. Sometimes, however, even when anger has persisted, if there are a number who have deserved to die, it stops the killing after shedding the blood of two or three. Its first blows are sharp: in the same way the venom of snakes as they slither out of hibernation is harmful, but their fangs are harmless when frequent strikes have drained them. **(7)** As a consequence, people who commit equal crimes don't suffer equal punishments, and often someone who has committed a lesser crime suffers more, because he has been exposed to a fresher onset of anger. And it's in fact an unbalanced thing overall: now it sallies forth farther than it should, now it comes to a halt sooner than it should. It's self-indulgent, it bases its judg-

ments on its desires, it doesn't want to listen, it leaves no room for intercession, it keeps a grip on what it has seized, and it doesn't allow its judgment to be wrested from its control, even if that judgment is warped.

18 Reason grants both parties time for a hearing and then seeks an adjournment for its own sake, so that it has time to search out the truth. Anger's in a hurry. Reason wants its judgment to be fair; anger wants its judgment to appear fair. **(2)** Reason keeps its eye solely on the matter under consideration; anger is moved by empty and irrelevant imaginings. Too nonchalant an expression, too loud a voice, too free a way of speaking, too refined a style of dress, advocacy that's too insistent, popular support—all these rub anger the wrong way. It often condemns the defendant out of pique at his counsel; even if the truth is shoved in its face, it fancies and upholds error. It doesn't want to be refuted: when it's made a bad beginning, it takes stubbornness to be more honorable than second thoughts.

(3) I recall that Gnaeus Piso was a man untouched by many vices, but he took a warped pleasure in prizing obstinacy over consistency.[108] Having angrily ordered the execution of a soldier who returned from leave without his comrade—as if the soldier had killed the man he couldn't bring forward—Piso refused the soldier's request for some time to mount a search. The condemned man was led out beyond the palisade and was already offering up his neck, when suddenly there appeared the comrade who seemed to have been killed. **(4)** The centurion put in charge of the execution ordered the watchman to sheathe his sword and brought the condemned man back to Piso, intending thereby to restore Piso's innocence when good fortune had restored the soldier's. After the two comrades had embraced, to the camp's great joy, they were escorted back as a great crowd gathered. Piso mounted the tribunal in a rage and ordered both soldiers executed, both the one who had not done a murder and the one who had not died. **(5)** What could be more unfair than this? Because one innocent man had turned up, two were perishing. Piso added a third, too, for he ordered the execution of the very centurion who had brought back the condemned man. They were decreed to be in the same condition: three men condemned to die on account of one man's innocence. **(6)** Oh, how clever anger is when it comes to finding pretexts for its rages! "You I order to be executed," Piso

said, "because you were condemned; you, because you caused your comrade to be condemned; you, because you didn't obey your commander when ordered to kill." He figured out a way to commit three crimes because he had uncovered no crime.

19 Anger—a point I stress—has this particular evil trait: it's unwilling to be controlled. It grows angry at the truth itself, if it appears to contradict its will. It pursues its intended victims with shouting and uproar, the whole body shaking, with abuse and curses added in. **(2)** Reason doesn't do this; but should the need arise it uproots whole households—silently, quietly—and destroys families that are a plague on the commonwealth, together with their wives and children, it overturns the very dwellings and extirpates the clans that are freedom's enemies,[109] doing all this without gnashing its teeth or tossing its head about or any other behavior unbecoming a judge, whose expression should be calm and in repose most especially when he is making an important pronouncement. **(3)** Hieronymus asks: "When you intend to kill someone, what's the point of gnawing on your lips beforehand?"[110] What if he had seen a proconsul leaping down from the tribunal, snatching the fasces from a lictor, tearing his own garments because another's were a bit too slow in being torn?[111] **(4)** What's the point of overturning a table? Of smashing cups? Of dashing oneself against a column? Of tearing out one's hair or striking one's thigh or chest? How witless a thing[112] do you reckon anger to be, seeing that it turns against itself when it cannot burst out against another as quickly as it wants? That's why people in that condition are taken in hand by their relatives, who beg them to be reconciled to themselves.

(5) Whoever is free of anger does none of these things when imposing the penalty that each person deserves. Often he releases a person whose misdeed he has caught out: if the miscreant's regret gives good reason to hope, if the judge sees that the wickedness is not deep-seated but sticks, as the say, to the surface of the mind, he'll grant a suspended sentence that will harm neither the recipient nor the giver. **(6)** Sometimes he'll apply a lighter rein to important crimes than to lesser ones, if the former were committed through a slip rather than cruelty whereas the latter concealed a stealthy and habitual cunning. He'll impose different punishments on two men guilty of the same crime, if one committed it out of carelessness while

the other made a point of doing harm. **(7)** He will always, whenever he imposes punishment, keep this principle in mind: one penalty is inflicted to correct the wicked, another to destroy them. In either case he will keep his eye on the future, not the past (for as Plato says,[113] a sensible man punishes, not because a wrong has been done, but lest one be done; what's done is beyond recall, what's to come can be prevented). Those whom he wants to make examples of stubborn wickedness he will kill for all to see, not only so that they themselves will die but so that by dying they will deter others. **(8)** You can see how the person who must weigh and judge all these factors should approach the matter at hand—the power of life and death—with the utmost calm and scrupulousness. A sword is not well entrusted to an angry man.[114]

20 Nor should we even suppose that anger adds something to greatness of spirit.[115] For that's not greatness; it's a swelling, just as when bodies are stretched taut by an abundance of unhealthy fluid. The disease is not an example of growth, but of destructive excess. **(2)** All whose minds, in delirium, cause them to think more than human thoughts believe that they radiate something lofty, sublime. But there's no solid underpinning; rather, what has been raised up without a foundation is apt to come crashing down. Anger has no sound footing: it doesn't arise from something stable and destined to abide but is windy and empty,[116] as far removed from greatness of spirit as recklessness is from bravery, arrogance from confidence, moroseness from sternness, cruelty from strictness. **(3)** There is—mark me—a great difference between a lofty mind and a haughty one. Anger sets in motion no substantial and becoming project. Quite the contrary, it seems to me the mark of a lethargic and sterile mind, aware of its own feebleness, given to chronic distress, like sore and sickly bodies that groan at the lightest touch. In this respect anger is an especially womanish and childish vice. "But it befalls men." Yes, because men too have childish and womanish natures. **(4)** "Do you mean to say that angry people don't produce some utterances that seem the products of a great spirit?" No, rather, of spirits that don't know true greatness, like that loathsome, abominable utterance, "Let them hate, so long as they fear."[117] You could tell that it was written in the age of Sulla. I don't know which wish is worse, to be regarded with hatred or with fear. "Let them hate." It dawns on him that they

will then curse and plot and seek to crush him: what does he add? May the gods blast him, such a worthy cure for hatred he discovered. "Let them hate"—what, "so long as they obey?" No. "So long as they assent."[118] No. What then? "So long as they fear." I would not want even to be loved on such terms. **(5)** Do you suppose that this was said by a great spirit? You're mistaken; that's not greatness, it's brutality. There's no reason to believe the words of angry men, who make loud and threatening noises while the mind within is in utter panic. **(6)** Nor is there any reason to judge true what that most eloquent man Titus Livy says when he writes: "A man of a great rather than a good nature."[119] The two cannot be separated. Either the nature will be good, too, or it will not be great, either. Greatness of spirit, as I understand it, is unshaken, solid through and through, balanced and stable from its base on up, the sort of thing that bad natures cannot contain. **(7)** They can be terrifying and riotous and deadly. Greatness, whose strength and stability is goodness, they will not have. **(8)** To be sure, in their speech and their strivings and all their trappings they will produce a credible impression of greatness. They will make a statement that you might reckon belongs to a great spirit, as Gaius Caesar[120] did when he grew enraged with the heavens because thunder was noisily interfering with his pantomimes (whom he imitated more zealously than he watched),[121] and lightning bolts (off the mark, alas) were putting a jolt of fear in his carouse. He challenged Jupiter to fight—in fact, no quarter given—while shouting out that famous Homeric line:[122]

Either lift me or I will lift you.

(9) How crazy was that! He supposed either that not even Jupiter could harm him or that he could harm even Jupiter. I think this utterance of his made no small impact in stirring the thoughts of the conspirators: for it seemed the last word in supine behavior to put up with a man who would not put up with Jupiter.

21 There's nothing great, then, nothing notable in anger, not even when it seems to be vigorous, despising gods and men. Or if someone thinks anger produces a great spirit, let him think that luxury does too: it wants to be carried about on ivory, dressed in purple, covered in gold, it wants to move masses of land about, dam up the seas, create waterfalls, hang forests in midair.[123] **(2)** Let him think that

greed, too, is the mark of a great spirit: it broods over heaps of gold and silver, cultivates estates that go by the names of provinces, puts individual stewards in charge of territories larger than those allotted to consuls.[124] **(3)** Let him think that lust, too, is the mark of a great spirit: it swims across straits in the sea, castrates flocks of boys, puts itself in the way of a husband's sword, holding death in contempt. Let him think that ambition, too, is the mark of a great spirit: it's not content with annual offices but wants, if possible, to engross the magistrate lists with a single name[125] and to distribute its honorific inscriptions throughout the whole world. **(4)** All such things, no matter how far and wide they reach, are pinched, wretched, base. Only virtue is sublime and exalted; there's nothing great that is not at the same time at peace.

To Novatus on Anger: Book 2
Book 4 of the Dialogues

1 My first book, Novatus, had a more copious subject: the vices' slippery slope makes for an easy downhill run.[126] Now we must address matters of narrower compass: the question before us is whether anger begins with an act of judgment or with a mere impulse—that is, whether it's set in motion voluntarily or like many things that come about inside us without our being aware.[127] **(2)** Our discussion must descend to these particulars so that it can later rise to those loftier themes. In our bodies, too, bones, sinews, joints—the things that give the whole its strength and life, though they're hardly attractive to look at—are set in order first; next come the elements that give our features all their allure; and then, after all these, the final touch, the glow of health that suffuses the body, once it's fully formed, and draws the onlooker's eye most of all.

(3) Now, it's beyond doubt that anger is stirred when we have the impression that we've been wronged. The question is whether anger follows directly upon that very appearance, launching its attack without the mind's collaboration, or whether it's stirred with the mind's assent. **(4)** We hold that anger ventures nothing on its own but acts only with the mind's approval:[128] for (a) having the impression that one has been done a wrong, (b) desiring to take vengeance for it, and then (c) combining both in the judgment that one ought not to

have been harmed and that one ought to be avenged—none of this is proper to a mere impulse set in motion independent of our will.

2 "What's the point of this inquiry?" you ask. The point is to know what anger is; for if it comes into being against our will, it will never yield to reason—indeed, any movements that occur independent of our will cannot be overcome or avoided, like shivering when we're sprinkled with cold water, or revulsion at touching certain things, or the way our hair stands on end at bad news, or the blush that spreads when we hear obscene words, or the dizziness that comes over us when we look down from a cliff. Because none of these responses is in our power, no form of reason can argue against their occurring.[129] **(2)** Anger, by contrast, is put to flight by instruction because it's a fault of the mind subject to our will. It's not among the things that happen to us just because of our lot as humans, and happen, accordingly, even to the very wise; and among these things must be included the initial mental jolt that stirs us when we believe we've been wronged. **(3)** This sensation comes upon us even when we're watching shows at theatrical games and reading ancient history: we often seem to become angry with Clodius as he drives Cicero into exile, or with Antony as he orders his death. Who's not stirred when faced with Marius' arms or Sulla's proscriptions? Who doesn't hate Theodotus and Achillas and the actual child who dared a grown-up crime?[130] **(4)** Sometimes a song sets us on edge, a double-time tune, the martial sound of war trumpets; a horrific picture stirs our minds, or the grim sight of punishments, however justly meted out. **(5)** For the same reason we answer others' smiles with our own and grow sad in a crowd of mourners[131] and feel the blood tingle while watching other men in competition. Such responses aren't forms of anger, any more than what causes us to frown as we watch a staged shipwreck is true sadness,[132] or fear that flashes through people's minds as they read of Hannibal's laying siege to Rome after Cannae.[133] These are all movements of minds stirred despite themselves; they're not passions but the first preludes to passion. **(6)** In this same way the war trumpet stirs a veteran soldier's ear even after he's resumed civilian dress in a period of peace, and the clatter of arms makes cavalry horses' blood rise. They say that Alexander's hand jerked toward his sword at the sound of Xenophantus's flute.[134]

3 The term "passion" should be applied to none of these responses that merely chance to move the mind: the mind doesn't so much cause them as suffer them, if I can put it that way. Passion, then, consists not in being stirred in response to impressions presented to us, but in surrendering ourselves to those impressions and following up the mind's first chance movement. **(2)** Turning pale, shedding tears, the first stirrings of sexual arousal, a deep sigh, a suddenly sharpened glance, anything along these lines: whoever reckons them a clear token of passion and a sign of the mind's engagement is just mistaken and fails to understand that they're involuntary bodily movements. **(3)** Thus even the bravest man has often grown pale while donning his arms, even the fiercest soldier's knees have trembled a bit when the signal was given for battle; the great general has sensed his heart leap before the opposing armies clash, the most eloquent speaker has felt his extremities go cold[135] as he gathers himself to speak. **(4)** Anger shouldn't just be "stirred," it should go on the offensive; it's a kind of pursuit,[136] and no pursuit ever occurs without the mind's assent, nor can one act to gain vengeance and compensation with the mind all unaware. Suppose that someone has reckoned he was harmed, wants to take revenge, and then immediately calms down when some reason urges against it. I don't call this anger, I call it the movement of a mind still obedient to reason; anger's something that leaps clear of reason, that snatches reason up and carries it along. **(5)** Accordingly, that first mental jolt produced by the impression of an injury is no more "anger" than the impression itself. The intentional movement that follows, which has not only taken in the impression but affirmed it—that's anger, the arousal of a mind that moves willingly and deliberately toward the goal of vengeance. There can be no doubt that fear involves flight, anger a pursuit. Consider, then, whether you reckon anything can be either pursued or treated with caution without the mind's assent.

4 Now, to make plain how passions begin or grow or get carried away:[137] there's the initial involuntary movement—a preparation for the passion, as it were, and a kind of threatening signal; there's a second movement accompanied by an expression of will not stubbornly resolved, to the effect that "I should be avenged, since I've been harmed" or "this man should be punished, since he's committed a crime." The third movement's already out of control, it desires ven-

geance not if it's appropriate but come what may, having overthrown reason. **(2)** We cannot avoid that first mental jolt with reason's help, just as we cannot avoid the other movements that (as I've mentioned) befall our bodies, just as we cannot avoid having another's yawn provoke our own, or avoid closing our eyes at the sudden poke of another's fingers. Reason cannot overcome those movements, though perhaps their force can be lessened if we become used to them and constantly keep a watch for them. That second movement, which is born from deliberation, is eradicated by deliberation.[138]

5 Now, too, we have to ask whether people who often behave like animals and take pleasure in shedding human blood are angry when they kill those from whom they've not received an injury and from whom they don't even believe they've received one—I mean people like Apollodorus or Phalaris.[139] **(2)** No, this is not anger, it's bestiality: it doesn't do harm in return for an injury received, it's prepared even to receive an injury as long as it can do harm; it seeks to thrash and tear not for vengeance but for pleasure. **(3)** In short, this evil takes its start from anger, which is brought by full and frequent exercise to lose all thought of clemency and every human bond, until at last it's transformed into cruelty. Such people smile with delight, take every bit of pleasure they can, and look not at all like angry folk, since they find relaxation in their savagery. **(4)** They say that when Hannibal saw a ditch filled with human blood, he remarked, "What a lovely sight!"[140] How much lovelier would he have found it if he'd filled some river or lake! Is it any wonder you're beguiled by this sight above all, seeing that you were born to bloodshed and became an intimate of murder from your infancy? For twenty years luck will attend you, supporting your cruelty, and will ever show you sights to please your eye, around Lake Trasumene and around Cannae and, finally, around your own city, Carthage.[141] **(5)** Not long ago, under the deified Augustus, the proconsul of Asia, Volesus, decapitated three hundred men in one day, then strode about among the corpses with a haughty look, as though he had accomplished something splendid and wondrous, exclaiming in Greek, "Such a kingly deed!"[142] What would this man have done if he had been king? This was not anger at work, but some greater evil, beyond cure.

6 An objection: "Just as virtue is kindly disposed to honorable behavior, so should it greet disgraceful behavior with anger." What

if one would say that virtue ought to be both abject and magnificent? Yet that is precisely what is meant when one wishes anger to be raised up and debased. Gladness derived from right action is splendid and magnificent, whereas anger caused by another's wrongdoing is mean, the sign of a pinched spirit. **(2)** Further, virtue will never make the mistake of imitating vices while seeking to check them: it holds that anger as such must be reprimanded,[143] a thing no better—and often worse—than those faults that are its object. It's a natural property of virtue to be glad and joyful;[144] being angry's no more in accord with virtue's honorable standing than grief, whereas wrath has sadness as its companion, and it inevitably turns to sadness, either after it comes to feel regret or after it's rebuffed. **(3)** Or again: if being angry at wrongdoing is proper for a wise man, then the greater the wrongdoings, the greater his anger will be, and he will be angry often; it follows that the wise man will not only experience anger, he will be wrathful by disposition. Yet if we believe that neither great nor frequent anger has a place in the wise man's soul, why should we not then free him entirely from this passion? **(4)** For a limit on anger cannot exist if anger must be felt in proportion to each person's behavior: either you will be unjust, if you feel the same degree of anger for different degrees of wrongdoing, or you will be angry in the extreme, if you feel anger's full heat as often as misdeeds merit wrath.

7 Now, what's more unworthy than having another man's wickedness determine a wise man's passion? Will the great Socrates no longer be able to return home wearing the same expression he had when he left?[145] And yet if the wise man should always be angry at shameful behavior and be riled and gloomy because of criminal behavior, he must be the most troubled man in the world: he'll pass his entire life in anger and grief. **(2)** Will there be an instant when he'll not see things worthy of reproach? Whenever he leaves his house he'll have to make his way through crowds of criminals and people who are greedy, spendthrift, shameless—and prosperous because of those very vices. There'll be nowhere he can turn his glance without finding some source of indignation: he won't have the strength to rouse himself to anger as often as the provocation demands. **(3)** There they go, hurrying to the forum at the crack of dawn, so many thousands—what shameful lawsuits they mount, how much more shameful still their advocates! One man

brings a suit against a father's judgments that he would have done better not to deserve;[146] another's hailed his mother into court, another's come to act as an informer on a charge of which he is more plainly guilty. A judge is chosen to pass sentence on acts that he himself has committed, while the onlookers side with the guilty parties because they've been corrupted by an advocate's fine voice.

8 Why go through individual cases? When you see the forum packed with a mob, and the polling place filled with a swarming crowd, and that circus where the greatest part of the populace is on display, be sure that there are just as many vices on hand as there are people. **(2)** Those you see in civilian dress are constantly warring among themselves.[147] One man's led to destroy another for a small gain; no one profits save from another's harm; they hate the prosperous and despise the poor, resent the greater man and afflict the lesser. Goaded by a host of desires, they lust to win some trivially pleasurable prize from any and every depravity. It's a way of life no different from a gladiatorial school: living and fighting with the same people. **(3)** It's a gathering of wild beasts[148]—except that beasts live peacefully among themselves and don't bite their own, whereas these get their fill by tearing each other to pieces. In this one respect[149] they differ from animals incapable of speech: the latter behave gently toward their keepers, these in their frenzy bite the hand that feeds them.

9 The wise man will never cease to be angry once he begins. There's a full load of crimes and vices everywhere. More crime is committed than punishment can remedy. We're engaged in a struggle—a vast struggle—with wickedness. The desire to do wrong is greater every day, the sense of modest restraint is diminished. Regard for what is better and more just has been cast out, while lust imposes itself by force wherever it wishes. Nor are crimes now kept secret: they go on right before our eyes. Wickedness has been so broadcast and gained such power in everyone's breast that innocence is not rare; it's nonexistent. **(2)** For surely the lawbreakers aren't isolated individuals or a mere handful, are they? No, they've arisen on every side, as though a signal had been given, to confound right and wrong:

> Host is not safe from guest,
> nor father-in-law from son-in-law, even brotherly goodwill is
> scarce;

the husband is bent on his wife's destruction, and she on his;
terrifying stepmothers blend ghastly poisons,
the son seeks, too soon, to learn how long his father will live.[150]

(3) And how small a fraction of the crimes are these? This catalog omits opposing camps where once there was a single whole, fathers and sons swearing allegiance to different sides, the fatherland set aflame by a citizen's hand, columns of enemy horsemen on the fly to find where the proscribed have gone to ground,[151] sacred springs polluted with poisons, plague made a weapon,[152] ditches dug to put parents under siege, prisons full, arson reducing whole cities to ashes, deadly tyrannies, secret plans for regal power and public executions, acts considered criminal as long as they can be held in check now a source of glory, rape and violation, with not even the mouth exempt from lust.[153] **(4)** Add to this now the oaths of nations violated, treaties broken, the stronger taking off as booty whatever's too weak to resist, cheating, theft, deceit, reneging—crimes for which three forums do not suffice.[154] If you want the wise man to be as angry as the unworthiness of the crimes demands, he must become not angry but insane.

10 You'll better contemplate this thought: errors shouldn't make us angry. What if one were to become angry at people unable to put one foot surely after another in the dark? Or at deaf people who don't listen to orders? Or at children, because they don't pay attention to their duties but look instead to their age-mates' games and silly jokes? What if you should choose to become angry at those who grow sick or old or tired? Among all those other disadvantages that are ours as mortals, there's this: the murkiness of our minds, whence both the inevitability of our mistakes and our fondness for the mistakes we make. **(2)** To keep from becoming angry with individuals you must forgive all at once: the human race should be granted a pardon. If you become angry with young men and old men because they do wrong, then be angry with infants: they're going to do wrong. Surely no one becomes angry with children of an age incapable of drawing distinctions, do they? Being human is a greater excuse, and more just, than being a child. **(3)** These are the terms and stipulations of our birth: we are creatures subject to no fewer diseases of mind than of body, neither dull nor slow, to be sure, but misusing our acuity, all

of us offering each other examples of vices. When anyone follows those who have gone before—down the wrong route—how could he not have an excuse, since he's gone astray on the common highway? **(4)** A general's strictness is unsheathed against individuals, but pardon is required when the whole army has deserted. What eliminates a wise man's anger? The great crowd of wrongdoers. He understands how unjust it is—and how dangerous—to be angry with a vice that is pandemic.

(5) Whenever Heraclitus left his house and saw all around him such a mass of people living badly (or rather, dying badly), he wept out of pity for all the happy and prosperous people he met—the behavior of a mind that was gentle, but too weak.[155] Besides, he himself was among those deserving of his tears. By contrast, they say Democritus was never without a smile in public, so hard did he find it to take seriously all the transactions being conducted in earnest.[156] Where's the place for anger there? All things deserve either our laughter or our tears.

(6) The wise man will not be angry with wrongdoers. Why? Because he knows that the wise man is not born but made, he knows that very, very few turn out wise in the whole expanse of time,[157] because he has come to recognize the terms that define human life—and no sane man becomes angry with nature. That would be as pointless as choosing to wonder why fruit doesn't hang on woodland briars, or why brambles and thorn bushes aren't filled with some useful fruit. No one becomes angry when nature defends the vice.[158] **(7)** And so the wise man—calm and even-tempered in the face of error, not an enemy of wrongdoers but one who sets them straight—leaves his house daily with this thought in mind: "I will encounter many people who are devoted to drink, many who are lustful, many who are ungrateful, many who are greedy, many who are driven by the demons of ambition."[159] All such behaviors he will regard as kindly as a doctor does his own patients. **(8)** When a man's ship is taking on a lot of water, as the joins buckle and gape on every side, he surely doesn't become angry with the sailors and the ship itself, does he? Rather, he runs to help—keeping the water out here, bailing it out there, plugging the gaps he can see, working constantly to counter the unseen gaps that invisibly draw water into the bilge—and he doesn't leave off just because more water takes the place of all the water he

drains. Prolonged assistance is needed against constant and prolific evils, not so they cease, but so they don't gain the upper hand.

11 An objection: "Anger is useful because it keeps you from being despised and frightens off the wicked." In the first place, if anger is as powerful as it is threatening, it's also hated, on account of the very fact that it arouses fear; but it's more dangerous to be feared than to be despised. On the other hand, if it's impotent, it's more vulnerable to contempt and doesn't escape mockery; for what's more feeble than anger huffing and puffing to no purpose? **(2)** In the second place, it's not the case that certain things are more powerful for being frightening, and I wouldn't want a wise man to be told that being feared, which is part of a wild beast's armory, is also a weapon for the wise. Fever, the gout, a bad sore are all feared, aren't they? But there's not a drop of good in those things, is there? Quite the contrary, all things that are despised, disgusting, and base are for that very reason[160] feared. Thus anger is ugly per se and not at all formidable, but it's feared by many as an ugly mask is feared by infants. **(3)** What of the fact that anger always rebounds upon the angry, while no one is feared who is himself without fear? On this point you should think of the famous line of Laberius that, when delivered on the stage in the midst of a civil war, caught the whole people's attention just as though the voice of public sentiment had spoken:

> He whom many fear must needs fear many.[161]

(4) Nature ordained that whatever another's fear makes great is not free from fear of its own. How lions' hearts quake at the slightest sounds! A shadow or a voice or an unaccustomed odor starts the fiercest beast: whatever terrifies trembles too. There's no reason, then, why any wise man should hanker after being feared, nor should he think anger some great thing because it's frightening, especially seeing that even the most contemptible things are feared, like poisons and plague-ridden bones and bites. **(5)** No wonder that—since a line hung at intervals with feathers keeps in check very large herds of wild beasts and steers them into traps—the device is called a "fright,"[162] after the passion itself; for silly things frighten silly creatures. The motion of a chariot and its wheels' spinning surfaces force lions back into their pen, while the sound of a pig terrifies elephants.[163] **(6)** Thus anger is feared in the same way that a shadow is feared by infants or

a red feather by wild beasts: it comprises nothing solid and robust, but affects minds that are insubstantial.

12 An objection: "You must eradicate wickedness from the natural order if you want to eradicate anger, but neither is possible." In the first place, one can avoid being cold, though it's winter, and sweltering in the summer months: either a favorable location provides protection from seasonal extremes or physical toughness overcomes the feelings of heat and cold. **(2)** In the second place, just turn that comment of yours around: you must eradicate virtue from the mind before you welcome anger, since vices don't coexist with virtues, and no one can at the same time be both angry and a good man, any more than he can be both sick and well. **(3)** A further objection: "Anger cannot be entirely eradicated from the mind; human nature doesn't allow it." Yet there's nothing so difficult and arduous that human thought doesn't overcome it and constant practice make it a comfortable companion; no passions are so wild and independent that discipline doesn't thoroughly tame them. **(4)** Whatever injunction the human mind has given itself, it has maintained: some people have succeeded in never laughing;[164] some people have forbidden their bodies wine, others sex, still others all liquid;[165] another man has made do with little sleep and kept up a tireless vigil; people have learned how to run up very slender, sloping ropes, carry huge loads that could scarcely be borne by human strength, dive to enormous depths and endure the seas with no chance to take a fresh breath. There are a thousand other examples of persistence overcoming every obstacle and showing that nothing is difficult when the mind enjoins itself to bear it. **(5)** Those people I have mentioned just now had either no material reward for such zealous persistence or no worthy reward—for what grand prize do people gain from practicing tightrope walking, or supporting huge bundles on their necks, or not surrendering their eyes to sleep, or penetrating to the bottom of the sea—and yet their toil persevered to the end of the task with no great compensation. **(6)** Will we not summon our endurance when such a great prize awaits us, the undisturbed tranquility of a joyful mind? What a grand thing, to escape the greatest evil—anger—and along with it frenzy, savagery, cruelty, madness, and that passion's other comrades!

13 There's no reason for us to look for a plea or an excuse to let us off the hook, saying that the thing's either useful or unavoidable:

what vice ever went without an advocate? There's no reason to say it can't be excised: what ails us is curable, and if we're willing to be freed of our flaws, nature herself lends a hand, for we are born to be upright. Nor is the path to the virtues steep and rough, as some have thought:[166] the approach lies on level ground. **(2)** I don't come to give you nonsensical advice. The way to the best human life is easy:[167] just make a start, with good auspices and with the gods themselves lending a hand. It's much more difficult to do the things you're doing. What's more tranquil than peace of mind? What's more toilsome than anger? What's more relaxed than mercy? What's more taxing than cruelty? Chastity has time free for itself, lust is ever busy. In short, all virtues are easy to maintain, but cultivating vices carries a high price.[168] **(3)** We should get rid of anger—this is granted in part even by those who say it should be lessened. Let it be entirely dismissed; it's not going to do any good. Without it, crimes will be eliminated more easily and thoroughly, the wicked will be punished and be led to a better place. The wise man will meet all his obligations without relying on any wicked thing's services and without the admixture of something that he must anxiously monitor and limit.

14 Thus we should never give anger entry, but sometimes we should feign it if our listeners' sluggish minds need stirring, just as we arouse with spurs and firebrands horses that rise slowly to a gallop. Sometimes we must strike with fear those with whom reason gets nowhere.[169] Actually to become angry is no more useful than grieving or being afraid. **(2)** "Yet don't situations arise that provoke anger?" But that's precisely when we must vigorously oppose it. Nor is it difficult to get the upper hand over your mind, since even athletes, engaged in activities involving the cheapest part of themselves,[170] nonetheless endure painful blows to drain the strength of the opponent beating them, and they strike when opportunity, not anger, prompts. **(3)** They say that Pyrrhus, the greatest trainer of contestants in the gymnasium, regularly instructed his trainees not to become angry, for anger unsettles skill and has an eye only for doing harm.[171] Often, then, reason urges forbearance where anger urges vengeance, and where we could have been clear of woe at its first onset, we end up tumbling into greater unhappiness. **(4)** Some people have been cast into exile when they couldn't bear with equanimity a single word

of insult, overwhelmed with the gravest misfortunes because they were unwilling to suffer a trivial insult in silence: indignant that their full range of freedom was infringed in any way, they placed the yoke of slavery on their own necks.[172]

15 An objection: "You can tell that anger has something noble about it when you see that free nations, like the Germans and Scyths, are the most disposed to anger."[173] Yes, this happens because naturally brave and substantial characters are prone to anger before they're softened by training. For certain traits are inborn only in better natures, like sturdy and prolific stands of trees that the earth bears, however uncultivated; a forest grows tall in fertile soil. **(2)** Thus naturally gallant characters are wrathful: their hot, fiery nature contains nothing slight and delicate. But their life force is unformed, as is true of all traits that arise only from the good of nature itself, without skill's guidance: unless they're quickly tamed, the elements suited to bravery become accustomed to recklessness and rashness. **(3)** "But aren't the milder vices—like pity, love, modest restraint[174]—associated with gentler minds?" Yes, and I shall often demonstrate that a good natural endowment has its own characteristic bad traits; but the fact that they're symptoms of a better nature doesn't mean that they're not vices. **(4)** Furthermore, all those nations whose ferocity makes them free, like lions and wolves, are as incapable of being commanders as they are of being slaves, for their strength isn't that of a human nature, but of a nature fierce and intractable: no one is able to rule who cannot also be ruled.[175] **(5)** That's why, for the most part, nations that enjoy a milder climate have had empires: those who look toward the north's chill have "natures untamable," as the poet[176] says, "and just like their climate."

16 An objection: "Animals that possess a lot of anger are considered the most noble." It's a mistake to adduce as an example for humans those creatures that have impulse in place of reason: humans have reason in place of impulse. But not even all animals are served by the same impulse: wrathfulness serves lions, panic fear, deer; attack aids the hawk, flight the dove. **(2)** And it's not even true that the best animals are those disposed to anger: what about that? I would suppose that predators are better the angrier they are, whereas I'd praise the forbearance of oxen and horses that obey the reins. But why should you refer a human being to such unproductive examples,

when you have the universe and god, whom a human being, alone of all animals, comprehends, so that he alone might imitate him.[177]

(3) And another objection: "Wrathful people are considered the most straightforward of all people." Yes, in comparison with deceitful and tricky people: they appear straightforward because they act without concealment. And yet I would say that they're not "straightforward" but "incautious": that's the name we give to folly, luxury, wastefulness, and all the vices deficient in cleverness.

17 More: "An orator is sometimes better when he's angry."[178] No, when he's acting angry: for actors, too, move their audience, though they're not angry when delivering their lines but are acting angry. So too, before a panel of judges and at a public assembly and wherever we must move other people's minds according to our will, we will ourselves make a show now of anger, now of fear, now of pity, to instill those feeling in others. Often simulated passions have achieved what actual passions would not.

(2) Yet again: "A mind that lacks anger lacks energy." That's true, if it has about it nothing more vigorous than anger. One must be neither a bandit nor his prey, neither given to pity nor cruel: the one sort's mind is too soft, the other's too hard. The wise man should be well-balanced, and for uncommonly brave action he should display strength, not anger.

18 Since we've treated the questions that anger raises, let's move on to its cures. As I see it, however, there are two main aims: that we not fall into anger, and that we not do wrong while angry.[179] Just as in taking care of our bodies some prescriptions look to maintain health, others to restore it, so we ought to resist anger one way and restrain it in another.[180] So that we can avoid anger, I will offer some prescriptions that pertain to our way of life as a whole: these I will distribute between child-rearing and the time that follows.

(2) Child-rearing requires the greatest attention and will have the greatest payoff: for it's easy to set minds in good order while they're still tender, but difficult to prune away vices that have grown up with us.

19 An ardent mind is by nature most vulnerable to wrathfulness. There are four elements—fire, water, air, and earth—with matching properties—hot, cold, dry, and moist.[181] Accordingly, the blending of the elements produces variations in places and creatures and

bodies and customs; creatures' innate characters incline more in a given direction in direct proportion to the greater force that the preponderance of a given element supplies. Hence we call some areas "moist" and "dry" and "hot" and "frigid." **(2)** The same distinctions are valid for animals and humans: it makes a difference how much moisture and heat each individual has within him; the element that predominates in him will determine his characteristic behaviors. An ardent mind's nature makes people disposed to anger, because fire is active and intransigent; a mixture in which cold predominates makes them timid, because cold is sluggish and pinched. **(3)** Accordingly, some of our sect have it that anger is stirred in the breast by the boiling of the blood around the heart;[182] this area, above all, is assigned to anger just because the breast is the warmest place in the body. **(4)** The anger of people whose makeup is predominantly moist grows gradually, because they don't have a ready supply of warmth, and it's gained only by movement. That's why the anger of children and women is more sharp than grievous, and rather trivial at its onset. Stages of life that are dry have an anger that's violent and strong, but without increase: it doesn't grow because cold follows upon the heat, which is bound to slack off. Old men are difficult and querulous, as are sick people, convalescents, and those whose heat has been drained by either exhaustion or bloodletting. **(5)** People wasting away from thirst and starvation are in the same situation, as are those whose bodies lack a full supply of blood and are weak from malnutrition. Wine kindles bouts of anger because it increases heat; some drunks come to a boil, or some people who have been wounded, according to the individual's nature. And that is precisely the reason why blonds and people with flushed complexions are most disposed to anger: they naturally have the coloring that other people usually acquire when they're angry,[183] because their blood is stirred up and moves easily.

20 But just as nature inclines some people to anger, so, too, many other factors arise that can have the same effect. Some have been led to this condition by disease or physical injury, others by toil or extended periods without sleep, troubled nights and feelings of longing and love;[184] anything that has harmed either body or mind makes the capacity for thought sickly and ready to complain. **(2)** But all those factors are the first causes: the greatest influence belongs to habit,

which—when it's unwholesome—nurtures vice. Nature is difficult to change; once the makeup of those coming into the world has been blended, it's not open to us alter it. Still, it will be useful to know that ardent natures should be kept from wine, which Plato thinks should be denied to children, basing his prohibition on the ground that fire shouldn't be aroused with fire.[185] They shouldn't even be filled full of food: their bodies will become swollen, and their minds will become bloated along with their bodies. **(3)** Hard labor should give them a workout, but short of exhaustion: the aim is to diminish their ardor, not consume it, and to let their excessive fervor go off the boil. Games, too, are useful, for a moderate amount of pleasure relaxes their minds and keeps them in balance. **(4)** Those natures that are moister or drier or cold aren't at risk of anger,[186] but you must beware of less spirited vices, like being panicky and cross-grained and hopeless and suspicious: such natures, accordingly, must be soothed, cherished, and roused to happiness. And since some remedies must be used against anger, others against gloominess—remedies not just very different but diametrically opposed—we will always try to counter the feeling that has come to dominate.

21 I stress the very great benefit derived from raising children in a healthy way right from the outset. Still, it's difficult to steer the right course, since we have to try to avoid either nurturing anger in them or blunting their natural capacities. **(2)** The matter requires careful monitoring, because the thing you're trying to encourage and the one you're trying to repress are both fed by similar things; yet similar things easily deceive even an attentive observer. **(3)** License makes the spirit grow, servility diminishes it. The spirit is elated when praised and comes to form good expectations of itself—but arrogance and anger have the same origin. Accordingly, we have to steer a middle course, using now the reins, now the spurs. **(4)** Let the child's spirit suffer nothing abject, nothing worthy of a slave. See that he never needs to beg and wheedle—and see that he never gets his way by doing so. What he wants should be granted for his own sake, for his earlier behavior, and for good behavior promised for the future. **(5)** When he's competing with his fellows, we should allow him neither to be bested nor to become angry. We should make an effort to insure that he regularly competes with friends, so that he becomes accustomed to wanting to win, not to hurt the other. Whenever he's

come out on top and done something praiseworthy, we should allow him to be elated, not to strut: joy is succeeded by exultation, which in turn is followed by a big head and too high an opinion of oneself. **(6)** We will grant some relaxation but we won't allow them to sink into sloth and inactivity, and we'll keep them well clear of luxuries. Nothing makes people more inclined to anger than being brought up soft and spoiled. That's why the more an only child is indulged, the more license one's wards are given,[187] the more corrupt their minds become. The person who's never been told "no," whose anxious mother always wiped away his tears, whose attendant[188] was beaten at his say-so—that person will not withstand being offended. **(7)** Surely you recognize that the greater each stroke of good fortune is, the greater the anger that accompanies it. This is especially clear in the case of rich men and notables and magistrates: anything frivolous and vacant in their mental makeup takes wing when the breeze is at its back. Prosperity nurtures anger, when a crowd of yes-men surrounds the arrogant man, speaking in his ear: "Really, is he to talk back to you? You don't allow yourself the full measure of your eminence, you demean yourself," and other things that healthy minds with a sound footing from day one have hardly withstood. **(8)** Accordingly, a child should be kept well clear of flattery: let him hear the truth. Let him now and then feel fear,[189] too, and be respectful always, and rise before his elders. Let him never get his own way through anger; what has been refused to the weeping child should be given when he has calmed down. And his parents' wealth should be there for him to see, not use. Let him be scolded for his shortcomings. **(9)** Giving children calm teachers and attendants will help. Anything young and tender fastens itself to the things closest to hand and grows to resemble them: the character of nurse and attendant is reflected in their charges' character when they grow into adulthood. **(10)** When a child raised at Plato's house was returned to his parents and saw his father shouting, he said, "I never saw this at Plato's house."[190] I have no doubt that he more readily imitated his father than Plato. **(11)** Above all, see that his food is simple, his clothing inexpensive, his mode of living like that of his fellows. The child you've made the peer of many from the start will not be angry when someone is compared with him.

22 But these comments are relevant to our children. As for

ourselves and our own accidents of birth and upbringing, there is no further opportunity either for fault or improvement: it is what follows that must be set in order. **(2)** Accordingly, we must struggle against the passions' first causes. The cause of anger is a belief that one has been wronged,[191] to which one ought not lightly give credence. One shouldn't immediately assent even to what is clear and obvious, for some things that are false look like the truth. One must always take one's time: the passage of time makes the truth plain.[192] **(3)** Don't lend your ears too easily to accusers. It's a flaw in human nature, well known to us and regarded with mistrust, that we're glad to believe what we don't want to hear, and we grow angry before we judge. **(4)** What of the fact that we're moved not only by accusations but by suspicions, and that we grow angry at innocent people because we've put the worse construction on someone else's look and laugh? One must plead the case of the absent party against one's own interests and keep anger suspended. Punishment postponed can still be exacted, but punishment exacted cannot be undone.

23 There's a well-known story about the tyrannicide who was captured before getting the job done.[193] Tortured by Hippias so he'd name his accomplices, he named the tyrant's friends who were standing around, knowing that they were fully committed to the tyrant's well-being. After the tyrant ordered them killed, one by one as they were named, he asked who was left: "Only you," the man said, "for I've left no one else who regards you fondly." Anger caused the tyrant to lend the tyrant-slayer a hand, killing his own protectors with his own sword. **(2)** How much more spirited was Alexander![194] After reading a letter from his mother warning him to beware the physician Philippus' poison, he took a drink Philippus offered him and downed it undeterred: on the subject of his friend he trusted more in himself. He was worthy of having a guiltless friend, and worthy of making the friend guiltless. **(3)** I praise this all the more in Alexander because no one was more prey to anger:[195] yet the more uncommon self-control is in kings, the more it's to be praised. **(4)** The great Julius Caesar did this too, in handling his victory in the civil war in a most merciful way. When he intercepted cases of letters sent to Gnaeus Pompey by men who seemed to have been either neutral or on the other side, he burned them.[196] Though he was habitually moderate in his anger,[197] he nonetheless preferred the inability to be angry

and thought it the most gratifying sort of pardon not to know what wrong each man had done.

24 Credulity does the most mischief. Often you shouldn't even lend an ear, for in some matters it's better to be deceived than to mistrust. You should entirely eliminate suspicion and guesswork, the most unreliable goads to anger: "That man greeted me with too little warmth. That man separated himself too quickly from my kiss. That man quickly broke off a conversation I'd begun. That man didn't invite me to dinner. That man had a rather unfriendly look."[198] **(2)** Suspicion will find proof to support it; straightforwardness is wanted, and a kindly judgment. Let's believe nothing save what stares us in the face and is caught red-handed, and let's scold our credulity whenever our suspicion has been shown to be empty. For this sort of scolding will make us slow to believe as a matter of habit.

25 From this it also follows that very trivial and petty matters will not aggravate us. The slave is not quick enough, the water's too hot to drink, the bed has been mussed, the table's been carelessly set: to get riled at such things is crazy. Someone whom a slight breeze has made shiver is weak and sickly; eyes that a bright white garment offends aren't healthy; a person whose own back feels pain at another's toil has been made effete by luxury. **(2)** They say that Mindyrides, from the city of the Sybarites, complained that he was becoming exhausted when he saw someone digging and lifting his hoe too high, and he forbade him to work in his sight; the same man complained that he felt worse when he lay down on rose petals that were creased.[199] **(3)** When pleasures have corrupted mind and body at once, nothing seems bearable, not because things are hard but because the person experiencing them is soft. For why should someone's cough or a sneeze send you into a frenzy, or a fly chased too negligently, or a dog that has got underfoot, or a key that slipped from the hands of a careless slave? **(4)** Will someone whose ears are bruised by the scraping of a bench being dragged bear with equanimity the abuse of public life and the curses heaped on him in an assembly or the Senate? Will someone who becomes angry when a slave does a bad job of melting the snow[200] endure hunger and the thirst of a summer campaign? That's why I say that nothing feeds anger more than luxury that's out of control and incapable of forbearance: the mind must be treated roughly so it feels only a serious blow.

26 We become angry either with those who weren't even able to wrong us or with those who were.[201] **(2)** In the former category are certain inanimate objects: often we've thrown away a book because the writing was too small and torn it to pieces because it was a bad copy, or we've ripped up garments because they were displeasing. How stupid, getting angry at things that neither deserved nor feel our anger![202] **(3)** "But of course the people who make them are the ones giving us offense." In the first place, we often become angry before we consciously make this distinction. In the second place, perhaps the craftsmen themselves will also offer reasonable excuses: this one couldn't do better than he did, and it wasn't for the purpose of insulting you that he didn't learn better; that other one didn't do what he did with the aim of offending you. Finally, what's crazier than venting your spleen against objects when people are your actual target? **(4)** What's more, as it's a mark of a lunatic to become angry with objects that lack a soul, so it is to become angry with animals incapable of speech, who do us no wrong because they lack the will: for it's not a wrong unless it proceeds from an intention.[203] Thus a sword or a stone can harm us, but they cannot do us a wrong. **(5)** And yet some people think they're being held in contempt when the same horses that obey one rider defy another—as though some things are more submissive to some people deliberately, not as a result of habit or the handler's skill. **(6)** And what's more, as it's stupid to become angry with these creatures, so it is to become angry with children and those not much more thoughtful than children.[204] In the eyes of a fair judge, any wrongdoing by people of that sort can be defended by a plea, not of innocence, but of thoughtlessness.

27 There are certain things that cannot harm us and have only beneficial and salutary power, like the immortal gods, who neither wish nor are able to be a hindrance. For their nature is gentle and calm, as far removed from doing wrong to another as from doing wrong to itself. **(2)** Accordingly, madmen and those ignorant of the truth hold the gods accountable for the sea's savagery, severe downpours, winter's stubborn grip; but in fact none of these natural phenomena that do us harm—and do us good—is aimed specifically at us. It's not on our account that the world enjoys the cycle of winter and summer: such things follow their own laws, by which the divine purpose is carried out.[205] We think too much of ourselves if we fancy

ourselves worthy of causing such great stirrings. None of these things, then, happens with the aim of wronging us—rather, quite the opposite, none of these things happens save for our well-being. **(3)** I've said that some things aren't able to harm us and others don't wish to harm us. In the latter category will be good magistrates and parents and teachers and judges, whose reproof should be accepted as therapy, like surgery and fasting and other things that cause pain in order to do us good. **(4)** Suppose we've been punished: we should think not only of what we're suffering but of what we did; we should be made to reflect on our way of life. Provided we want to tell ourselves the truth, we'll judge that we got off with less than we deserved.

28 If we want to be fair judges in all matters, let's first convince ourselves that none of us is without fault.[206] For this is the source of the greatest indignation, the thought "I'm without sin" and "I did nothing": no, rather, you admit nothing. We resent it when we're chastened by a word of rebuke or some restraint, though at that very moment we're doing wrong by adding arrogance and defiance to our misdeeds. **(2)** Who's that man there who claims he's innocent before all laws? Even though that might be so, what a pinched innocence it is to be "legally good." How much more broadly the norm of appropriate actions extends than the rule of law![207] How many demands do devotion, human feeling, generosity, justice, and good faith make, none of them confined to the tablets of the law![208] **(3)** But we cannot even represent ourselves as satisfying that very narrow definition of innocence: some things we've done, others we've planned, some we've hoped for, others still we've supported; in some cases we're innocent only because we didn't get our way. **(4)** With this thought in mind let's treat miscreants more fairly and pay heed to those who rebuke us; at least let's not become angry with the good (who'll escape, if we're angry even with the good?), and certainly not with the gods! It's not through their <fault> but through the law of our own mortality that we suffer whatever unpleasantness comes our way. "But diseases and pains beset us." Without a doubt, we must at some point die, since a decrepit dwelling place is our lot.

(5) Suppose you're told that someone has spoken ill of you. Consider whether you did it first; consider how many you badmouth. I stress this point: let's reflect that some aren't doing us a wrong but are returning one; some are acting on our behalf, others under

duress, others in ignorance. Let's reflect, too, that even those who act willingly and knowingly don't have the wrong itself as their aim in wronging us: either the person slipped in offering some urbane pleasantry, or he did what he did not to vex us but because he couldn't achieve his goal without getting us out of the way.[209] Often flattery, while trying to charm, gives offense. **(6)** Anyone who recalls how often he's been falsely suspected, how many of his own appropriate actions bad luck has made look like wrongs, how many people he came to like after hating them will be able to avoid becoming angry instantly, at least if he says to himself, each time he's offended, "I myself have made this mistake too."

(7) But where will you find such a fair judge? The same man who lusts only after another's wife and thinks the fact that she's another's wife is reason enough for loving her doesn't want his own wife looked at. The man who makes the sharpest demands on another's good faith is faithless himself. The man who chases down lies is himself a perjurer, the one who brings false charges is terrifically annoyed at being sued himself; the man who doesn't want his poor slaves' chastity assailed is profligate with his own. **(8)** We see others' vices right before us, but we carry our own on our backs.[210] Hence it happens that a father reproves his son's elaborate banquets, though he's worse than his son; the man who has denied nothing to his own appetite for luxury forgives nothing in another man's; the tyrant becomes angry with the murderer, the impious man punishes thefts. There's a large segment of humanity that becomes angry not with the wrongs done but with the wrongdoers. We'll become more self-controlled if we take a look at ourselves and ask: "It's surely not the case that I've done nothing like that myself, is it? Surely I've gone astray that same way, haven't I? Is it in my own interest to condemn such behavior?"

29 The great cure for anger is delay.[211] Ask it, at the outset, not to forgive but to deliberate: its first assaults do the damage, but if it waits it will back off. Don't try to uproot it all at once: it will be overcome entirely while you pluck it away bit by bit. **(2)** Some of the things that give offense are reported to us, others we hear or see ourselves. We shouldn't quickly believe the stories that are told us: many people don't tell the truth because they want to deceive, many because they themselves are deceived. One man tells an incriminating tale as a

way of ingratiating himself and falsely tells of wrongdoing so he can be seen to be pained that it was done. There's a malevolent sort who wants to split up close friendships; there's also the sort[212] who is eager for some amusement, who watches from a safe distance the clash of those he's pitted against each other. **(3)** If you were to judge a case involving a trifling amount,[213] you'd not consider the matter proved without a witness; the witness would count for nothing without swearing an oath, you'd give each side a chance to argue, you'd allow time, you wouldn't hold a single hearing, for the truth gleams all the more brightly the more often it's handled. Do you condemn a friend off the cuff? Do you become angry before you hear his side, before you question him, before he has a chance to know either his accuser or the accusation? Indeed, have you already heard <what> is to be said on both sides? **(4)** The very man who brought you the story will give it up if he's obliged to prove it: "There's no reason to call me as a witness," he says, "and if you do, I'll deny it. If you insist, I'll never tell you anything again." At one and the same time he stirs up trouble and withdraws from the resulting dust-up. Anyone willing to speak to you only in private might as well be mute: what is more unjust than to believe a tale told in secret, but to become angry for all to see?

30 Some things we witness for ourselves: in these cases we will inquire closely into the agents' nature and intention. He's a child: let it be chalked up to his age, he doesn't know whether he's doing wrong. He's a father: either he's been so helpful in the past that he has the right even to do wrong, or perhaps it's this very merit of his that offends us.[214] She's a woman: she makes a mistake. He was acting under orders: what just man becomes angry when compulsion's the cause? He was harmed: suffering in turn what you did previously doesn't count as being wronged. He's a judge: you should trust his opinion more than your own. He's a king: if he punished you when you were guilty, yield to justice; if he punished you when you were innocent, yield to fortune. **(2)** It's an animal incapable of speech, or just like one: you're acting no better if you become angry. It's a disease or a disaster: it will pass over you less grievously if you endure. It's God: you waste your time being angry with him no less than when you pray that he be angry with another. The one who committed the wrong is a good man: don't believe it. He's a bad man: don't be

surprised. He'll pay to another the penalty he owes to you, and he's already punished himself by being a wrongdoer.[215]

31 There are, as I've said,[216] two conditions that stir up anger: first, if we have the impression that we've been wronged—and I've already discussed this sufficiently; second, if we have been done a wrong unfairly—this is the topic that now must be addressed.[217] **(2)** People judge some things unfair on the ground that they shouldn't have suffered them, some on the ground that they were unexpected.[218] Because we reckon as inappropriate things that are unexpected, things that happen contrary what we hope and expect cause the greatest upset: that is precisely why the most trivial things in our domestic arrangements give offense, and why we call our friends' carelessness a "wrong." **(3)** An objection: "Why, then, do the wrongs our enemies do us upset us?" Because we didn't expect exactly those wrongs, or wrongs on such a scale. This is an effect of excessive amour propre: we judge that we should be undisturbed even by our enemies! Each of us has within us the mind of a monarch, wanting to be granted complete freedom of action but not wanting it to be used against him. **(4)** Accordingly, either ignorance or arrogance makes us inclined to anger. How is it strange if bad deeds proceed from bad men? How is it novel if an enemy does harm, a friend offends, a son slips, a slave does wrong? Fabius used to say that "I didn't reckon" was the most shameful excuse for a general; I think it's the most shameful for a human being.[219] Reckon and be on the watch for everything: even in a good character something too rough abides. **(5)** Human nature yields minds that are treacherous, ungrateful, lustful, impious:[220] when you're forming a judgment about one man's character, think about the character of men at large. Where you feel the greatest joy, you will feel the greatest fear; where you think that all is calm, there the sources of future harm aren't lacking, just lying low. Reckon that there will always be something to offend you: no steersman has ever unfurled all his sails so carefree that he didn't keep at hand the tackle to take them in.

(6) Reflect on this above all:[221] the power to do harm is disgusting, hateful, and most alien to a human being, through whose kindness even savage beasts become gentle. Consider the way elephants submit their necks to the yoke, bulls lend their back to be trod upon with impunity by leaping boys and women,[222] snakes slither among gob-

lets and in our bosoms, gliding harmlessly along, bears and lions as domestic pets offer their tranquil muzzles to be stroked, wild beasts fawning on their master: it will be a shame to have exchanged our human character with animals. **(7)** It's unspeakably wrong to harm one's fatherland; therefore, it's unspeakably wrong to harm a fellow citizen too, for he is part of the fatherland—the parts are sacrosanct if the whole is worthy of our worship. Therefore it's unspeakably wrong to harm a human being too, for he is your fellow citizen in the cosmopolis.[223] What if the hands wanted to harm the feet, the eyes the hands? As all our limbs are in harmony because it's in the interest of the whole that the individual parts be protected, so human beings will spare each individual because they've been born to form a social union, and a society cannot be sound save through the affectionate protection of its parts.[224] **(8)** We would not stamp out vipers and adders and any other creatures that do harm by biting or striking if we could tame them for the future or see to it that they not imperil us or others. A fortiori we will harm a human being, not because he has done wrong, but to keep him from doing wrong, and punishment will never be applied with thought to the past but with an eye on the future:[225] punishment acts from caution,[226] not anger. For if each and every person who has a warped and mischievous nature ought to be punished, no one will be exempt.

32 "But anger entails some pleasure: it's sweet to return pain for pain." Not in the least: though where favors are concerned it's the honorable thing to repay one good turn with another, it's not the honorable thing to repay wrongs with wrongs. In the case of favors, it's shameful to be outdone, whereas in this case it's the outdoing that's shameful. "Vengeance" is a word unworthy of human beings, for all that it's accepted as right. The one who retaliates is not much different from the wrongdoer, save in the order in which they cause pain: the retaliator is just more readily excused for doing wrong. **(2)** Some man, failing to recognize Marcus Cato in the baths, knocked up against him carelessly (for who would knowingly wrong such a man?). Later, when the man was apologizing, Cato said to him, "I don't recall being struck."[227] He thought it preferable not to take notice than to take revenge. **(3)** You ask, "Did that man suffer no grief for such effrontery?" No, rather, he received a great deal of good: he began to have Cato as an acquaintance. It's the mark of a

great spirit to regard wrongs as beneath contempt: that the offender appear unworthy of having vengeance exacted from him is the most insulting sort of vengeance. Many people, while taking vengeance, have let trivial wrongs get more deeply under their skins: the great and notable man is the one who, like a great beast, listens without concern to small dogs' yapping.[228]

33 An objection: "We'll be less subject to insult if we take vengeance when we're wronged."[229] If we're seeking a kind of remedy, we should seek it without anger, with the thought that vengeance would be useful, not enjoyable. But in fact it's often better to pretend not to notice than to get revenge. When more powerful people wrong us, we must bear it not just patiently but with a smile: they'll do it again if they believe they've succeeded. This is the worst feature of minds grown arrogant with great good fortune: they also hate those whom they've harmed. **(2)** A man who grew old paying court to kings is responsible for a very well-known saying: when asked how he achieved that rarest of things at court—old age—he said, "By accepting injuries and saying 'Thank you.'"[230] Often it's so inexpedient to avenge a wrong that it's not even expedient to acknowledge it. **(3)** Gaius Caesar had in custody the son of Pastor, a distinguished Roman knight, because he had been offended by the young man's refined grooming and exceptionally well-tended head of hair;[231] when the father asked him to spare his son's life, Caesar acted as though he'd been reminded of the young man's punishment and immediately ordered his execution. But lest his behavior toward the father be entirely monstrous,[232] he invited him to dinner that same day. **(4)** Pastor came with not a trace of reproach on his face. Caesar put eight ounces of wine before him as a toast to his health, and he stationed a guard over him;[233] the unhappy man drank the toast through gritted teeth, just as if he were drinking his son's blood. Caesar gave him perfumed oil and garlands, and ordered the guard to watch whether Pastor took them up; he did. On the same day that he had buried his son—or rather, hadn't had the chance to bury his son—the gouty old man was reclining as one of a hundred banqueters and draining drinks that would be scarcely respectable on his children's birthdays—and all the while he didn't shed a tear, didn't allow his grief to surface by any token: he dined as though he had gained his request for his son's life. Why, you ask? He had another. **(5)** What of great Priam?[234] Did he not hide his anger,

clasp the king's knees, kiss the hand smeared with his son's clotted blood, share a dinner? Yes, but with no perfumed oil, no garlands; and in his case, the terribly cruel enemy persuaded him to take some food with many words of consolation, he didn't urge him to drain huge cups dry with a guard posted at his neck. **(6)** As for the Roman father, I would have despised him if he had feared for himself;[235] in this case devotion to family kept anger in check.[236] He deserved permission to leave the banquet and gather his son's bones, but the young Caesar, kindly and companionable (sometimes), didn't grant even this. He harassed the old man with one toast after another, "advising" him to let his care be soothed. For his part, the old man made a show of being happy, as though he'd wiped clean the memory of what had happened that day: if the butcher hadn't found him a pleasing dinner companion, his other son would have perished.

34 We must, then, keep anger at a distance, whether the party who ought to be challenged is a peer or a superior or an inferior. With a peer, conflict can turn out this way or that; with a superior, it's daft; with an inferior, it's ignominious. It's the mark of a very small and wretched person to try to get back at someone who nips him: mice and ants turn to bite if you lay a finger on them—weak things think they're harmed just by being touched. **(2)** Our temper will be gentled if we reflect on the good that the person we're angry with once did us: his deserts will redeem the offense. Think, too, how a reputation for clemency will cause us to rise in others' estimation, and how many people pardon makes into useful friends.[237] **(3)** Let's not become angry with the children of personal and public enemies: it is among the signal instances of Sulla's cruelty that he barred the children of the proscribed from public life.[238] There's nothing more unjust than a person's inheriting his father's feuds. **(4)** Whenever we find it hard to forgive, we should consider whether it's in our interest that everyone be beyond the reach of pleading. How often the person who has denied a pardon has in turn sought one! How often he's groveled at the feet of a man he's shoved away from his own! What's more glorious than trading anger for friendship? What allies more faithful do the Roman people have than those who were its most stubborn enemies? What would our dominion be today if a salutary foresight had not thoroughly blended the conquered and their conquerors?[239]

(5) Suppose someone becomes angry with you. You, by contrast, should challenge him to match you in kindness. Conflict subsides immediately when one party leaves it behind: there can be no fight without a pair of fighters. With anger, however, there's contention on both side, and conflict. The one who withdraws first is the better man; the one who wins, loses. Suppose someone struck you: step back. By hitting back you'll give an opportunity, and an excuse, for more frequent blows, and you won't be able to extricate yourself when you want. **[35]** Surely no one would want to run an enemy through so vehemently that his own hand would be stuck in the wound, leaving him unable to withdraw from the blow, would he? Yet that's the sort of weapon anger is: it's withdrawn only with difficulty. We look for arms that are ready for action, a sword of a suitable size and easy to handle: will we not avoid the mind's assaults that are vehement, oppressive, and irrevocable? **(2)** Speed is acceptable if and only if it can stop in its tracks on command, go no farther than its determinate goal, be guided, and be brought back to a walk from a run.[240] We know that our muscles are unwell when they move against our will: it's an aged or infirm person who runs when he wants to walk. We should reckon that the healthiest and soundest movements of the mind are those that will proceed according to our judgment, not be borne along as they wish.

(3) Still, nothing will serve quite so usefully as a deterrent as looking closely first at anger's ugliness, then at its peril. No other passion's features are more disturbed. It turns the fairest faces foul and renders wild those that were utterly placid. Angry people lose all sense of propriety. If their dress is arranged comme il faut, they'll tear it off and lose all concern for their appearance. If their hair is arranged attractively by nature or by art, it bristles as wildly as their minds. Their veins swell, their chests are shaken by rapid breathing, their necks strain with the frenzied eruption of their voice; their joints tremble, their hands are restless, their whole body is buffeted as if by waves. **(4)** What do you imagine the mind within looks like, when its outward appearance is so foul? How much more terrifying is its aspect within the breast, its breathing more ragged, its assault more focused, sure to burst if it doesn't burst forth! **(5)** Like the sight of enemies or wild beasts dripping with blood or going to the kill; like the underworld monsters poets have imagined, girt with serpents

and breathing fire; like the most terrible divinities that issue from Hell to stir up war, spread discord among nations, and tear peace to shreds[241]—that's how we should picture anger in the mind's eye: its eyes ablaze, making a din with its shrieking and bellowing and groaning and hissing and any sound that is more hateful, brandishing its weapons in both hands (nor indeed is it concerned to shield itself), fierce, bloody, scarred, and bruised by self-inflicted blows, striding in a frenzy, cloaked in darkness, attacking, laying waste, putting to flight, stirred in its travails by a hatred of everyone and everything—itself most of all—as it seeks to confound earth and sea and sky, if it can cause harm no other way, hating and hated at once. **(6)** Or, if you prefer, let's take it to be as our bards describe it:[242]

> the goddess of War brandishing a bloody whip in her right hand

or

> her mantle in shreds, Discord makes her way rejoicing

or whatever more dreadful image of this dreadful passion can be imagined.

36 Some angry people, as Sextius said,[243] have benefited from looking in a mirror. They were taken aback to see such a great change in themselves: brought, as it were, to the scene of the crime, they didn't recognize themselves—and how little of their true deformity did that image reflected in the mirror show them! **(2)** If the mind could be made visible and shine forth in some material form,[244] its black, blotchy, seething, twisted, swollen appearance would stun the viewers. Even now, when it makes its way through bones and flesh and so many other obstacles,[245] its deformity is enormous: what if it could be shown uncovered? **(3)** To be sure, you'll believe that a mirror could deter no one from anger. Of course: someone who approaches a mirror in order to change himself has already changed. Angry people find no image more comely than one that's savage and grim—just as they want to appear.

(4) We should rather consider how many people anger has harmed all by itself. Some people have burst blood vessels in their excessive ardor, and spit up blood from shouting louder than their strength could bear, and blurred their vision when weeping forced water into their eyes too vigorously, and relapsed into illness when

they were sick. **(5)** No path leads more quickly to insanity: many, accordingly, have prolonged anger's frenzy and never regained the capacity for thought once they let it go. Frenzy drove Ajax to suicide, but anger made him mad.[246] Angry people curse their children with death, themselves with poverty, their households with ruin, and they deny they're angry just as madmen deny they're insane. They're enemies to their closest friends, people to be shunned by their nearest and dearest. Without thought for the law unless they can use it to do harm, apt to be stirred at the slightest provocation, beyond the reach of conversation and dutiful attention, they do violently whatever they do, ready both to do battle with the sword and to fall on it. **(6)** For they've been seized by the greatest evil, one that surpasses all vices.[247] Others make their entry little by little; this one's force acts suddenly and all at once. In short, anger makes all other passions its subjects. It overcomes the warmest affection—that's why people have stabbed through the bodies they've loved and fallen to lie in the embrace of those they've killed. Anger has trampled on greed, the toughest and most unbending evil, and compelled it to scatter its wealth and make a bonfire of its dwelling and all its gathered possessions. Has not a man fueled by ambition cast aside highly valued symbols of office and spurned the honor offered to him? There's no passion over which anger does not hold dominion.

To Novatus on Anger: Book 3
Book 5 of the Dialogues

1 Now, Novatus, we'll try to do what you chiefly wanted: excise anger from our minds, or at least rein it in and slow its assaults.[248] Sometimes we should do the job openly and frankly, when the evil is still slight enough to allow that; sometimes we must do it stealthily, when its heat is too high and it grows greater when any obstacle aggravates it. How strong and fresh it is determines whether we should beat it back and force it to retreat, or yield to it while the first storm gusts are spending their fury, lest it snatch up and carry off the very remedies we attempt.[249] **(2)** Our strategy must be based on each person's character.[250] Some are won over by entreaties, while others abuse and harass the submissive. Some we'll frighten into a calm state,[251] while others are deterred by reproach or confession or shame or delay—a sluggish remedy for a headlong evil, which we must use as a last

resort. **(3)** For all other passions tolerate being put off and are to be treated slowly, but anger's violence, once it has been aroused and is hurrying along, doesn't progress little by little but is complete at its onset. It doesn't just trouble our minds, in the manner of other vices;[252] it leads them astray and drives them on when they lack self-control and are eager even for an evil in which all will share. It rages not only against the targets it's marked out, but against whatever gets in its way. **(4)** All other vices give our minds a shove; anger pitches them headlong.[253] Even if it's not possible to resist one's passions, at least the passions themselves may come to a standstill: this one accelerates, just like lightning bolts and storm gusts and any other things that can't be called back because they don't just move, they plunge. **(5)** Other vices rebel against reason, this one rebels against sanity;[254] others approach gently and increase without our noticing, but in anger our minds are hurled straight down. Accordingly, no passion is more stunning in its force, eager to follow its own violent course, arrogant in success, crazed when frustrated. Not even when it's beaten back is it compelled to say "enough is enough": when the adversary has had the good luck to get away, it turns to biting itself. Nor does it matter how great the source is whence it's arisen: it passes from the most trivial beginnings to the weightiest consequences.

2 Anger exempts no stage of life,[255] and no class of people either. Some nations, thanks to the boon of poverty, don't know luxury; some, because they're nomads ever on the move, don't know laziness; some with an uncivilized and rustic way of life don't know trickery and deceit and any of the evils that the forum breeds. There's no nation that's not goaded by anger: it holds sway as much among Greeks as among barbarians and is as deadly to those who fear the law as it is to those for whom might makes right. **(2)** Finally, whereas all other vices seize upon individuals, this is the one passion that a whole populace sometimes contracts. An entire people has never burned with love for a woman, nor has an entire community placed all its hopes on money or gain. Ambition seizes individuals one at a time; loss of self-control is not an evil shared out among a whole people—but a whole people has often become angry en masse.[256] **(3)** Men and women, old and young, the foremost and the mob come to share a single thought, and the whole multitude, whipped up by a word or two, outstrips the agitator himself; straightway they scat-

ter to seize torches and declare war on their neighbors or wage it amongst themselves. **(4)** Whole houses are incinerated,[257] together with their entire households, and a man who was just now highly honored for his winning eloquence becomes the victim of the anger his own harangue has aroused. Legions have turned their spears on their own commander; commoners have split from patricians.[258] The Senate's policy has not waited for a levy to be held or a commander to be named, but has of a sudden chosen men to spearhead its anger, hunting down and executing notable men throughout the city's dwellings. **(5)** When embassies have suffered violence, contrary to universally recognized principles,[259] a community has been carried away by unspeakable frenzy. No delay to allow the public's inflamed feelings to simmer down, but directly fleets are launched, soldiers hastily recruited embark; marshaling forth without auspices, with due custom cast aside, with their own anger as their leader, the people seize whatever they chance to come upon in place of proper weapons—and thereupon suffer a huge disaster, the price for rash and reckless anger. **(6)** This has been the outcome for barbarians who rush at random into war.[260] When their minds, being easily swayed, are struck by the impression of an injury, they're instantly set in motion: drawn by their sense of grievance, they fall upon our legions like a collapsing building, without order, without fear, without caution, actually seeking to put themselves in harm's way. They exult in being struck, in pressing against the sword that stabbed them, in putting their weight into the spear that's pierced them, and in coming out the other side of their own wound.[261]

3 "There's no doubt," you say, "that anger's force is great and diseased: so show how it ought to be healed." But yet, as I've said in the earlier books, Aristotle stands as a defender of anger and forbids us to excise it: he says it's a spur to virtue, and removing it will leave the mind defenseless and too sluggish and supine to undertake great actions.[262] **(2)** Accordingly, it's necessary to prove its disgusting and bestial character and to make you see how monstrous it is for one human being to rage against another, and how violently anger attacks, dealing destruction at the cost of its own destruction and seeking to sink those whom it can drown only if it drowns with them. **(3)** Does anyone really call sane a man who doesn't move on his own but is made to move as though in a hurricane's grip, who is a slave to a fren-

zied evil, who doesn't delegate the job of taking vengeance but acts as his own avenger, savage in thought and deed at once, butchering those dearest to him and those he'll mourn as soon as they're lost?[263] **(4)** Does anyone make this passion virtue's helpmate and comrade, when it confounds the deliberations that virtue needs to get anything done? Its strength is fleeting and sinister, capable only of harming itself, the sort of strength that the onset of disease stirs in a sick man. **(5)** There's no reason, then, to suppose that I'm pointlessly wasting time in defaming anger as if people were of two minds about it, since there's a philosopher—indeed, a distinguished one—who assigns it tasks and summons it to battle, to the conduct of affairs, to anything needing some heat for its execution, as though it were a useful source of vigor. **(6)** No one should be fooled into thinking that it will be profitable at some time or in some place: its unbridled, lunatic frenzy must be made plain, and its proper paraphernalia must be handed over to it:[264] the rack, the grate, the cross, fires set around half-buried bodies, the hook, too, used to drag corpses, different sorts of bonds, diverse kinds of punishments, limbs torn, foreheads tattooed, the cages of monstrous beasts. Let anger take its proper place among these implements, a loathsome thing whose shrieks make you shiver, fouler than all the tools of its frenzy.

4 Though its other aspects might be in doubt, it's certain that no passion wears an uglier expression, which I've described in the earlier books:[265] harsh and fierce, now pallid, when the blood withdraws in flight, now flushed and bloody-looking, when all the heat and spirit return to the face, veins swollen, eyes now darting and frantic, now fixed and staring. **(2)** Add the sound of teeth ramming against each other as though they were trying to mimic boars grinding their own weapons to a point; add the crack of knuckles from hands being wrung, breast beaten time and again, panting and heartfelt groans, dizziness, incomprehensible words produced in sudden shouts, lips now quivering, now pursed, expelling some loathsome, hissing noise. **(3)** Beasts, by Hercules—whether they're driven by hunger or pierced in the guts with a spear, trying to bite the hunter with their dying breath—beasts look less disgusting than a man ablaze with anger. Come, if you've time to listen to menacing sounds, hear what sorts of words belong to a tortured mind!

(4) Won't anyone want to summon himself back from the brink

of anger once he realizes that it begins by doing him evil first? Don't you want me, then, to warn those who put their anger to work from a position of supreme power—thinking prompt vengeance proof of their strength, counting it among the grand benefits of great good fortune—that the person who is the captive of his own anger is not powerful, or rather, cannot even be called free? **(5)** Don't you want me to warn people—so that each will be more careful and circumspect—that the mind's other evils are associated with all the worst people, but an angry disposition steals upon even the cultured and those who are in other respects sound? In fact it's reached the point that some people think that an inclination to anger is a sign of honesty and that all who are most subject to it are commonly believed to be most free and easy.[266]

5 "What's your point?" you ask. That no one should reckon himself safe from it, since it provokes to savage violence even those who are gentle and calm by nature. Just as a sound physique and carefully maintained health do no good at all against a plague (for it attacks the weak and strong indiscriminately), so anger is equally dangerous for unquiet characters and those that are settled and relaxed—and it's all the more shameful and destructive for the latter, since it works more of a change in them. **(2)** But since the first goal is not to become angry, the second is to cease when angered, and the third is to cure another's anger too, I shall first tell how to avoid succumbing to anger, then how to free ourselves from it, and finally how to restrain angry people, calm them, and lead them back to sanity.[267]

(3) We'll succeed in avoiding anger if we promptly lay out before us all of anger's vices and form a sound estimation of it. It must be arraigned before us and condemned; its evils must be searched out and made plain; it must be set side by side with the worst vices, so the sort of thing it is becomes clear. **(4)** What greed acquires and heaps together, a better person might put to use: anger is spendthrift, cost-free to only a few. How many slaves has a wrathful master made fugitive, or killed! How much more has he lost through his anger than the loss that angered him to begin with! Anger has brought a father grief, a husband divorce, a magistrate hatred, a candidate defeat. **(5)** It's worse than luxury, which enjoys its own pleasure: anger enjoys another's pain. It outdoes malice and envy, which want others to be made unhappy and take delight in strokes of bad luck: anger

makes others unhappy and can't wait for luck to harm the people it hates—it wants to harm them itself. **(6)** There's nothing more grievous than quarrels: anger causes quarrels. There's nothing deadlier than war: the anger of powerful men explodes in war—yet even the everyday, private sort of anger is a form of war that lacks the force of arms. Furthermore—to set aside the consequences of anger, the losses, the treachery, the unending anxiety when one struggle leads to another—it is punished in the act of punishing. It betrays human nature, which urges us toward love and bids us to benefit others:[268] anger urges us toward hate and bids us to do harm. **(7)** Add the fact that though its indignation comes from an excessively high opinion of itself, so that it fancies itself high-spirited, it's in fact puny and petty. For anyone who judges himself despised is inferior to the one who despises him, but the one who is indeed a great spirit and a true judge of his own worth takes no vengeance for an injury, because he just doesn't feel it.[269] **(8)** Missiles rebound from a hard surface, and solid objects, when struck, cause pain to the one striking them; just so, injury cannot cause a great spirit to feel it, because it is more fragile than the thing it attacks. How much finer it is to rebuff all injuries and insults, as though impervious to any missile! To take vengeance is to acknowledge pain: a great spirit is not bowed down by a wrong. The one who has harmed you is either stronger or weaker than you: if he's weaker, give him a break; if he's stronger, give yourself a break.[270]

6 There's no more certain proof of greatness than remaining unprovoked by whatever happens. The upper part of the universe, being more orderly and closer to the stars, is not compacted to form a cloud nor driven to make a tempest nor whirled about to produce a tornado: it experiences no upheaval, while the regions below are blasted by lightning. Just so, the lofty mind is ever peaceful, firmly moored in its tranquil anchorage, suppressing all of anger's components, controlled and august and orderly. And you will find none of these qualities in an angry man. **(2)** For who surrenders to anguish and rage without first casting off modest restraint? Who attacks another wildly without jettisoning whatever respectable qualities he had? Who keeps orderly account of his duties once he's been stirred up? Who controls his tongue? Who restrains any part of his body? Who can govern himself once he lets go the reins? **(3)** We will profit

from Democritus's salutary teaching, which shows that the path to tranquility lies in undertaking few activities, and none beyond our strength, in both private and public affairs.[271] When a person is bustling this way and that to handle many transactions, the day never passes so felicitously that someone or something doesn't cause an offense that primes the mind for anger. **(4)** Just as when we're hurrying through the city's crowded spaces, it's inevitable that we'll bump into many people, tripping here or getting stuck there or being splashed some other place, so in leading a life that's scattered and undirected we run into many obstacles, and many causes for complaint. This one has deceived our hope, that one has delayed its fulfillment, another one has put it to an end: our projects have not progressed smoothly in accordance with our plans. **(5)** No one is so much fortune's darling that he'll find her always responsive to his many endeavors. It follows, then, that the person whose plans have been set back has no patience for people or things but becomes angry for the most trivial reasons, now at a person, now at a transaction, now at a place, now at fortune, now at himself. **(6)** For the mind to be quiet, then, it must not be in turmoil or wearied by activities that, as I said, are either numerous or substantial, seeking ends beyond our means. It's easy to shoulder light burdens and transport them this way and that without a slip, but we have a hard time supporting the burdens that others place upon us. Overwhelmed, we shrug them off at the first opportunity; even while we stand beneath the bundle, we totter because we're unequal to the weight.

7 The same thing, of course, happens in both civic and domestic affairs. Dealings that are free from encumbrances and easy to handle comply with the agent's wishes. Those that are massive and beyond the agent's powers don't yield readily and, once undertaken, oppress him, lead him off course, and—just when success seems in his grasp—bring him and the whole enterprise down. So it frequently happens that a man who doesn't undertake easy things, but who wants the things he's undertaken to be easy, has his intentions foiled. **(2)** Whenever you're going to attempt something, be sure to gauge yourself and the undertaking and your preparation for it all at once: regret for a task left incomplete will make you irritable. Here it makes a difference whether one's nature is ardent or cold and abject.[272] Failure elicits anger in a noble man, depression in one who

is limp and supine. Our undertakings, then, should be neither small nor reckless and wicked, and our hopes should stay close to home. We should attempt nothing that—once we've succeeded—will leave us surprised that we did.

8 Because we don't know how to tolerate a wrong we should take care not to suffer one. Our intimates should be very calm and easy to get along with, not nervous and cross-grained. We pick up habits from our companions, and just as some disorders are transmitted by bodily contact, so the mind passes on its defects to those closest at hand. A drunkard has made his tablemates fond of unmixed wine.[273] Mingling with the sexually abandoned has made even a rugged man effeminate, though he had the nature of flint. A greedy man has transmitted his infection to his neighbors. **(2)** It's the same way with virtues, but in reverse. They make mild everything that is within their orbit, and just as poor health profits from being in an advantageous region and a more healthy climate, so minds wanting in strength profit from keeping company with a better crowd. **(3)** You'll understand how effective this is if you've seen that even wild animals become gentle from living with us. Not even a monstrous beast retains its violent character if it's been able to share human quarters for a long time.[274] All harshness is smoothed away and unlearned, little by little, in placid company. There's also the fact that someone in daily contact with calm people not only becomes better by their example but also lacks reasons to become angry and doesn't indulge his own vice. He will accordingly avoid all who he knows will goad his inclination to anger.

(4) "Who are those?" you ask. Many people will have this effect, for a range of reasons. An arrogant man will offend you with his contempt, a smart-mouth with an insult, an unruly man with an injury, a spiteful man with his malice, an aggressive man by picking a fight, a lying windbag with his vanity. You won't put up with being viewed suspiciously by the fearful, being bested by the stubborn, being regarded with an upturned nose by the overrefined. **(5)** Pick people who are straightforward, affable, and self-controlled, since they'll neither provoke your anger nor put up with it. More beneficial still will be those who are sweet-tempered, humane, and unassertive—though not to the point of being yes-men, for excessive compliance provokes people who are inclined to anger.[275] Certainly I used to have a

friend who was a good man but too ready to anger: it was no safer to sweet-talk him than to badmouth him. **(6)** It's a well-known fact that the orator Caelius was extremely irascible.[276] The story goes that he was dining in his private chamber with a client whose forbearance was exquisite—though finding himself in those close quarters, he had a hard time avoiding a quarrel with his patron. He reckoned it best to follow along with whatever Caelius said and play second fiddle. Caelius couldn't bear this continuous agreement and shouted, "Contradict me somehow, so there'll be two of us!" But even Caelius, angry because the other didn't become angry, soon left off, finding himself without an opponent. **(7)** If we know we're quick to anger, then, we should pick even companions like this, the sort to follow our every look and utterance: to be sure, they'll spoil us and put us in the bad habit of hearing nothing against our wishes, but they'll do us the service of giving our anger a bit of quiet time, thanks to their own vice. Even those who are naturally difficult and violent will put up with someone who sweet-talks them: no creature stays harsh and severe while you're petting it. **(8)** Whenever a discussion turns overlong and quarrelsome, we should try to put a stop to it at the first stages before it gains strength. Disagreement feeds upon itself and keeps a grip on those immersed too deeply in it. It's easier to abstain from a conflict than to extricate oneself.

9 People inclined to anger should give up unusually demanding fields of study, too, or at least shouldn't pursue them to the point of exhaustion. Their minds shouldn't be employed on hard subjects but should be entrusted to the pleasant arts—let them be soothed by reading poetry and beguiled by legends from history: the goal is a softer and more comfortable mental regimen. **(2)** Pythagoras used to play the lyre to settle his mind when it was upset.[277] Who doesn't know, furthermore, that war horns and trumpets are meant to excite, whereas certain beguiling songs are conducive to mental relaxation? Looking at green objects helps when our vision is all ajumble.[278] Some colors calm our glance when it's unsteady, just as the brightness of some others dazzles it. In the same way, studies that give pleasure soothe our capacity for thought when it's sickly. **(3)** We ought to avoid the forum, advocacy, the courts, and all pursuits that irritate the vice of anger. We should equally beware of physical exhaustion, for it uses up whatever is mild and calm in us

and rouses the things that are fierce. **(4)** That's the reason why people whose temper is unreliable take some food to balance their bile when they're about to undertake matters of greater moment.[279] Becoming wearied especially stirs up bile, either because it forces all bodily heat into the middle regions, damages the blood, and stops the circulation because the veins become overtaxed, or because the body when it's weakened and unsteady presses its weight upon the mind (that's certainly the reason why people worn out by disease or age are more inclined to anger).[280] Hunger and thirst should be avoided for the same reasons, too: they irritate and inflame our minds. **(5)** There's an old saying that a tired man goes looking for a fight—and that's equally true of a hungry man, a thirsty man, any man who's galled by anything.[281] For just as sores hurt at a slight touch, and even the mere thought of a touch, so a mind that's impaired is offended for the slightest reasons, to the extent that a greeting, a letter, a speech, a question provokes some people to a quarrel. Whatever's sickly always squawks when it's touched.

10 Accordingly, it's best to be your own physician when you first sense the evil, and to keep your words on a tight leash, too, and prevent aggressive movement.[282] **(2)** Moreover, it's easy to diagnose one's passions as they first arise: symptoms precede the disease. Just as signs of a rainstorm arrive before the storm itself, so there are certain signs that announce the coming of anger, love, and all those storm gusts that vex our minds. **(3)** People who chronically suffer from epilepsy[283] recognize that the disease is already approaching if their extremities grow cold, their vision swims, their muscles tremble, their memory falters, and their head spins. Accordingly, they anticipate the onset with the usual remedies: they use an odor or a taste to drive off whatever it is that makes their minds strangers to themselves, or they use warm poultices to counteract the stiffening chill in their limbs; and if medicine fails, they stay away from a crowd and suffer their seizure where no one can see.[284] **(4)** It helps to recognize your disease and to check its strength before it spreads. We should consider what especially riles us. Insulting speech moves one person, insulting actions another. This one is sensitive about his notable status; that one, about his good looks. One person wants to be thought exceptionally refined; another, exceptionally learned. This person can't stand arrogance; that one, defiance. That fellow over there doesn't think slaves

worthy of his anger; this one here is a beast at home, a lamb abroad. One man thinks he's being wronged when he's asked a favor; another thinks he's being insulted when he's not asked. Not all people feel the blow in the same part of themselves, so it's proper to know your own weak spot, in order to give it special protection.

11 It's not a good idea to hear and see everything that goes on. Let many injuries just pass us by: the person who doesn't register most of them doesn't suffer them.[285] You don't want to be inclined to anger? Don't be inquisitive. The person who asks what remarks were made about him and unearths nasty gossip even if it was kept secret just upsets himself. Interpreting certain things a certain way makes them look like injuries. The proper course is to defer some things, laugh off others, and forgive still others. **(2)** Anger should be hedged about in various ways; most things should be turned into a joke. When Socrates was struck on the head (the story goes), he made no response save to say that it was a bother people didn't know when it was a good idea to wear a helmet when leaving the house.[286] **(3)** What makes a difference is not how an injury was caused, but how it's borne, and I fail to see why self-control is difficult, since I know that even tyrants—bloated with good fortune and license though their natures are—have checked their own savagery. **(4)** It's certainly recorded in the history books that when a drunken dinner guest offered a long critique of the Athenian tyrant Pisistratus' cruelty, and there was no lack of those willing to lend a hand in vengeance—with men on every side trying to light a fire under Pisistratus' anger—he bore it calmly and said to those who were trying to stir him up him that he was no more furious than if a blindfolded man had run into him.[287]

12 Many people manufacture their own causes for complaint through false suspicion and by exaggerating things that are trivial. Anger often comes to us, but we more often go to it. Yet we should never summon it: even when it comes our way, we should reject it. **(2)** No one says to himself, "This thing that's making me angry—either I've done it myself, or I could have." No one gauges the agent's intention, only the act itself. Yet it's the agent we ought to consider closely.[288] Was his act voluntary or accidental, was he compelled or deceived, was he acting out of hatred or for a reward, did he gratify himself or lend his services to another? The wrongdoer's age should

be taken into account, and also his fortune, making forbearance a matter either of kindness or of expediency. **(3)** We should put ourselves in the place of the person we're angry with: from that perspective we see that an unfair valuation of ourselves makes us angry, and that we don't want to suffer an act that we'd willingly commit. **(4)** No one says to himself, "Wait a minute"—yet the greatest remedy for anger is postponement,[289] so that its initial ardor might slacken and the darkness that overwhelms the mind might either pass or be less thick. Not a day but a single hour will mitigate some of the things that are sending you headlong, others will completely vanish. Even if the adjournment you sought accomplishes nothing, it will now have the appearance of a trial, not a rage. Whenever you want to know the character of a thing, entrust the job to time: no careful discriminations are made in flux. **(5)** When Plato was angry with his slave,[290] he couldn't get himself to grant a delay but ordered the slave to doff his tunic and offer his back for lashes, which he intended to administer with his own hand. After he realized he was angry, just as he raised his hand, he kept it raised in midair and stood there like someone poised to strike; then when a friend who happened on the scene asked him what he was doing, he said, "I'm punishing an angry man." **(6)** Like someone paralyzed, he maintained the pose—grotesque for a wise man—of someone on the verge of savagery, having now forgotten the slave because he'd found another more deserving of rebuke. He accordingly deprived himself of such power over his household: when more than usually upset by some misdeed, he said, "Speusippus, you chastise that no-good slave with a whipping; for I'm angry."[291] **(7)** By so doing, he avoided doing wrong because another had done wrong. "I'm angry," he said, "and I'll do more than I should, and more gladly; that slave shouldn't be in the control of one who can't control himself." Does anyone want vengeance to be entrusted to an angry man, when Plato himself revoked his own powers of command? When you're angry, you should allow yourself nothing. Why? Because then you want to allow yourself everything.

13 Struggle with yourself: if <you have the will> to overcome anger, it cannot overcome you. You begin to overcome it if it's kept concealed and not given an outlet. We should disguise its signs and keep it, to the extent possible, hidden and secret. **(2)** That will cost us great distress (for it wants to leap forth, set the eyes ablaze, and

change our expression), but once it's been allowed to reveal itself outside us, it has mastery over us. We should conceal it in the deepest recesses of our breast; we should bear it, not be borne away by it. No, quite the opposite—we should modify its telltale signs, relaxing our expression, softening the voice, slowing our step. Little by little, our inner state comes to conform to our outward appearance. **(3)** It was a sign that Socrates was angry when he lowered his voice and spoke less volubly; that made it plain that he was resisting his own impulses.[292] Accordingly, his friends used to lay hold of him and reprove him, nor did he resent their reproach of his lurking anger: why shouldn't he rejoice that many recognized his anger but no one felt it? They would have felt it, however, if he hadn't authorized his friends to scold him—the same role he had assumed vis-à-vis his friends.[293] **(4)** How much more ought we adopt this practice! We should ask all our closest friends to reproach us candidly just when we will be least tolerant of that candor, and not to second us in our anger. Against this powerful and pleasing evil we should summon assistance while we still have the sense and self-possession to do so. **(5)** People who can't hold their wine and fear the rash, wild consequences of drunkenness give their friends the job of taking them home from a banquet. People who have experienced a loss of self-control in illness forbid others to obey them when they're unwell. **(6)** It's best to look for obstacles to put in the way of our known vices and, above all, to have our mind so composed that even when it's suddenly and very grievously shaken, it either doesn't feel anger or draws the anger back deep inside and doesn't acknowledge its own anguish, when the magnitude of an unexpected injury has caused it to start. **(7)** It will be plain that this can be done if I offer a few examples from the huge crowd available. From these it will be possible to learn two lessons: how much evil anger has within its grasp when it uses all the might of extraordinarily powerful persons, and how much it can stay in command of itself when it has been checked by a greater fear.[294]

14 King Cambyses was excessively devoted to wine.[295] Praexaspes, one of his dearest friends, advised him to drink more sparingly, saying that drunkenness was shameful in a king, the cynosure of all eyes and ears. The king replied, "Just so you can be sure that I'll never cut back, I'll prove that both my hands and my eyes can do their duty

when I've been drinking." **(2)** Thereupon he drank more freely than usual, from larger cups, and when he was already woozy and stinking drunk he bade the son of the man who had reproved him to go out beyond the threshold and stand with his left hand raised above his head. Then he bent his bow and pierced the young man to the very heart (for that's the target he'd specified); cutting open the chest and displaying the dart lodged in the heart, he looked back at the father and asked whether his hand had been steady enough. The father affirmed that Apollo couldn't have made a surer shot. **(3)** May the gods waste that man—no better than a slave, in his mind if not his station![296] He offered an encomium of a deed that it was intolerable even to have witnessed. He reckoned it an opportunity for flattery, that his son's chest had been split in two, with the heart still beating beneath the wound. He should have taken Cambyses to task on the subject of glory and called for a second shot, so that the king could have the pleasure of showing that his hand was still steadier in slaying the father himself. **(4)** O bloody king, who deserved to have all his people turn their bows against him! Though I've cursed him for bringing his banquet to an end in deadly retribution, still, praising that shot was more atrocious than the shot itself. We will consider at another time how the father ought to have behaved, standing over his son's dead body, a murder he had both witnessed and caused. As for the point under discussion, it's obvious that anger can be suppressed. **(5)** He didn't curse the king; he didn't utter even a word of lamentation for his disaster, though he saw his own heart pierced no less than his son's. One could say that he rightly swallowed his words; for had he said anything in the character of an angry man, he could have done nothing in his character as a father. **(6)** It could appear (I stress this point) that he behaved more wisely in his misfortune than he did in recommending moderation in drink to a man better off drinking wine than blood: when his hands were busy with his cups, peace reigned. And so Praexaspes joined the company of those who have shown, through their own disasters, how high a price kings' friends pay for their good advice.

15 I've no doubt that Harpagus, too, gave some such advice to his own king, the king of the Persians:[297] taking offense, the king served him his own children for dinner and then asked whether he liked the seasoning; and when he saw that Harpagus was quite overcome

by his woes, he next ordered that the children's heads be brought to him, and he inquired how he received them. The poor man wasn't at a loss for words, his mouth didn't clamp shut: "At the palace of the king, every banquet is pleasing." What did he gain by this piece of flattery?[298] Not being invited to the leftovers. **(2)** I don't say that the father shouldn't condemn his king's action, I don't say he shouldn't seek condign punishment for so savage a monster,[299] but I draw an inference that is relevant now: even anger provoked by enormous wickedness can be concealed and compelled to speak in a way quite unlike itself. **(3)** Reining in one's anguish in that way is necessary, not least for those whose lot in life brings them to a king's table. That's the way one eats, drinks, answers in their presence—the rule is "Smile while your family members die." I'll consider on another occasion whether life is worth so high a price: that's a different question. I'll not palliate with consolation a chain-gang way of life—so grim—I'll not urge you to bear the commands of butchers: I'll demonstrate that in every form of slavery the path to freedom lies open.[300] A person who has the license to end his miseries is miserable only because of his own weak mind, his own fault. **(4)** Both to the man who fell in with a king who shot arrows at his friends' breasts and to the man whose lord fed fathers full with their children's flesh, I shall say: "Why groan, madman? Why wait, either for some foreign enemy to avenge you by destroying your nation or for a powerful king to fly to your aid from afar? Wherever you look, there's the end of your woes. See that cliff? The way down is the way to freedom. See that sea, that river, that well? Freedom abides there, in its depths. See that tree, stumpy, shriveled, barren? Freedom hangs from it. See your own neck, your own throat, your own heart? They're the escape routes from slavery. Are the exits I'm showing you too toilsome? Do they demand too much strength of mind? Do you ask what path leads to freedom? Any vein in your body."

16 Now, as long as we find nothing so unbearable as to drive us from life, we should get rid of anger, no matter what our station in life will be. Anger is destructive for those serving in subordinate positions. All resentment works a form of self-torture and feels commands to be all the more burdensome the more defiantly they're endured. That's how a wild animal tightens a trap's noose while jerking it about; that's how birds end up smearing bird-lime all over their

feathers while shaking themselves to shed it.[301] No yoke is so tight that it doesn't hurt the compliant less than the recalcitrant. The one relief for massive woes is to endure them and submit to the constraints they impose. **(2)** But though it's useful for subordinates to control their passions, and this wild, unbridled passion especially, it's still more useful for kings. When fortune permits what anger urges, all is lost, nor can any power long abide that's exercised at the cost of many people's woe:[302] it's put at risk when a common fear unites those who are lamenting by themselves. Many have been slaughtered—some by individuals, some by all acting together—when the anguish shared by a whole people drove them to unify their anger. **(3)** And yet many have employed their anger as though it was an emblem of kingship.[303] Take Darius, for example, who first held Persia and a large part of the east after wresting dominion from the Magus. When he declared war on the Scyths, who were encircling the east, he was asked by Oeobazus, an aged notable, to leave one of his three sons as a consolation for his father and use the services of the other two: promising more than was asked, Darius said that he'd send all three back to him—then had them killed and dumped before their father's eyes, since he would have been cruel had he taken them all on campaign. **(4)** But how much more easygoing was Xerxes![304] When Pythius, the father of five sons, asked that one of them be released from service, Xerxes allowed him to choose the one he wanted, then had the one he picked split in two, with each half placed on one side of the road, as a sacrificial victim to purify his army. He accordingly met the outcome he deserved: defeated, his forces scattered far and wide, seeing all that was his razed to the ground on every side, he marched in the midst of his people's corpses.

17 Such, in their anger, was the savagery of barbarian kings, who had not been steeped in learning and literary culture. Now I'll give you—from the bosom of Aristotle—king Alexander,[305] who killed Clitus, his dearest friend from childhood, with his own hand while feasting, because Clitus was insufficiently fawning, and loath to pass from freedom as a Macedonian to slavery as a Persian. **(2)** Again, he threw Lysimachus, an equally close friend, to the lions: but when Lysimachus had the good luck to escape the lions' maw, he wasn't any gentler for the experience when he himself came to rule, was he?[306] **(3)** For when he had done the job of pruning Telesphorus of Rhodes

all about, cutting off his ears and nose, he long maintained him in a cage like some sort of new and extraordinary animal, though the ugly docking and mutilation of his face had destroyed his human features; to this was added the wasting hunger and squalor and filth of his body, abandoned in his own feces. **(4)** Not only that; when his hands and knees, which the narrow cage forced him to use as feet, grew calloused pads, and his back and sides developed sores from the rubbing, he was a sight no less disgusting than fearful to look at. Made monstrous by his punishment, he had lost all claim even on pity.[307] Still: though the man who suffered such things was utterly unlike a human being, the one who caused them was still less human.

18 I only wish that such savagery had remained confined to foreign examples, and that the barbarism of punitive rage had not passed over into the Roman character, along with other immigrant vices. Marcus Marius—to whom the people had raised statues in one neighborhood after another, to whose image prayer-offerings of incense and wine were made—had his legs broken, his eyes gouged out, and his tongue and hands cut off at the order of Lucius Sulla, who tore him apart little by little and joint by joint, as though he could kill him every time he wounded him.[308] **(2)** Who was the servant who carried out this order? Who but Catiline, already giving his hands employment in every sort of crime? He was butchering Marius before the tomb of Quintus Catulus, doing grievous wrong to the ashes of that mildest of men, as over those ashes Marius shed his blood drop by drop, a man who set a bad example in his policies but who was still a man of the people, loved by them not undeservedly but too well. Marius was worthy of suffering such things, Sulla, of ordering them, Catiline, of doing them, but the commonwealth didn't deserve to have its body pierced by the swords of enemies and defenders alike. **(3)** Why rummage about in ancient history for examples? Not long ago Gaius Caesar[309] whipped and tortured, in a single day, Sextus Papinius (son of a former consul), Betilienus Bassus (his own quaestor and son of his procurator), and others too, both senators and Roman knights, not while conducting an investigation, but because he felt like it. **(4)** Furthermore, he could so little endure postponing pleasure, which his cruelty demanded in massive amounts and all at once, that while strolling on his mother's estate,[310] along a walkway separating a portico from the riverbank, he decapitated by lamplight some of

those I have just mentioned in the company of Roman matrons and other senators.[311] Why was he in such a hurry? Because the space of a single night threatened some public or personal peril? How small a thing it would have been, in short, to wait until dawn, so that senators of the Roman people might not be killed by a man in flip-flops.[312]

19 Knowing how arrogant his cruelty was is relevant to the matter at hand, though someone could judge that I'm deviating from my subject and going off on a tangent; but this very trait of his will be characteristic of anger when its savagery is extraordinary.[313] He had whipped senators: his own prior behavior made it possible to say "This sort of thing happens." He had tortured them, using all the most ghastly means the world knows—the grate, ankle clamps, the rack,[314] fire, his own face. **(2)** Here someone will say: "Big deal! So he took turns using whips and fire on three senators, as though they were worthless chattel—a person who used to contemplate slaughtering the whole Senate, who used to wish that the Roman people had a single neck[315] so that he could concentrate his atrocities, otherwise dispersed over so many sites and occasions, into a single blow on a single day." Is there anything more unprecedented than an execution carried out under cover of night?[316] Though acts of banditry are usually concealed in the shadows, punishments more effectively set edifying examples the more notorious they are. **(3)** And here someone will say to me: "The behavior that leaves you agog is that beast's daily regimen: he lives for it, he keeps watch for it, he burns the midnight oil for it." True enough; you'll find no one else who commanded that all whose execution he ordered have their mouths stopped up with a sponge, so that they couldn't utter a sound. Was anyone on the point of death ever kept from groaning? He was afraid that their final anguish would produce speech of uncommon candor, that he'd hear what he didn't want to hear. He knew, moreover, that there were countless things that none would dare cast in his face save on the point of death. **(4)** When sponges weren't at hand, he ordered that the wretches' garments be torn up and the rags stuffed in their mouths. What kind of savagery is that? Let the wretch draw his last breath, give the soul a way to leave the body,[317] don't make him send it forth through a gaping wound. **(5)** It's too much to add that on the same night he also killed the fathers of the men he murdered—that is to say, the soft-hearted man freed them from their grief—by sending

centurions around to their homes. It's my aim to describe not Gaius's savagery but the savagery of anger, which doesn't vent its rage on one man at a time but rends entire nations, battering cities and rivers and entities immune from feeling pain.

20 So the Persian king cut an entire people's noses off in Syria, whence the place is named "Dock-Nose."[318] You reckon that he spared them, because he didn't cut off the heads? No, he just took pleasure in a new kind of punishment. **(2)** The Ethiopians, who are called "the Long-lived Ones" (the course of their life goes on and on), would have suffered some such fate too, for Cambyses was in a lather because they didn't accept slavery with gestures of grateful submission[319] but gave the ambassadors he sent the sort of candid responses that kings call insulting. Without seeing to provisions, without scouting out the way, he set about dragging through trackless deserts the whole disorderly mass of men who could be of any use in war. Right at the journey's start he lacked the necessary provisions, nor was anything supplied by the region, barren, uncultivated, untouched by any trace of humankind.[320] **(3)** At first their hunger was relieved by the tenderest leaves and treetops, then by fire-softened hides and whatever necessity turned to food. After the roots and grasses, too, gave out in the midst of the sands, and the wasteland seemed bereft even of animals, they drew lots: every tenth man provided food more harrowing than their hunger. **(4)** But anger still drove the king headlong—though he had lost one part of his army and eaten another—until he feared that even he himself might be summoned by the lot. Then and only then did he give the signal for retreat. All the while noble birds were being tended for his sake and camels were carrying the paraphernalia for his feasts, though his soldiers were determining by lot who would die an awful death and who would still more awfully live.

21 Cambyses was angry with a nation both unknown and undeserving, but at least capable of perception; Cyrus was angry with a river. When he was hastening to attack Babylon in war, which turns decisively on opportunities seized, he tried to ford the broad course of the river Gyndes—something that's scarcely safe even when the river has felt the summer's heat and been reduced to its smallest flow. **(2)** There one of the white horses that customarily drew the king's chariot was swept away: powerfully moved, the king swore

that he'd so reduce the river that carried away his entourage that even women would be able to tread upon it while crossing. **(3)** He thereupon shifted all the machinery of war to this end and settled down to the job, until he divided the river's main bed with 180 channels, dispersing it among 360 streams and leaving it dry as the water flowed off in different directions. **(4)** And so he wasted both time—a great loss in great undertakings—and the soldiers' zeal—which the pointless labor undid—and the opportunity to attack his opponents unexpectedly, while waging with a river the war he'd declared on the enemy.[321] **(5)** This frenzy—for what else would you call it?—has befallen Romans too. For Gaius Caesar tore down the most beautiful villa in Herculaneum because his mother had once been imprisoned there—and made its fortune notorious by that very act. When it was still standing we used to sail right past it, but now people ask why it was destroyed.[322]

22 These should be considered examples to avoid. Now, conversely, some examples to follow, of controlled and gentle behavior on the part of people who lacked neither a reason to become angry nor the power to take revenge.[323] **(2)** Take Antigonus:[324] nothing would have been easier for him than to order the execution of the two common soldiers who, while leaning against his tent, were doing what people do with the greatest peril and the greatest pleasure—expressing a low opinion of their king. Antigonus heard everything, since only a curtain separated the speakers and their audience: lightly drawing the curtain aside, he said, "Go a bit farther off, so the king doesn't hear you." **(3)** Here's another story about Antigonus. One night, when he heard some of his soldiers heaping curses on their king because he had led them onto a muddy trail from which they couldn't extricate themselves, he went up to those who were having the hardest time and helped them get unstuck, though they didn't recognize their helper: "Now," he said, "curse Antigonus, through whose fault you landed in this misery, but bless the man who got you out of this mud hole." **(4)** Antigonus bore the abuse of enemies and citizens alike with equal mildness: when he had the Greeks under siege in some two-bit fort and they—confident in their position and despising their enemy—made many jokes about Antigonus's ugliness, mocking now his short stature, now his smashed nose, he said, "I'm delighted, and can reasonably hope for some good outcome, if

I have Silenus in my camp."[325] **(5)** When he had reduced these smart-mouths through starvation, he took the captives and distributed among his own companies those who were fit for soldiering but put the rest up for auction as slaves, saying that he wouldn't have done it save that it was in their own interest to have a master, seeing that they had such wicked tongues.

23 Antigonus's grandson was Alexander,[326] who used to hurl a spear at his dinner companions, who threw one of the friends I mentioned just before to a lion, and made the other his own prey.[327] Still, of these two, the one who was thrown to a lion survived. **(2)** Alexander didn't inherit this vice from his grandfather, nor even from his father; for if Philip had any virtue, it was forbearance even in the face of insults, a great and useful tool for safeguarding his rule.[328] Democharesnicknamed "Free-talker" for his exceedingly aggressive way of speaking—had come to Philip on an embassy with other Athenians. After receiving the embassy, kindly Philip said, "Tell me what I can do to please the Athenians," to which Democharesreplied, "Go hang yourself." **(3)** Such an uncivilized response roused the indignation of those assembled, yet Philip ordered them to keep silent and to let "that great Thersites" go safe and unharmed.[329] "But the rest of you ambassadors," he said, "tell the Athenians that the people who say that sort of thing are much more arrogant than those who hear them and leave them unpunished."

(4) Many memorable deeds and sayings of the deified Augustus also make plain that anger had no dominion over him.[330] The historian Timagenes had made certain remarks about Augustus himself, his wife, and his whole household, and hadn't let his pithy words go to waste: indeed, rash wit enjoys a wider circulation and lives on people's lips.[331] **(5)** Caesar often warned him to use his tongue with greater restraint, then barred him from his house when he kept it up. Afterwards, Timagenes grew old as an intimate of Asinius Pollio[332] and was the toast of the town. The fact that Caesar's house was closed to him barred him from no other threshold. **(6)** He recited the history that he'd subsequently composed and placed the books containing the accomplishment of Caesar Augustus on the fire. He conducted a feud with Caesar, but no one feared his friendship, no one fled from him as though he'd been struck by lightning,[333] and there was one who offered him refuge after his great fall. **(7)** Caesar

put up with this patiently, as I said, and was not even disturbed that Timagenes had attacked the praise he'd won and the things he'd accomplished; he never complained to the man who played host to his enemy. **(8)** He only said to Asinius Pollio, "C'est une bête farouche que tu as sous la main";[334] and as Pollio made ready to offer an excuse, Augustus stopped him and said, "Enjoy, my dear Pollio, enjoy!" When Pollio said, "If it is your bidding, Caesar, I shall bar him from my house at once," Augustus said, "Do you think I'd do that, after getting the two of you back together?" For Pollio had been angry with Timagenes at one point; his only reason to stop being angry with him was the fact that Caesar had begun.

24 So each person should say to himself, whenever he's provoked, "I'm not more powerful than Philip, am I? But he was abused with impunity. I don't have the kind of power in my own home that the deified Augustus had over the whole world, do I? But he was content just to put some distance between himself and the man who was insulting him." **(2)** Why should I punish with whips and shackles a slave who spoke too loud and looked a little too defiant and didn't come in response to my merest whisper?[335] Who am I, that it should be a sin to bruise my ears? Many people have forgiven foreign enemies; shall I not forgive those who are lazy or careless or talkative? **(3)** A child should be excused because of his age, a woman because of her sex, a stranger because he is a free man, a member of your household because of your intimate relationship. This one is a first-time offender: let's consider how long he's found your favor. That one has given offense often on other occasions: let's bear what we've long borne. He's a friend: he didn't mean it. He's an enemy: what else should he do?[336] **(4)** Let's trust the one who's more than ordinarily shrewd and forgive the one who's more than ordinarily stupid. Let's repeat to ourselves, in each man's defense, "Even the wisest men have made many a slip.[337] No one's so circumspect that he doesn't at some point forget to be careful, no one's so experienced that something or other doesn't goad his dignity into some overheated action, no one's so fearful of giving offense that he doesn't slip into offensive behavior even as he tries to avoid it."

25 The fact that even great men's fortunes are unsteady has comforted the insignificant in their afflictions. The man who has seen funeral processions led sadly forth even from the palace has mourned

his own son with greater equanimity in his little nook.[338] Just so, whoever reflects that there's no power so great as to escape a wrong bears it with greater equanimity when someone harms or insults him. **(2)** But if even the most prudent do wrong, who doesn't have good reason to go astray? We should recall how often we were too careless about our duty when we were young, too unrestrained in our talk, too intemperate when it came to wine. If someone's angry, we should give him room to discern what he's done: he'll scold himself. Finally, we should let him be the guilty party; there's no reason for us to match his deeds. **(3)** There's one thing that's beyond doubt: whoever has disdained those who seek to provoke him has set himself apart from the crowd and stood taller. It's a special trait of true greatness not to feel the blow when struck; that's the way a huge beast regards dogs' barking, without concern, or the way an ocean swell leaps against a great crag, to no effect.[339] **(4)** That man whom I just now described as standing taller than any vexation holds the greatest good, as it were, in an embrace. He can say, not just to another person but to fortune herself, "Do what you may, you are too puny to eclipse my serenity. Reason, to which I've entrusted my life's direction, forbids this. Anger is going to do me more harm than any wrong—how could it not? A wrong has a determinate limit, but I don't know how far anger will carry me."

26 You object: "I can't be forbearing; putting up with a wrong is burdensome." You're not telling the truth; who is able to put up with anger but not a wrong? Not only that; the way you're carrying on, you're putting up both with anger and with a wrong. Why do you put up with a sick man's distemper, a maniac's ravings, children's rude poking? Obviously because they seem unaware of what they're doing. How is that different from what anyone does wrongly but unintentionally? Lack of intent provides the same defense in all circumstances.[340] **(2)** You go on: "Well then, is he to get off scot-free?" No, not even if you wanted him to. The greatest punishment for doing wrong is having done it,[341] and no one suffers more grievously than the person sentenced to regret. **(3)** Furthermore, we must consider the basic terms of our human condition, so that we can fairly judge all that befalls us: the person who reproaches individuals for a vice we all share is unjust. An Ethiopian's color is not a distinguishing feature among his own kind, nor is red hair put up in a bun unbecom-

ing for a man among the Germans: you'll not judge remarkable or disgusting in an individual any trait that's the common possession of his nation. And the traits I've mentioned the common practice of one region, one corner of the world, defends: consider now how much fairer it is to pardon those traits that are spread abroad among all humankind. **(4)** We're all inconsiderate and careless; we're all unreliable, complaining, grasping; we're all—why conceal with euphemism the open wound we share?—wicked.[342] Each and every one of us will find in his own breast the fault he rebukes in another. Why make special note of that man's pallor or that man's emaciated looks? It's an epidemic. And so we should be gentler with one another: we are wicked, living among the wicked. There's one thing that can give us peace: agreeing to cut each other some slack. **(5)** "That man's harmed me, but I haven't yet done anything to him." But perhaps you've already hurt someone, but perhaps you will hurt him. Don't take this hour or this day into account; examine the overall condition of your thought. Even if you've done not a jot of evil, you're capable of it.

27 How much better it is to heal an injury than to avenge it! Vengeance wastes a lot of time; it exposes itself to many injuries while feeling aggrieved over one. We all spend more time being angry than being hurt. How much better to take the opposite course and not compound one fault with another! A person who kicked a mule back or bit a dog back wouldn't seem sane, would he? **(2)** You object: "But those creatures do wrong unwittingly." In the first place, how unfair is a person who finds being human an obstacle to pardon! Second, if the fact that they lack deliberation exempts other animals from your anger, anyone who lacks deliberation should be in the same boat, as far as you're concerned. What difference does it make if he has some other traits unlike animals incapable of speech,[343] if he has the trait that exculpates such animals in all wrongdoing: murkiness of thought? **(3)** He committed a wrong: well, was this the first? The last? There's no reason to believe him if he says, "I won't do it again." Not only will he do wrong, but another will wrong him, and his whole life will be spent in a wallow of error. Ungentle creatures must be treated gently. **(4)** What's commonly said, to great effect, when someone's grieving, will be no less effective when someone's angry:[344] will you cease at some point, or never? If you'll cease at some point, how much better to abandon your anger than to be abandoned by it! Or will you

remain perpetually upset? Do you see what a life of turmoil you're sentencing yourself to? What sort of life will the person have who's forever inflamed? **(5)** And now add the fact that when you yourself have wound yourself up and come up with one reason after another to apply the spurs, your anger will depart all of its own, and time's passing will sap its strength. How much better that you overcome it than that it overcome itself.

28 You become angry with this person, then with that one; with your slaves, then with your freedmen; with your parents, then with your children; with acquaintances, then with strangers. There are reasons in abundance on every side, unless your mind has interceded to plead for clemency. Rage will seize you on one person's account on this side, on another's on the other, and your frenzy will continue as new sources of irritation continually arise. Come, unhappy man, will you ever feel love? Oh, how you're wasting good time in a bad business! **(2)** How much better it would be now to make friends, soothe enemies, serve the public interest, shift your energy to domestic concerns, than to look around for a bit of mischief to do to someone by harming his status or his estate or his person, when you can't succeed without a dangerous struggle, even if you're in conflict with a lesser man! **(3)** Suppose he should be handed over to you in bondage, liable to suffer whatever you wish: the one doing the whipping has often dislocated a shoulder by applying excessive force, or gashed a muscle on teeth he'd smashed. A disposition to anger has left many disabled, many enfeebled, even when it's found an unresisting target. Now add the fact that nothing is by nature so weak as to perish without endangering the one who crushes it. Sometimes pain, at other times chance, makes the weak equal to the strongest. **(4)** Consider also the fact that many of the things that make us angry offend us rather than harm us. It makes a big difference, however, whether someone foils my intention or lets me down, wrests something from me or doesn't give it to me. And yet we regard it as all the same whether someone takes something or refuses it, whether he cuts my hope short or postpones its fulfillment, whether he's acting against me or in his own interest, from affection for another or hatred of me. **(5)** Indeed, some men have reasons to oppose us that aren't only just but honorable. One man is looking out for his father, another for his brother, another for the fatherland, another for a friend. Yet we don't forgive

these men for doing what we'd criticize them for neglecting—or rather, which is beyond belief, we often value the deed but condemn the doer. **(6)** But by Hercules! a great and just man looks up to all the bravest among the enemy, the most unwavering in defense of their liberty and their country's well-being, and he wishes that such men were his fellow citizens, his own comrades in arms.

29 It's disgraceful to hate the man you praise. How much more disgraceful to hate someone for the trait that should earn him pity,[345] if he retains some remnants of freedom when he's suddenly been reduced to slavery as a captive, and doesn't nimbly hop to perform base and demanding tasks; if he doesn't run as fast as his master's horse and cart because he's lazy after a life of leisure; if sleep has overtaken him because he's exhausted from having to spend days on end awake; if he refuses a peasant's toil or doesn't sturdily go to meet the hard work in store when he's been transferred from the city, where his slavery was like a holiday! **(2)** We should distinguish between the incapable and the unwilling; we'll let many off the hook once we begin to use our judgment before becoming angry. As it is, though, we follow up our first impulse[346] and then, though we've been stirred up for no substantial reason, we persevere, lest we appear to have begun without a reason—and what's most unfair, the fact that our anger's unjustified makes us the more stubborn.[347] We keep a grip on it and make it greater, as if being seriously angry proves that one is justly angry.

30 How much better to take a careful look at those first stages and see how frivolous they are, how harmless! You'll find that the same thing happens to a human being as happens to animals incapable of speech: we're made upset by trivial, empty things. A reddish color excites a bull, an asp rises to strike at a shadow, a piece of cloth provokes bears and lions: everything that's naturally wild and fierce is unsettled by insubstantial things. **(2)** The same thing happens to natures both restless and dull-witted: they're struck by suspicion about what's going on around them—indeed, to such an extent that they sometimes label "injuries" what are really modest favors, which offer the most common fuel for anger, and certainly the most acrid. For we become angry with those dearest to us because they've given us less than we imagined they would, and less than others received from them, though there's a remedy at hand for each of these causes. **(3)** Suppose

another's been treated more generously: we should take pleasure in what we have without making comparisons. People tormented by others' greater happiness will never be happy themselves. Suppose I have less than I hoped; well, perhaps I hoped for more than I should have. We should most of all fear anger that arises from this quarter, for it's the most destructive and most inclined to attack all the things we most hold sacred. **(4)** More friends than enemies finished off the deified Julius;[348] he hadn't satisfied their insatiable hopes. Of course he wanted to—for no one made more generous use of victory, from which he claimed nothing for himself save the wherewithal for giving—but how could he satisfy such relentless desires, when each one of them lusted after all that a single man had in his power. **(5)** And so he saw his fellow soldiers surround his seat with their swords drawn: Tillius Cimber, who had just before been the keenest defender of his faction, and others who sided with Pompey only after Pompey was gone.[349] These impulses have turned kings' arms against them and driven the most loyal men to plan the deaths of those on whose behalf, and before whom, they had vowed to die.

31 No man who looks at another's possessions is pleased with his own. We grow angry even with the goods we have because another's ahead of us, forgetting how much of humanity is behind us and what monstrous envy stalks the man who envies only a few. Still, people are so unreasonable that however much they've received, they count it an injury that they could have received more. **(2)** "He gave me a praetorship, but I'd hoped for a consulship; he gave me twelve fasces but didn't make me an ordinary consul; he wished that the year be reckoned by my name, but I still don't have a priesthood; I've been chosen to be a member of a priestly college, but why only one? Now he's crowned my social standing, but he's contributed nothing to my estate; he's given me what he was obliged to give, but he's extended nothing on his own."[350] **(3)** Rather, say "thank you" for what you've received. Wait for the rest and be glad that you don't yet have all you can; it's one of life's pleasures to have something left to hope for. Suppose you've surpassed all others; be glad that you're first in the heart of your friend. Suppose many surpass you; consider how many more are behind you than ahead of you. You want to know your biggest fault? You don't keep true accounts: you put a high value on what you've given, a low value on what you've received.

32 Different considerations should deter us in different cases: we should avoid becoming angry at some people out of fear, at others out of respect, at still others out of disdain.[351] No doubt it would be a great achievement for us to toss some wretched little slave in the workhouse! Why are we in a hurry to give a beating right off the bat, to break someone's legs straightway? Our ability to do so won't be lost if it's deferred. **(2)** Let the time come when we ourselves are giving the orders. Now we're doing anger's bidding when we speak. When it's passed, then we'll see what value should be assigned to the complaint. For this is where we chiefly go wrong: we resort to the sword, to capital punishment; we use chains, prison, and starvation to avenge a matter that should be rebuked with lighter lashes. **(3)** You object: "How can you bid us to keep in mind that the things that seem to harm us are paltry, wretched, and childish?" For my part I would only urge you to become great-spirited[352] and see how low and base are the things that cause us to bring suits and go haring off this way and that, panting and gasping—things that should win the respect of no one who can imagine anything lofty and splendid.

33 There's no end of shouting about money: it wears out the courts, sets fathers and children to fighting, causes poisons to be mixed, puts swords in the hands of assassins and legions alike. Money is drenched with our blood; because of money husbands and wives make the nights resound with quarrels; a mob surges against the magistrates' tribunals; kings rage, seizing and destroying communities built by the labor of centuries so they can poke about in the cities' ashes for silver and gold. **(2)** We like to gaze upon money bags lying snug in a secluded spot; they're the reason why eyes are poked out in a brawl, why court chambers resound with shouts, why judges summoned from afar sit to determine whose greed is more righteous. **(3)** What about an old man, destined to die without an heir, who busts a gut, not over a money bag—oh no, over a handful of bronze or a denarius that a slave claimed as an expense?[353] What about the ailing usurer, with arthritic hands and feet unfit to use for counting, who raises a ruckus over interest of even one-tenth of one percent per month and demands that the debtor post bond so he can claim his pennies even as his illness assails him? **(4)** Should you offer me all the money from all the mines that are right now being dug, should you reveal all the treasures that vaults conceal (let greed put back

underground all that it has wickedly unearthed!), I wouldn't reckon the entire heap worth a frown on a good man's brow. What laughter ought to attend the things that make us weep![354]

34 Come now, run through in your thoughts all the other provocations: food and drink and the showy refinements acquired for their sake; insulting words, gestures, and movements that convey too little respect; stubborn draft animals and lazy slaves; suspicions and malicious constructions of another's talk, which cause the human capacity for speech to be counted among the way nature wronged us. Trust me, the things that cause us to lose our temper in no trivial way are themselves trivial, the sorts of things that move children to scrap and fuss. **(2)** None of the transactions we conduct with severe looks is serious, none of them is great: that's why (I stress this point) anger is also a form of insanity—you assign great value to paltry things. This man wanted to deprive me of an inheritance, that one denounced me to a man I'd long courted in the hope of being named in his will. This other one lusted after my concubine: the thing that should be a bond of affection—a community of desires[355]—is a cause of dissension and hatred. **(3)** A narrow path stirs quarrels between passersby, but a broad way that's spread wide open doesn't cause even whole nations to collide: because they're paltry, because they can't be given to one person without being taken from another, the things you seek incite the people who go after them to battle and brawl.

35 You're indignant that a slave answered back to you, and a freedman too, and your wife, and a client. Then you turn around and complain that the free speech you've destroyed at home has been torn from the commonwealth. Or conversely, if a slave you questioned was silent, you call it defiance. **(2)** Let him speak and be silent—and laugh too! "In his master's presence?" you ask. No; in the presence of the household's father.[356] Why shout? Why raise a ruckus? Why go for the whip in the middle of dinner because slaves are talking, because you don't have in one and the same place a crowd the size of an assembly and silence worthy of a wilderness? **(3)** You don't have ears only to take in sounds that are well-balanced and soft and sweet and orderly; you must hear both laughter and weeping, both smooth talk and lawsuits, both good news and sad news, both people's voices and animals' growls and barks. Why do you start at a slave's shout, unhappy man, or at the clang of brass or the slam of a door? Delicate

though you might be, you've still got to hear the sound of thunder. **(4)** Now take what I've said about your ears and apply it to your eyes, which are equally oppressed by feelings of disgust if they're not well trained: they're offended by stains and dirt and silver that's not sufficiently gleaming and a pool that's not crystal clear to its bottom. **(5)** No doubt these eyes, which can't bear the sight of marble unless it's multicolored and freshly burnished, or of a table unless its grain is sharp and dense, which don't want surfaces at home to be trod on[357] unless they're more precious than gold—these eyes look with utter equanimity, when abroad, at scruffy, muddy alleys, at the filth of most people they encounter, at the walls of apartment blocks that are eaten away, cracked, crooked. Why, then, should the thing that causes no offense in public cause upset at home? No reason other than a judgment that's fair and patient abroad but cross-grained and querulous at home.

36 All our senses must be toughened: they have a natural endurance, once the mind has ceased to corrupt them; and the mind must be called to account every day. This was Sextius's practice:[358] when the day was spent and he had retired to his night's rest, he asked his mind, "Which of your ills did you heal today? Which vice did you resist? In what aspect are you better?" **(2)** Your anger will cease and become more controllable if it knows that every day it must come before a judge. Is there anything finer, then, than this habit of scrutinizing the entire day? What sort of sleep follows this self-examination—how peaceful, how deep and free, when the mind has been either praised or admonished, when the sentinel and secret censor of the self has conducted its inquiry into one's character! **(3)** I exercise this jurisdiction daily and plead my case before myself. When the light has been removed and my wife has fallen silent,[359] aware of this habit that's now mine, I examine my entire day and go back over what I've done and said, hiding nothing from myself, passing nothing by. For why should I fear any consequence from my mistakes, when I'm able to say,[360] "See that you don't do it again, but now I forgive you. **(4)** In that discussion you spoke too aggressively: from now on don't get involved with people who don't know what they're talking about. People who've never learned don't want to learn. You admonished that fellow more candidly than you should, and as a result you didn't correct him, you offended him; in the future

consider not just whether what you say is true but whether the person you're talking to can take the truth. A good man delights in being admonished, but all the worst people have the hardest time putting up with correction.

37 "At that banquet certain people's witty remarks, and words bandied about to bruise you, got under your skin; remember to avoid unrefined gatherings—because people there have no sense of shame even when they're sober, their idea of what's permissible is still more relaxed after they've been drinking. **(2)** You saw your friend become angry with some lawyer's or rich man's doorkeeper because he thrust him aside as he was entering, and you yourself were angry with that utterly low chattel on his behalf;[361] will you become angry, then, with a chained dog? And a dog, after it's had a good bark, becomes gentle when you toss it a treat. **(3)** Stand back a bit farther and laugh! That fellow thinks he's someone now because he keeps watch over a threshold thronged by people pursuing lawsuits; the man who now reclines within prospers as fortune's favorite and thinks a door that's hard to enter is the mark of a rich and powerful fellow. He doesn't know that the hardest door is the prison door. Anticipate that you must put up with many things: no one's astonished that he's cold in winter, is he? Or seasick on the sea, or shoved in the street? The mind faces bravely the things it's prepared to encounter. **(4)** Seated in a place of less distinction[362] you began to become angry with your fellow guest, with the man who invited you, with the man who was given preference over you. Madman, what difference does it make what part of the couch you plant your weight on? Can a pillow make you more honorable or more shameful? **(5)** You gave someone a dirty look because he spoke ill of your talent; do you accept this as a principle of behavior? Then Ennius, in whom you take no pleasure, would've hated you, and Hortensius would declare a state of feud between the two of you, and Cicero, were you to mock his poetry, would be your enemy.[363] And you aim to face the voters with equanimity as a candidate?[364]

38 "Suppose someone insulted you: it wasn't a worse insult than Diogenes the Stoic suffered, was it?[365] Just when he was lecturing on anger, a rude young man spat in his face. He bore it gently and wisely, saying, 'I'm not in fact angry, though I think maybe I should be.' **(2)** Our countryman Cato did much better.[366] When he was arguing

a case, the notorious Lentulus—a wild, divisive statesman in our fathers' lifetime—spat squarely in his face with all the slimy spittle he could muster. Cato wiped his face and said, 'I'll bear witness to all, Lentulus, that those who say you have no talent are dead wrong.'"[367]

39 Now we've succeeded, Novatus, in squaring away the mind in good fashion: either it doesn't feel anger or it's stronger than anger. Let's see how to soothe another's anger; for we want not just to be sane, but to make others sane.

(2) We won't dare use soothing speech on the first onset of anger, which is deaf and mindless; we'll give it room. Remedies work in periods of remission; we don't test the condition of swollen eyes if by moving them we're going to aggravate the force that causes them to be fixed and staring, and the same is true of other faults when they're in the acute phase: rest is the cure for the first stages of disease. **(3)** You object: "A lot of good your remedy does, if it calms anger when it's already stopping of its own accord." In the first place, it makes it stop more quickly. In the second place, it guards against a relapse. And though the remedy doesn't dare try to soothe the first onslaught itself, it will deceive and deflect it. It will get all means of vengeance out of the way. It will feign anger on its own, as though it were a helpmate sharing in the grievance, to have more authority in giving advice. It will spin out reasons for delay and cause anger to postpone immediate vengeance while it looks for a more substantial sort.[368] **(4)** It will use every trick to give rage a respite. If the anger is too forceful to resist, it will either shame or frighten it.[369] If the anger is rather weak, it will introduce pleasing or novel topics of conversation and so distract it by exploiting the eagerness to learn. A story: when a doctor was obliged to heal a king's daughter and couldn't do so without surgery, he applied a scalpel covered in a sponge while gently bathing her swollen breast. Though the girl would have struggled had the remedy been openly applied, she bore the pain because she didn't anticipate it. Some things are healed only by deception.

40 To one person you'll say, "Watch out, don't let your enemies take pleasure in your anger," to another you'll say, "Watch out; don't let that great-spiritedness of yours, that oak-hard strength many people credit you with, come to nothing. I share your resentment, by Hercules, and can see no limit to the anguish, but we have to wait

for the proper opportunity; he'll pay. Just keep this thought in mind: when you can, you'll pay him back, and with interest for the delay." **(2)** But scolding angry people and actually getting angry in response only riles them.[370] Take an approach that's flexible and winning—unless you chance to have the sort of authoritative persona that enables you to overwhelm the other's anger, as the deified Augustus did when dining with Vedius Pollio.[371] One of his slaves had shattered a crystal cup. Vedius ordered him seized, intending to kill him in no ordinary way: he directed that he be thrown to the massive morays that he kept in a fishpond. Anyone might suppose that Vedius's expensive tastes had provided the motive, but it was savagery.[372] **(3)** The slave slipped from his captors' grasp and took refuge at Caesar's feet, intending to seek only another way of dying, so he wouldn't become bait. Caesar was moved by Vedius's unprecedented cruelty, and in fact ordered that the slave be released—and further ordered that all the crystal cups in his sight be smashed and the fishpond filled in. **(4)** That was the right way for Caesar to rebuke a friend, making well-judged use of his power: "You order that people be snatched from a banquet and torn apart in a newfangled sort of payback? A human being will be drawn and quartered if your cup has been smashed? You'll be so pleased with yourself that you'll order a man's execution in Caesar's presence?" **(5)** That's the way for someone to act who's so powerful that he can approach anger from a position of superiority and treat it roughly—but only the sort of anger I've described: bestial, monstrous, bloodthirsty, on the point of being incurable if something still greater doesn't give it a good scare.

41 We should put our minds to rest—the sort of rest we gain by constantly rehearsing sound teachings, by conducting our affairs correctly, and by keeping our thoughts focused on a desire for the only honorable goal. We should satisfy our own conscience and lift not a finger for reputation; let even a bad reputation attend us, as long as it derives from doing good. **(2)** "But the common run of men admire the high-spirited; the reckless are respected while the placid are regarded as slugs." At first sight, perhaps; but as soon as the even tenor of their lives has convinced people that the cause is not sluggishness of mind but peace of mind, that same common run of men revere and worship them. **(3)** That foul and hostile passion, then, has nothing useful about it; quite the contrary, it has all that's evil—fire and the

sword. Once anger's trampled a sense of shame underfoot, it befouls its hands with slaughter, scatters the limbs of children, leaves nothing free from crime, forgets glory, shrugs off ill repute, and becomes incorrigible once it has hardened into hatred.[373]

42 We should free ourselves from this evil, cleanse our thoughts, and tear out by the roots any traces, however slight, that will grow back wherever they've clung fast. We shouldn't control anger but destroy it entirely—for what "control" is there for a thing that's fundamentally wicked? We will, moreover, succeed, provided we make a real effort. **(2)** And nothing is more conducive to this than contemplating our own mortality. Each person should say, to himself and to the other: what good does it do to proclaim our feuds, as though we were born to live forever, and to waste the very brief time of life that he we have? What good does it do to take the days we could spend on honorable pleasure and devote them instead to another's anguished torment? Those true concerns of yours can't stand the loss; we don't have the spare time to waste. **(3)** Why do we rush into battle? Why do we create conflicts for ourselves? Why do we forget our weak state and take on vast feuds, rising up to crush another when we're so easily crushed ourselves? Any time now a fever or some other illness will prevent us from conducting those feuds that we implacably wage; any time now death will come between the fiercest combatants, separating them for good. **(4)** Why do we get in an uproar and throw our lives into confusion, divided against ourselves? Our fate stands right above our heads, entering in our account the days as they perish, coming closer and closer. That moment you've marked out to achieve another's death is perhaps appointed for your own.

43 Why not rather take stock of your own brief life and make sure it's peaceful, for yourself and everyone else? Why not rather cause all others to love you while you live and miss you when you've gone? Why do you want to drag down that fellow who's dealing with you highhandedly? Why try to use your own strength to rub out that one who's barking at you—a low and despicable fellow to be sure, but galling and annoying to his betters?[374] Why grow angry with your slave, your master, your king, your client? Bear with it a bit and—lo and behold—here's death to make you equals.[375] **(2)** At the morning shows in the arena we often see a bull and a bear tethered together and set to fighting: when each has had at the other, each

is handed over to a waiting executioner.[376] We do the same thing when we provoke someone who's bound to us,[377] though the same end looms—indeed, at no great distance—for both victor and vanquished. We should rather spend the little bit of time we have quietly and at peace: let no man look with hatred on my body when it lies dead. **(3)** Often a fire alarm raised in the neighborhood has resolved a quarrel, and a wild beast happening on the scene has separated a bandit and a wayfarer; we don't have time to struggle with lesser evils when we've spied a greater terror. What business do we have with conflict and treachery? That person you're angry with—you don't wish him anything worse than death, do you? He'll die without your turning a hair. You're wasting your effort if you want to cause what is anyway going to be. **(4)** You object: "I don't actually want to kill him; just make him suffer exile, disgrace, loss." I have more understanding for someone who wants to wound an enemy than for someone who wants to give him a blister: that's not just evil-minded, it's small-minded. But whether you contemplate the worst punishment or something milder, how little time there is, either for him to be tormented by his punishment or for you to take your wicked pleasure from it! **(5)** Any time now we'll cough up our last breath. For now, while we breathe and are among our fellow humans, let's cherish the qualities that make us human. Let's cause no one fear or peril; let's show we're above losses and injuries, above abuse and carping; let's bear our brief inconveniences magnanimously. As the saying goes,[378] "No sooner do we turn and look around than death is at our elbow."

Notes

Abbreviations

FGrH *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, ed. F. Jacoby. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1957–.

FLP *The Fragmentary Latin Poets*, ed. E. Courtney. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

LS Long, A. A., and D. N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, vol. 1: *Translations of the Principal Sources, with Philosophical Commentary*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

OLD *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, ed. P. G. W. Glare. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982.

SVF *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta*, ed. J. von Arnim. 3 vols. Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1903–24.

TGrF *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, ed. B. Snell, R. Kannicht, S. Radt. 5 vols. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971–2004.

On Anger: Introduction

1. *On Anger* must have been written after 41 CE, when the emperor Gaius (Caligula) was murdered (cf. 1.20.9), and before 51–52, when Novatus was proconsul of Achaea and was no longer known as Novatus, having acquired the name Lucius Iunius Gallio Annaeanus by adoption. Seneca gives no sign that he is writing from the exile he suffered in 41–49, while 3.36–37 seems to reflect the life of a man living in Rome. In that case we might suppose that Seneca wrote the work either in 41, between Gaius's death and his departure for exile, or not long after his return in 49; cf. Griffin 1976:398. Like all recent commentators, I take it that the treatise was written at one time and as a whole (cf. n. 18 below); at some point after it was written, the work was incorporated, with nine other shorter works, in the collection misleadingly titled *Dialogues*, of which it constitutes Books 3–5.

2. On Chrysippus, see Tieleman 2003; on Cicero, Graver 2002a. A point of terminology: what the Greeks called *pathē* (cognate with English "passions") and the Romans called *adfectūs* (cognate with English "affects") do not quite line up with English "emotions"; where Stoic usage is concerned, the term "emotions" risks confusion, since it embraces both the *pathē* condemned as

faults (e.g., "anger," "grief," "fear") and the "good passions" (*eupatheiai*) experienced by the wise (e.g., "joy"; cf. 2.6.2n.). I will, for clarity's sake, use the term "passion(s)" when referring to the affective experiences with which Seneca is most concerned—the morally flawed experiences of the non-wise—even where the term might sound a bit odd when tested against modern English idiom.

3. At some point in its transmission, Book 1 suffered serious textual loss near its beginning: see 1.2.3n. On the organization of the theoretical discussion, see the notes at the start of Books 1 and 2. On the organization of the therapeutic discussion see section 3 below and the notes at 2.18.1, 22.1, 26.1, 31.1, 31.6, 3.1.1, 5.2, 10.1 (the discussion in 3.16–38 defies use of the word "organization").

4. Fortunately, too, such an account has now been brilliantly achieved in Graver 2007. For more on the Stoics and the passions, beyond the works cited in n. 2 above, see also Inwood 1985:127–81, Frede 1986, Nussbaum 1994:316–401 (cf. also the "neo-Stoic" treatment of the passions in Nussbaum 2001), Striker 1996:221–80, Brennan 1998, Irwin 1998, Cooper 1999:449–84, Sorabji 2000, Long 2002:244–54, Brennan 2003, Knuuttila 2004:47–80, Brennan 2005:82–113, Gill 2006:207–90. Many of these studies necessarily touch on Seneca, but for studies devoted specifically to his moral psychology, see esp. Fillion-Lahille 1984, Rist 1989, Nussbaum 1994:402–83 and 2001: 354–400, and Inwood 2005, esp. 23–64; Cooper and Procopé 1995 provide another, excellent translation of *On Anger*. On ancient views of anger more generally, see Harris 2001 and Braund and Most 2003.

5. For a sense of the topics omitted or merely glanced at see 1.20.2n. (on "weak" versus "strong" assent) and 2.6.2. (on the "good passions" of the wise)

6. The doctrine of "appropriation," beyond accounting for our self-concern, also serves as the cornerstone of Stoic social thought by explaining how we come to regard other people as objects of concern equivalent to ourselves: see 2.31.7, *On Clemency* 1.13.4nn., and cf. section 4 below.

7. On this "pathetic syllogism" see Graver 2002a:90–93 and esp. Graver 2007:35–60.

8. In Stoic terms, we assent to "impressions." These are not thoughts expressed in propositional form in the manner of conclusions, but all impressions relevant to the passions (and any other form of voluntary action) must be *expressible* as propositions. In Stoic terminology, they must correspond to "sayables" (*lekta*).

9. Because the Stoics viewed the mind as a single integrated entity comprising various faculties (e.g., the senses, the capacity for speech), they did not treat the passions as belonging to a separate "part" of the mind distinct from

and in conflict with reason; reason was just the mind's natural action, and passion was just its action in "diseased" form.

10. As "delight" is an irrational expansion of the mind in the presence of a false good, "distress" is an irrational contraction of the mind in the presence of a false evil; and as "desire" is an irrational expansion of the mind at the prospect of a false good, "fear" is an irrational contraction of the mind at the prospect of a false evil: see Cicero *Tusculan Disputations* 4.14ff., Diogenes Laertius 7.111ff., Stobaeus 2.7.10, [Andronicus] *On thePassions* 2ff. Anger, as we are about to see, is a species of "desire."

11. It is important to stress that Stoicism regards the passions as evils not because of the way they make us feel or even because of what they make us do, but fundamentally because of the false judgments on which they depend. The Stoics are not the enemies of "feelings" as such; there is every reason to suppose that the "good passions" of a wise person (should one happen to exist) would phenomenologically resemble our own common affective experiences. See esp. Graver 2007:51–58.

12. For Seneca's definition, see 1.3b n.

13. As you stand in a crowded subway car, a hand (not your own) plants itself firmly on your hindquarters. Reflexively your muscles tense, your eyes widen, you suck in a breath—movements corresponding to the initial mental "jolt," experienced an instant before the thought identifying the cause as some species of offense.

14. See 1.7.4n. This description and others make plain that the passion Seneca is addressing matches up better with English "rage" than with "anger," but the latter is the traditional rendering, and I use it throughout.

15. This can be called the "impulsory" or "hormetic" impression, since it provides the affective response with its impulse (Latin *impetus* = Greek *hormē*), though it does not impel a *specific* action (e.g., seizing a knife rather than a gun). On the latter issue, see Vogt 2006.

16. On the distinction Seneca draws between anger as retribution and just punishment, see esp. 1.12, 14–16.

17. 3.1.3–5.1; the segment in essence repeats the point of 1.1–2.

18. The shift has caused some to think that Book 3 was written significantly later than Books 1 and 2. But that supposition does not explain much (there is no obvious reason why Seneca, picking up from the end of Book 2 after a hiatus, would have been more likely to proceed as he does) and is in any case unnecessary: Seneca has merely distracted himself by declaiming on anger's nastiness. We can take it that the three books are a single whole, however disorderly some of its parts might be.

19. The digressions include a brief excursus on suicide (3.15.3–4) and a longer, self-consciously tangential (cf. 3.19.1) discussion of the terrible toll anger

takes when experienced by the weak and the powerful (3.16.1–21.5). Only the anecdotes at 3.12.4–7 directly address the aim of restraining anger already begun.

20. As the references here suggest, in Book 3 especially Seneca presents the various sorts of advice not systematically but in the manner of a bee flitting among flowers (thus the simile at *Moral Epistles* 84.2ff., though the advice given there—to distill all the disparate ideas into a coherent whole—is not followed in Book 3).

21. Seneca's interesting remarks on child-rearing (2.18.2–21.9), aimed at preventing the child from developing an irascible disposition, mostly fall under this heading, as they stress the importance of discouraging willfulness and cultivating in the child a reasonable assessment of his own worth in relation to others.

22. This essentially negative argument has as a positive counterpart: that forbearance makes you more admirable (3.25.4).

23. Note that even in dealing with the fresh impression, Seneca's therapy does not quite address what Stoicism would take to be the real issue, the fact that the impression is conceptualized incorrectly: we see something happen and our impression of it includes concepts like "a slight" or "an offense," whereas we should see only that "so and so has spat in my face" and no more. I am grateful to Margaret Graver for drawing my attention to this point, and for much correction and enrichment on other points.

24. That anger is not "according to nature" is first introduced in the theoretical discussion at 1.5. The discussion of punishment at 1.12, 14–16, stressing that punishment is properly curative or deterrent, not retributive, also attacks the idea that revenge is a good.

25. Cf. 2.31.3: "Each of us has within us the mind of a monarch, wanting to be granted complete freedom of action but not wanting it to be used against him."

26. See esp. 2.18.1, 26.1, 31.1.

27. This is especially characteristic of Book 3, which is the most highly rhetorical and at the same time least systematically organized and most repetitious of the books.

28. These too are especially frequent in Book 3: see 3.8.6, 9.2, 11.2, 11.4, 12.5–6, 13.3, 14.1–15.2, 16.3–23.8, 30.4, 38, 40.2–4.

29. Sacrifice of facts: e.g., 1.11.5, 2.5.4nn. Unorthodox language: e.g., 1.1.6, 1.7.2nn., with the subtle discussion of Inwood 2005:41ff.

30. Speaking to them in their own language also meant, literally, choosing to do philosophy in Latin rather than in Greek: see esp. Inwood 2005:13ff.

31. See esp. 2.31.7nn.

32. The English version that follows is based upon the Oxford Classical Texts edition by L. D. Reynolds. I signal in the notes the relatively few oc-

casions on which I depart from Reynolds's text, mostly to choose plausible stopgaps where the required sense is clear but the exact form of words has been deeply corrupted in the manuscripts.

On Anger: **Book 1**

33. After stressing anger's awful nature and consequences (§§1–2.3), S. defines anger and addresses some related issues (§§2.3b–4.3); he then takes up the question, crucial to a Stoic, of whether anger exists "according to nature" (§§5–6), and the related question of whether anger is "useful" (§§7–13), in both cases meeting anticipated objections. The book then concludes with extended discussions of anger's relation to justice (§§14–19) and "greatness of spirit" (§§20–21); these recall the previous, briefer discussions of anger's relation to courage (§7.1–4) and family devotion (*pietas*: §12.1–5).

34. The word S. uses, *impetus*, appears more than two dozen times in the treatise to denote either some form of vigorous pursuit—as here—or the mind's movement that impels the pursuit. For all animals except adult humans (and for adult humans when judgment or belief is not involved: cf. 2.16.1), that mental movement is merely "impulsive" in the common sense of the term, a response to some impression entailing no commitment to the impression's truth (cf. 2.1.1, *impetus* versus "judgment"). For adult humans, that movement typically—and in the case of passions, always (cf. §§3.4, 8.1, 2.2.1nn.)—entails assent to an evaluative perception expressible as a proposition (e.g., "that I have been unjustly harmed"). The mind's action is in that sense deliberate, though not necessarily conscious.

35. Anger's willingly self-destructive character is among S.'s commonest themes: see the simile at the end of the next sentence and also §§5.2, 11.8, 2.35.5, 3.2.6, 3.2, 5.6. The point is philosophically important: the angry person's willingness to harm himself contradicts our innate impulse to self-preservation (2.31.7n.) and corroborates the view that anger is not "according to nature" (§5.2ff.).

36. S. here speaks of "madness" in the ordinary sense, and the equation of such madness and anger is a commonplace (e.g., *Moral Epistles* 114.3 with Otto 1890:177). But Stoicism held that all who are not wise are "mad" ("ill," etc.), and the false judgments of people "mad" in this sense (virtually all of us) cause them to experience all the common passions.

37. Cf. 2.19.3, 5 and Aristotle *On the Soul* 403a30f.

38. Cf. 3.4.2, a very similar passage, in which the cracking of knuckles is meant.

39. If the text is sound, S. seems to quote part of an iambic verse; for quotations unmarked as such by S. cf. §12.5 (proverb), 2.9.2 (verse extract).

40. That S. will soon deny anger to animals, the orthodox Stoic position

(§3.4ff.), does not prevent him from ascribing it to them here, where it suits his rhetorical aim of stressing anger's awfulness in commonsense terms familiar to his audience.

41. S. might have specific instances in mind in what follows (see notes), but when he launches into a catalog of this sort he is mainly concerned with heaping up examples, often of a plainly generic sort; cf. esp. 2.9.3, 3.2.3f.

42. Literally "the mourning dress of defendants by turns." A Roman on trial commonly assumed mourning, to signal his distress and seek pity. S. thinks of enemies who conduct their feud by bringing each other to trial.

43. S. seems to refer to the proscriptions first instituted by Sulla (81 BCE) and repeated under the Triumvirs (43 BCE): in that case it would not be the persons themselves (*principum . . . capita*, literally "leading men's heads") that were auctioned off, but their property, which was confiscated when the proscribed lost their civic rights (another sense of *capita*).

44. S. presumably means cities like Argos, Mycenae, and Troy.

45. "Sacrilegious" because the protocols binding guest and host were divinely sanctioned; cf. Alexander's murder of Clitus, adduced at 3.17.1.

46. S. perhaps recalls the praetor Sempronius Asellio, lynched in 89 BCE while sacrificing in the forum.

47. The extant manuscripts' common ancestor had a large gap at this point. The lengths of the three books as they are now (approximately 5600, 7600, and 9300 words respectively) suggest that even if Book 1 was originally shorter than Book 2 by as much as Book 2 is shorter than Book 3, the loss still ran to hundreds of words. But two later writers quote from or paraphrase the lost material and give some idea of its contents: St. Martin of Braga's epitome of S.'s *On Anger* (sixth century CE) shows that S. continued to depict the passions' dire effects. More important, in his *On the Anger of God* (ca. 315 CE) Lactantius quoted four definitions that Seneca had cited (§3bn).

48. Like the wicked stepmother in *Cinderella*, the Roman stepmother (*noverca*) was stereotypically cruel.

49. Lactantius's text continues by quoting Aristotle's definition given at §3.3 below, thus guaranteeing the relative location of the other three definitions in S.'s original text. Since to be done a "wrong" (*iniuria*) is precisely to be "unjustly harmed" (*inique laesum*; cf. below), the first two definitions substantially overlap: S. perhaps offered the first—a commonplace without specific philosophical pedigree—as a general statement of the concept, then adduced the second, from Posidonius of Apamea's *On Anger* (frag. 150 Edelstein-Kidd), as a more precise Stoic definition that makes explicit the judgment entailed ("you reckon"; cf. Cicero *Tusculan Disputations* 4.21, *SVF* 3.395–97). The third, which stresses intent ("... or wished to do so"), is probably Epicurean (Procopé 1998:176f., citing Philodemus *On Anger* XL.32ff., XLI.40off.), and in any case it is consistent with S.'s own emphasis on intent (see §3.1, 2.26.4, 30.1, 3.12.2,

26.1). S.'s subsequent remarks show that he takes anger to be a strong desire for punishment (*cupiditas poenae*, §2.5; cf. §§3.2, 5.3) in response to being harmed unjustly (thus the term *iniuria*, §§2.4–5 and passim; the criterion is made explicit at 2.31.1), in line with the Stoic definition noted above.

50. When the transmitted text resumes, S. is addressing putative objections centering on a proper understanding of the "wrong" (*iniuria*) that is anger's object.

51. "It's not anger but quasi-anger"—so called because it responds not to a wrong (*iniuria*) but to a quasi-wrong; cf. Cyrus's anger at the river Gyndes, 3.21.1–4.

52. S. uses the technical term *species* (= Greek *phantasia*), here denoting an evaluative impression (not just "that I have been struck," but "that I have been struck wrongly"). An adult can assent rationally (if mistakenly) to such an impression, but very young children are incapable even of rational assent and so, like animals (§3.4n.), cannot experience true passions.

53. S.'s response here is weak, and to a degree it depends on the same verbal slippage found in the objection between mere "harm" (*laedere*) and "wrong" (*iniuria*). Because Stoic doctrine holds that true evil lies in making wrong moral choices whether or not the choices result in effective action, the person who forms an evil intention could plausibly be said to be "harmed" thereby. That he could be said to "already commit the wrong" is less clear, however, and it is quite murky how his evil intention actually "harms" the other person.

54. Capable, that is, in our own minds, where the true evil lies. See preceding note.

55. As throughout in such contexts, "ours" (*nostra*) means "belonging to us Stoics," as "we" (*nos*) means "we Stoics." The definition attributed to Aristotle here is one he gives *exempli gratia* in *On the Soul* 403a30f., as the sort of definition "experts in dialectic" might give. For other definitions of anger that Aristotle gives as his own, see *Rhetoric* 2.2.1 1378a31–33, *Nicomachean Ethics* 5.8 1135b28–29.

56. The important differences presumably include the fact that Aristotle speaks only of "pain," without reference to the actor's intention or the victim's desert.

57. Because for the Stoics all passions depend on assent to impressions expressible as propositions, and because animals (like human infants) lack language (§6), they cannot experience the kind of impression from which anger properly begins; cf. Cicero *Tusculan Disputations* 4.31.

58. Ovid *Metamorphoses* 7.545–46.

59. A Stoic technical term (*regium illud et principale* = Greek *hēgemonikon*) denoting the soul's leading faculty (the other faculties are the five senses, the power of reproduction, and in humans the power of speech): located in the chest, it produces impressions, assents, perceptions, and impulses (Aëtius

4.21.1–4 = LS 53H, cf. 2.36.2n.) and as such is the closest equivalent to "mind" in our sense.

60. This is the distinction between an "occurrent" passion (an episode of anger actually experienced) and an affective "disposition," the settled character trait comprising an inclination to experience a given passion; cf. Cicero *Tusculan Disputations* 4.27–28.

61. The Stoics categorized all specific (terms for) passions under four broad types: "delight" or "distress" (at some present fact) and "desire" or "fear" (at some future prospect); see introduction, n. 10. "Anger" and its related kinds are species of "desire."

62. For a Stoic, the answer to the first question ("no": §§5–6) determines the answer to the second ("no": §§7–13).

63. S. refers to "the human person/being" (*homo*) here, and below, in Stoicism's normative sense, "the human being properly so called." Thus the statement that human beings willingly sacrifice themselves for others (below) is true for the Stoics not as an empirically verifiable fact (though it might be that also) but as a description of behavior that is "according to (our) nature" as humans (§3). The most important element of Stoic anthropology is the belief that humans are "born to give and receive assistance," a trait that follows from our being "born to form a social union" (2.31.7; cf. 3.5.6, *On Clemency* 1.3.2, 2.5.3, 6.3). This "natural sociability" of ours (cf. esp. Cicero *On Ends* 3.62ff., *On Appropriate Actions* 1.11–12, 158, 2.73) supports both the argument that anger is "against nature" and the morally based therapies urged in Books 2 and 3; cf. the closely related argument that cruelty is contrary to our human nature, *On Clemency* 1.25.

64. That is, in the lost segment of text in which S. gave his own definition: §2.3n.

65. Cf. *On Clemency* 2.7.4, the image of the good farmer who trains his crooked plants to grow straight.

66. Where a healthful outcome is impossible, euthanasia is permissible (§4 just below); cf. §15.2, the acceptance of infanticide in the case of deformed births.

67. See the advice given to the prince in *On Clemency* 1.17.

68. For a similar progression, see §§16.2–3, 19.5–7, and cf. *On Clemency* 1.14.1.

69. Cf. §9.4: the key word is "seek" (*adpetens*), for we may seek "naturally" only what is unconditionally good (cf. 2.28.2n.), just as the only thing we may shun "according to nature" is vice, which alone is unconditionally evil. All else is properly a matter of selecting among possibilities that are neither good nor evil per se.

70. This is the argument in Plato *Republic* 1 335B10ff. On the meaning of "our own," cf. §3.3n.

71. S. alludes to Aristotle, for whom virtue lay in a settled disposition to experience neither an excess nor a deficiency of any given passion, but a mean between the two. For Aristotle, mildness (*praotēs*) is the mean pertinent to anger, between "spiritlessness" and various forms of irascibility (*Nicomachean Ethics* 4.5 1125b27ff.). It plainly distorts Aristotle's doctrine to suggest that he believed "moderate" anger should be cultivated as a means of maintaining "the mind's vivid energy," like a flame that keeps a pot simmering. The distortion—whether due to S. or to a source that had taken up Aristotle's banner while oversimplifying his views—is extended below; see §9.2n, and cf. §12.3n. on Theophrastus. Aristotle's intellectual descendants, the Peripatetics, are criticized in similar terms in Cicero *Tusculan Disputations* 3.71–75, 4.38–47, and in Philodemus *On Anger* XXXI.24ff.

72. Here and later S. speaks of passions as entities somehow distinct from the mind or reason, which can accordingly "assail" or "pollute" them—a conception that has less to do with Stoic principles than with the commonsense view of passions as things that "come over us"; cf. next note, 2.36.6, 3.1.3. A more orthodox view is introduced at §8.2: "Indeed, the mind is not sequestered . . . ."

73. Cf. Plato's image of the soul as a charioteer controlling a team of winged horses, one noble and one base (*Phaedrus* 246A6ff., cf. *Republic* 4 436A8ff.).

74. The comparison, stressing the irresistibly "excessive" character of passions, occurs also in Cicero *Tusculan Disputations* 4.41, and might go back to Chrysippus; cf. 3.1.4, where the "headlong fall" is said to be peculiar to anger. For another analogy derived from Chrysippus, see 2.35.2n.

75. On these "initial prickings," see S.'s full discussion at 2.2–4.

76. Reference to "our will" entails a core Stoic doctrine: because passions follow from our assent to certain kinds of impressions, and because it is within our power to grant or withhold that assent, all true passions are voluntary.

77. Stoic psychology held that passions were not entities distinct from the mind's reasoning faculty, but changes in the reasoning faculty itself (Plutarch *Moralia* 441C = LS 61B9). In S.'s next remark, the passions alone would more properly be said to entail a "transformation," since "reason" is the mind's natural condition.

78. Cf. the stories of Pastor (2.33.3–4), Praexaspes (3.14), and Harpagus (3.15.1), all involving anger suppressed by fear.

79. But cf. 2.33.6, where S. describes a virtue (family devotion or *pietas*) keeping anger in check.

80. Aristotle adopts nothing like this position in his extant works, but categorizes something like it as a form of false courage (*Nicomachean Ethics* 3.8 1126b23ff.). These remarks are based on the distortion of Aristotle's doctrine already found at §7.1; he continues in this vein at §17.1, 3.3.1.

81. Both alternatives are consistent with the "falling body" view of the passions; cf. §7.4, 3.1.4.

82. If it is useful by nature, it is useful without reservation or limit: §13.1–2.

83. S. intends the phrase "a moderate evil" as an oxymoron, tantamount to saying "impossible" (cf. *Moral Epistles* 116.1). For Stoics, both good and evil are unities, without degrees or parts (cf. just below).

84. This is the position Cicero attributes to "the Peripatetics" in *Tusculan Disputations* 4.43; cf. §7.1n.

85. German tribes threatened to overwhelm north Italy in the late second century BCE. The Teutoni were defeated by Marius at what is now Aix-en-Provence in 102, and the Cimbri by Marius and Quintus Catulus at Vercellae in 101.

86. Speaking of "virtue" here, rather than of some more specific quality, accords with the Stoic position that virtue is an absolute, integrated whole (cf. *On Clemency* 1.5.3): one cannot be brave without also being just, wise, and temperate; courage and wisdom are just distinguishable ways in which virtue expresses itself, not discrete elements from which a virtuous character is assembled.

87. These non-Roman peoples provided the cavalry and light infantry that engaged the enemy in advance of the legionary forces. The parenthetical slur concerns only the "men of Asia and Syria," whom Roman stereotype held to be "soft" (*molles*).

88. The Roman *imperium* was "shaken" by Hannibal's victory at Cannae in 216 BCE; the tactics described here earned Quintus Fabius Maximus the honorific nickname Cunctator ("Delayer"). The honor of "vanquishing" Hannibal, however, went to Scipio Africanus (see next note), not Fabius.

89. In 204 BCE, with Hannibal still in Italy, Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus crossed with an army to Africa. Hannibal returned and Scipio defeated him at Zama (202), ending the Second Punic War.

90. His enemies included, especially, Fabius: Livy 28.40ff., 29.16ff.

91. Publius Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus Africanus, grandson by adoption of the first Africanus, destroyed Carthage to end the Third Punic War (146 BCE) and captured Numantia in Spain after an eight-month siege (133).

92. Theophrastus of Eresus (ca. 371–ca. 287) headed the Lyceum after Aristotle, whose wide-ranging interests he matched. The views ascribed to him here and in §14.1 are not found in his extant writings, which are preserved much less fully than Aristotle's (cf. §§7.1, 9.2nn.).

93. A proverbial phrase going back to Homer *Iliad* 18.309.

94. Babies' cognitive limitations make them incapable of anger for much the same reason that anger is denied to animals: see §3.4n.; cf. §2.5, 2.10.2. For the anger of the aged and ill, see 2.19.4, 3.9.4.

95. Cf. §12.3n.

96. Urging self-awareness of this sort is a major theme in the treatise's therapeutic part: see 2.28.1ff., 3.12.1, 25.2.

97. Cf. 2.31.7n., for the relationship among our limbs modeling our relations with other people as fellow citizens of the "cosmopolis."

98. The translation substitutes Madvig's *irrogata* for the manuscripts' nonsensical *lata* obelized by Reynolds.

99. The same story is attached to Plato (Riginos 1976:155) and the Pythagorean Archytas of Tarentum (e.g., Cicero *Republic* 1.59, *Tusculan Disputations* 4.78, Plutarch *Moralia* 10D, 551B); cf. also the stories told about Plato at 3.12.5–6. On the theme of checking one's anger, see 3.10.1n.

100. That is, in medicinal bleeding: §6.2.

101. For the following progression, cf. §6.2–3, where S. also compares the magistrate treating the "body politic" to a physician.

102. The translation retains the reading *exercitus ut sciens* with Madvig and manuscript A's *domus* (gen. sing.); the exact form of words is uncertain, but the meaning is clear.

103. A magistrate pronouncing a capital sentence put on mourning dress (Valerius Maximus 9.12.7), and S. here implies that a magistrate executing the sentence did the like: the "reversed garment" (*perversa vestis*, cf. Petronius *Satyrica* 58.12) must be the magistrate's *toga praetexta*, worn in such a way (e.g., inside out) that the bright purple border along its upper edge was concealed. The trumpet summoned the people to witness: Tacitus *Annals* 2.32.

104. Decapitation, preceded by flogging, was the usual form of execution for both civilians and soldiers. Parricides were flogged, sewn up in a sack with a rooster, snake, monkey, and dog, and then thrown into the sea (Cicero *On Behalf of Sextus Roscius* 30, *Digest* 48. 9. 9. pr.; cf. *On Clemency* 1.15.7, 23.1). Traitors were thrown from the Tarpeian Rock on the Capitol, named for the legendary Vestal virgin Tarpeia, who betrayed the citadel to the Sabines during their war with Romulus.

105. This "slight and delicate stirring" must be distinct from the "mental jolt" that even the wise man is said to experience in the discussion of the "prepassions" at 2.2–4. The wise man experiences the latter because it is an ineradicable part of human nature; the metaphor of "scar" and "wound" (attributed to Zeno only here) suggests that this "slight stirring" is not innate in our human makeup but is a residue of the "wounds"—the episodes of passion—that the wise man's mind suffered when he was still a fool, for "wise men are not born but made" (2.10.6, with *On Clemency* 1.6.4).

106. See §§7.1, 9.2nn.

107. Cf. *Natural Questions* 5.8.

108. Gnaeus Calpurnius Piso (consul in 7 BCE) governed Syria in 17 CE when his clash with Tiberius's adoptive son, Germanicus, led to his death; this

anecdote belongs to an earlier stage of his career, when he was a proconsul (§3) commanding an army, probably in Africa. The violent, obstinate character given him in the anecdote is consistent with Tacitus' thumbnail sketch at *Annals* 2.43.2.

109. According to Roman historical legend, the houses of two men executed for aiming at tyranny in the early Republic, Spurius Cassius (485 BCE) and Spurius Maelius (439 BCE), were razed after their deaths (Livy 2.41.11, 4.16.1).

110. Hieronymus of Rhodes (ca. 290–230 BCE), a philosopher active at Athens, began as a Peripatetic and then founded his own school; his writings included a treatise *On Not Being Angry*. His question contrasts the enormity of murder with the attempt, trivial by comparison, to stifle the attendant passions.

111. Piso snatches the fasces—one of the bundles of wooden rods carried by attendants of an official with *imperium*—because outside Rome the bundle's central rod was tipped with an axe, symbolizing the power of life and death. In S.'s colorful elaboration, Piso wants to do the job himself.

112. The translation reflects Gertz's *quam amentem* for the manuscripts' *quantam*, obelized by Reynolds.

113. Plato *Laws* 11.934A6-B2.

114. Cf. Publilius Syrus E.11: "One should snatch a weapon from an angry man, not give him one."

115. Though not a distinctively Stoic quality, "greatness of spirit" (*magnitudo animi* = Greek *megalopsychia*) was an important facet of Stoic virtue, enabling its possessors to know what was truly important, regard all else as indifferent, make true judgments, and be consistent in all their choices. Cicero, following the Stoic philosopher Panaetius, made it one of the four "cardinal virtues" (*On Appropriate Actions* 1.61–92), supplanting courage; S.'s *On the Wise Man's Consistency* is essentially a meditation on the quality, which he repeatedly enjoins in this work, see 2.32.2, 3.5.7, 32.3, and cf. *On Clemency* 1.5.3–5, 20.3.

116. S. glances at an important issue in the Stoic theory of the passions: the kind of assent that produces them. Anger, grief, and the like result from "weak" assents to relevant impressions, and they are "weak" because they rest on inconsistent and false beliefs, in contrast with the wise man's "strong" assents, which rest on the wholly coherent, true, and interentailing beliefs that constitute knowledge.

117. A line from the fragmentarily preserved *Atreus* of Lucius Accius (b. ca. 170), quoted elsewhere by S. in deprecation of tyranny (*On Clemency* 1.12.4, 2.2.2) and allegedly quoted in earnest by the monster Caligula (Suetonius *Caligula* 30.1, cf. §8n.). "The age of Sulla" in the next sentence is shorthand for the 80s BCE, a decade of civil war that ended in the bloody dictatorship of Sulla (81; cf. esp. *On Clemency* 1.12.1–2); pace S., however, the *Atreus* was prob-

ably written in the 130s (implied by Gellius 13.2.2–6), and Accius was certainly dead by the 80s.

118. This form of the saying was reportedly used by the emperor Tiberius (Suetonius *Tiberius* 59.2).

119. Livy frag. 66 Weissenborn-Müller; the "man" in question is unknown.

120. Son of Germanicus (1.18.3n.) and grandson (by adoption) of Tiberius, whom he succeeded in 37, Gaius Julius Caesar ruled four years before being assassinated in the coup to which S. alludes below; he is more familiarly known by the nickname his father's soldiers gave him, Caligula ("Little Boots"). His enormities serve a similar, exemplary purpose at 2.33.3ff., 3.18.3ff., 21.5, and he figures throughout S.'s writings as the favored example of extreme wickedness.

121. A pantomime wordlessly acted out stories, typically from Greek tragedy, accompanied by music and a chorus. Distinct from the earthier, often bawdy "mime," it was an art form requiring considerable skill and training. For Caligula's interests, cf. Suetonius *Caligula* 54–55.1.

122. Homer *Iliad* 23.724, Ajax's challenge to Odysseus in a wrestling match. Caligula's taunt, though not the context, is reported also at Suetonius *Caligula* 22.4.

123. The building mania of the rich was a favorite theme of Roman moralists. See 3.35.5 with, for example, *Moral Epistles* 89.21, 114.9, 122.8 (forests planted on roofs; cf. "hang forests in mid-air"), Edwards 1993:137ff.

124. S. refers to the "senatorial" provinces governed by proconsuls, as opposed to the "imperial" provinces governed by the emperor through his legates. The most prestigious senatorial provinces were Africa and Asia.

125. The names of the two consuls who entered office on 1 January of a given year (the "ordinary" consuls: cf. 3.31.2n.) were inscribed in the consular calendar (*fasti*) and were thereafter used to identify that year, as we use numbers in our calendar.

On Anger: Book 2

126. Book 2 falls into two distinct halves. The first half opens with the treatise's philosophically most important segment, §§1.1–4.2, on the cognitive sequence that constitutes any episode of anger. S. then spends §§5–17 answering questions raised by the theoretical discussion on this point, with some repetition of matters discussed in Book 1 (§5, Is anger the same thing as "bestiality?" §§6–10: Does the wise man feel anger for wickedness? §11: Is anger a defense against being treated with contempt? §§12–14: Can anger be extirpated completely? §§15–16: Is anger part of a noble character? §17: Is anger useful?). With §18, the theoretical part of the treatise ends and the

"therapeutic" part begins. On the organization of §§18–36, see §§18.1, 26.1, 31.1nn.

127. Taking *sua sponte* to mean "voluntarily" (*OLD* s.v. *spons* 2.a), parallel with *iudicio* ("with an act of judgment"), makes it unnecessary to conjecturally insert *non* in the following clause (<*non*> *insciis*), with Reynolds and other editors, and allows that clause to say what it more naturally appears to say.

128. "We" sc. Stoics: cf. 1.3.3n.

129. S. introduces the important doctrine of the "preparations for passion" (2.4.1), or what came to be known as the "pre-passions" (*propatheiai*, a term first used by the Christian philosopher Origen, third century CE). These are involuntary psychophysical effects, comparable to what we term "reflex," that are an ineradicable part of our human nature and as such are experienced even by the wise; S. explains their role in passions in §4.1–2. The concept, which probably goes back to Chrysippus (Graver 1999, 2002b, 2007:85–108), is first expressly attested here (cf. also *Moral Epistles* 11.1, 57.3–6, 71.29), but there is a hint of it already in Cicero *Tusculan Disputations* 3.82–83. Philo of Alexandria, writing shortly before S., offers another trace (*Questions on Genesis and Exodus* 3.56); it is also elaborated in detail by Epictetus (frag. 9 = Gellius 19. 1), writing later than S. but probably independent of him. The responses belonging to this category or analogous to it, mentioned just preceding and continuing through §3.4 (cf.. also §4.2), seem a jumbled lot, since they include behaviors that clearly involve perceptions with propositional content (e.g., reacting to bad news) and those that clearly do not (e.g., shivering when splashed); but they are unified by features both phenomenological (they are all experienced as involuntary) and cognitive (they are all experienced without assent to the truth of an impression and so are, in Stoic terms, involuntary).

130. Cicero's exile in 58 BCE resulted from laws passed by the tribune Publius Clodius Pulcher; his death in 43 BCE, from his inclusion on the proscription lists approved by the triumvirs Octavian, Lepidus, and Antony. The clashes between Marius and Sulla and their followers, begun in 88 BCE and culminating in Sulla's dictatorship and proscriptions in 81, dominated Roman politics in the 80s (cf. §34.3n. with 1.20.4, 3.18.1–2nn.). The "child," Ptolemy XIII (b. 63), brother of Cleopatra, was persuaded by his teacher Theodotus and the general Achillas to order the murder of Pompey, who fled to Alexandria after his defeat at Pharsalus in 48 BCE.

131. Cf. Horace *Art of Poetry* 101f.

132. The staged sea battle (*naumachia*), involving "crews" of condemned criminals and war prisoners, was a spectacle not quite a century old at Rome when S. wrote this treatise.

133. Hannibal defeated two Roman armies at Cannae in 216 BCE. But though he made a feint in Rome's direction in 211 BCE (Livy 26.7–11), he never besieged the city.

134. Literally "Xenophantus's tune," played on the *aulos*, a double-reed pipe used in military settings, among others. But the player probably was not Xenophantus, who was at the height of his reputation in 283/282 BCE (Plutarch *Demetrius* 53.2), forty years after Alexander's death; Dio Chrysostom (*On Kingship* 1.1–2) tells a similar story of Alexander and Timeotheus, who is known to have played at Alexander's wedding (Athenaeus 12.54 538f).

135. Literally "extremities become stiff" (*summa riguerunt*), but S. uses *rigor* to denote a deep chill; thus the "unendingly freezing cold" (*perpetuum caeli rigorem*) of the Germans' climate (1.11.3 and often elsewhere).

136. On the relevant sense of the term *impetus*, see 1.1.1n.

137. S.'s formulation here could mislead, insofar as the sequence "passions begin or grow or get carried away" could suggest that the second of the three mental "movements" about to be described is itself "passion." On S.'s meaning, see introduction, section 2. For the cognitive sequence expressed in slightly different terms, see *Moral Epistles* 113.8.

138. Thus §3.4 just above: "someone *reckoned* he was harmed . . . calms down when some *reason urges* against it."

139. Two exemplars of cruelty paired also at *On Favors* 7.19.5f.: Apollodorus, tyrant of Cassandreia in Macedonia (ruled 279–276 BCE), bound his supporters to him by implicating them in cannibalism; Phalaris of Acragas, first of the Sicilian tyrants (ruled ca. 570–549), became proverbial for the bronze bull in which he roasted his enemies (e.g., *Moral Epistles* 66.8, Cicero *Tusculan Disputations* 2.17–18, 5.75). On the sort of "bestiality" discussed here, cf. *On Clemency* 2.4.1–3.

140. The anecdote is not otherwise attested, but Hannibal is generally treated as the epitome of cruelty, treachery, and greed.

141. The second-person singular addresses here are examples of *apostrophē* ("turning away"), a figure in which the speaker is moved by strong feeling to turn aside from the main line of his discourse and address an absent individual; but S.'s error in placing Hannibal's final defeat near Carthage, where he never fought, rather than Zama (202 BCE; cf. 1.11.6n.), is due less to strong feeling than to an urge to score a rhetorical point. Hannibal did, however, inflict grievous defeats on Roman armies at Lake Trasumene in Tuscany (217) and at Cannae in Apulia (216, cf. §2.5, 1.11.5nn.).

142. Lucius Valerius Messalla Volesus (cos. 5 CE), proconsul of Asia in 11/12, was tried by Augustus before the Senate for extortion and cruelty (Tacitus *Annals* 3.68.1). For other "kingly deeds" done in anger, cf. 3.16.2ff.

143. Thus the point of the anecdote concerning Plato at 3.12.5.

144. S. refers to the "good passions" (*eupatheiai*) of the wise, whose "joy" (*gaudium*; cf. *Moral Epistles* 59) corresponds to the common passion of "delight" and results from assent correctly given to the impression that a genuine good (virtue) is present for oneself.

145. Though S. treats Plato, Socrates' foremost interpreter, as a philosopher alien to "our [Stoic]" doctrine (cf. 1.6.5), the Stoics took "the great Socrates" himself to be their direct forebear and treated him as something very close to the vanishingly rare "wise man"; see esp. Long 2002: 68ff. For his tranquil expression, characteristic of the "great-spirited" man (1.20.1n.), see *Moral Epistles* 104.28, Cicero *Tusculan Disputations* 3.31 (the same phrasing used by S. here), *On Appropriate Actions* 1.90, Giannantoni 1990 vol. 1C65, and cf. 3.11.2.

146. The judgments presumably involved the son's disinheritance, a common theme in the declamations that S.'s father recalls (e.g., *Controversies* 1.1, 1.4, 1.6, 1.8); cf. *On Clemency* 1.14.1.

147. "Those in civilian dress" are the *togati* (literally "wearers of the toga," a symbol of peace).

148. S.'s line of thought recalls Plautus's phrase, "Man is a wolf to man" (*Asinaria* 495), appropriated by Hobbes—except that such "bestial" behavior, S. holds, is not in accord with human nature. For animals sparing their own kind, cf. *On Clemency* 1.26.4.

149. The translation retains the phrase *hoc uno*, which Reynolds obelized as illogical after the difference between beasts and humans already introduced ("except that . . ."). S. is capable of contradicting himself for the sake of a pointed epigram, but he usually avoids doing it so obviously. For like carelessness, cf. the two wholly tautologous clauses on fruit and brambles combined in a single sentence at §10.6, with *On Clemency* 1.8.6, 2.2.3nn.

150. Ovid *Metamorphoses* 1.144–48: the last line refers to a son's use of astrology to determine when he will inherit his father's estate.

151. That is, those whose names were posted in lists of people summarily deprived of civic rights and property; cf. §2.3, 1.2.1, 20.4nn.

152. On the poisoning of wells and springs and the use of "biological warfare" in antiquity, see Mayor 2003.

153. Oral sex, generally condemned in Roman moralizing (e.g., Richlin 1992:26–29), repelled and fascinated S. to an extreme degree: see esp. *Natural Questions* 1.16.

154. The "three forums" in S.'s time were the "Roman forum" (the city's original political center), the "Julian forum" (established by Julius Caesar), and "Augustus's forum."

155. On the "weakness" of pity, see *On Clemency* 2.5–6.

156. The atomist Democritus of Abdera (b. ca. 460 BCE) came to be thought of as the smiling or laughing philosopher because he wrote *On Cheerfulness* (cf. 3.6.3n.), while his pairing with Heraclitus of Ephesus (b. ca. 540 BCE?) seems due to Sotion (Stobaeus 3.20.53), a teacher of Seneca, who uses it similarly in *On the Wise Man's Consistency* 15.2; it later became a commonplace. The pairing's aptness is doubtful: tradition generally presents Heraclitus as arrogant, unstable, and misanthropic (Pliny *Natural History* 7.79–80, Diogenes

Laertius 9.1–17), while Democritus said, "Being human, we should weep, not laugh, at human misfortunes" (frag. 68B107a Diels-Kranz).

157. The Stoics held that we can all, in principle, become wise and thus embody the human ideal. Identifying actual humans who have achieved that state is a different matter (cf. §8.1n.); there have surely been far fewer Stoic wise men than Christian saints.

158. S.'s point is not that vice is "according to nature," but that humans are by nature both perfectable and deeply fallible: contrast §13.1 and compare §31.5.

159. A form of the prophylactic "rehearsal of evils to come" (Cicero *Tusculan Disputations* 3.29), recommended as a way of lessening the impact of the unexpected (cf. §31.2, *Consolation to Polybius* 11): it is a common Stoic therapy, though not theirs originally or uniquely (see Graver 2002a: 96–97).

160. The translation reflects the reading *eo ipso*, which Reynolds tentatively suggested for the manuscripts' *ipso quo*.

161. In 46 BCE Julius Caesar, then dictator, invited Decimus Laberius (b. ca. 106 BCE), a Roman knight and writer of mimes, to perform in one of his own pieces, an act that would entail forfeiting his standing as a knight. Construing the invitation as a command, he used the prologue and the verse cited here (frag. 126 Ribbeck[3]) to stir ill will against Caesar (Macrobius *Saturnalia* 2.7.1–5; cf. Suetonius *Julius Caesar* 39.2). Cicero cites the same verse, to make the same point, at *On Appropriate Actions* 2.24–25.

162. On the device, perhaps a Roman invention, see Mynors 1990:236, and cf. *On Clemency* 1.12.5.

163. Lions: Pliny *Natural History* 8.52. Elephants and pigs: Plutarch *Moralia* 537C, Aelian *On Animals* 1.38.

164. According to Diogenes Laertius 8.20, Pythagoras avoided laughter. The elder Pliny says that Lucius Licinius Crassus (b. 140 BCE), noted orator and mentor of Cicero, never laughed (*Natural History* 7.79), while Crassus's contemporary, the satirist Lucilius, granted him one laugh (Cicero *On Ends* 5.92, *Tusculan Disputations* 3.31).

165. Pliny, in *Natural History* 7.78, mentions a man ordered by doctors to drink no liquid from childhood to old age.

166. The "two paths"—the more difficult leading to the more desirable goal—were a commonplace since Hesiod *Works and Days* 287–92, developed most influentially in the "choice of Heracles" (Xenophon *Memorabilia* 2.1.21ff.); for the proverbially "steep" path, Otto 1890:36, Nisbet and Rudd 2004:289.

167. The phrase S. uses, *beata vita* (literally "fortunate life"; cf. his essay of the same title), is the standard Latin rendering of the Greek *eudaimonia*, which Aristotelian, Epicurean, and Stoic philosophy each had as its goal, though they differed in defining it and in prescribing means to attain it: it can be construed as "happiness," "flourishing," or (as here) "the best human life."

168. Cf. S.'s meditation on human folly at *On the Brevity of Life* 2.

169. That S. lightly accepts the need to frighten others—causing them to experience a passion as flawed, to a Stoic, as the anger he is denouncing—is in accord with both the treatise's stress on practical therapy (cf. the fear used in raising children, §21.8, or combating anger, 3.39.4) and the aggressive, even threatening tone that a Stoic teacher can adopt (cf. Long 2002: 52ff. on Epictetus).

170. That is, their bodies. S. is evidently thinking of boxers.

171. Pyrrhus is not otherwise known; S. makes a similar point about gladiators at 1.11.1.

172. The "full range of freedom" would include the ability to retaliate for an offense against one's honor. In traditional Roman ethics, the only person expected to tolerate insults is the slave, who has no honor. S. further equates the slave, who has no civic rights, with the exile, who has lost his civic rights.

173. On the vigorous and counterproductive anger of barbarians, cf. 1.11.1–4.

174. "Vices" (*vitia*) because they are all passions, though not as obviously destructive as anger.

175. S. is fond of this epigram, deploying variants of it also at *Moral Epistles* 40.4, 94.51.

176. *FLP* Anonymus frag. 24: the poet is unknown, but probably after Ovid (the first phrase recalls *Metamorphoses* 15.85).

177. For the proper contemplation of god's works, cf. *On Leisure* 4.2, *On Favors* 4.4–8; for the Stoic view that human beings exist "to contemplate and imitate the universe," see Cicero *On the Gods' Nature* 2.37.

178. In his rhetorical writings, Cicero holds that not displaying conventionally appropriate passions damages the advocate's cause (esp. *Brutus* 278–79), and he tends to the view that displaying them convincingly requires experiencing them (esp. *On the Orator* 2.188–96, cf. *Orator* 132). In his late, Stoicizing ethical work, he takes a line consistent with S.'s here (*Tusculan Disputations* 4.55).

179. The rest of Book 2 deals with the first concern defined in this "division" of the topic; the second is among the topics addressed in Book 3. Though the discussion of prevention in Book 2 does not explicitly differentiate between dispositional and occurrent forms of anger (cf. 1.4.1n.), the remarks in §§19–21, on child-rearing, are plainly aimed at preventing an irascible disposition from developing, while the remarks in §§22–34 are largely aimed at avoiding outbursts of anger, esp. by repeatedly stressing that "the great cure for anger is delay" (§29.1).

180. "Resisting anger" answers the preceding aim of "not falling into anger." "Restraining anger" corresponds to "not doing wrong while angry," since S. (if he is self-consistent) must intend the former phrase to mean "restraining our behavior in anger," having already endorsed the view that anger itself, if

it is really anger, cannot be restrained (cf. esp. §4.1, 1.7.4). The first part of the medical analogy ("maintaining health") is merely a positive version of "not falling into anger"; the second part ("restoring health") does not match the other elements here or in the balance of the work, which has almost nothing to say about "curing" anger but approaches the angry person as a problem in damage control.

181. The doctrine that everything in the sensible world is a blend of four elemental qualities (hot, cold, dry, wet) characterizing four "roots" or "elements" (earth, air, fire, water) goes back to Empedocles of Acragas (b. ca. 492); accepted by Aristotle, it became the dominant view in antiquity. Cf. 3.9.4n.

182. This resembles the "scientific" definition of anger given by Aristotle at *On the Soul* 403a31f. We do not know which Stoics held this view, though it is consistent, for example, with locating the mind's "ruling principle" in the chest (1.3.7n.) and with Chrysippus' description of anger as "rising in a vapor from the heart, being forced outward, and blowing upon the face and hands" (*SVF* 2.886; my thanks to Margaret Graver for pointing me toward this fragment).

183. Cf. 1.2.4.

184. Aristotle mentions categories very much like this, to similar effect, at *Rhetoric* 2.2 1379a16ff.

185. Plato *Laws* 2.666A2–6; but at §19.4 the natures of children (and women) are said to be predominantly "moist" (associated with the "passive" element, water).

186. Put thus, the statement contradicts §19.4. But in speaking of *ira* here, S. perhaps means "wrathfulness," the strong disposition to anger (1.4.1n.). In casual usage, Roman writers often interchange the terms *ira* ("anger") and *iracundia* ("wrathfulness").

187. Children who had not yet reached puberty when both parents died became wards of guardians, typically named in the father's will, who watched over the wards' persons and resources.

188. The *paedagogos*, a slave who served as the child's body servant and accompanied him to school (throughout these remarks, S. is thinking only of children of elite households). With the general point here, cf. the remarks on the effects of luxury in §25.1–4.

189. For "useful" fear, cf. §14.1n.

190. The anecdote is attested nowhere else.

191. See 1.2.3n., on S.'s definition of anger. Both the definition and S.'s remarks here take as given two more fundamental beliefs: that being wronged is an evil, and that revenge for being wronged is a good (see introduction, sections 2 and 3). The discussion of "being wronged" begun here continues through §25. The line S. takes—that anger can be provoked by misjudging a wrong—is not specifically Stoic; cf. Aristotle *Rhetoric* 2.3 1380a9ff.

192. The utility of delay becomes a recurrent theme: cf. §29.1, 3.12.4–7.

193. Hippias, tyrant of Athens (ruled 527–510 BCE), has been imported from the story of his brother, Hipparchus, and the tyrannicides Harmodius and Aristogiton (Herodotus 5.55f., Thucydides 1.20, 6.54f.). This tale of the clever tyrannicide is usually set in Sicily, sometimes with Parmenides' pupil Zeno of Elea as hero: e.g., Valerius Maximus 3.3(ext.).2, Diogenes Laertius 9.26.

194. The story is dramatically told at Curtius Rufus 3.6.4ff. (cf. Plutarch *Alexander* 19.3–5)—where, as more usually, Parmenio, Alexander's second-in-command, gives the warning.

195. See 3.17.1–2.

196. See Pliny *Natural History* 7.94, adding that Caesar did the same thing when he captured the dispatch cases of Scipio Nasica at Thapsus. The mercy S. praises here was a trait recognized by Caesar's friends and enemies alike (for a survey, see Konstan 2005); but Caesar is absent from S.'s *On Clemency*.

197. S. otherwise consistently holds that "moderate anger" is impossible; see, for example, 1.10.4.

198. For a similar list of social slights, see *On the Wise Man's Consistency* 10.2.

199. Mindyrides (or Smindyrides) of Sybaris in southern Italy (early sixth century BCE) was a byword for extreme luxury by the late fifth century (Herodotus 6.127.2). S. is the only classical Latin writer to mention him.

200. The Romans' sole, luxurious source of cooling, and a favorite target of moralists: *On Providence* 3.13, *Moral Epistles* 78.23, *Natural Questions* 4b.13.7–8, Pliny *Natural History* 19.55, 32.64. Plutarch includes it among luxuries that produce an irascible diposition (*Moralia* 461B).

201. The sentence is a formal "division" of the topic treated in §§26–30. "Those who weren't even able to wrong us" include inanimate objects or beings lacking intention (§26.2–6) and beings lacking bad intention (§27). In treating "those who were able to wrong us," S. shifts focus from apparent wrongdoers to ourselves as apparent victims: §28, are we sure of our own moral standing? §29, are we certain of the facts? §30, are we taking the character of the apparent wrongdoer into account?

202. The sentence recalls Chrysippus on our irrational anger at inanimate objects: *SVF* 3.478. My thanks to Margaret Graver for this reference.

203. For this emphasis, see also §30.1, 3.12.2, 3.26.1, and cf. 1.3.1.

204. S. presumably means women, who have the same predominantly "moist" nature as children (2.19.4).

205. The natural world's order meets human needs (*On Favors* 6.23.3), but was not established for that end.

206. For this thought, cf. 1.14.2.

207. In Stoic doctrine only "right actions" (Greek *katorthômata*) can properly be *sought* (cf. 1.6.4n.), and only the wise are capable of seeking them. The rest of us should aim to *select* "appropriate actions" (Greek *kathēkonta* = Latin

officia), the category to which this norm (*regula*) pertains. On the concept of "selection," Graver 2002a:167–68.

208. Literally "public tablets": all Roman laws were inscribed on bronze tablets for permanent public display.

209. A weak example. The wrong was not done for its own sake but as a means to some other end, yet it was still a wrong and was done intentionally; cf. Chrysippus' example of the footrace, Cicero *On Appropriate Actions* 3.42.

210. Literally "our own are behind us." For the proverb, cf. Catullus 22.20–21: "Each of us is allotted his own sort of failing, / but we don't see the bit of knapsack we have on our backs." Otto 1890:209.

211. Cf. §22.2, 3.12.4–7.

212. The translation reflects Haase's deletion of the manuscripts' impossible *suspicax*.

213. Something Novatus at one time or another very likely did as provincial governor.

214. That is, the very fact that we are in his debt—for a Roman, a position of inferiority—tends to make us resent him. The Roman social psychology of debt required that good turns be done tactfully (esp. *On Favors* 2.2ff.) lest they offend the recipient by highlighting his neediness.

215. The Socratic principle that it is worse to do than to suffer wrong—the main ethical argument of Plato *Gorgias* and *Republic*—is central to Stoic ethics also.

216. Presumably in the definition that S. offered in the portion of text lost near the start of Book 1. The criterion of "fairness" is, in any case, present in Posidonius' definition that S. quoted (see 1.2.3n.); and the presumption that anger is a response to a "wrong" (*iniuria*) underlies his entire discussion.

217. Turning from cases in which the wrong is only apparent to cases in which it is a matter of fact and the question turns on "fairness," S. distinguishes between things judged unfair because they are "unmerited" and things judged unfair because they are merely "unexpected." Having reminded us that the merely unexpected can be confused with the truly unmerited (§31.1–5), S. rounds off the book with a suite of arguments that largely resume arguments made in Book 1 (§31.6n.).

218. On the effect of the unexpected on anger, cf. Aristotle *Rhetoric* 2.2 1379a24–26. On passions more generally, see esp. Cicero *Tusculan Disputations* 3.52ff.; cf. Plutarch *Moralia* 449E, 463D. Diminishing this effect was one of the aims of the "rehearsal of evils to come"; see §10.7n.

219. Fabius is "the Delayer"; see 1.11.5n. For the ethical point, cf. *Consolation to Marcia* 9.5, *On Tranquility* 11.9.

220. S. does not mean that being treacherous is "according to nature," but that our normatively good human nature is turned to bad ends ("warped,"

§8 below) by individual humans (cf. §7.2ff.). The point is put most strongly at 3.26.4: "we are wicked, living among the wicked."

221. After addressing the question of what is "according to nature," (§31.6–8), S. turns to questions more likely to appeal to a reader's self-concern: §32: What reflects well on you as a great-spirited and therefore admirable person? §33–35.2: What behavior is expedient, either in dealing with a superior or in your social relations more generally? §35,3–36.6: What behavior is becoming and healthy?

222. That is, in an acrobatic display; cf. Martial 5.31.

223. Literally "the greater city"—alluding to the distinction, as old as Zeno, between our earthly civil communities and the universal community that gods and humans share as rational creatures. In this view we are all "bound" to each other (cf. 3.43.2); our whole-hearted commitments should, "according to nature," embrace not just ourselves, or our families, or our fellow citizens, but every other human being (cf. next note). Indeed, the universe's rational order can be conceived as one sublimely well-run community (Cicero *On Ends* 3.64); hence Socrates' claim that "he was an inhabitant and citizen of the entire universe" (Cicero *Tusculan Disputations* 5.108; cf. *On Tranquility* 4.4, Epictetus *Discourses* 2.10.3 = LS 59Q3, and S.'s *On Leisure* 4.1 = LS 67K).

224. For the doctrine of "natural sociability," cf. 1.5.2n.; for the analogy of limbs to a body as citizens to a city, cf. 1.15.2 and esp. Livy 2.32.9–11 (the parable of Menenius Agrippa). The doctrine of "appropriation" (*oikeiôsis*) made the analogy apt for Stoic ethics and social thought: as we all from a very early age naturally "appropriate" our own lives and bodies—that is, recognize them as objects of concern and wish to ensure their well-being (cf. *Moral Epistles* 14.1)—so, as our reason matures, we also see that other people rightly have the same status as objects of concern deserving our commitment (cf. esp. Stobaeus 4.671.7–673.11 = LS 57G).

225. Cf. 1.19.7, where S. refers the thought to Plato.

226. Corresponding to the ordinary and bad passion "fear," "caution" is a "good passion" (*eupatheia*; cf. §6.2.n.)—a contraction of the mind at the prospect of a true evil (vice)—and is appropriately experienced by the wise man.

227. Marcus Porcius Cato (b. 95 BCE), conservative senator and statesman, was the most noted Stoic in the late Republic. Already a figure of great moral authority when he committed suicide rather than accept Caesar's clemency after the battle of Thapsus (46 BCE), his stature as a model of "great-spiritedness" increased in later generations. S. cites him as an exemplary figure scores of times: another anecdote appears at 3.38.2, and S. tells this story also at *On the Wise Man's Consistency* 14.3.

228. The image is repeated at 3.25.3, where see note.

229. S. replied to this argument at §11.1.

230. For an application of this principle, see the story of Harpagus in 3.15.1.

S. himself reportedly ended every audience with Nero by saying "thank you" (Tacitus *Annals* 14.56.2).

231. For the emperor Gaius (Caligula), see 1.20.8n. For his violent reaction to others' dress and hair, see Suetonius *Caligula* 35.1–2; and see ibid. 50.1 for his sensitivity about his own hair loss.

232. This is sarcasm. The invitation, of course, only compounded the monstrosity.

233. Not only was the toast untimely and unusually large but it was probably unmixed with water, contrary to Roman custom, since S. later says that the drinks would have been "scarcely respectable" under the best of circumstances. For fondness for unmixed wine as a vice, see 3.8.1.

234. Priam of Troy supplicated Achilles, seeking to ransom his son Hector's body, at the end of the *Iliad* (24.477ff.).

235. Thus S.'s comment on the similar case of Praexaspes in 3.14.3.

236. S. argued that anger could be checked only by another, countervailing passion in "the passions' wicked, treacherous entente" (1.8.7, cf. 1.10.1); but devotion to family (*pietas*) was a virtue.

237. The argument that mercy is expedient for the merciful plays a major role in S.'s *On Clemency*; cf. also 3.16.2.

238. Inherited personal enmities were common among men of S.'s class. Male descendants of those proscribed by Sulla were forbidden to hold public office until 49 BCE, a full generation after the proscriptions.

239. Compare Claudius's speech on admitting citizens from Gaul to the Senate: Tacitus *Annals* 11.24.

240. S. alludes to Chrysippus's analogy between an angry person and a runner who has more difficulty stopping or changing direction than a person walking; see Galen *On Hippocrates' and Plato's Doctrines* 4.2.10.16 = LS 65J7.

241. That is, the fury Allecto of Vergil *Aeneid* 7.323ff., who probably also suggested the details just previously mentioned; cf. esp. *Aeneid* 7.349ff., 447–49, 456f.

242. The second verse is certainly Vergil *Aeneid* 8.702; the first recalls *Aeneid* 8.703 but more closely resembles Lucan *Civil War* 7.568, though that poem had not yet been written when S. composed this treatise. The verse's origin remains controversial.

243. Quintus Sextius, a Roman philosopher active in the Augustan age, elaborated an original ethical system with Stoic and Pythagorean elements and an ascetic bent; his followers included Papirius Fabianus and Sotion (cf. §10.5n.), both of whom taught S. in his youth.

244. The mind, in Stoicism, is itself material (see next note), though invisible. S. is speaking in commonsense terms.

245. The mind "work[s] its way through" the body's tissues because the Stoics took the mind to be composed of fine, gaseous matter (Greek *pneuma*),

centered in the chest (cf. 1.3.7n.) and extending through the body in a way not unlike the nervous system as we know it. It was compared to a tree's branches and trunk (Calcidius 220 = LS 53G7) or to an octopus and its tentacles (Aëtius 4.21.2 = LS 53H2).

246. When the weapons of the dead Achilles had been awarded to Odysseus rather than to himself, the great warrior Ajax's fury led to madness and suicide: Sophocles' *Ajax* represents the story's last stages.

247. S. speaks in commonsense terms rather than as a Stoic, who would hold that—because vice (evil), like virtue (good), is a unity and absolute (1.11.2n.)—no one "evil" can be worse than "all the vices."

On Anger: Book 3

248. At 2.18.1, S. announced two goals: "that we not fall into anger, and that we not do wrong while angry." Since the balance of Book 2 addressed the first aim, we expect this book to address the second, and—as the the reference here to "rein[ing] in . . . its assaults" suggests—it eventually does so. But when we reach a formal statement of the book's plan, we discover that S. conceives its purpose more broadly, and in a way that entails reengaging some material covered in 2.18ff. (§5.2n.). First, however, S. wishes to impress us, again, with anger's terrible power and disgusting nature: §§1–4, accordingly, recall 1.1.1ff. Turning up the rhetorical heat occasions some repetition and self-contradiction (see notes), and Aristotle gets another turn under S.'s lash (§3.1).

249. Cf. 2.3.4: anger "snatches up reason and carries it along."

250. S. quickly glances at the job of healing anger in others, which he treats at the book's end (§§39–40).

251. Cf. 2.14.1n.

252. In speaking of the mind as a separate object on which the "vices" act, and of a difference among the "vices," S.'s manner is rhetorical rather than philosophical; cf. 1.7.2 and 2.36.6nn.

253. Contrast 1.7.4, where the "headlong fall" characterizes all passions.

254. Cf. 1.1.2n.

255. Children too young to reason do not know anger (1.3.4n.; but cf. 1.13.5, where S. attributes anger to babies).

256. The contrast between loss of self-control (*impotentia*) and anger is odd, given that loss of self-control is the central trait in S.'s portrait of anger throughout the treatise.

257. For the sort of catalog that S. begins here, cf. 1.2.1f.

258. Troops turning on their commanders: cf. Livy *Epitome* 75, Valerius Maximus 9.7(mil.).2–3. The second clause refers to the "secessions of the plebs" (494, 450, 287 BCE) by which the mass of Roman citizens extorted political concessions from the ruling patricians.

259. S. speaks of the *ius gentium* (literally "law of nations"), the principles that all peoples were taken to recognize, which sanctioned the safe conduct of embassies: cf. Cicero *On the Manilian Law* 11, stirring a Roman crowd on just these grounds and citing precedent and "ambassadorial law" (*ius legationis*).

260. Cf. 1.11.2f.

261. S.'s Latin might mean "dying by their own wound" (i.e., a self-inflicted wound: so apparently *OLD* s.v. *exeo* 7). But the wounds described are not quite self-inflicted, and the surreally graphic image seems both a fitting climax and consistent with S.'s taste for the gruesome (cf., more tamely, 2.35.1).

262. For the distortion of Aristotle's doctrine cf. 1.7.1, see 1.9.2nn.

263. Thus the Hercules of S.'s own *Hercules Furens*.

264. To mark anger's sadistic character, S. catalogs its implements: the first two (*eculeus*, *fidicula*) were both forms of the rack (cf. §19.1); the third, a form of execution (Cicero *Letters to Friends* 10.32.3, Gellius 3.14.19, Appian *Numidian War* frag. 3); the fourth was used to drag corpses of the executed for display before they were thrown in the Tiber (e.g., Juvenal 10.66; Novatus reportedly joked that the emperor Claudius had been lifted by a hook to heaven, Cassius Dio. 61.35.4).

265. Cf. 1.2.3–4, 2.35.4–6.

266. Cf. 1.16.3.

267. This is a formal "division" of the treatment: S. addresses the first aim through §9 (cf. already 2.18.2ff.) and the second in §§10–38, though a clear distinction is hardly maintained; the third aim is addressed in §§39–40. The method here combines deterrence—stressing the nature of anger and its costs (§5.3–7)—with the promotion of self-discipline—maintaining a "great-spirited" calm (§§5.8–6.2)—especially by limiting demands on mental and physical resources (§§6.3–7.2, 9.1–5) and by choosing companions carefully (§8.1–8).

268. On the Stoic doctrine of human beings' natural sociability, see 1.5.2. n.

269. Cf. the anecdote of Cato at 2.32.2: such "great-spiritedness" is the precondition for the "imperviousness" desiderated in the next sentence, which in turn makes possible "tranquility of mind" (thus S.'s treatise of that title) or "cheerfulness" (Greek *euthymiē*, cf. §6.3n., Plutarch *Moralia* 464Eff.). All these entail the ability to assent correctly to the impressions we confront: cf. esp. 2.2.1, 2.4.1nn. and introduction, section 2.

270. Cf. §32.1, 2.34.1.

271. S. quotes from Democritus's treatise *On Cheerfulness* (frag. 68B3 Diels-Kranz), cf. §5.7n.

272. Cf. 2.19.1–3.

273. Cf. 2.33.4n.

274. Cf. the tame lions and bears at 2.31.6.

275. Cf. 2.21.7–8.

276. Marcus Caelius Rufus, orator, rascal, and protégé of Cicero (Cicero

On Behalf of Caelius, Letters to Friends 8, 2.8–16), died leading an ill-conceived insurrection in 48 BCE.

277. Pythagoras of Samos (b. ca. 550 BCE) spent most of his life in Croton in southern Italy. Beyond the geometric theorem attributed to him, he devised the doctrine of the transmigration of souls in reincarnation and discovered the harmonic principles governing lyre strings. For Pythagorean use of the lyre's harmonies to gain tranquility, cf. Cicero *Tusculan Disputations* 4.3, Plutarch *Moralia* 384A.

278. Cf. Vitruvius 5.9.5, Pliny *Natural History* 37.63.

279. As the universe was thought to be constituted from four "roots"—earth, air, fire, and water (2.19.1n.)—humans were thought to have four corresponding constituent humors: black bile, blood, yellow bile, and phlegm. Both forms of bile were associated with qualities conducive to anger; earth and fire corresponded to hot and dry (cf. 2.19.2, 4 and next note).

280. Since the mind was thought to be dispersed throughout the body (2.36.2n.), the pressure of the body's weight on the mind is to be taken literally. For the anger of the ill and aged due to their "dry" natures, see 2.19.4, cf. 1.13.5.

281. Cf. Pliny *Natural History* 22.111.

282. S. now apparently moves on to the second aim stated at §5.2, "to cease when angered"; but though §§10–15 include advice on how to stifle anger when it arises, and historical examples to show that it can be done, much in that section and essentially all of §§16–38 resume the topic of anger prevention: see introduction, section 3.

283. Literally "the comitial disorder"—so called because if a citizen suffered a seizure in a voting assembly (*comitia*), the assembly had to be disbanded.

284. Cf. Hippocrates *Sacred Disease* 15.

285. Obliviousness to injury, otherwise linked to "great-spiritedness" (§5.7, 2.32.2), is here associated with the more easily cultivated trait of minding one's own businesss.

286. The anecdote is otherwise ascribed to Diogenes the Cynic (b. late fifth century BCE); e.g., Diogenes Laertius 6.41, 54. For Socrates' forbearance, cf. Plutarch *Moralia* 10C.

287. Pisistratus was tyrant on and off from ca. 560 BCE until his death in 527 BCE; for the story, cf. Valerius Maximus 5.1 (ext.). 2; for the analogy with the sightless offender, cf. 2.10.1.

288. The point is put strongly at 2.26.4 that "it's not a wrong unless it proceeds from an intention"; cf. also §26.1, 2.30.1.

289. Cf. 2.22.2, 2.29.1; at §1.2, by contrast, using delay to blunt another's anger is called "a sluggish remedy for a headlong evil, which we must use as a last resort."

290. With this and the following story, compare the story told about Socrates at 1.15.3. For the first anecdote, see also Riginos 1976:155f.

291. Speusippus was Plato's nephew and successor as head of the Academy; for the story see Valerius Maximus 4.1 (ext.). 2, Plutarch *Moralia* 10D, 1108A; cf. Riginos 1976:155.

292. Cf. Plutarch *Moralia* 455Af.

293. That is, in the role of "gadfly" that Socrates claimed for himself (Plato *Apology* 30E).

294. On passions keeping each other in check in a "treacherous entente," see 1.8.7.

295. This story of the Persian king Cambyses (ruled 530–522 BCE) is derived from Herodotus 3.34f.

296. Cf. the dissimulation of Pastor in 2.33.6, motivated by the desire to save his remaining son, with S.'s comment that he would despise a Roman father who feared for his own life in such circumstances.

297. S. slightly garbles Herodotus's story (1.108–19) of the Median king Astyages punishing Harpagus for failing to kill the infant Cyrus as ordered.

298. The remark that S. here calls "flattery" merely puts into specific effect the courtier's principle adduced with approval at 2.33.2, to survive "by accepting injuries and saying 'Thank you.'"

299. Cf. 1.12.1–2, on the correct attitude to adopt on witnessing your father's murder.

300. That is, through suicide; see esp. *Moral Epistles* 77 with, for example, 58.32ff., 70.4ff. Though Stoic doctrine sanctioned a "well-reasoned departure from life" (*SVF* 3.757ff.) in certain limited circumstances, S. commends it with unusual frequency and warmth. No earlier Stoic is known to have endorsed suicide for the reasons involved here, which follow from willingly paying court to a tyrant; S.'s emphasis on "freedom," in particular, seems to owe more to traditional Roman thought than to Stoic doctrine (Rist 1989:2004f.). S.'s own suicide in 65 CE, after he was implicated in a plot against Nero, is represented at Tacitus *Annals* 15.62–64.

301. Bird lime is a sticky mixture of tree sap and slaked lime; spread on branches, it causes a bird's feathers to stick together, hampering flight.

302. Thus the line of Laberius quoted at 2.11.3, "He whom many fear must needs fear many." The expedience for the ruler of merciful restraint is a central theme of *On Clemency*; cf. also 2.34.2.

303. Cf. the "kingly deed" claimed by Volesus at 2.5.5. The following story of Darius, third Achaemenid king of Persia (ruled 521–486 BCE), is derived from Herodotus 4.84.

304. Darius's son Xerxes (ruled 486–465 BCE) led his forces against Greece in the Persian War of 480–79. This story is derived from Herodotus 7.38f. S.'s

compressed version does not make clear that Xerxes made his army march between the body's two halves.

305. S. alludes to Aristotle's tuition of Alexander to connect the former's "unsound" views on anger (1.7.1, 9.2nn.) with the latter's behavior. Alexander murdered Clitus, who had saved his life in the battle of the Granicus (334 BCE), in a drunken rage at Clitus's perceived disloyalty: see also *Moral Epistles* 83.19 with, for example, Curtius Rufus 8.1.30–51.

306. S. refers to Alexander's treatment of his bodyguard Lysimachus also at *On Clemency* 1.25.1, and variants occur in other sources (the story is denounced as false at Curtius Rufus 8.1.14–17). After Alexander died, Lysimachus ruled Thrace for four decades; his treatment of Telesphorus for insulting his wife is recalled also at Plutarch *Moralia* 606B and Athenaeus 14 616C.

307. The statement assumes that the object of pity not only suffers undeservedly (cf. *On Clemency* 2.5.4) but is also recognizably like ourselves in his suffering (cf. Aristotle *Rhetoric* 2.8 1385b13–16, 1386a1–3, 25–29); sheer horror tends to drive out pity (ibid. 1386a22–24).

308. Nephew of the great Marius (1.11.2n.) and praetor in 85 BCE, when his attempt to control debased coinage made him popular (hence the statues), Marcus Marius Gratidianus was murdered in Sulla's proscriptions (81)—according to S., by his brother-in-law Lucius Sergius Catilina, Sulla's legate and later leader of the insurrection (63) to which S. alludes. Murdering Marius at the tomb amounted to sacrificing him to the shades of Quintus Lutatius Catulus, the hero of Vercellae (1.11.2n.), who killed himself when Marius prosecuted him for treason in 87. S. combines two versions of the story, in which Marius was either beheaded by Catiline or savaged limb by limb by Catulus's son.

309. That is, Caligula; cf. 1.20.8n. This enormity is not otherwise reported; for a catalog of his "savagery," see Suetonius *Caligula* 27ff.

310. Caligula's mother was Agrippina the elder, daughter of Marcus Agrippa and Augustus's daughter, Julia. Her estate, on the right bank of the Tiber, probably stood between the river and the modern Piazza di San Pietro.

311. Thus the usual rendering, making the matrons and senators witnesses; but the Latin, which is ambiguous ("quosdam ex illis cum matronis atque aliis senatoribus ad lucernam decollaret"), is perhaps more naturally taken to mean that they were victims ("together with their wives and other senators").

312. Literally "clad in *soleae*," a simple sandal consisting of a sole and thongs. The choice compounds the lack of decorum condemned below, §19.2n.; cf. Seneca *Controversies* 9.2.25.

313. Such "extraordinary" anger is no longer anger but sadistic cruelty. S. means to put Caligula in the same category as a Phalaris, according to the distinction drawn at 2.5 between anger and "bestiality."

314. The "grate" (*fidicula*) and "rack" (*eculeus*) have already been mentioned

at §3.6; "ankle clamps" (*talaria*) were implements of torture perhaps used to suspend a person upside down.

315. For the wish, see Suetonius *Caligula* 30.2, Cassius Dio 59.13.6.

316. Execution was supposed to be carried out in public, in a solemn ceremony that included a trumpet summons of the whole people (1.16.5n.), to give the event maximum impact for deterrence.

317. The belief that the soul leaves the body with the last breath is widespread. At Rome, see for example *Moral Epistles* 78.4, *Natural Questions* 3 pr. 16, Cicero *against Verres* 2.6.118, Vergil *Aeneid* 4.684f.

318. Cambyses was the Persian king fondest of this sort of cruelty (cf. just below and §14), but the story—an obvious attempt to explain an odd place name ("Dock-Nose" = Rhinokolura, derived from Greek *rhino-* / nose + *kolourein* / dock, prune)—is not otherwise told of him. (Strabo attributes the act to "one of the Ethiopians," 16.2.31).

319. Literally "with hands held palms up" (*supinis manibus*), a gesture of prayer and thanksgiving.

320. Cf. Herodotus 3.20–25.

321. Cf. Herodotus 1.189. Despite S.'s implication to the contrary, Cyrus went on to capture Babylon. Cyrus's anger at the river equates him with children who irrationally feel quasi-anger at the ground when they are hurt by a fall (1.2.5).

322. Agrippina (cf. §18.4n.) was banished in 29 CE to Pandateria, a desolate island off the Campanian coast, where she died in 33. She perhaps was first held at Herculaneum, on the Bay of Naples.

323. S. takes the advice already given at §11.2 on the benefit of treating an apparent injury with mildness, and offers examples from the behavior of persons of high rank.

324. Antigonus I Monophthalmus ("One-Eyed"), governor of Phrygia under Alexander, engaged in war and intrigues for control of Asia from Alexander's death until his own (301 BCE). Plutarch tells the first anecdote (*Moralia* 182C–D, 457E) and a version of the third (458F); for Antigonus's mildness in old age, see Plutarch *Moralia* 182A-B.

325. A satyr-like figure, part human and part animal, noted for his ugliness (hence the point here), vigorous physical appetites, and (in some versions) wisdom.

326. Alexander's grandfather was Amyntas III of Macedon. S. was probably confused by the fact that Antigonus had a son with the same name as Alexander's father, Philip.

327. Lysimachus and Clitus: cf. §17.1–2nn.

328. Philip II (382–36 BCE) made Macedon a great power before his son made it a world-historical power. A number of stories are told of the sort of forbearance displayed here (e.g., Plutarch *Moralia* 143F, 177D-E, 178A), but

this tale is unlikely to be authentic since Democharés, nephew of the orator Demosthenes, was no more than about twenty-five years old when Philip died; the role given him here better suits the time of his political prominence after 307 BCE.

329. At Homer *Iliad* 2.212ff., the ugly, ignoble Thersites abuses the great Agamemnon in an assembly and receives a beating from Odysseus in return.

330. For Augustus as a model of forbearance, cf. *On Clemency* 1.9f.

331. For Timagenes' rise from slave to cook to litter-bearer to friend of the emperor, cf. Seneca *Controversies* 10.5.22.

332. Literary man, orator, general, and statesman, Asinius Pollio (76 BCE–4 CE) supported Julius Caesar and Mark Antony in the 40s, then retired from public life after holding the consulship in 40 and celebrating a triumph in 39. In retirement he wrote an influential history of the period 60–42 BCE. The anecdote is typical of his independence vis-à-vis Augustus; his reply ("If it is your bidding, Caesar . . .")—stiff in form and invidious in intent—gives a flavor of his character.

333. A person struck by lightning was consecrated to the gods, and so outside the realm of ordinary human contact. He was buried on the spot where he was struck, which itself then became consecrated. Cf. *On Clemency* 1.7.1.

334. Augustus made his remark in Greek, as a cultivated English-speaker today might slip briefly into French.

335. For S.'s views on the humane treatment of slaves, see esp. *Moral Epistles* 47.

336. For the thought, cf. 2.31.4.

337. S. uses "wise" loosely sense here. The "wise man" of the Stoic normative ideal, who "does everything well" (Stobaeus 2.66.14–67.4 = LS 61G), would have neither cause for regret nor need of pardon.

338. For the woes borne by the great used in consolation, cf. *Consolation to Marcia* 12.6ff.

339. The image of large beast and small dogs appeared to like effect at 2.32.3, but joined here with the ocean crag it recalls the similes of epic poetry: cf. *Aeneid* 10.707ff. (simile of boar and dogs) and 7.586ff. (wave-buffeted crag, elaborating Homer *Iliad* 15.618ff.)

340. On the importance of intent, cf. §12.2, 2.26.4, 30.1.

341. Cf. 2.30.2n.

342. For the actual wickedness of individual humans versus the perfectable goodness of their shared nature, cf. 2.31.5n.

343. On the link between the capacity for speech and the capacity for deliberation, cf. 1.3.6, 2.26.4.

344. Cf. Plutarch *Moralia* 112B–C, 114F.

345. S.'s example supposes the enslavement of a free adult person—not a

rare occurrence in antiquity, thanks to war, piracy, kidnapping, etc.—who fails to be a good slave in his new station.

346. On the crucial assent to this "first impulse," see 1.8.1, 2.2.1nn.

347. Cf. esp. the anecdote of Gnaeus Piso at 1.18.3ff.

348. Julius Caesar, accorded divine status after his death, was the first Roman to be so honored since Romulus.

349. For the scene, see Suetonius *Julius Caesar* 82, Plutarch *Caesar* 66.3–7. The conspiracy comprised men who had served with Caesar against Pompey—including Tillius Cimber, whose approach to Caesar was the signal for the attack—as well as men whom Caesar had pardoned for serving with Pompey, most notably Marcus Brutus.

350. "He," of course, is the emperor—the only person with magistracies and priesthoods in his gift. The consulship (with twelve fasces: cf. 1.19.3n.) was a greater honor than the praetorship (with six fasces); being an "ordinary" consul, who entered office on the first of January (cf. 1.21.3n.), was a greater honor than being a "suffect" consul, who was appointed in the course of the year. Because by S.'s time it was common for a consul to hold office for only part of the year, opportunities for honors—and distinctions among them—were multiplied.

351. Cf. 2.34.1.

352. On this quality, see 1.20.1n., cf. §5.7, 2.32.2.

353. The basic Roman bronze coin was the *as* (actually issued in copper in S.'s day), sixteen of which were worth one silver denarius. A denarius could buy one measure of unmilled wheat, which could sustain an adult male for about a week. At the height of his power S. had a fortune of perhaps 75,000,000 denarii (Tacitus *Annals* 13.42).

354. Cf. 2.10.5, on Democritus' smile, and §37.3: "Stand back a bit farther and laugh!"

355. For two men "to want, and not want, the same thing" is a definition of friendship (cf. *Moral Epistles* 109.16, Sallust *Catiline's War* 20.4); for one man "always to want, and not want, the same thing" is a definition of wisdom (*Moral Epistles* 20.5).

356. The head of a Roman household was both the formidable *dominus* ("master") to his slaves and the normatively benevolent *pater familias* ("father of the *familia*," which included both kin and slaves).

357. I adopt Haase's *calcari* (passive, "to be trod on"), which is preferable to the manuscripts' *calcare* (active, "to tread on") unless we assume S. was indifferent to the anomaly of "eyes" (the grammatical subject) doing the treading. For the point, cf. *Moral Epistles* 86.7.

358. On Sextius, see 2.36.1n. For the necessity of self-scrutiny, following from Socrates' precept that "for a human being the unexamined life is not worth living" (Plato *Apology* 38A5–6); cf. *Moral Epistles* 16.2, 28.10, 65.15, 118.2, *On Tranquility* 6.2, *On Life's Brevity* 2.5.

359. S. is known to have been married both before his exile in 41 CE (implied by *Consolation to Helvia* 5) and in the 60s, at the latter time to Pompeia Paulina. We do not know if there was more than one marriage or, if there was, which wife is meant here.

360. Since S. regularly addresses his notional reader as "you," it is not quite clear where this self-address ends and the remarks to Novatus resume. I take it that the self-address extends through §38.

361. The power attached to the doorkeeper's position, common in any substantial household, is all the more galling because it was typically held by a slave, hence "chattel" (*mancipium*) here; cf. *On the Wise Man's Consistency* 14.1–2.

362. The seating at a Roman dinner party was hierarchically arranged according to an elaborate protocol; cf. esp. Pliny *Epistles* 2.6.

363. The poet Quintus Ennius (239–169 BCE) was remembered for his tragedies and for being the first to write epic in Latin using the dactylic verse form of Homer, but he was regarded as stylistically uncouth in S.'s day (cf. *Moral Epistles* frag. 8 = Gellius 12.2.11). Cicero's poetry, especially that written on his own career (*FLP* frag. 5–14), was criticized for both its technique and its conceit. Quintus Hortensius (114–50 BCE) was the foremost orator at Rome until Cicero supplanted him; S. alludes to his florid style.

364. That is, if you cannot bear criticism in a private matter, what will you do in the rough-and-tumble of politics? For the argumentative move, cf. esp. 2.25.4.

365. Diogenes of Babylon (ca. 240–152 BCE), a head of the Stoa, left influential writings on language and ethics; he visited Rome in 155 BCE. This anecdote is told of him only here.

366. For Cato's "great-spirited" imperviousness, cf. 2.32.2n. S. cites another instance in which he was spat upon at *Moral Epistles* 14.13 and *On the Wise Man's Consistency* 2.1ff. There were many Lentuli in the late Republic: the only known candidate who could be called "wild and divisive"—Publius Cornelius Lentulus Sura, executed for participating in the Catilinarian conspiracy as praetor in 63 BCE—seems a bit too early to be placed "in our fathers' lifetimes" (S.'s father was probably born in the late 50s BCE).

367. S. makes an untranslatable triple pun on the phrase "have no *os*," which can mean "have no mouth" (proved false by Lentulus' spitting), "have no eloquence," or "have no shameless audacity" (from *os* = *os durum* / *ferreum* = "a hard / iron face"—that is, incapable of blushing).

368. This approach is exemplified in the second piece of "advice" given just below, §40.1.

369. For the use of fear, cf. 2.14.1n.

370. Contrast the hard line that S. is prepared to take with grief; see *Consolation to Marcia* 1.7f.

371. Publius Vedius Pollio (d. 15 BCE), a freedman's son who rose to the rank of knight, was a partisan and (in his will) benefactor of Augustus. For the anecdote, cf. *On Clemency* 1.18.2, Pliny *Natural History* 9.77.

372. That is, the vice beyond anger exemplified by Caligula (§19.1) and Phalaris (2.5.1).

373. Thus the standard Stoic definition of hatred as anger that has become inveterate: *SVF* 3.395–98.

374. Cf. the simile of the great beast beset by barking dogs at §25.3.

375. Cf. *Moral Epistles* 91.16: "Death makes all ashes equal."

376. For S.'s disgust at the games, see *Moral Epistles* 7.

377. As all other humans are, for we are all fellow citizens of the "cosmopolis": 2.31.7n., and cf. 1.5.2n.

378. Cf. Lucretius 3.959–60 and esp. Anonymus *Copa* 38: "Death tweaks your ear and says, 'Live—I'm coming.'"

On Clemency

Introduction

ROBERT A. KASTER

The Treatise

Soon after Nero succeeded his adoptive father, Claudius, in October 54, Seneca hailed him and savaged his dead predecessor in a lampoon, the *Apocolocyntosis*, that also appears in this volume. A year or two passed before Seneca began the next of the extant writings we can date fairly closely: *On Clemency*, planned in at least two books and begun between December 55 and December 56.[1] We do not know the precise occasion, if any, that inspired him.[2] In fact, we cannot even know whether the treatise was finished and circulated in Seneca's lifetime; it breaks off, obviously incomplete, early in Book 2. But we know the general plan he had in mind, and we can see how the work's main concerns speak to the general political circumstances of Nero's early reign.

Above all there is the contrast, sometimes expressed but understood throughout, with one of the chief evils of Claudius's reign: his cruelty and eccentricity in judicial matters.[3] In the accession speech that he composed for Nero to deliver to the Senate, Seneca had made a point of stressing that Nero "rejected especially those practices that had recently inspired a blaze of indignation," singling out Claudius's judicial habits, and in a display of leniency Nero soon thereafter restored to the Senate a man who had been expelled for alleged adultery with the empress Messalina, "offering solemn assurances of his clemency in frequent speeches that Seneca . . . used the emperor's voice to spread abroad."[4] *On Clemency* obviously participates in this attempt to "brand" Nero as quite a different sort of emperor. At the same time, the great claims that Seneca makes for Nero's innocence—"to be without blemish, never to have spilled a fellow citizen's blood" (1.11.2, cf. 1.1.5)—could help counter whatever rumors might be circulating that this reign was perhaps not so different after all: for early in 55 Britannicus, Claudius's biological son and a potential younger rival for Nero's power, had quite unexpectedly died, very likely poisoned at Nero's command.[5]

In broad terms, *On Clemency* is presented as an attempt to instruct Nero and cause him to reflect upon the nature of his power; much of the attempt is cast as a panegyric. As often in panegyric, what appears to be simple, laudatory description is a cover for moral exhortation: Seneca means to urge Nero toward virtue by praising him as though he were already virtuous. The technique had been used before in Roman political speech, most notably in the orations that Cicero delivered before Julius Caesar in late 46 and 45 BCE, when Caesar was sole supreme magistrate (*dictator*): when defending men being tried before Caesar (*On Behalf of Ligarius, On Behalf of King Deiotarus*), and especially when thanking Caesar for restoring a former enemy from exile (*On Behalf of Marcellus*), Cicero used praise—including praise for Caesar's clemency—to outline the proper civil role that he hoped the *dictator* would assume. Two generations after Seneca, the younger Pliny was to use the same technique when thanking the emperor for his consulship in the *Panegyric of Trajan*, the most elaborate example of the genre from classical Rome. And later still, the metaphor that Seneca adopts in his opening address to Nero—where he speaks of his desire to "serve . . . as a mirror for you, to show you to yourself" (1.1.1)—was to re-echo in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, in the label given to the genre—the "mirror of princes"—of which Machiavelli's *The Prince* is the best known example.[6]

Seneca explains his plan for the work early in Book 1 (1.3.1):

> The first part will be concerned with leniency; the second will make plain the nature and character of clemency—for there are certain vices that imitate virtues, and they cannot be set to one side unless you get a clear impression of their distinguishing signs. In the third part we will ask how the mind is brought to this virtue, strengthens it, and by exercising it makes it its own.

The treatise we now read obviously does not match that plan, for the third part is entirely lacking, either because of a loss suffered as the work was transmitted, or because Seneca simply decided to abandon the project.[7] Yet the plan does make plain that Seneca intended to cast the project in much the same mold as that used for *On Anger*, with due adjustments made for the difference between attacking a

vice and promoting a virtue—and for the difference between addressing one's peers (in *On Anger*) and addressing one's prince.

Both works open with highly rhetorical, protreptic treatments of their topic: as *On Anger* 1 urged that extirpating anger is both desirable and possible, so *On Clemency* 1 urges that cultivating clemency is both right and expedient, for human beings in general but above all for the prince. After celebrating Nero's goodness and clemency's special merits (§§1–2), then sketching his plan in the passage quoted just above (§3.1), Seneca frames the book's long central segment (§§3.2–19.9) by twice extolling clemency—as a virtue "especially suited to the king or prince," serving both his security and his self-regard (§§3.2–8.6, 19.5–9)—and places within that frame a series of further considerations:

- the exemplary behavior of Augustus (§§9.1–11.3);
- further prudential arguments that speak to the prince's security (§§11.4–13.5);
- the prince's role as good father (§§14.1–15.5);
- the lessons to be drawn from the behavior of animals (§§16.1–19.4).

Seneca then rounds the book off by analyzing the proper aims of punishment (§§20–24)—a theme particularly relevant to the addressee (see section 3 below) and at the same time highly reminiscent of *On Anger* (see esp. 1.15–16)—and by offering a horrifying picture of cruelty—clemency's opposite—as the enemy of happiness (§§25–26).[8]

After this wide-ranging introduction to the main themes and a second, brief encomium of Nero at the start of Book 2 (§§1–2), Seneca turns to a more philosophically exact approach—and here again the parallel with *On Anger* is clear. As *On Anger* 2 began by defining the precise nature and mechanism of anger and distinguishing it from "bestiality" (*On Anger* 2.1–5), so here Seneca first defines the concept of clemency itself (§3), establishes that its true opposite is not strictness (*severitas*) but cruelty (*crudelitas*: §4.1–3), and distinguishes it from two attitudes with which it might be confused: pity (*misericordia*: §4.4–6.4), condemned because—as an emotion—it enacts the irrational consequences of a flawed assessment; and for-

giveness (*ignoscere, venia*: §7), condemned because—as "the remission of a deserved punishment"—it entails unjustly giving someone less than he is due.[9] No sooner has this distinction between clemency and forgiveness been drawn (if indeed it is complete) than the text breaks off, and we plainly cannot know how long Seneca would have continued in the same mode. We do know, however, that at some point he would have moved on to offer practical counsel on achieving and strengthening the virtuous disposition of clemency, according to the plan stated at 1.3.1. And here, too, the parallel with *On Anger* is plain, for the last, "therapeutic" segment of that work (2.18–3.43) was also devoted to practical counsel, on avoiding or moderating the vice of anger.

So much, then, for an overview of the text. In the balance of this introduction we can examine in greater detail Seneca's two main concerns: first the nature of the clemency he is urging, and then the position of the man on whom it is being urged—the virtue and the prince.

The Virtue

In trying to explicate *clementia* and urge its cultivation Seneca was doing something quite novel.[10] Earlier discussions of the virtues in Latin had certainly taken it into account, identifying it as a species of self-restraint (*temperantia*) or aligning it with a "readiness to be placated" (*placabilitas*) under the heading "great-spiritedness."[11] But no Roman before Seneca chose to write at length on clemency, and no Greek could have done so, because no Greek word or concept quite corresponds to Latin *clementia*. There were, to be sure, Greek terms that converged on the same idea insofar as they denoted some of the qualities constitutive of *clementia*: chief among these were "forbearance" (*epieikeia*)—a willing restraint, especially in the face of a wrong or provocation—"mildness" (*praötês*), and "affection for humankind" (*philanthrôpia*). Yet even taken all together, these qualities did not add up to *clementia*, in part because none entailed a crucial quality of mind that, as we shall see, is essential to Seneca's conception of the virtue.

We can begin to approach that conception by looking first at the definitions that Seneca himself offers near the start of the second book (2.3.1–2):

Clemency is

(1) "the mind's moderation (*temperantia*) when it has the power to take revenge," or
(2) "mildness (*lenitas*) in a superior toward an inferior in determining punishment." It's safer to advance several definitions, lest a single definition fall short of covering the matter. . . . Thus it can also be termed
(3) "the mind's inclination toward mildness (*lenitas*) in exacting punishment." The following definition will not cover every case, but it most closely approximates the truth, to wit: clemency is
(4) "moderation (*moderatio*) that diminishes a due and deserved punishment to some degree."

Formally, all four definitions share two features that we should expect to find in a definition of a virtue, and in a Stoic definition not least: they all pick out a certain quality of mind—moderation or (an inclination to) mildness—and they all locate that quality of mind in relation to a certain kind of action—punishing, in the case of the last three definitions, or the slightly more specific act of taking revenge, in the case of the first. Yet Seneca's fear of offering a definition that falls short is not misplaced, primarily because the definitions he gives do not adequately express the relevant quality of mind that Seneca himself implies in his discussion as a whole.

If we take all of Seneca's remarks into account, we can summarize them by saying (a) that clemency entails a mild, humane, and great-spirited disposition born of mental calm and clarity, and (b) that this disposition inclines people to requite wrongs fairly, by moderating their responses relative to what might strictly be deserved. To elaborate a bit, we can first note that the adjectives "mild, humane, and great-spirited," which recall the Greek virtues noted above, pick out elements central to Seneca's discourse: references to being "great-spirited" and especially "mild" constantly recur, while being "humane" is of a piece with the Stoic mission to "be useful, bring assistance, and consider the interests . . . of all people, individually and collectively" (2.5.3) just because we are "born . . . to assist [our] fellows and add to the common good, of which [we] will give each person a share" (2.6.3).[12] Similarly, the crucial adverb "fairly" reflects

Seneca's repeated concern with "fairness" (e.g., 1.7.2, 18.1), while the idea of limiting one's response relative to what might strictly be deserved brings clemency into relation with another virtue with which Seneca pairs it, "strictness" (*severitas*): whereas strictness chooses the harshest response that a wrong could justly receive, given the kind of wrong it is, clemency finds good reason in any particular case for mitigating that response in the interest of fairness.[13] "Good reason," of course, is the key: it explains why clemency is a virtue while pity is a weakness and a vice;[14] and it suggests why "mental calm and clarity" are the most important elements in the summary above, for two reasons. First, the phrase "mental calm and clarity" respects Seneca's repeated insistence on the indispensability of clarity and calm, in opposition to murkiness and turbulence (e.g., 1.5.5, 7.2, 13.4, 2.6.1). Second, and more important, mental clarity is simply what makes all else possible—mildness, humanity, greatness of spirit, concern for moderation and fairness, finding the good reason—because through it we perceive the true nature of things and assign them their correct value. "Clarity of mind," in fact, would necessarily anchor the Stoic definition of any virtue.

Our summary's aptness can be judged from an anecdote that Seneca tells in the first book (1.15.2–7):

> When [Lucius] Tarius discovered that his son was planning to kill him and condemned him in a trial held in his own household, everyone looked up to him because he was content to sentence the young man to exile—and a pampered exile at that, in Massilia, where he provided him with the same annual allowance he used to give him before his disgrace: because of this generous gesture everyone in Rome . . . believed that the young man had been justly condemned, seeing that a father incapable of hating him had been able to condemn him. . . . [Seneca then loops back to an earlier stage in the story:] when Tarius was going to conduct the trial he asked Caesar Augustus to sit on his advisory council, and . . . when the case had been heard and the evidence thoroughly examined—both the points that the young man made on his own behalf and those that tended to convict him—Augustus asked that each man write down his own judgment, lest

> everyone make Caesar's verdict his own. Then, . . . he said that the son should be banished, the location to be left to the father's discretion. . . . He decreed neither [execution] nor a prison cell but made plain that a father should be content with the mildest punishment in the case of a young son driven to a crime in which he had shown himself, by his timid conduct, only one step removed from innocence: he should be removed from the city and from his father's sight.

As Seneca says, the "very same episode . . . provides a model of the good prince . . . to compare with the good father" (1.15.3). Conscious of his status, Augustus as the good prince takes care to shield Tarius's advisory council from the full weight of his own authority; and Augustus and Tarius together, as good prince and good father, concur in a judgment that is a model of clemency. Both men, plainly, must be understood to act with a mild, humane, and great-spirited clarity of mind, unclouded by the emotions—anger, hatred—that attempted parricide might provoke and by the sorts of faulty judgment from which such emotions derive. Equally plainly, the penalty on which they agree represents some moderation of response relative to what might strictly be deserved: in the case of parricide, the penalty sanctioned by strict justice was a particularly gruesome form of execution.[15] Finally, the result is judged to be fair for a plausible reason that can be clearly stated: the formerly blameless young man was "only one step removed from innocence." Note that in this case the clemency "that diminishes a due and deserved punishment *to some degree*" (2.3.2, cf. 2.6.3) results in "the mildest punishment"; but what is essential to the judgment—what makes it clemency—is not the fact that it is the mildest, but the fact that it gets the degree of remission just right. Presented with a slightly different set of facts—a son, say, who was not quite so nearly innocent—the clement person will judge the degree of remission differently—exile in a less attractive place, perhaps, or with a less generous allowance. True clemency's ability to gauge the outcome rationally in this way is what allows Seneca to claim that "clemency exercises freedom of judgment: it makes its determinations not according to a set formula but according to what is fair and good, . . . [and] not as though it were doing

less than what is just, but as though the determination it reaches is the most just."[16]

As the anecdote of Tarius's judgment shows, the clarity of mind that *produces* the judgments essential to clemency is identical to the clarity of mind that *avoids* the judgments essential to the "passions."[17] A mind that is truly *clemens* will never know anger, not just for the formal Stoic reason that—clemency being a virtue, anger a vice—they could not coexist in the same mind, but because a *clemens* mind would not fall away from reason into the errors that make anger possible.[18] This link between clemency and the avoidance of anger touches upon another important point—one that is often overlooked, indeed actually obscured, when it is said that clemency is an essentially hierarchical quality, displayed by a superior toward an inferior. It is true that one of Seneca's definitions includes the stipulation that the giver and the recipient of *clementia* are of different status.[19] It is also true that in practice, differences of status would often, or even typically, have existed between the sentencing judge and the guilty party, or between the conqueror and the conquered. But it must be stressed that such differences would merely be contingent on the circumstances, not essential to the virtue itself. As a virtue—which is to say, as an action of the human mind making judgments in the way intended by nature—clemency *must* be appropriate to all human beings as such; and in fact it is not difficult to find references to peers who are said to behave with clemency toward one another in the age of Cicero,[20] just as Seneca remarks that "clemency will make any household it reaches happy and calm" (1.5.4) right after he insists that "clemency is natural for all human beings" (1.5.2). The clarity of mind that clemency brings to fairly requiting wrongs is a true human good, whatever the social levels on which the wrongs are committed and requited.

And yet: as we have already noted, Seneca does say that "clemency suits no one better than a king or prince" (1.3.3, cf. 1.5.2, 4), and he is after all addressing Nero, who is perched not just on a superior position but on the supreme position. So it is time to consider how Seneca approaches his prince and commends this virtue to him.

The Prince

In part because of his temperament and personal inclination, in part to demonstrate that he was not another Sulla wishing to use his preeminent power to take cruel revenge (cf. 1.12.1–3), Julius Caesar had made clemency a key element of his public acts during and after the civil wars, and in this he was followed by the men who succeeded to his power, the "foremost men" (*principes*) of the Julio-Claudian dynasty. On the same day in 27 BCE when the Senate voted that Caesar's heir, Octavian, should be known as Augustus, it also voted that he should be honored with a golden shield inscribed with his signal virtues, which included clemency along with courage (*virtus*), justice (*iustitia*), and piety (*pietas*). Augustus' successor, Tiberius, issued coinage stamped with his portrait on one side and "clementia" on the other. And even the cruel Claudius was celebrated by Seneca for his "clemency" (*Consolation to Polybius* 13.2), when doing so suited Seneca's attempt to gain recall from exile.[21]

But the way in which Seneca speaks of Nero's position in this treatise casts his clemency in a rather different light. The accession speech Seneca had written for Nero in October 54 acknowledged the authority and responsibilities of the Senate and intimated that he would work in partnership with that body,[22] according to the model of relations between the "foremost man" and Senate that had been at least nominally in force since the time of Augustus. *On Clemency*, however, nowhere mentions either that nominal partnership or the Senate itself. Instead we read, very early in the treatise, that "clemency suits no one better than a king (*rex*) or *princeps*" (1.3.3). Here we find Nero's title mentioned in the same breath as *rex*, a title that had been anathema to the Roman upper classes since the city's kings had been expelled and the Republic founded in the late sixth century BCE. And when we see that Seneca soon thereafter speaks of "*principes* and kings and guardians of the civil regime, by whatever other name they go" (1.4.3), and find that throughout the rest of the work he refers to *princeps* and king indifferently, we may draw two conclusions: that a reasonable translation of *princeps* in this work is also the most etymologically transparent—"prince," with all the regal associations that the word brings with it; and that the different titles used for the sort of people Seneca has in mind are indeed

unimportant compared with the autocratic power they are frankly acknowledged as wielding.

The Nero of the treatise, then, is unmistakably and unabashedly a monarch, and immeasurably greater than the people he rules, as Seneca makes clear in a number of different ways. At the very beginning of the work (1.1.2), as Nero peers into the "mirror" that Seneca holds up to him, he is imagined as asking, "Have I, from among all mortals, been found pleasing and been chosen to act in the gods' stead here on earth?" And though Seneca does not here expressly answer the question "Found pleasing and chosen *by whom*?," subsequent statements—for example, that "one with the power to give life and take it away ought to use the gods' great gift (*munus*) in a high-minded way" (1.21.2)—might well lead us to conclude that the answer is "by the gods themselves."[23] Nero is, furthermore, presumed to be bound by no laws: when near the end of the same opening discourse he is depicted as saying, "I hold a watch over myself as though I might be obliged to render an account to the laws" (1.1.4), the merely hypothetical force of the statement acknowledges the reality that the *princeps* was a law unto himself. And repeatedly, through a range of different images, Seneca stresses the hierarchical distance between Nero and those who are dependent on him: in a metaphor borrowed from the treatment of orphaned children, the people are his "wards," he is their faithful guardian (1.1.5, 18.1); he is the good father (1.14.1, 16.2) or physician (1.17.1–2) or teacher (1.16.2); he is the "mind" or "living breath" of the body politic, which "would be nothing but a dead weight . . . absent the central authority's great intellect" (1.4.1, cf. 1.35, 2.2.1). Whereas he "hold[s] each man's lot and station in the palm of [his] hand" (1.1.2), the people collectively are draft animals who might break free of their "yoke" or their "reins" (1.1.1, 4.2).

How does a man in such a position not prove to be a tyrant? Seneca answers the question directly (1.12.1, 3): "A tyrant differs from a king in his behavior, not his title. . . . [I]t's because of clemency that there's a big difference between a king and a tyrant."[24] Unconstrained by law and institutions, the monarch can avoid the bad model—the utterly willful power of "the tyrant"—and approach the good model—"the king"—only by cultivating clemency and the mild, humane, and great-spirited clarity of mind from which it flows. Or to put it another way, where law and institutions have no force, all

depends on character, and on the prince's self-chosen grounds for regulating his behavior. But this answer seems merely to put the original question in different form: why ever should such a man chose to regulate his behavior in such a way?

To this form of the question Seneca offers two different kinds of answer, both of them traditional parts of the advice offered to monarchs. First, there is the tactic of normative praise already noted. Nero will naturally want to cultivate the particular sort of goodness that clemency entails just because he is already good: his goodness is "innate," not assumed for show, "genuine and foursquare" (1.1.6); he has "kept the community free of bloodshed, [an] accomplishment . . . all the more grand and admirable because the sword of authority has never before been entrusted to anyone at an earlier stage in his life" (1.11.3); he has shown, through his reluctance to approve the deaths even of condemned criminals, how his "goodness struggles with [his] high fortune" (2.1.1).[25] But joined with such cajoling appeals to Nero's self-conception is another tactic both more pervasively used and more likely to be effective: the reassurance that his "unique goodness . . . does not go for naught . . . ; gratitude is given [him] in return, and no one person has even been as dear to another individual as [he is] dear to the Roman people, its great and lasting good" (1.1.5).

So Seneca introduces the first in a long series of frankly prudential arguments meant to convince Nero that clemency is not just right, but also expedient:

- Stable and well-founded greatness belongs only to the man who all others know is for them as much as he is above them. . . . For that man's sake people are utterly prepared to hurl themselves on the swords of would-be assassins and to lay down their lives if his path to safety must be paved with their corpses (1.3.3).
- The person who has vengeance at his beck and call can be sure he'll be praised as gentle if he lets an opportunity for revenge go by (1.7.3).
- [Augustus's] clemency brought him safety and peace of mind and caused people to regard him with grateful favor, though he had set a master's hand on the Roman people's not-yet-submissive neck (1.10.2).

- Clemency, then, not only ennobles men, it makes them safer; it is at one and the same time an adornment of supreme power and its surest security (1.11.4).
- When a king is calm and tranquil his auxiliary forces are loyal, inasmuch as he's using them for the general well-being; and the regular soldier, eager for glory, gladly endures every task as though he were protecting a parent (1.13.1).
- Affable, approachable, and amiable in his expression . . . , favorably inclined to reasonable requests, nor yet harshly opposed even to the unreasonable, he is loved, defended, and cherished by the entire community. . . . Made safe by his own kindness, this prince needs no guards. . . . (1.13.4–5).
- There's no need to build up lofty citadels or fortify steep hills or quarry out the sides of mountains, to wall oneself in with a series of towers and bulwarks; clemency guarantees that a king will be safe out in the open. The love of his citizens is his one impregnable fortification (1.19.6).

But there is plainly more to Seneca's lessons here than the message "goodness pays." Top-down beneficence and gentle humanity are met by bottom-up gratitude and love—and the bonds of affection that ideally bind prince and people in this model are as important as the traditional (and in principle dispassionate) reciprocities involving favors granted and repaid. Though the hierarchical distances are not for a moment minimized, the forms of connection that clemency fosters construct a real mutuality of concern. Each side undertakes to make the other safe (cf. 1.19.5) when the prince is a "man who all others know is for them as much as he is above them."

There was, finally, a specific legal setting in which the prince's exercise of clemency was especially likely to matter for the members of the political elite who were (beyond Nero himself) Seneca's notional audience.[26] By the late Republic, the sorts of charges of greatest concern to that elite—charges of provincial malfeasance, seditious violence, electoral corruption, treason, and the like—would usually be brought to trial before one of the "standing courts of inquiry" (*quaestiones perpetuae*) devoted to public law. In such cases, both the offense and the corresponding penalty were defined as a matter of positive law (*lex*): the panel of judges in a "standing court" was re-

sponsible for deciding the question of guilt but had no role at all in assessing the penalty—and so had no scope for applying the sort of rational moderation that Seneca's version of clemency entailed.[27] Under the Principate, however, it became common for another form of trial (called a *cognitio*) to be held before the Senate or the *princeps*, and in such a trial—as in a trial of noncitizens before a provincial governor, or in the sort of domestic trial that we saw earlier in the anecdote of Lucius Tarius—the person or persons judging the case had significant freedom in assessing the penalty, and so in deciding whether to incline in the direction of strictness or clemency. In such circumstances it was a matter of real consequence for Seneca's peers if the prince, or other members of the Senate, embraced the arguments of moral nobility and practical utility that Seneca offered on clemency's behalf.

In the event, of course, Seneca's instruction of his prince, whether in this treatise or in their conversations, did not take. When, for example, Nero murdered his mother in 59, and then concocted charges of past crimes against her and pardoned some whom she was alleged to have exiled, he could not be said to be displaying the sort of clemency that Seneca had urged.[28] The sequel, in Nero's bad last years, made it inevitable that Seneca should later be branded the "teacher of a tyrant."[29] How soon Seneca himself came fully to appreciate the truth about his prince, and about the pointlessness of his teaching, we cannot know. But we might take *On Clemency*'s fragmentary state to be a symbol of his failure.[30]

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On Clemency

LUCIUS ANNAEUS SENECA
TRANSLATED BY ROBERT A. KASTER

Book 1

1 I decided to write about clemency, Nero Caesar, that I might serve, so to speak, as a mirror for you, to show you to yourself as you are about to gain the greatest of all pleasures. For though the true profit of right actions lies in their performance, and virtues have no worthy reward beyond themselves, it's nice to get a fully rounded view of your own good conscience, and then to look at this measureless mass of men before you—fractious, quarrelsome, without self-control, as ready to run amok to its own destruction as to another's, if once it breaks free of this yoke—and[31] say to oneself: **(2)** "Have I, from among all mortals, been found pleasing and been chosen to act in the gods' stead here on earth? Do I judge matters of life and death for whole nations? I hold each man's lot and station in the palm of my hand; it is with my lips that Fortune declares, what she wants each mortal to be granted; peoples and cities draw reasons for rejoicing from my response; no area anywhere flourishes save by my wish and inclination; the many thousands of swords that my peace keeps in check are unsheathed at my nod; which tribes are rightly destroyed root and branch, which are sent to live elsewhere, which are granted freedom, which have it snatched away, which kings are made slaves, which heads are wreathed in kingly glory, which cities fall, which rise—all this is subject to my judgment. **(3)** When I have such vast capacities at my disposal, anger does not drive me to impose unjust punishments—no, nor does youth's impulsiveness nor people's rash defiance, which often wrests forbearance from even the most placid hearts, nor the sort of glory—dreadful, but common in high commands—that depends on using terror to display one's power. My sword is sheathed, or rather bound fast. I am utterly sparing of even the meanest blood; no one fails to win my favor just by virtue of being human, if he has nothing else to commend him. **(4)** I have strictness in reserve but keep clemency at the ready; I hold a watch over myself as though I might be obliged to render an account to

the laws,[32] which I have summoned forth into the light from gloomy neglect.[33] I have been moved because one man is just starting life, another coming to its end. I spared one man for the sake of his high standing, another because he is lowly. Whenever I've found no reason for pity,[34] I am clement for my own sake. Should the immortal gods call me to account today, I am prepared to give a reckoning of all humankind."

(5) You can boldly make this declaration, Caesar: all that <has been entrusted> to your faithful guardianship is kept <safe>, and you <have detracted>[35] not a jot from the commonwealth by force or by stealth. You have longed for praise of the rarest sort, which has to date been granted to none of your predecessors: praise of innocence.[36] That unique goodness of yours does not go for naught, nor has it encountered ungrateful or malicious judges: gratitude is given you in return, and no one person has even been as dear to another individual as you are dear to the Roman people, its great and lasting good. **(6)** But you have taken a huge burden on your shoulders. No one now speaks of the deified Augustus or the first years of Tiberius,[37] nor does anyone seek a model that he would have you imitate, besides yourself; your position as prince[38] is judged by the sample we have received. This would have been a challenge, were that goodness of yours not innate but assumed for the occasion. For no one can act a part for very long, and artifice soon reverts to its own true nature. But things that are supported by the truth and spring, so to speak, from what is genuine and foursquare become greater and better through the very passage of time.

(7) The Roman people were facing a great gamble when it was unclear what turn that noble character of yours would take; but now the people's wishes have been answered, for there's no risk of your suddenly forgetting who you are. To be sure, excessive prosperity makes people greedy; strong desires are never so well controlled that they draw the line at what they've gained. There's a progression from great to greater, and people who have succeeded beyond their expectations embrace expectations of the most outrageous sort. Still, all your fellow citizens now cannot help but avow both that they are happy and that nothing can be added to their present good fortune, save that it last. **(8)** Many things compel them to make this avowal, something that people are generally very slow to do: a deep

and abundant freedom from care; right put beyond the reach of any wrong; the very prosperous condition of the commonwealth that hovers before their eyes, lacking nothing for perfect liberty save the license to destroy itself. **(9)** Above all, however, there is the admiration for your clemency, which the greatest and the least have come to know equally. For each person perceives all other goods in proportion to their own good fortune, expecting them to be greater or less accordingly, but all expect to derive the same benefit from clemency. There is no one so deeply complacent about his own innocence that he does not rejoice to see clemency stand ready for human failings.

2 Yet there are some, I know, who reckon that clemency supports all the worst people, since it is superfluous until some wrong has been done and is the only virtue that has no place among the innocent. But first of all, just as medicine has its uses among the ill but is held in honor by the healthy too, so even the innocent esteem clemency, though it's people deserving punishment who seek its support. Second, clemency has a place in the character of the innocent, since people are sometimes blamed for things that are just bad luck; further, clemency comes to the aid not just of innocence but often of virtue, inasmuch as some things happen, in certain situations, that can be punished though they're praised.[39] There's also the fact that a large proportion of people can be restored to innocence if < . . . >.[40] **(2)** Still, it's not appropriate to dispense forgiveness wholesale; for when the distinction between good men and bad is abolished, chaos follows and vices erupt. Accordingly, one needs to apply the sort of moderation that knows how to distinguish natures that can be healed from those that are lost.[41] One's clemency should be neither promiscuously indiscriminate nor very restricted: it's just as cruel to forgive all as to forgive none. We must maintain the mean; but since that balance is difficult, whatever measure will be more than strictly equitable[42] should tip the scale in the more humane direction.

3 But it will be better to address these matters in their proper place. Now I shall divide the whole subject into three parts.[43] The first part will be concerned with leniency;[44] the second will make plain the nature and character of clemency—for there are certain vices that imitate virtues, and they cannot be set to one side unless you mark out their distinguishing signs clearly. In the third part we

will ask how the mind is brought to this virtue, strengthens it, and by exercising it makes it its own.

(2) Among all the virtues none better suits a human being, because none is more humane. This must be a matter of general agreement not only amongst ourselves,[45] who would have the human being be regarded as a social animal born for the common good, but also among those who dedicate the human being to pleasure and look to their own interests in all their words and deeds:[46] for if a person seeks peace and quiet, he finds this virtue to be part of his nature, since it loves peace and causes us to keep our hands to ourselves. **(3)** That said, clemency suits no one better than a king or prince.[47] For great resources bring honor and glory if and only if their power is beneficial: having the strength to do harm is a baneful sort of power. Stable and well-founded greatness belongs only to the man who all others know is for them as much as he is above them, whom they daily find to be anxiously on guard for their well-being, individually and collectively. When that man appears, people don't scatter as though some evil or harmful beast has sprung from his lair; they compete in flocking to him as though to a brilliant, beneficent star. For that man's sake, people are utterly prepared to hurl themselves onto the swords of would-be assassins and to lay down their lives if his path to safety must be paved with their corpses: keeping watch at night they protect his sleep, surrounding him as a shield they guard his flanks, and when dangers come rushing on they put themselves in their path.[48] **(4)** It is not without reason that peoples and cities have entered into this agreement, to love and protect their kings in this way and to sacrifice their lives and property however the ruler's safety requires. No, nor does it mean that they are mad, or place little value on their own lives, when so many thousands take up arms on a single person's behalf, and at the cost of many deaths save the life of one man who is sometimes old and weak.[49] **(5)** Just as the whole body is in thrall to the mind and—though the body is much larger and far more pleasing to the eye, while the mind's slender being is concealed, its hiding place uncertain—the hands, feet, and eyes still do the mind's bidding, the skin protects it, we lie still at its command, or we restlessly dash about when it has given the order. We search the seas for profit's sake, if it's a greedy master, while if it's eager for glory

we have long since placed our right hand in the flames[50] or willingly suffer death.[51] Just so, this measureless mass of people surrounding one man's soul is ruled by his spirit and guided by his reasoning, doomed to overwhelm and shatter itself with its own forces, were it not held uplifted by his deliberation.

4 Thus it's their own safety that they love when they lead their legions into battle, ten at a time, for one person's sake, when they run ahead to meet the enemy's front line and expose their breasts to wounds, lest their own commander's battle standards be turned in flight. For *he* is the bond that holds the commonwealth together, *he* is the living breath drawn by the many, many thousands who would themselves be nothing but a dead weight, prey for the taking, absent the central authority's great intellect.

> While the king is unharmed, all have but one thought;
> when he has been lost, they break the bonds of trust.[52]

(2) This calamity will mean the end of peace for Rome and bring our great community's fortunes to ruin. That community will stay clear of this danger only so long as it knows how to tolerate the reins. If it ever snaps them or doesn't keep them from being replaced, should some mishap shake them loose, this unity, this fabric of our supreme dominion will be rent and tattered; our city will cease to be master the instant it ceases to be obedient. **(3)** That's why it's not strange that princes and kings and guardians of the civil regime, by whatever other name they go, are loved more vehemently than even personal relations: if any sane person regards public affairs as more important than private affairs, it follows that the person on whom the commonwealth is centered is also dearer. For a long time now Caesar[53] has been so merged with the commonwealth that the one could not be separated from the other without destroying both: Caesar needs the commonwealth's strength while the commonwealth needs Caesar as its head.

5 My discourse seems to have veered rather far from the topic, but be assured it's bearing down on the very nub.[54] For if you are the commonwealth's mind and it is your body (thus the argument to this point), I imagine you see how necessary clemency is: for you spare yourself when you are seen to spare another. Accordingly, you must spare even citizens worthy of chastisement just as you would faltering

limbs, and if at some point bloodletting is needed, you must check <your hand> lest the incision be deeper than necessary. **(2)** As I was saying, then, clemency is natural[55] for all human beings, to be sure, yet it best adorns people in command, insofar as it has more to protect in their cases and has more material to work with in making itself apparent. For how little harm a private person's cruelty does! But the savagery of princes means war. **(3)** Moreover, though the virtues exist in a state of mutual harmony and no one of them is better or more honorable than another,[56] a given virtue is nonetheless more apt for certain kinds of characters.[57] Being great-spirited[58] is becoming for any mortal, even the lowliest: for what is greater or more gallant than blunting misfortune's edge? Still, this quality has more ample scope in good fortune and is seen to better advantage on the judge's tribunal than where the spectators stand.

(4) Clemency will make any household it reaches happy and calm, but it is more admirable in the palace just to the degree that it is less common there. For the person whose anger knows no obstacles, whose more grievous judgments gain the assent of the very people they condemn, whom no one is about to interrupt, indeed, whose pardon no one is about to beg when his rage is more than usually violent—what is more memorable than for such a person to take himself in hand and use his power to better and more peaceful ends, by thinking to himself: "Anyone can break the law by taking a life, but only I can do so by saving one?"[59] **(5)** A great spirit is an adornment of great good fortune; unless it raises itself to good fortune's level and stands taller, it drags even good fortune down to earth. Moreover, it is the defining trait of a great spirit that it is peaceful and calm and looks down on slights and offenses from a position of superiority. Raging in anger is womanish; harassing those who have cast themselves at your feet and tearing at them with your teeth—that's the behavior of beasts, and not even noble beasts at that. Elephants and lions pass by the animals they lay low; it's the low brute that keeps at them. **(6)** Fierce and implacable anger is unbecoming in a king; a person does not loom above another when anger brings him down to the other's level.[60] But if he grants life and a decent social standing to defendants who deserve to lose life and standing, he does something that is permitted only to the one who is in control: life can be taken away from a superior but is never granted save to an inferior.

(7) Being a savior is a defining trait of superior fortune, which ought never be more admired than when it is granted the same power as the gods, through whose kindness we are brought into the light of day, both good people and bad. Accordingly, the prince, in claiming for himself the gods' own disposition, should be glad to look upon some of his fellow citizens because they are good and useful, while leaving others to round out the company: let him rejoice that some exist, let him regard with forbearance the existence of others.

6 In this community—where crowds in ceaseless motion on the broadest streets get jammed whenever an obstacle slows their torrential flow, where seats are in demand in three theaters at the same time,[61] where all the produce of farms throughout the world is consumed—imagine what a great and lonely desolation there would be if there remained only the fraction a strict judge might acquit. **(2)** How rare is the presiding judge who would not be held liable under the very law that guides his inquiry? How rare is the blameless accuser? And probably no one is more resistant when it comes to granting pardon than one who has too often deserved to seek it. **(3)** We have all done wrong,[62] some in more serious ways, others more trivially, some from set purpose, others acting on random impulse or led astray by another's wickedness; some of us have stood by our good intentions with too little steadfastness and have lost our innocence unwillingly and reluctantly. And not only have we fallen short, but we will continue to fall short to the end of our days. **(4)** Even if someone has so thoroughly cleared his conscience that nothing can distract and deceive him henceforth, he still has arrived at innocence by doing wrong.[63]

7 Since I've mentioned the gods, I might best set down this model for a prince to imitate: let him wish to treat his fellow-citizens as he wishes the gods to treat him. Is it in our interest, then, for the powers above to be implacable when we do wrong and go astray, for their hostility to extend to our utter destruction? Indeed, what king will be safe; whose limbs would the soothsayers not gather?[64] **(2)** But if the gods, fair and easily appeased as they are, do not immediately punish misdeeds of the powerful with lightning blasts, how much fairer is it for the one human being set in charge of the rest to exercise his power mildly, and to ponder whether the state of the world is more attractive and pleasing to the eye when the sky is clear and the sun is shining or when repeated peals of thunder shake all creation and

lightning bolts blaze from every direction! Yet the calm and deliberate exercise of power has exactly the same appearance as a clear and brilliant sky. **(3)** Royal rule, when it's cruel, is plunged in murk and shadows; people on every side tremble and start at sudden sounds, and not even the one who causes all the alarm is left unshaken.

One can more easily forgive ordinary people who are implacable in pursuing vengeance: they can suffer real harm; their pain comes from actual wrongs; they are furthermore afraid of being despised; and they appear weak, not clement, when they don't return the favor to people who harm them. But the person who has vengeance at his beck and call can be sure he'll be praised as gentle if he lets an opportunity for revenge go by. **(4)** People of humble station have more leeway when it comes to using force, bringing suits, rushing into quarrels, and indulging their anger; blows traded by equals do little harm. But for a king, even raising his voice to use intemperate language is at odds with his majesty.

8 Do you think it's oppressive for kings to be stripped of the freedom to speak their minds, something even the lowliest have? "That's slavery," you say, "not supreme authority." Do you mean you don't find that authority of yours to be *noble* slavery?[65] The situation of those who remain hidden in the crowd is different: their virtues wage a long struggle to be seen, their vices are cloaked in shadows. But the words and deeds of people in your position make the rounds in gossip: that's why no one has to be more careful of their reputation than those whose names will be on everyone's lips, whatever sort of name they've deserved. **(2)** How many things are denied to you that are permitted to us through your favor! I can amble along, alone and unafraid, in any part of the city I please, though no companion attends me and there is no weapon in my home, none at my side; you must live under arms even in that peace which you provide. You cannot stray from your lot in life: it keeps you under siege and follows along with a grand entourage wherever you go. **(3)** That's the slavery of supreme majesty: it cannot be diminished, and that's[66] the necessity you share with the gods. They, too, are held fast in heaven, and it's no more granted to them to come down from on high[67] than it is safe for you to do so: you are planted immovably on your eminence. **(4)** Few are aware of the movements of men like me; we're allowed to go out and come back and change our clothes without the people

at large noticing; you can no more hide than can the sun.[68] A great light surrounds you and draws everyone's glances. You think you just go out? You *rise*. **(5)** You cannot speak without nations throughout the world hearing what you say; you cannot become angry without making the world tremble, for you cannot dash anyone to the ground without causing everything in the vicinity to shake. Just as lightning bolts endanger few but frighten all, so punishments meted out by the mighty spread terror more widely than harm, not without reason: when a person is all-powerful, the concern is not how much he has done but how much he might do.

(6) Now add this consideration: whereas putting up with slights they've received makes ordinary people more liable to receive further slights,[69] kings derive security more reliably from gentleness, because frequent punishment represses the hatred of a few but spurs the hatred of all. **(7)** The wish to rage about should cease *before* there ceases to be cause for rage. Otherwise, just as trees that have been pruned send forth the most branches, and many kinds of plants are cut back so that they'll sprout more thickly, so a king's cruelty swells his enemy's ranks by destroying them: for every one who's killed, there are parents and children and kinsmen and friends to take his place.

9 I want to persuade you of this truth with an example from your own family. The deified Augustus was a mild prince,[70] if one commences the reckoning with his principate, though he did, to be sure, take up arms in the calamity of the Republic in which all shared.[71] By the time he was your age, having turned eighteen, he had already stabbed friends in the heart, already tried to ambush Mark Antony when he was consul, and already become a party to the proscriptions.[72] **(2)** But by the time he turned forty, when he was spending time in Gaul, he received evidence that Lucius Cinna, a man of no great intelligence, was plotting against him:[73] the where, the when, and the how of the attack were spelled out by one of the conspirators. **(3)** He decided to take vengeance on Cinna and ordered his privy council to be summoned, then spent an uneasy night reflecting on the fact that he had to condemn a young man of notable family who was thoroughly decent, save for this one incident, and a grandson of Gnaeus Pompey. The man to whom Mark Antony had dictated the edict for the proscriptions over dinner now could not kill one lone man. **(4)** With a groan he began to muse out loud, his words in

conflict with themselves. "What am I to do, then? Am I to let my assassin stroll about without a care while I'm wracked by anxiety? Will he not be punished, when he has undertaken not just to kill me but to offer me up as a blood sacrifice"—for Cinna had decided to attack Augustus when he was sacrificing—"after I've survived attacks in so many civil wars, so many naval and ground skirmishes, and brought peace on land and sea?" **(5)** But then again, after falling silent, he began to speak much more loudly and in anger, more at himself than at Cinna: "Why live, if so many have an interest in your dying? What end will there be to punishment and to bloodshed? My head is a target for young men of high birth, who sharpen their swords for the attack: life is not worth so great a price, if so much destruction is required to prevent my own destruction." **(6)** At last his wife, Livia,[74] interrupted him and said: "Will you take a woman's advice? Do what doctors do when the usual prescriptions have no effect: try the opposite remedies. Strictness has gotten you nowhere: Lepidus followed Salvidienus, Murena followed Lepidus, Caepio followed Murena, Egnatius followed Caepio—to say nothing of others whose effrontery I am ashamed to mention.[75] Now try and see how far clemency gets you: forgive Lucius Cinna. He's been caught and now can do you no harm, though he can do your reputation some good." **(7)** Delighted that he'd found a counselor, Augustus thanked his wife heartily, ordered that the meeting of his privy council be cancelled, and summoned Cinna all by himself. Dismissing everyone else from his chamber and ordering that another chair be provided for Cinna, he said: "I ask, first of all, that you not interrupt me while I'm speaking or exclaim in the midst of my comments; you'll be given all the time you want to speak. **(8)** Cinna, though I found you in the camp of my enemies—an enemy born, not made—I let you live and keep your family estate. Today you are so prosperous and wealthy that the victors envy the vanquished. I passed over many whose fathers fought by my side to give you the priesthood you sought. But though I deserved your gratitude, you undertook to kill me." **(9)** At this Cinna cried out that he was far from being so crazy, but Augustus said: "You're not keeping your promise, Cinna: we had agreed that you wouldn't interrupt. As I said, you are making ready to kill me," and he specified the place, his companions in the plot, the day, the arrangement of the ambush, and the person entrusted with the weapon.

(10) And when he saw that Cinna was thunderstruck and silent, now not because of their agreement but from full awareness of what he'd done, Augustus said: "What's your aim in doing this? Do you mean to be prince yourself? My God, the Roman people are in a bad way if I'm the only thing between you and supreme authority! You can't protect your own household: just recently you were defeated in a private suit, brought down by a freedman's influence.[76] Really, nothing could be easier, you suppose,[77] than to raise a hue and cry against Caesar! Look: if I'm the only obstacle to your hopes, will Paulus and Fabius Maximus and men like Cossus and Servilius[78] put up with you—yes, and the whole great troop of notable men, not the ones who offer nothing but a name, but those who bring honor to their ancestors?"[79]

(**11**) Not to take up a lion's share of this book by repeating everything he said (for it's well known that he spoke for more than two hours, drawing out in this way the sole penalty with which he was going to rest content): "I give you your life, Cinna," Augustus said, "for the second time, formerly as my enemy under arms, now as a conspirator and parricide. From this day let our friendship commence, and let us compete to see who acts in better faith—I as your savior, or you as my debtor." **(12)** After this Augustus actually gave him a consulship, reproaching him for not having dared to ask. He had Cinna as his dearest and most loyal friend and was his sole heir.[80] Augustus was never again the object of a conspiracy.

10 Your great-great-grandfather[81] forgave those he conquered; if he hadn't, whom would he have ruled? From his opponents' camp he drafted Sallust and men like Cocceius and Dellius and the whole cadre of his closest associates;[82] soon he chalked up to his clemency's account men like Domitius, Messala, Asinius, Cicero—in fact, all the first flower of the community.[83] As for Lepidus himself—how long he let him do his dying![84] For many years he let Lepidus hold onto the honors proper to the community's leading citizen and did not allow the position of chief priest to be transferred to himself until the other was dead: he wanted it to be called an honor, not a trophy. **(2)** His clemency brought him safety and peace of mind and caused people to regard him with grateful favor, though he had set a master's hand upon the neck of the Roman people, who had not yet been brought under a ruler's control; it's clemency that even to-

day makes him renowned, something that few living princes enjoy.[85] **(3)** We believe him to be a god, but not as though we've been ordered to do so;[86] we acknowledge that Augustus was a good prince worthy of his father's name just because he did not requite with cruelty the insults he suffered (princes tend to be touchier about insults than about injuries), because he laughed at scabrous remarks made about him,[87] because when he inflicted punishments he let it be seen that he felt them himself, and because he was so far from killing the men he condemned for adultery with his daughter that he gave them letters of transit so that they would be safer when he sent them away.[88] **(4)** This is the essence of forgiveness: not just to give but to guarantee safety, when you know that many men, angry on your behalf, will be ready to please you by shedding another man's blood.

11 This was Augustus' behavior in old age, or close to it; in his early years, when he was hot-headed and given to blazing rages, he did many things he later looked back on reluctantly. No one will dare to compare the deified Augustus with *your* gentleness, even if Augustus' advanced old age be set against your youth. Yes, he was restrained and clement—but of course that was after the sea at Actium had been stained with Roman blood, after his own fleet and his enemy's had been wrecked in Sicily, after the Perusine War and the proscriptions.[89] **(2)** *I* don't call exhausted cruelty "clemency." This, Caesar, is true clemency—to be without blemish, never to have spilled a fellow-citizen's blood—the sort that *you* display, which does not start from regret for past savagery.[90] In a position of supreme power the truest self-restraint, and the yearning to bind all humankind to oneself,[91] come to this: to dull the edge of one's authority, *not* to see how much one can get away with in preying upon one's fellow-citizens out of some eager passion or rash folly, or because one has been corrupted by the precedent set by previous princes. **(3)** You, Caesar, have kept the community free of bloodshed, and this accomplishment—the subject of your great-spirited boast that you have let not one drop of human blood in all the world—is all the more grand and admirable because the sword of authority has never before been entrusted to anyone at an earlier stage in his life.

(4) Clemency, then, not only ennobles men, it makes them safer; it is at one and the same time an adornment of supreme power and its surest security. For why else do kings reach old age and bequeath

their kingdoms to their sons and grandsons, while the power of tyrants is loathsome and short-lived? What difference is there between a tyrant and king (for their fortune looks the same, and they both have equal license), save that tyrants indulge in violence as a matter of pleasure[92] whereas kings do so only for some necessary reason?

12 "What, then," you might object, "don't kings also customarily kill people?" Yes, but only as often as the common good urges; savagery is close to tyrants' hearts. A tyrant differs from a king in his behavior, not his title:[93] Dionysius the elder can rightly and deservedly be preferred to many kings and Lucius Sulla—well, what prevents him from being called a tyrant, given that he stopped his killing only when he ran out of enemies?[94] **(2)** Yes, he resigned his dictatorship and put on an ordinary citizen's toga; yet what tyrant ever drank human blood as greedily as he? Seven thousand Roman citizens he ordered to be slaughtered, and as he sat nearby in the temple of Bellona,[95] hearing the cries and groans of so many thousands coming under the sword, he said to a terrified Senate: "Let's attend to the business at hand, conscript fathers! A handful of traitors are being killed on my order." **(3)** This was no lie: to Sulla they did seem a handful. But we'll come back to Sulla soon,[96] when we address the question of how one should deal in anger with enemies, at least in the event that one's fellow citizens break loose from the body politic and pass into that category. Meanwhile, to return to the point I was making: it's because of clemency that there's a big difference between a king and a tyrant. Surrounded by weapons though both of them are, one has weapons to safeguard the peace, the other so he can use great fear to restrain great hatred; he cannot look with nonchalance at the very hands to which he has entrusted the weapons. **(4)** The tyrant is caught in a vicious cycle: given that he's hated because he's feared, he wants to be feared because he's hated. And so he has recourse to that loathsome verse,[97] which has ruined many—"Let them hate, provided they fear"—though he's unaware of the ravening fury that arises when hatred has grown beyond all measure. For fear, when it's moderated,[98] keeps our thoughts in check, whereas fear that's constant, sharp, and desperately threatening rouses supine minds to recklessness and urges them to dare and do all. **(5)** Thus a line hung with feathers[99] keeps wild animals contained, but when an armed horseman advances on them from behind, they'll try to flee

and trample down the very "fright" that they had fled. Courage is sharpest when it's forged by the most dire necessity. Fear should leave some sense of security and offer a prospect much more of hope than of peril. Otherwise, if he who acquiesces fears equivalent penalties, it's actually a relief to rush into danger and throw away one's life as though it were another's.

13 When a king is calm and tranquil his auxiliary forces are loyal, inasmuch as he's using them for the general well-being, and the regular soldier, eager for glory, gladly endures every task as though he were protecting a parent, for he sees that he's contributing to the people's peace of mind. But when a king is harsh and bloodthirsty, his own bodyguard cannot help but feel oppressed. **(2)** No one can have good servants whose intentions are good and loyal when he uses them as instruments of torture, like the rack or implements designed to kill, or when he treats them like beasts, throwing human beings to them. No defendant is more miserable and anxious than such a man: he fears gods and men as witnesses and avengers of his deeds, yet he reaches the point where he's not free to change his behavior. For among all of cruelty's other bad features, this is surely the worst: you can't retrace your steps for the better but have got to keep at it, using fresh crimes to ward off the consequences of your old ones. Yet what could be unhappier than the man who now *must* be evil? **(3)** What a pitiable wretch—in his own eyes, at any rate! For it would be unspeakable for anyone else to pity a man who uses murder and robbery as instruments of his power, who must regard everything with suspicion, at home and abroad, taking refuge in arms because he fears arms, trusting neither in friends' loyalty nor childrens' devotion. When he has looked around at what he has done and what he intends to do and has laid bare a conscience full of crimes and torture, he often fears death but more often hopes for it, being more loathsome in his own eyes than he is to those who serve him. **(4)** Quite the opposite is the man who makes everything the object of his concern, watching over some things more, others less, but nurturing every element of the commonwealth as though it were part of himself.[100] Inclined to the gentler course, showing, even when punishment is called for, how unwillingly he has recourse to that harsh remedy, he knows no wild or hostile thoughts but exercises his power calmly and for the good, desiring that his fellow citizens approve his commands.

He thinks himself fortunate beyond measure if he succeeds in making his good fortune the common possession of all: affable, approachable, and amiable in his expression (this especially wins nations over), favorably inclined to reasonable requests, nor yet harshly opposed even to the unreasonable, he is loved, defended, and cherished by the entire community. **(5)** People speak of him in private just as they do to his face; they want to raise children, and the barrenness once inflicted on us by the community's woes is withdrawn;[101] every man is sure that his children will be grateful to him for showing them such an age. Made safe by his own kindness, this prince needs no guards: his arms are simply for display.

14 What, then, is his duty? The same as that of good fathers, who are accustomed to reprove their children sometimes gently, sometimes menacingly, and now and again to admonish them even with blows. No sane man disinherits a son at his first offense, does he? No, he doesn't take up the pen to draft that decree save when grievous and repeated injuries have overcome his patience, or when the behavior he fears[102] is worse than the behavior he condemns. Before it comes to that, he tries many ways to recall a wavering character from its present, regrettable condition; the final steps are taken when hope is lost. No one reaches the point of exacting punishment unless he has tried all possible cures.[103] **(2)** The things a father should do should also be done by a prince, whom we call "Father of the Fatherland"[104] for reasons having nothing to do with empty flattery. For all other such titles are bestowed honorifically: we have called men "the Great" and "the Fortunate" and "the August,"[105] and have heaped up all possible labels for showy magnificence.[106] But we have proclaimed a man "Father of the Fatherland" so that he might recognize that he has been granted a father's power,[107] which considers in the most finely balanced way what is good for the children and puts its own interests after theirs**. (3)** Let a father be slow to amputate his own limbs;[108] let him even, once he has done it, wish them put back in place; and when after long delay he does it, let him groan. For when a person is quick to condemn, it is almost as though he is glad to condemn; to punish too much is almost to punish unjustly.[109]

15 I recall the case of Tricho, a Roman knight, whom the people attacked with styluses[110] in the forum because he had flogged his son

to death: the authority of Augustus Caesar barely rescued him from the outrage of fathers and sons alike. **(2)** When Tarius[111] discovered that his son was planning to kill him and condemned him in a trial held in his own household, everyone looked up to him because he was content to sentence the young man to exile—and a pampered exile at that, in Massilia,[112] where he provided him with the same annual allowance he used to give him before his disgrace. Because of this generous gesture, everyone in Rome—where even scoundrels never lack an advocate—believed that the young man had been justly condemned, seeing that a father incapable of hating him had been able to condemn him.

(3) This very same episode also provides a model of the good prince for you to compare with the good father. When Tarius was going to conduct the trial he asked Caesar Augustus to sit on his advisory council; and so Augustus came to a private home and sat at Tarius's side as a counselor—he did *not* say, "No, no, let him come to *my* home," for in that case the trial would have been Caesar's, not the father's. **(4)** When the case had been heard and the evidence thoroughly examined—both the points that the young man made on his own behalf and those that tended to convict him—Augustus asked that each man write down his own judgment, lest everyone make Caesar's verdict his own.[113] Then, before the tablets were opened, he took an oath that he had no intention of accepting an inheritance from Tarius, who was a wealthy man.[114] **(5)** Someone will say, "*That* was a petty concern, not wanting to seem to make room for himself by voting to condemn the son." Quite the opposite, I think: any of us ordinary folk should have had sufficient confidence in his own clear conscience to withstand malicious talk, but princes must make many concessions even to gossip. He swore that he would not accept an inheritance. **(6)** And indeed on the same day Tarius lost two heirs,[115] but Caesar secured his own freedom of judgment; and after he proved that his own strictness was not self-interested—a prince's constant concern—he said that the son should be banished, the location to be left to the father's discretion. **(7)** Mindful not of the charge he was judging but of the man he was advising, he decreed neither the sack nor snakes[116] nor a prison cell but made plain that a father should be content with the mildest punishment in the case of

a young son driven to a crime in which he had shown himself, by his timid conduct, only one step removed from innocence: he should be removed from the city and from his father's sight.

16 Wise man, whom fathers would worthily consult and worthily make an heir alongside their innocent children! This is the sort of clemency worthy of a prince: wherever he goes, he makes all gentler. For a king, no one is of so little account that his death goes unfelt: whatever sort of person he is, he is part of the dominion. **(2)** Let us look to lesser forms of authority to find a model for great authority. There is not just one kind of command: a prince commands his citizens, a father his children, a teacher his pupils, a military tribune or centurion the common soldiers. **(3)** A man who disciplines his children with constant beatings for even the least offenses will seem the worst sort of father, right? Or again, which teacher is more worthy of the studies befitting free men:[117] the one who savages his students if their memory fails or their eye clumsily falters when reading, or the one who prefers to correct and teach with admonitions that bring a blush to the students' cheeks? Show me a brutal tribune or centurion, and I'll show you one who makes soldiers desert—pardonably. **(4)** It's not reasonable, is it, to be more harshly overbearing in giving an order to a person than to an animal incapable of speech? And yet an experienced trainer doesn't frighten a horse with frequent blows, for it will become skittish and stubborn unless you soothe it by stroking it. **(5)** The same is true of a hunter who uses well-trained dogs to track, flush, and chase his prey: he doesn't keep threatening them (that dulls their spirits and, by cowing them, makes them inferior to their breeding), nor does he grant them license to go wandering off hither and yon. To these examples you can add the handlers of the slower beasts of burden, which—for all that they're born to woe and abuse—are driven by excessive cruelty to refuse the yoke.

17 No animal is more cross-grained or requires more skillful handling than a human being, and none stands in greater need of forbearance. For what could be more foolish than to blush at becoming angry at mules and dogs, but to want to subject one human being to another on the worst possible terms? We treat diseases and don't become angry, and yet this is a disease of the mind, requiring not just gentle treatment but also a healer who is in no way hostile to the patient.[118] **(2)** It's the mark of a bad physician to despair of finding a

cure: the person entrusted with the well-being of all will have to take the same approach in the case of those whose mind is affected, not quickly giving up hope and declaring that the symptoms are fatal. Rather, he should struggle against the faults and resist them, confronting some people with their disease, deceiving others by using a gentle regimen, intending to heal them more quickly and effectively with remedies that work undetected. The prince should be anxious not only to restore health but also to leave no disfiguring scars. **(3)** A king gains no glory by punishing brutally (who could doubt that?) but instead gains the greatest glory if he keeps his own power in check, saves many from another's anger, and offers up no one as a victim to his own.

18 Giving orders to slaves in a temperate fashion deserves praise.[119] Even in the case of chattel, you must consider not how much you can get away with making them suffer, but how much license you are given by the nature of morality and fairness, which bids you spare even captives and those you've purchased. When people are free then, freeborn and honorable, is it not even more just for you to spare them—treating them not as chattel, that is, abusively, but as persons of lower rank who have been handed over to you as wards, not slaves. **(2)** Slaves are allowed to take refuge at a statue;[120] though it is permitted to do anything and everything to a slave, the common rights of living creatures say that some things cannot be done to a human being.[121] Who did not hate Vedius Pollio more keenly than his slaves did, for fattening his morays on human blood and ordering those who had given some offense to be thrown into a fish pond filled with eels?[122] The man deserved to die a thousand times, whether for feeding slaves to morays intended to feed him in turn, or for raising eels only with the aim of feeding them this way. **(3)** Just as cruel masters are pointed out as objects of hate and loathing throughout the entire community, so both the wrongs and the infamy of kings get wider circulation, and hatred for them gets passed on to posterity: how much better not to be born than to be counted among those born to the people's misfortune!

19 No one will be able to imagine anything more becoming to a ruler than clemency, whatever sort of ruler he is and on whatever terms he is put in charge of others. Surely we will admit that clemency is all the finer and more magnificent the grander the power

in which it excels—a power that cannot rightly be harmful if it is ordered according to nature's law.[123] **(2)** For a king is a contrivance of nature: a point that can be appreciated from other animals, and especially from bees.[124] Their king has the most spacious chamber, located in the hive's safest place, the center, and he is also free from labor himself while supervising the labor of others. Once the king has been lost, the whole community falls apart: they never put up with more than one ruler,[125] but seek to find in battle the one who is superior. Furthermore, the king is conspicuous in his physical form, differing from the rest in size and splendor. **(3)** Yet he is distinguished by this trait above all: whereas bees are extremely irascible and (given their physical capacities) extremely pugnacious, leaving their stingers behind in their wound, the king has no stinger;[126] for nature—not wanting him to be fierce and seek retribution that would come at a high cost—took his weapon away and left his anger unarmed. This is a tremendous lesson for great kings: for it's nature's way to take pains in its tiny creations,[127] and by working on the smallest scale provide models for the magnificent.[128]

(**4**) We should be ashamed not to imitate the behavior of these small creatures, since the human mind ought to be all the more temperate given its greater power to do harm. Indeed, I wish that the same principle applied to humankind as to bees, so that anger's force would be broken along with its weapon and it would not be possible to inflict pain more than once, or to rely on another to enforce our hatred! For rage would be more easily exhausted if it sought satisfaction only through its own efforts and risked death in spending its strength. **(5)** But even as things are, rage's course is not safe: it cannot help but feel fear to the same extent as it seeks to frighten others,[129] it cannot help but keep a wary eye on every hand, think it's being attacked even when it's not being stalked, and have not a second's freedom from dread. Does anyone bear to live this sort of life, when it's possible to wield lawful power harmlessly, and therefore securely, in a way that brings health and joy on every side? It's a mistake to think that a king is safe where nothing is safe from the king: for security to be arranged, each side must undertake to make the other safe. **(6)** There's no need to build up lofty citadels or fortify steep hills or quarry out the sides of mountains, to wall oneself in with a series of towers and bulwarks: clemency guarantees that a king will be

safe out in the open. The love of his citizens is his one impregnable fortification.

(7) What is finer than to live with everyone wishing you life, making vows for your well-being of their own free will? Or for people to be stirred by fear, not hope, if your health slightly falters? Or for no one to hold anything so precious that he would not willingly trade it for his protector's well-being? **(8)** Surely the man allotted . . . has shown,[130] through constant tokens of his goodness, that the commonwealth does not belong to him, but he belongs to the commonwealth. Who would dare devise some peril for such a man? Who, if he could, would not want to deflect even a stroke of bad luck from the man under whom justice, peace, sexual propriety, security, and self-respect all flourish? A prosperous community enjoys an abundant supply of all goods and looks upon its ruler with the same thought in mind that we would have, should the immortal gods make us capable of seeing them, in looking upon them with reverence and honor. **(9)** What then? Does he not occupy a place closest to the gods who behaves in accordance with their nature, using his power kindly, generously, and for our betterment? This is the appropriate goal and the appropriate model: so to be considered the greatest just insofar as you are considered the best.

20 There are usually two reasons for a prince to punish: if he is avenging himself, or if he is avenging another. I shall address the former case first,[131] for it's more difficult to control oneself when retribution satisfies a personal grievance than when it's making an edifying point. **(2)** It's superfluous here to warn a prince against being too credulous and to urge him to search out the truth,[132] to support innocence warmly and conspicuously, and to be aware that the defendant's interests are at stake no less than the judge's;[133] for such advice is relevant to justice, not clemency. I do now urge him to keep a firm grip on his thoughts when he has been flagrantly offended and to punish only if he can do so prudently; otherwise he should restrain himself and be far more open to entreaty where his own slights are concerned than when another has been wronged. **(3)** For just as the great-spririted man[134] is not generous at another's expense but gives what he gives at some cost to himself, so I will apply the term "clement" not to the man who's lenient where another's distress is at issue, but to one who does not pounce when he himself is goaded,

who knows that great-spiritedness entails tolerating slights from a position of supreme power and that nothing is more glorious than a prince who has been offended with impunity.

21 Retribution usually provides either comfort to the injured party or security for the future.[135] A prince's lot in life is too grand to require comfort, his power too obvious to seek confirmation in another man's pain. This comment pertains to attacks and outrages launched by inferiors; for if he sees that those who were once his peers are now beneath him, that is vindication enough. Even a slave can kill a king, and so can a snake, or an arrow. But to preserve life—that can only be done by one who is greater than the man he saves. **(2)** And so one with the power to give life and take it away ought to use the gods' great gift in a high-minded way. This is especially true in the case of men who he knows once enjoyed a lofty station equal to his own:[136] just by gaining judgment over them, he has enjoyed perfect vengeance and accomplished all that true punishment requires. For owing your life to someone is tantamount to losing it: when anyone has been cast down from an eminence to grovel at his enemy's feet and has awaited the other's verdict on his life and realm, his living brings glory to his savior, who gains greater renown by leaving the other unharmed than if he wiped him from the face of the earth. He remains a perpetual showpiece of the other's virtue, whereas he would have passed by in a moment had he been led in triumph. **(3)** Indeed, if the other's kingdom could safely be left in his charge, and if he could be restored to the eminence from which he had fallen, the man content to take nothing but glory from a vanquished king reaps a huge dividend of praise. This amounts to triumphing over one's own victory and testifying that one found the conquered to possess nothing worthy of the conqueror. **(4)** With fellow citizens both ignoble and lowly the prince should deal more moderately, the more trivial a matter it is to afflict them: some you should gladly spare, others it should disgust you to chastise—you should draw back your hand as you do in the case of small creatures that foul you if you crush them. But in the case of those whose punishment or preservation the whole community regards with interest, you should use the opportunity for a notable act of clemency.

22 Let's move along to other people's injuries, in requiting which the law pursues these three goals, which the prince also ought to

pursue: either to correct the person punished, or to improve everyone else by punishing him, or to allow everyone else to live more securely once the malefactors have been removed from their midst. You will more easily correct the wrongdoer himself with a lesser penalty: a person conducts his life more carefully when he is left something whole and unsullied, whereas no one is chary of a self-respect he has utterly lost. Having nothing that punishment can affect is a kind of impunity. **(2)** However, a sparing use of punishment does more to correct a community's habits, for a multitude of wrongdoers makes wrongdoing a matter of habit; condemnations that come thick and fast relieve the stigma of punishment, and strictness, when unrelieved, loses its moral authority, which is its most important healing power. **(3)** The prince establishes good practices for the community, and clears away vices, if he is patient with the latter—not in an approving manner but as one who undertakes their chastisement unwillingly and with great anguish.[137] A ruler's clemency makes men blush to do wrong: punishment seems much more grievous when ordained by a mild-mannered man.

23 You'll see, moreover, that the crimes commonly punished are the ones commonly committed. Your father[138] sewed more men up in sacks in five years than we've heard of in all past ages combined: children were much less bold about violating the ultimate taboo as long as there was no law to cover the crime.[139] The men of the very distant past, who were supremely farsighted and very canny about the nature of things, preferred to overlook the crime as though it were unthinkable and beyond all daring, rather than punish it and thereby show that it could be committed: thus parricides came into existence along with the law, as the punishment drew their attention to the deed. Filial devotion reached its nadir once we saw more sacks than crosses.[140] **(2)** In a community where people are rarely punished, innocence comes to enjoy general support and is kindly regarded as a common good. Provided that a community thinks itself innocent, it will be; it will be more indignant at those who depart from the general standard of goodness if it sees that they are few. It's risky, believe me, to let a community see how many more wicked men there are. **[24]** It was once upon a time proposed in the Senate that slaves should be distinguished from free men by their dress:[141] it then became apparent how much danger would threaten if our slaves began

to count us. Be sure that we would have to fear the same outcome if none received forgiveness: it would quickly become apparent how preponderant the worse segment of the community was. Having many occasions for punishment is no less a disgrace for a prince than many deaths are for a doctor. People better obey someone who gives his orders in a milder manner. **(2)** The human mind is stubborn by nature, struggling against anything that opposes it or puts an obstacle in its way, and it follows on its own more readily than it is led; just as noble thoroughbred horses are better guided with a loose rein, so a willing innocence follows clemency with an impulse all its own, and the community thinks it worth preserving for its own good. *This* is the path on which we make more progress.

25 Cruelty is the least human sort of evil and unworthy of the gentle mind of man;[142] it's a bestial sort of madness to take delight in bloody wounds, casting off one's humanity to assume the character of some woodland creature. Tell me, Alexander, what difference does it make whether you throw Lysimachus to a lion or rend him with your teeth yourself?[143] The maw, the ferocity are *yours*. Oh, how you wish that you, not the lion, had the claws, that you had the gaping jaws capable of devouring men! We do not demand that your dreadful hand—known to intimates as the surest source of their destruction[144]—be anyone's savior, or that your savage thoughts—known to nations as an insatiable evil—rest content this side of bloody slaughter: we can now call it "clemency" if you give a human executioner the job of killing your friend. **(2)** This is why savagery should be detested above all: it first goes beyond customary limits, then beyond all human limits, in searching out new forms of punishment, in calling on special talents to dream up the means of multiplying and prolonging pain, in taking pleasure in human misery. In the end, its diseased and loathsome thoughts are reduced to utter insanity: cruelty is converted into pleasure, committing murder becomes an actual delight.[145] **(3)** A proper disgust, displays of hatred,[146] poison, the sword dog the tracks of such a man: as many sources of peril pursue him as there are people he has imperiled. He's beset now by private plots, now by public upheaval. For a slight and ordinary source of destruction does not throw entire cities into an uproar: a madness that begins to rage at large and does not limit its targets gets shot down from every side. **(4)** Small snakes escape our notice and are not rounded

up with a community's forces, but when one exceeds its usual size and grows into a monster—poisoning wells with its spittle, roasting anything it breathes upon, and crushing everything in its path—siege engines take it on. Trivial evils can fool us, giving us the slip, but we go right out to meet them if they're massive. **(5)** In the same way, a single sick person doesn't seriously disturb even a household, but when a manifest plague is causing many deaths, the community raises an alarm and takes flight, as people shake their fists at the very gods. If one dwelling catches fire, the household and the neighbors douse it with water, but a huge blaze that has already swallowed many houses can be put out only by a sizeable part of the city.

26 When ordinary people have been cruel, even slaves have exacted vengeance, though they face certain death on the cross; whole nations and peoples have undertaken to destroy their tyrannical rulers, both when they've suffered and when suffering has been threatened. Sometimes tyrants' own guards have risen up and treated them treacherously, impiously, savagely, and in whatever other vicious way the tyrants trained them to behave. What else can a person expect from someone he has taught to be evil? Wickedness doesn't stay subservient for long, or misbehave only so far as it's ordered. **(2)** But suppose that cruelty is secure: what sort of realm does it enjoy? One that looks just like a city captured in war, where awful dread can be seen on every face: sorrow, trembling, confusion wherever you look, pleasures themselves regarded with fear, people going uneasily to banquets, where even the tipsy must anxiously guard their tongues, and to shows as well, where informers look for grounds to bring a charge.[147] Though the games are prepared at great expense, with regal opulence and a select cast of skilled performers, who could enjoy them in a prison?

(3) Good gods, what sort of wretched wickedness is that—killing, raging, delighting in the clank of chains, lopping off your fellow citizens' heads, spilling great gouts of blood wherever you go, putting others to terrified flight at the very sight of you?[148] How is that different from the sort of life we'd have if lions and bears were our rulers, if snakes and all the most harmful animals were given dominion over us? **(4)** Those creatures bereft of reason, indicted and condemned by us on the charge of being "monsters," keep from harming their own.[149] Even among wild animals, being of the same species brings

security, whereas the frenzy of human savages is not restrained from attacking even close connections: it treats its own and strangers indifferently, <becoming more aroused> the longer it keeps at it.[150] Then it progresses from the murder of individuals to the destruction of whole tribes, reckoning it a show of power to set fire to dwellings and plough under ancient cities. It believes it hasn't done a commander's job by ordering one or two murders, but judges that it has been reduced to the rank of common soldier if a whole gaggle of wretches doesn't await the executioner's blow all at once.[151]

(5) True happiness lies in granting well-being to many, in summoning them back to life from death, and in earning a civic garland through clemency.[152] No decoration is finer and more worthy of a prince's eminence than that garland, gained for saving the lives of fellow-citizens—not arms stripped from conquered enemies, not chariots stained with barbarians' blood, not spoils won in war. *This* is godlike power: to save people, whole flocks at a time, as your public service. Killing large numbers indiscriminately is the power of a conflagration or a collapsing building.

Book 2

1 I was moved to write about clemency, Nero Caesar, above all by one remark of yours, which I recall hearing with wonder when you said it, and recounting with wonder to others—a noble utterance, great-spirited and very gentle, which burst forth of a sudden, spontaneous and uncalculated, making plain how your goodness struggles with your high fortune. **(2)** Your praetorian prefect, Burrus,[153] an outstanding man born to serve you as prince, intended to punish two brigands and asked you to set down in writing whom you wished punished and how; after you postponed this duty several times, he pressed you to do it at last. When he had brought out the warrant and handed it to you—both of you reluctant—you cried out, "I wish I were illiterate!" **(3)** A statement worthy of being heard by all the peoples who inhabit our dominion, all who live just beyond our borders and see their freedom threatened, and all who rise up against it with strength and courage! A statement that should be published before all human assemblies and claim the sworn allegiance of foreign kings and princes! A statement worthy of humankind's innate innocence, by which the fabled Golden Age could be restored![154] **(4)** Now surely

it were fitting to resolve on good and right and to expel the lust for others' goods—the source of all anguish—fitting, too, for moral wholeness to be restored, along with good faith and temperance, and for the vices that have long held wrongful sway to yield at last to a happy and unsullied age.

2 That this will largely come to pass, Caesar, we hope with joyful confidence. The mildness of your spirit will be handed on and spread through the whole framework of our dominion,[155] and all things will be modeled on your likeness. Good health starts from the head: all else is energetic and alert, or drooping in exhaustion, to the degree that the mind is full of life or enfeebled. There will be fellow citizens, there will be allies worthy of this goodness, and right conduct will be restored to all the world: nowhere will you have to raise your hand to chastise.

(2) Allow me to linger a bit on this statement of yours, not as mere flattery for your ears (that's not my way; I'd rather offend by telling the truth than give pleasure as a toady). What, then, is my aim? Beyond wanting you to become as familiar as possible with your own good deeds and sayings, so you might come to do deliberately what you now do out of innate impulse, I am reflecting on this point: many great-seeming but abhorrent utterances have made their way among men and become renowned by being on everyone's lips, like the saying "Let them hate, provided they fear," and a Greek verse like it, spoken by a character who says, "After I am dead, may the earth be confounded by fire," and other things of this sort.[156] **(3)** Somehow or other human wits have more successfully expressed forceful and passionate sentiments when the subject matter is monstrous and hateful; I've yet to hear a good and gentle soul come up with a spirited saying.[157] What's the upshot, then? That you must at some point—albeit rarely, unwillingly, and very hesitantly—write something that makes you hate the fact that you *can* write; you must do it as you do, with much delay and many postponements.

3 And lest perchance the fair-seeming name of clemency at times deceive us and lead us in the opposite direction, let's see what clemency is, what its characteristics, and where to draw the distinctions concerning it.

Clemency is "the mind's moderation when it has the power to take revenge," or "mildness in a superior toward an inferior in deter-

mining punishment." It's safer to advance several definitions, lest a single definition fall short of covering the matter and, so to speak, forfeit the case.[158] Thus it can also be termed "the mind's inclination toward mildness in exacting punishment." **(2)** The following definition will not cover every case, but it most closely approximates the truth, to wit: "Clemency is moderation that diminishes a due and deserved punishment to some degree." Expect an outcry: "No virtue does for anyone less than what is due!"[159] Yet everyone understands that clemency is that which reins itself in short of what could deservedly be ordained.

4 The ignorant suppose that strictness is clemency's opposite, but no virtue is the opposite of any other. What, then, is the opposite of clemency? Cruelty, which is nothing other than a harshness of mind in exacting punishment. "But some people," one will object, "do not exact punishment and yet are cruel—for example, those who kill strangers who happen to cross their paths, not for gain but just for the sake of killing, and indeed are not content with killing but torture them, like the notorious Busiris and Procustes,[160] and pirates who beat their captives and burn them alive." **(2)** True, that seems to be cruelty; but because it's not seeking vengeance (for it has suffered no harm) and is not angry at some wrongdoer (for no crime preceded), it falls outside our definition, which was limited to intemperance of mind in exacting punishment. We can say that this other behavior is not cruelty but bestiality,[161] which takes pleasure in savagery, or we can call it insanity; for there are various kinds of cruelty and none more reliably diagnosed than the one that reaches the point of killing people and tearing them to pieces. **(3)** I will call "cruel," then, those who have grounds for punishing but set no limit on the punishment, as in the case of Phalaris,[162] who reportedly exercised his savagery not against innocent men, to be sure, but beyond any human limit and any limit that one could approve. We can avoid quibbling and use this definition: let cruelty be the mind's inclination toward too great harshness. Clemency rebuffs this quality and compels it to stay far off from itself; for it's with strictness that clemency is in accord.

(4) At this point it is relevant to ask what pity is; for most people praise it as a virtue and call someone prone to pity a good man. This too is a vice of the mind:[163] both vices, pity and cruelty, are close to clemency and strictness, and we must avoid them: <we lapse into

cruelty because it looks like strictness>,[164] while we lapse into pity because it looks like clemency. Erring in the direction of pity entails less risk, but those who fall away from the truth err equally in both cases.[165]

5 Just as religion cherishes the gods, then, whereas superstition wounds them, so all good men will display clemency and mildness but avoid pity; for it's the fault of a paltry spirit that collapses at the impression of other people's <woes>.[166] Accordingly, it's most familiar to all the worst people: old or foolish women, whom even the most noxious types move with their tears—they'd stage a prison break, given the chance. Pity looks only at the state a person is in, not its cause; clemency is in accord with reason.

(2) I know that the Stoics have a bad reputation among the ignorant for being too callous and therefore very unlikely to give good advice to kings and princes: they're blamed for asserting that the wise man does not feel pity and does not forgive.[167] Taken by itself, that assertion is invidious, for the Stoics seem to leave human error no hope, but instead refer all shortcomings directly to punishment. **(3)** And if that's how it is, then what wisdom is this, that bids people unlearn their humanity and keeps them from providing the mutual assistance that is the surest refuge from misfortune—why shouldn't it be in disrepute? No; in fact no philosophical school is kindlier and gentler, nor more loving of humankind and more attentive to our common good, to the degree that its very purpose is to be useful, bring assistance, and consider the interests not only of itself as a school but of all people, individually and collectively. **(4)** Pity is a distress caused by the impression of others' unhappiness, or a sadness brought on by the woes of others who one believes are suffering undeservedly. But distress does not befall the wise man,[168] whose mind is cheerful, nor can anything happen to him that would bring on distress. Furthermore, nothing is as becoming for a human being as a great spirit; but the same spirit cannot be at once both great and gloomy. **(5)** Gloominess blunts our thoughts, makes them downcast and pinched: this will not befall the wise man even in the midst of his own losses, but he will beat back any anger at his misfortune and cast it down, shattered, before him. He will always keep the same expression, calm and unshaken,[169] which he could not do if he made room for sadness.

6 Add to this the fact that the wise man is farsighted and has his plan of action at the ready; yet nothing clear and pure ever comes from something murky. Sadness is unsuited to seeing to the heart of things, to figuring out what's helpful, to avoiding risks, and to calculating what's fair. Therefore, the wise man will not commiserate, since that necessarily entails the mind's misery. **(2)** All the other things that those who feel pity want to do,[170] the wise man will do gladly and with mind uplifted: he will bring succor to another's tears, not join in them; he will give a hand to the shipwrecked, shelter to the exile, a coin to the needy—not the insulting sort of offering that most of those who want to appear compassionate just toss away, disgusted by those they help and afraid of being touched by them, but a coin given by one human being to another from a source they share.[171] He will release a son in answer to a mother's tears and bid his chains be undone, he will free the gladiator from his training,[172] he will bury even a criminal's corpse. But he will do all those things with a tranquil mind and unaltered expression. **(3)** The wise man, then, will not feel pity, but he will give aid and be useful, born as he was to assist his fellows and add to the common good, of which he will give each person a share. Even to wretches who are reprobates needing correction, he will make his own goodness available in due proportion,[173] but he will much more gladly assist those who are afflicted and in difficulty by chance. Whenever he can, he will stand in misfortune's way: for when will he rather use his strength and resources than in restoring what mischance has overthrown? Surely his expression will not be downcast, nor his mind either, at the sight of someone's shriveled leg or a person reduced to rags and bone, supporting his old age on a cane; but he will do good for all who are worthy and, like the gods, look with kindness on those in distress.

(**4**) Commiseration is misery's neighbor, whence it derives some of the same quality. Eyes that well up when another's are inflamed are weak, you can be sure—just as, by God, it's a sickness, not hilarity, that always makes one smile when others are smiling or open one's own mouth wide every time someone yawns.[174] Commiseration is a vice of minds too frightened of misery: for someone to demand it of a wise man is virtually to demand that he groan and wail at the deaths of strangers.[175]

7 A question: "But why will he not grant forgiveness?" Very well,[176]

let's now also determine what "pardon" is, and we'll then understand that a wise man ought not grant it. Pardon is the remission of a deserved punishment.[177] Why a wise man should not grant it can be explained at greater length by those who have that as their main objective; to treat the question briefly, as one encroaching (so to speak) on another's jurisdiction, I will say this. Forgiveness is granted to one who ought to be punished; a wise man, however, neither does anything he ought not do nor forgoes doing anything he ought to do. Accordingly, he does not remit a punishment that he ought to exact. **(2)** But what you want to gain from a pardon the wise man will grant you by a more honorable path: for he will spare you, take thought for your real interests, and set you straight; he'll do what he'd do were he forgiving you, but he'll not forgive you, because someone who forgives acknowledges that he has omitted to do something that ought to be done. He'll give one person only an admonition and not punish him, seeing that he's at a stage in life where he's not incorrigible; someone else, who's plainly distressed at the ill-will that his crime has incurred,[178] he will bid depart unscathed, because he was misled or because he slipped while tipsy; he will release enemies unharmed, sometimes even with words of praise, if they were summoned forth to war in an honorable cause, for the sake of loyalty or in defense of a treaty or their freedom. **(3)** All these actions are proper to clemency, not pardon. Clemency exercises freedom of judgment: it makes its determinations not according to a set formula but according to what is fair and good; it is free to acquit, and to assess the value of a suit at the amount it wishes. It does all of these things, not as though it were doing less than what is just, but as though the determination it reaches is the most just.[179] But to forgive is to forgo punishing one whom you judge ought to be punished, and pardon is the remission of a deserved punishment. Clemency accomplishes this first and foremost: it declares that those whom it lets go ought not have suffered anything else. It is more complete than pardon, and more honorable.

(4) In my opinion, the controversy involves a question of terminology, whereas the substance is surely a matter of agreement. The wise man will remit punishment in many cases, and he will preserve many whose character is insufficiently sound but capable of being made sound. He will imitate good farmers, who not only tend the

trees that grow straight and tall but also put props around those that have for some reason grown crooked, to straighten them, and cut others back, lest by branching out they become stunted; they fertilize some that are enfeebled by poor soil and give more sunlight to others that suffer from being overshadowed. So the wise man will perceive what character should be treated with which regimen and how those that are warped might be bent and straightened. * * *

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Notes

Abbreviations

FGrH *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, ed. F. Jacoby. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1957–.

FLP *The Fragmentary Latin Poets*, ed. E. Courtney. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

LS Long, A. A., and D. N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, vol. 1: *Translations of the Principal Sources, with Philosophical Commentary*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

OLD *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, ed. P. G. W. Glare. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982.

SVF *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta*, ed. J. von Arnim. 3 vols. Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1903–24.

TGrF *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, ed. B. Snell, R. Kannicht, S. Radt. 5 vols. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971–2004.

***On Clemency:* Introduction**

1. On the date, see 1.9.1n.; I set aside here the possibility that one other essay, *On the Brevity of Life*, was written earlier in 55 (see Griffin 1976, 401–7). On the plan of the work, see just below. On the place of Hellenistic "kingship theory" in the work's intellectual background, see especially Braund 2009, 24–30, in the introduction to a splendid new edition, with text, translation, and commentary, that appeared after the present translation was completed. Unless otherwise noted, all parenthetical references are to the translation of *On Clemency*.

2. The tale S. tells at 2.1–2 looks like a convenient fiction.

3. See 1.1.4, 10.3, 23.2nn.

4. Accession speech: Tacitus *Annals* 13.4.2 (Seneca's authorship: Cassius Dio 61.3.1). Pardon: Tacitus *Annals* 13.11.2.

5. Suetonius *Nero* 33.2–3, Tacitus *Annals* 13.15–17, Cassius Dio 61.7.4.

6. On the reflections of and on the principate in Seneca's writings, see esp. Griffin 1976, 202–21.

7. If Seneca did abandon it, for whatever reason, it presumably did not circulate until it was found among his papers after his death. As a secondary matter, we do not know whether the complete work would have comprised

three books, like *On Anger*, or whether the missing third section would simply have filled out the balance of Book 2.

8. More elaborate structural relations have been discovered in Book 1: see, e.g., Mortureux 1973, 69.

9. The difference between the rhetorical exuberance of Book 1 and the philosophical precision of Book 2 can be gauged from the fact that clemency in Book 1 is spoken of interchangeably with pity (1.1.4) and forgiveness (1.2.2, 9.6, 10.1, 4), the very "vices" from which it is distinguished in Book 2.

10. Griffin 2003 is the best brief overview. Also important and accessible are Griffin 1976, 133–71, and 2000, 535–45; Inwood 2005, 201–23; Konstan 2005; and Dowling 2006, all with references to earlier discussions.

11. See, respectively, Cicero *On Invention* 2.164 and *On Appropriate Actions* 1.88. On "great-spiritedness" (*magnitudo animi*), see *On Anger* 1.20.1n.

12. Great-spiritedness: 1.20.3, 2.1.1, cf. 2.5.4. Mildness and gentleness: 1.8.6, 9.1, 11.1, 13.4, 16.1, 22.3, 24.1, 2.1.1, 2.1, 5.1. Humaneness: see also 1.1.3, 3.2, 11.2, 13.4, and on the doctrine of "appropriation" that underlies this quality and Stoic social thought more generally, 1.13.4n., *On Anger* 2.31.7n.

13. For strictness and clemency, cf. 1.1.4 and esp. 2.4, with the anecdote of Tarius's son discussed below and Griffin 2003, 174.

14. Cf. 2.5.1: "Pity looks only at the state a person is in, not its cause; clemency is in accord with reason."

15. See *On Anger* 1.16.5n.

16. 2.7.3. All that said, it must be acknowledged that Seneca's account is deficient in at least one significant respect: though the wise man by definition would know how to gauge the degree of remission precisely in any given case, the rest of us need to be taught the principles to apply. But the extant text, at any rate, offers no such instruction (cf. 2.6.3n.)

17. On the avoidance of the "passions," see *On Anger* introduction, section 2.

18. On the impossibility of virtue and vice coexisting in the same mind, see *On Anger* 2.12.2. For the contrast between clemency and anger see, e.g., 1.5.4–5, 7.3–4, 11.1, 17.1, 19.4, *On Anger* 2.5.3, 13.2, 23.4; on clemency as the opposite of anger, see also Cicero *On Appropriate Actions* 1.88.

19. 2.3.1, quoted above. In Cicero's definition of *clementia* at *On Invention* 2.164—"clementia, per quam animi temere in odium alicuius †iniectionis [*vel* invectionis]† concitati comitate retinentur"—the corrupt word has since the sixteenth century commonly been emended to read *inferioris*, on the model of Seneca's definition ("clemency, by which minds that have been rashly roused to hatred of someone inferior are restrained by friendliness"). But it is not clear that the emendation is correct; given Seneca's particular focus in addressing Nero, it might actually introduce an anachronism. The point being made in the text is in any case not affected.

20. See the references gathered at Griffin 2003, 161, and the general thrust of the argument in Konstan 2005.

21. For these examples and others, see Griffin 2003, 165–67.

22. Tacitus *Annals* 13.4.1–2.

23. For Nero vis-à-vis the gods, cf. also 1.1.2, 1.4, 5.7, 7.1, 8.3, 19.8–9; for argument that Seneca does indeed intend to represent Nero as the gods' chosen "vice-regent," see Fears 1975.

24. On the traditional grounds for distinguishing "tyrants" from "kings," different from the character-based distinction Seneca draws here, see 1.12.1n.

25. The whole of the introduction to Book 2 (§§1–2) furthers this tactic; for appeals to goodness that cater to Nero's sense of his own grandeur cf., e.g., 1.5.6 (Nero as "master of the world"), 1.8.4 (Nero as the sun).

26. On this point see esp. Griffin 1976, 161–64, and 2003, 175–77.

27. By contrast, pity had a common role in these courts, and one that provides an instructive contrast with clemency. In trying to arouse pity for a defendant, an advocate sought to convince the judges either that the defendant was actually a victim, not a perpetrator—that he was in fact innocent, in other words—or that the defendant should, all things considered, be let off the hook despite his actual guilt. But neither of these moves has anything to do with the sort of clemency that Seneca urges.

28. Tacitus *Annals* 14.11, 12.3–4.

29. Cassius Dio 61.10.2.

30. The English version that follows is based upon the edition of Ermanno Malaspina (Alessandria, 2001). I signal in the notes the occasions on which I depart from Malaspina's text, and briefly indicate in each case the reason for the alternate reading I have adopted.

On Clemency: Book 1

31. In place of the lacuna posited here by Malaspina, I translate *et*, with some later manuscripts and most editors.

32. The purely hypothetical phrasing is pointed: though the *princeps* was nominally "first among equals" (§3.3n. below), he was distinguished from other citizens not least by the fact that he was not answerable to the law, either in practice or, as time went on, in theory (cf. the dictum of the third-century-CE jurist Ulpian, "The *princeps* is not bound by the laws"; *Digest* 1.3.31.pr.). Cf. also §12.1n.

33. The first of several express or implied hits at Nero's adoptive father, Claudius (cf. §§10.3, 23.2 nn.), who was criticized for his capricious and sometime cruel judicial behavior (cf. *Apocolocyntosis* 10.4, 14.2, Tacitus *Annals* 13.4.2, Suetonius *Claudius* 14–15).

34. The examples just preceding, which involve reasons extrinsic to the

facts of the case, suggest that S. thinks of pity as a response merely to perceived suffering (cf. 2.5.1), not as a response only to suffering perceived to be unjust (Aristotle *Rhetoric* 2.8 1385b13–14); cf. also 2.5.4.

35. Several words were lost in transmission here, though the required sense is clear. The translation reflects the commonly accepted supplements: "omnia, quae in fidem tutelam<que tuam venerunt, tuta ha>beri, nihil per te neque vi neque clam <adimi> rei publicae."

36. The first suppression of Britannicus's murder; cf. esp. §11.2 below.

37. In the conventional view, reflected here and (for example) in Tacitus *Annals* 4.1.1, Tiberius ruled well after succeeding Augustus in 14 CE, until his minister Sejanus's influence became paramount, esp. from 23 on.

38. On the term here translated as "prince," *princeps*, see §3.3n. below.

39. A cryptic formulation that presumably would cover (for example) resistance to a tyrant; cf. §26.1.

40. Lost in the lacuna is some idea along the lines of "if they're given a second chance" (Basore's *si <poenae remissio fuerit>*) or "if you treat them as innocent" (*si <eos pro innocentibus habeas>*) or "if clemency gives them hope" (Ball's *si <clementia spem restituerit>*). What S. should not say here is "if you forgive them" (Préchac's *si <ignoscas>*), since he will distinguish *clementia* from forgiveness at 2.7. But he is not always self-consistent; cf. the end of this paragraph.

41. On punishment as healing, see esp. *On Anger* 1.16, and on the aims of punishment, cf. §21–22 below.

42. S. speaks exuberantly and imprecisely: contrast the claim at 2.7.3 that whatever clemency decides is *ipso facto* fair.

43. The first part is the subject of Book 1; the second comprises the definition of "clemency" and its distinction from the vices of "pity" (*misericordia*) and "pardon" (*venia*) in 2.3–7. The third part was either lost or never completed.

44. The translation reflects Kronenberg's *animi remissionis*—literally "of the relaxation of the mind," esp. with regard to strictness or severity (*OLD* s.v. *remissio* 4b, cf. §24.1: "People better obey someone who gives his orders in a milder [*remissius*] way")—adopted instead of the archetype's *manumissionis* printed by Hosius and obelized by Malaspina (with a lacuna posited following). The reading is consistent with the thought that clemency depends on mental calm and clarity and is hindered by mental turbulence and upset: cf. §5.5, 7.2, 13.4, 2.6.1 and introduction, section 2; similar thoughts occur also in *On Anger* (cf. esp. 1.16.6–7).

45. That is, adherents of Stoicism. For S.'s use of the first-person plural in this sense, cf. *On Anger* 1.5.2n.

46. That is, adherents of Epicureanism, for whom the final good was "pleasure," in the limited sense of the absence of pain, a "freedom from disturbance" (*ataraxia*) that encouraged political quietism. Though S. here portrays these goals as merely selfish (cf. *On the Wise Man's Consistency* 15.4, *On Favors*

4.2.1), he is capable of a more nuanced response, esp. in the *Moral Epistles* (e.g., 9, 21.3ff., 25.4ff.).

47. Nero was not "king" (*rex*), a title inimical to Roman political tradition; he was "the foremost man" (*princeps*), a label with roots in the Republic, chosen by Augustus to characterize his place in the community and used by all subsequent emperors. Beginning in §4.3, however, and throughout the treatise, S. effaces the distinction between *rex* and *princeps* (cf. §4.3n. on "Caesar"); I have translated *princeps* as "prince," the English cognate with connotations closer to the sense that S. typically has in mind (e.g., §5.7 below).

48. For the contrast between the bad emperor, figured as a fearful beast, and the good emperor, whom the people love and willingly protect, cf. Pliny *Panegyric* 48–49.

49. For the people's rational recognition of the benefit bestowed by a just ruler, and their consequent willingness to defend him "even when he is very old," see Polybius 6.6.10–12.

50. S. refers to the legend of Gaius Mucius, who gained the nickname Scaevola ("Lefty") after plunging his right hand into a fire to show the Etruscan king Lars Porsenna the stuff that Romans were made of—an incident that occurred while Porsenna was trying to force Rome to restore its king Tarquin the Proud, who had been expelled in 509 BCE.

51. I translate *voluntariam subivimus* <*mortem*>, the easiest correction of the archetype's corrupt reading, *voluntariam subsiluimus* (cf. Malaspina's *voluntariam sub*<*ivimus mortem aut* *** *sub*>*siluimus*). Most earlier corrections have tried to salvage *subsiluimus* ("leapt beneath"), perhaps correctly, taking S. to be referring to Marcus Curtius's legendary leap into a chasm that had opened in the Roman forum, an act that satisfied an oracle and saved his city (e.g., Hosius's *voluntarii* <*terram*> *subsiluimus*, "willingly leapt beneath the earth").

52. Virgil *Georgics* 4.212–13; cf. §19.2 below.

53. S. here uses the name, originally a cognomen ("nickname") of one branch of Julian the clan, as a title (cf. "Kaiser") equivalent to the terms used in the preceding sentence ("prince," "king," "guardian of the civil regime").

54. S. has promised, in §3.1, that the first topic would be the mental calmness conducive to clemency. He now starts to approach that topic directly.

55. Literally "according to nature" (*secundum naturam*); on the significance of this criterion for the Stoics, see *On Anger* introduction. section 2.

56. This is the orthodox Stoic position; cf. *On Anger* 1.11.2n.

57. For the doctrine that we should act in ways appropriate to our "characters" (*personae*)—our shared characters as human beings, and our individual characters with their varying talents and temperaments—see Cicero *On Appropriate Actions* 1.107ff.

58. On this virtue, see *On Anger* 1.20–21 and accompanying note.

59. The paradox conceals a point—that clemency seems to overrule what

the law says a wrongdoer is owed—to which S. will return in Book 2, where he must explain why the wise man, who should give all people exactly what they deserve, should nonetheless be clement, and so seemingly give some people less than they deserve.

60. For similarly self-regarding motives for restraining anger, cf. *On Anger* 2.34.2, 3.32.1.

61. That is, the theaters of Pompey (Rome's first permanent theater, dedicated 55 BCE), Marcellus (begun soon after Pompey's but not dedicated until 13 BCE), and Balbus (also 13 BCE).

62. For the theme, cf. esp. *On Anger* 2.10.2–6, 28, 3.26.3–5.

63. S. refers to the wise man, who "will not be angry with wrongdoers . . . [b]ecause he knows that the wise man is not born but made" (*On Anger* 2.10.6).

64. That is, after the wrongdoer has been blasted by a thunderbolt; cf. *On Anger* 3.23.6n.

65. The paradoxical notion that monarchic power was a "glorious slavery," resumed in §3 below, was expressed by the Macedonian king Antigonus II Gonatas (ruled 276–39: Aelian *Miscellaneous History* 2.20). Already at *Consolation to Polybius* 7.2 (on Claudius) S. notes that the prince, though all-powerful, is still forbidden many things.

66. The translation reflects Erasmus's *ista* for *ipsa*.

67. S. refers to the common conception of the gods as beings ordinarily barred from face-to-face contact with mortals. Stoic theology, which regarded as "god" the rational, providential principle that pervades and orders the universe, interpreted the gods of the traditional pantheon as so many manifestations of that principle.

68. S. anticipates Nero's identification with the god Apollo, esp. in his character as the sun; this was to become a major motif of the reign, celebrated both in literary texts and on coins struck throughout the empire, which commonly present him with a radiate crown. For a survey, see Champlin 2003:112ff.

69. A concern addressed at *On Anger* 2.11.1.

70. On Augustus's forbearance, see *On Anger* 3.23.4–8.

71. Reading *in communi quidem rei publicae* <*clade*> with Madvig.

72. The only reasonable construction of the passage treats the clauses "By the time he was your age. . . ." and "by the time he was forty . . ." as parallel and requires a full stop before the first (Grifffin 1976:408–11). Augustus had not in fact done all the things mentioned by the age of 18 (the proscriptions, for example, postdated his twentieth birthday), but S. does not let chronological precision stand in the way of making a point (cf. Griffin ibid. with, e.g., *On Anger* 1.20.4n.). The passage dates the treatise to Nero's nineteenth year (15 December 55 to 14 December 56).

73. The man S. calls "Lucius Cinna" was Gnaeus Cornelius Cinna Magnus, son of Lucius Cornelius Cinna—once Julius Caesar's brother-in-law, he later

approved his murder—and grandson of Pompey the Great, hence his characterization in §8 as "an enemy [of Augustus] born, not made." He became consul in 5 CE (cf. §12). S.'s dating of the incident to a time when Augustus was in Gaul in his forties would most likely place it in 16–14 BCE, though its status as historical fact has been doubted. An expanded version, probably based directly or indirectly on S., is found at Cassius Dio 55.14–22.2, dating the episode to 4 CE.

74. Livia Drusilla (58 BCE–29 CE) was the wife of Augustus and mother of Tiberius. Divorced from the latter's father, Tiberius Claudius Nero, in 39 BCE in order to marry Augustus, she survived him by fifteen years and was subsequently deified by her grandson, Claudius.

75. Quintus Salvidienus Rufus Salvius was consul designate for 39 BCE when his disloyalty to Octavian was denounced and he was condemned in the Senate (Cassius Dio 48.33.1–3). The other men named here—Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, son of the triumvir (cf. §10.1n.), whose plot dated to 29; a Varro Murena and Fannius Caepio, who acted together in 23 or 22; and Marcus Egnatius Rufus, executed in 19 for seditious violence not aimed directly at Augustus—also appear together at Suetonius *Augustus* 19.1, where several other conspirators are named, including a freedman (Asinius Epicadus) and a slave (Telephus). S. must have the latter in mind when he has Livia refer to persons "whose effrontery is an actual source of shame," for to be challenged by people of low status was to the Roman mind disgraceful per se; cf. §10 just below.

76. Just as it was shameful to be physically attacked by such a person (§6n.), so it was disgraceful to be shown to be less influential.

77. The translation reflects Haase's *putas*, for *potes*.

78. S. presumably thinks of the patricians who reached the consulship under Augustus—Cossus Cornelius Lentulus (in 1 BCE), Lucius Aemilius Paulus (1 CE), Marcus Servilius (3 CE), Paullus Fabius Maximus (11 CE)—though the period of their prominence sits a bit oddly with the early date S. assigns the incident (§2n.).

79. More literally, "who are an adornment to their ancestor masks" (*imaginibus suis decori sint*), referring to the wax masks (*imagines*) of their ancestors that Romans of a certain rank had the privilege of displaying in the atria of their houses. S. means that the men named not only live up to their ancestors' standard but also add to their luster.

80. Including a person in one's will was among the most common and important means the Romans used to signal social intimacy and esteem (Champlin 1991). With the foundation of the principate, the emperor's preeminence guaranteed that he was named in many wills; cf. also §15.4 below.

81. S. speaks of Nero's matrilinear descent from Augustus as the son of the younger Agrippina and grandson of the elder Agrippina, who was the daughter of Julia, Augustus's only child.

82. Literally "the whole cadre [of those with the right] of first admission": at *On Favors* 6.34.1–2 S. traces to Gaius Sempronius Gracchus (d. 121 BCE) and Marcus Livius Drusus (d. 109 BCE) the Roman grandees' practice of dividing their friends into "grades," in imitation of Hellenistic kings. The emperor Claudius gave certain friends the right of free admission to his presence symbolized by a gold ring bearing his likeness (Pliny *Natural History* 33.41).

83. This catalog of Republicans whom Augustus co-opted includes Gaius Sallustius Crispus, grandnephew and adoptive son of the historian Sallust; Marcus Cocceius Nerva, made consul in 36 BCE after Octavian pardoned him; Quintus Dellius, called the "acrobat rider" (*desultor*) of the triumviral period for successively attaching himself to, and detaching himself from, a series of political men until he settled on Octavian just before the battle of Actium; Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus, partisan of Julius Caesar's murderer Brutus and later of Mark Antony, who also timely switched to Octavian before Actium; Marcus Valerius Messala Corvinus, consul of 31 BCE, whose career resembled that of Ahenobarbus; Gaius Asinius Pollio (see *On Anger* 3.23.5n.), who maintained more independence from Augustus than the others named; and Marcus Tullius Cicero, suffect consul 30 BCE, dissolute son of the orator and the only male member of his family to survive the proscriptions.

84. Oldest and most aristocratic of the triumvirs, Marcus Aemilius Lepidus (ca. 89–ca. 13) was eventually marginalized by Antony and Octavian and exiled by the latter in 36. Allowed to return to Rome, he retained until his death the position of *pontifex maximus*, in which he had succeeded Julius Caesar in 44.

85. As ever, S. is ready to sacrifice consistency for the sake of a good line: contrast §8.1, on the inevitable renown of princes.

86. In contrast (by implication) with Claudius, whose deification S. mocks in the *Apocolocyntosis*.

87. Cf. *On Anger* 3.23.4–8.

88. Besides figuring in a series of dynastic marriages, the last to the future emperor Tiberius, Augustus's daughter, Julia (39 BCE–14 CE), allegedly engaged in multiple adulteries (a partial catalog: Velleius Paterculus 2.100.4–5) for which her father exiled her in 2 BCE, an act that S. does not mention. His choice of words here ("sent them away") is at best euphemistic: at least one of her lovers was exiled (Tacitus *Annals* 1.53.3–4) and another was executed or compelled to commit suicide (ibid. 1.10.4, Cassius Dio 55.10.15).

89. S. refers, in reverse chronological order, to Augustus's defeat of Antony and Cleopatra in 31 BCE, the wars against Sextus Pompeius in 36 and Lucius Antonius in 41, and the murders that inaugurated the Triumvirate in 43 (cf. *On Anger* 2.2.3n.).

90. Yet even if the fact was not widely known, S. was surely aware of Nero's responsibility for Britannicus's death.

91. The translation starts from Mazzoli's *comprendendi item sibi amor* to provide a stopgap for the archetype's deeply corrupt *conpraenditte sibi mor*.

92. That is the mark of the "bestial" man at *On Anger* 2.5.

93. The monarchic rulers who first gained the title "tyrant" in Greece (seventh and sixth centuries BCE) were distinguished from "kings" primarily by the fact that they achieved sole power through usurpation rather than some socially sanctioned means (e.g., inheritance); as drawn by Aristotle (*Politics* 3.9.3 1285a15ff.), the distinction lay between those who ruled in accordance with the law and with the consent of their subjects and those who did not. By stressing clemency (esp. §3 below), S. draws a different distinction which invests everything in character and sidesteps the question of law, by which a ruler like Nero is bound only hypothetically (§1.4n.).

94. The elder Dionysius of Syracuse dominated eastern Sicily under one title or another from the end of the fifth century BCE until 367. Despite S.'s comment here, there are many anecdotes that present him as a stereotypical tyrant. Lucius Cornelius Sulla Felix (ca. 138–79 BCE), a ruthless proponent of aristocratic senatorial rule, ended nearly a decade of civil war at Rome by assuming the constitutional but seldom used office of *dictator* (81). Already depicted by Cicero as a tyrant in 70 (*Against Verres* 2.3.81–82), Sulla became the stock Roman example of the type, as here and in *On Anger* 1.20.4, 2.2.3, 34.3, 3.18.1–2.

95. The Senate commonly met in temples—including that of Bellona, goddess of battle-frenzy, which lay in the southern part of the Campus Martius, outside the city's sacred boundary (*pomerium*). This incident followed Sulla's defeat of his enemies in the battle of the Colline Gate (1 November 82 BCE).

96. A promise not fulfilled in the extant treatise; but cf. §26.4n. below.

97. For this line, from the poet Accius's *Atreus*, see *On Anger* 1.20.4n., and cf. 2.2.2 below.

98. S. speaks in commonsense terms here. Contrast, for example, *On Anger* 1.10.4 for the orthodox Stoic view that an emotion truly so called cannot be "moderated."

99. For the device, called a "fright" (*formido*), see *On Anger* 2.11.5n.

100. S. applies to the special position of ruler Stoicism's normative expectation that all people, as they develop intellectually, will come to regard others as proper objects of concern equivalent to themselves. On the doctrine of "appropriation" that underlies this expectation, see *On Anger* introduction, section 2, 2.31.7n.

101. I translate *reducitur* in place of the manuscripts' nonsensical *recluditur* (cf.. Watt 1994, 230, suggesting *repudiatur*).

102. Presumably, worse behavior feared for the future—not worse behavior concealed in the present.

103. Thus the view of punishment in *On Anger* 1.16.2–3, 19.5–7, and cf. §22 below.

104. An honorific phrase applied informally to Roman patriots, and later decreed by the Senate as a title for Julius Caesar in 45 BCE and for Augustus in 2 BCE. Tiberius refused to accept it, but it was later a fixture of imperial titulature, so that it could simply be said that "The *princeps* is the father of the fatherland" (*Digest* 48.22.18.1).

105. S. refers, respectively, to Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus ("the Great"), Lucius Cornelius Sulla Felix ("the Fortunate"), and of course the title Augustus, bestowed by the Senate on Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus in January 27 BCE and assumed formally as part of their titulature by all subsequent emperors except Tiberius.

106. The translation follows Kruczkiewcz in deleting the otiose phrase *hoc illis tribuentes* ("ascribing this to them") at the end of this sentence.

107. Roman children were subject to their father's power (*patria potestas*) irrespective of their age as long as the father was alive. In cases of delinquency, the father exercised his power—including the power of life and death—in the setting of a domestic trial of the sort described in §15.

108. S. speaks metaphorically, of course, exploiting the idea that children are virtually as close to their parents as the parents' own limbs. What is true of the relation between parents and children is true, according to the Stoics, of all human relations, properly understood. See *On Anger* 1.15.2n.

109. The qualification "almost" (*prope*) is ill-chosen; to punish excessively is to give more than is deserved, which is unjust (cf. 2.7.1).

110. The pointed instruments used for writing on waxed wooden tablets.

111. Lucius Tarius Rufus served Augustus in a series of military commands during and after the civil wars and was rewarded with wealth and a suffect consulship (16 BCE).

112. Modern Marseille, founded as a Greek colony in the late sixth century BCE and a center of some wealth and culture, was a common destination for Romans in exile.

113. In hearing cases, Nero required members of his own advisory council to put their views in writing without knowledge of his own (Suetonius *Nero* 15.1).

114. On the practice of making Caesar an heir, cf. §9.12n. above.

115. The son's disinheritance (cf. §14.1) is assumed, despite the kindness his father showed him in exile.

116. For the role of sack and snakes in the punishment of a parricide, see *On Anger* 1.16.5n.

117. Thus the literal meaning of the phrase S. uses, *liberalia studia*—from which is derived the modern concept of "liberal studies" or "liberal arts."

118. The "disease of the mind" is the "cross-grained" character (*morositas*)

that we have by virtue of being human. This use of "disease" (*morbus* = Greek *nosema*) does not conform to standard Stoic usage, according to which a "disease" is an evaluative belief, firmly held but false, that predisposes us to passion (Graver 2002a:150–53); but one can imagine how the "disease" in S.'s sense would predispose us to experience "disease" in the standard Stoic sense. For the metaphor of "healing" compare, for example, *On Anger* 1.6.2, 2.10.7.

119. S. follows the orthodox Stoic view that slavery is a merely contingent condition of the physical self: since enslaved persons have the same rational nature as the free, they are our fellows with an equal capacity for virtue. See esp. *Moral Epistles* 47, *On Favors* 3.18–28.

120. That is, of a god or the prince himself. For the practice of slaves and others seeking asylum at or near the statue of an emperor, see, for example, Pliny *Epistles* 10.74, Tacitus *Annals* 3.36.1, Suetonius *Augustus* 17.5, *Tiberius* 58.

121. That is, though a slave *qua* "animate tool" (cf. Aristotle *Politics* 1 253b27ff.) has no rights, a slave *qua* human being does.

122. For the story, see *On Anger* 3.40.2n.

123. "Nature's law" is the rational order of the universe, which is providential and therefore not possibly malignant.

124. The quasi-polity of bees is described most fully in Latin literature by Vergil (*Georgics* 4.149ff., esp. 210ff. on their devotion to their ruler), from whose treatement S. has already quoted (§4.1). Greeks and Romans mistakenly thought that the queen bee was a king.

125. Differing from Aristotle, who says that each hive has several rulers and falls to ruin if there are too few or too many (*History of Animals* 5.22 553b14–19).

126. Differing from Aristotle, according to whom the "king" bee has a stinger but does not use it (*History of Animals* 5.21 553b5–7).

127. For this theme, see Pliny *Natural History* 11.1–4.

128. The translation reflects Hosius's *documenta in minima parere*, for the archetype's corrupt *documentam minima argere*; the point is anyway clear.

129. Cf. the "vicious cycle" of hate and fear noted at §12.4.

130. This is the most textually troubled passage in the treatise. Most editors read some version of "o ne ille cui contingit <ut> sibi quoque vivere debeat" (with Baehren's suppletion of *ut* and various choices in punctuation), but I can find in those words no thought appropriate to the context, nor does any suggested alternative seem convincing. The possibility of a more extensive lacuna after *contingit* cannot be ruled out.

131. The latter is taken up starting in §22.

132. The need to judge others' actions fairly and not jump to conclusions or trust hearsay is a major theme of *On Anger*: 2.22.2–27.4, 29–31.5, 3.12.1–4, 26.1, 26.3–5, 28.4–30.2, 32.2–34.2.

133. The translation reflects Lipsius's transposition of *ut* ("ut innocentiae

faveat et [ut] appareat, <ut> non minorem agi rem periclitantis quam iudicis sciat").

134. Cf. §5.3n. above.

135. On the proper aims of punishment, cf. *On Anger* 1.15–16, where the affective dimension noted here—"comfort to the injured"—is perhaps understandably absent, and "security for the future" comprises rehabilitation, deterrence, or removal of a source of harm; thus §22.1 below.

136. As will become clear, S. is thinking of foreign kings and princes.

137. Cf. Nero's display of reluctance, which S. will celebrate at 2.1–2.

138. The emperor Claudius, Nero's father by adoption. On this punishment of parricides, see *On Anger* 1.16.5n. On Claudius's fondness for the punishment, a mark of his "savage and bloody" nature, see Suetonius *Claudius* 34.1.

139. For the thought developed here, cf. Cicero *On Behalf of Sextus Roscius* 70 (a case of parricide).

140. That is, once more Roman sons were punished than slaves and noncitizens (cf. §26.1), the categories for whom crucifixion was normally reserved.

141. There is no evidence of any such move in the senate before S.'s time, and S. is not above using a convenient fiction to make a point. The Romans' anxiety vis-à-vis their slaves was in any case real.

142. This is close kin to the argument that anger is contrary to our nature as humans (*On Anger* 1.5.2–3), though S.'s subsequent remarks show that the cruelty he has in mind goes beyond anger to the sort of insane savagery practiced by a Phalaris or a Caligula (*On Anger* 2.5 and 2.19.1n.).

143. For this incident, see *On Anger* 3.17.1n.

144. S. alludes to Alexander's murder of his friend Clitus in a drunken rage; see *On Anger* 3.17.1n.

145. S. is thinking of the "sickness," the settled condition beyond anger, that he diagnoses as "bestiality" at *On Anger* 2.5; cf. 2.4.2 below.

146. Reading *aversio, odia* in place of *eversio*, †*odiae*† printed by Malaspina.

147. Literally "in which the material for a charge and trial is sought"; but the verb wants an agent, and S. is clearly thinking about the informers (*delatores*) of his own day.

148. Contrast the response evoked by the clement man described at §3.3.

149. For the argument, cf. *On Anger* 2.8.3.

150. The text is defective, and Gertz's correction, translated here—"quo plus se exercitat, <eo incitat>ior"—has the advantage of readily explaining the error (it presumes that the scribe's eye jumped from the end of *exercitat* to the middle of *incitatior*, thus omitting the intervening text). But "more aroused" does not directly respond to the preceding thought, which concerns savagery's failure to draw a relevant distinction. Did S. perhaps write "<eo caec>ior" ("becoming more random the longer it keeps at it")?

151. Malaspina, following Mazzoli, posits a lacuna at this point, perhaps correctly. He also suggests, less securely, that the lost material would have included the treatment of Sulla promised at §12.3.

152. An oak-leaf garland was awarded to a soldier who had saved a fellow soldier in battle, slain the enemy, and held the contested ground. The senate granted such a garland to Augustus, to go with the golden shield on which his clemency and other virtues were celebrated (*Res Gestae* 34.2).

On Clemency: Book 2

153. Sextus Afranius Burrus, from southern Gaul, became prefect of the praetorian guard under Claudius (51 CE) and remained in the post until his death (from poison, some said) in 62. With S. he was responsible for guiding Nero during the first years of his reign. As the only person authorized to carry a sword in the emperor's presence, the praetorian prefect was the armed extension of the emperor's authority (Millar 1977:123). Nero's remark, quoted below, is also found in slightly different form at Suetonius *Nero* 10.2.

154. The "Golden Age" was the Edenic time when human beings lived in peace and harmony, supported by a spontaneously fruitful Nature. In Latin literature the most elaborate imagining of the Golden Age's return is Vergil *Eclogue* 4; that Nero's reign would inaugurate a new Golden Age is "foretold" already at *Apocolocyntosis* 4.1.8–9.

155. I translate Hosius's *omne imperii corpus* (for the archetype's corrupt *omne imne imperii corpus*), against Rossbach's *per omne immane imperii corpus*, printed by Malaspina. S. uses *immane* only with deeply negative connotations (e.g., §2.3 below, "monstrous [*immani*] and hateful [*invisa*]"), and it is hardly likely to be used here.

156. The first verse, from Accius's *Atreus*, was already cited at 1.12.4. The second, from an unknown Greek tragedy (*TGrF* 2, frag. 513), was reportedly adopted by Tiberius (Cassius Dio 58.23.4): when someone used it in conversation, Nero allegedly modified it by saying, "No, while I am alive" (Suetonius *Nero* 38.1, in loose connection with Nero's starting the great fire of July 64 CE).

157. Yet Nero's remark, extravagantly praised above, would seem to meet the standard. For S.'s willingness to sacrifice consistency or precision for the sake of a striking aperçu, cf. *On Anger* 2.8.3n.

158. The metaphor S. uses, *formula excidere*, refers to losing a case at law by entering an incorrect or poorly drafted plea (cf. *OLD* s.v. *formula* 6c).

159. This point, a crucial one for S., is taken up at §7 below, just before the text breaks off; see also 6.3n. below, on the implications of such qualifications as "to some degree" or "in due proportion."

160. Two paragons of cruelty, paired only here in Latin literature: Busiris, an Egyptian king, sacrificed foreigners to Zeus until he was killed by Hercules;

Procrustes (also known as Damastes or Polypemon), a bandit in Attica who made his victims "fit" a bed of torture by stretching or amputating their limbs, was killed by Theseus.

161. On "bestiality" (*feritas*), see 1.25.2n.

162. Contrast *On Anger* 2.5.1, where Phalaris is an example not of "cruelty" but of the "bestiality" just discussed, which inflicts pain for the pleasure of doing so, irrespective of the victim's desert.

163. As an emotion, that is. On the Stoic view that emotions are vices per se, see *On Anger*, introduction, section 2.

164. Gertz's supplement—"<per speciem enim severitatis in crudelitatem incidimus>, per speciem clementiae in misericordiam"—is necessary, and the sense is clear.

165. This is a variant on the Stoic thought that all vice, like all virtue, is a unity, absolute and without degrees; cf. 1.5.3n.

166. S. uses the technical term, *species* ("impression"), denoting the evaluative perception from which a passion proceeds when we accept the impression as true (cf. *On Anger* introduction, section 2 and 1.2.5n.). On the impressions relevant to pity, cf. 1.1.4n. and §4 below.

167. So the view attributed to the Stoics at *SVF* 3.640–41; cf. Cicero *On Behalf of Murena* 62.

168. For this fundamental Stoic principle, cf., e.g., Cicero *Tusculan Disputations* 3.7f.

169. Thus the image of the "great-spirited" Socrates; cf. *On Anger* 2.7.1. Not all Stoics maintained this strict view of impassivity in appearance and deportment; see the fragment of Epictetus preserved at Gellius 19.1.

170. I translate the *volunt* ("they want") found in some later manuscripts in place of the archetype's *volo* ("I want").

171. For this form of giving, cf. *On Favors* 2.13.2.

172. The man being trained in the gladiatorial school (*ludus*) was typically a slave, and the training led in most cases to death in the arena.

173. The phrase "in due proportion" touches upon a key issue of clemency. If clemency entails a remission "to some degree" (thus §3.2 above), by what rational principle do we decide the exact degree of remission to grant in any given case? Cf. also §7.3 below. The category mentioned in the balance of this sentence—of those "afflicted and in difficulty by chance"—is irrelevant to the topic of clemency.

174. Contrast *On Anger* 2.2.5, 4.2, where involuntary smiles and yawns are not "diseases," but are among the "natural" responses S. uses as analogies to illustrate the first mental "jolt" that is a prelude to emotion.

175. The analogy is doubly jarring insofar as it implies that a wise man will view only stangers' deaths impassively, or regard strangers' misfortunes as more alien than a friend's or his own.

176. The translation reflects Hosius's *agedum*, adopted as a stopgap where the archetype read *vacuam*. (Malaspina obelizes *vacuam* and posits a lacuna, probably correctly.).

177. That is, pardon follows upon and cancels an assessment of desert already made, whereas clemency (in the examples S. is about to give) shapes the act of assessment itself.

178. That is, someone who shows that he has a proper sense of shame.

179. Contrast 1.2.2: "Whatever measure will be *more than strictly equitable* (*aequo plus*) should tip the scale in the more humane direction."

The Pumpkinification of Claudius the God

Introduction

MARTHA C. NUSSBAUM

The Work's Occasion and Purpose

On October 13, 54 CE, the emperor Claudius died at the age of sixty-four. The likely cause was poison, though ancient writers disagree about the identity of the poisoner. Many people were happy at Claudius's death. Although not a maniac like his predecessor Caligula, he was harsh, unpredictable, and cruel. Besides, he was surrounded by schemers who had their own reasons to hasten his demise. No matter exactly how the fatal dose was administered, the ultimate responsibility almost certainly falls on Agrippina, the last of his four wives, a woman of remarkable criminal powers. She had recently prevailed on Claudius to adopt Nero (b. 37), her son by a previous marriage. The adoption might have shored up the power of Claudius's own son Britannicus (b. 41, from his marriage to the notoriously promiscuous Messalina) by giving the youth an older companion in the succession; but Nero's career advanced rapidly while Claudius's death, suspiciously, came just in time to prevent him from granting Britannicus the toga of manhood. Once Claudius was out of the way, Agrippina, aided by trusted advisors, made sure that Nero, not Britannicus, took the helm. (Poisoned early in 55, the unfortunate Britannicus did not long survive his father.) Claudius was declared a god by the Senate shortly after his death—a move that enhanced young Nero's prestige.

Seneca had never been on good terms with Claudius: the emperor was responsible for his exile, and even after the return he remained distant. By contrast, he was young Nero's tutor, and Agrippina had long been his ally. Seneca helped her ensure Nero's succession and soon became co-regent of the empire, sharing power with Burrus, prefect of the pretorian guard. (He also wrote Nero's speech on Claudius's death.) So Seneca's situation would have disposed him to find October 13 a happy day indeed.

The *Apocolocyntosis* was almost certainly written and circulated shortly after Claudius's death. One plausible suggestion is that it was

composed for public reading at the Saturnalia in December 54—a festive and indulgent holiday that Claudius, who loved banquets, had enjoyed and extended. Nero was master of the revels.

Title and Authorship

Only one ancient commentator, Cassius Dio, more than a century later, mentions a work by Seneca about the death and divinization of Claudius. The manuscript tradition, however, uniformly ascribes the work to him. Although our oldest extant manuscripts date back only to the ninth century CE, we have no reason to question their consensus about authorship. Stylistic considerations favor the consensus, since the poetry of sections 7 and 12 bears a close relationship to the diction and metrical usage in Seneca's tragedies. The only argument given against recognizing Seneca as the work's author is the prejudice that a solemn philosopher could not be funny or spiteful. Seneca, however, was a very complicated man, whose philosophical doctrines are often hard to square with the rest of his career.

It is Dio who also gives us the work's title, writing, "Seneca composed a work which he entitled *Apocolocyntosis*, as though it were some king of deification." Among the ancient manuscripts, one calls it "The Deification of Claudius the God through Satire," which seems more like a catalogue description than like a title; the other two call it "Play on (*ludus de*) the death of Claudius," an anachronistic medieval usage. So it seems wise to follow Dio.

A *kolokynte* (Latin *cucurbita*) is a gourd, a close relative of the pumpkin. The work's best commentator, P. T. Eden, argues convincingly that the metaphor is one of emptiness: a dried gourd is hollow, and "a head like a gourd" can mean "fool" or "empty head." Some authors have supposed that there is a lost section of the work in which Claudius is literally transformed into a pumpkin, but that is to read a joke with depressing literalness. Just as the Senate made Claudius into a god (producing an *apotheosis*), so Seneca's work makes him into what he always was: a fool. Twice in the text, "fool" in Greek is substituted for the Greek word for "god" in talking about Claudius (sections 7 and 8; see notes). The title contains the same joking substitution.

Menippean Satire

Roman satire is usually understood to begin with Lucilius (180–103 BCE), a shadowy figure much admired in antiquity, although some earlier poets, including the epic poet Ennius (239–169 BCE) also composed poems called *saturae*. The word means "miscellanies," and thus tells us little about the poems' point or pedigree. The genre, if genre it is, is said by the first-century-CE literary theorist Quintilian to be a Roman invention, but the poet Horace insists, more plausibly, that Lucilius borrowed from Greek Old Comedy. Lucilius was apparently the first Roman poet to develop the satire as a vehicle for both personal abuse and social criticism. Almost nothing from his work survives, but subsequent poets in the genre, from Horace (65–8 BCE) to Persius (34–62 CE) and Juvenal (c. 60–140 CE), are plausibly seen as continuing a tradition he began. Their works all involve denunciation of social and personal corruption and folly. The tone is sometimes exceedingly dark (as in Juvenal), sometimes relatively gentle (as in Horace, whose humane attitude the English poet Dryden dismisses as that of "a well-mannered court slave").

This tradition, however, is not the one to which we owe our work. A different type of satire is associated with the Greek author Menippus (third century BCE), and with the Roman author Varro (116–27 BCE), and it was very popular. None of Menippus's work survives, and only scanty fragments of Varro's—although, called by Cicero "the most prolific of writers," Varro published 490 books, of which 150 were satires. His works were widely imitated, and the genre remained productive at least until the time of the Greek author Lucian (second century CE).

We know that Menippean satires contained a mixture of poetry and prose and of high and low style, that they were given to literary parody, and that they contained both serious moralizing and lighthearted comedy. Beyond this, however, we know nothing useful that would help us understand how Seneca used the genre in a distinctive way. We can reconstruct the genre only from the text before us.

So examined, our Menippean work lacks the morally stable center of a Juvenalian or Horatian satire, where the sentiments of the poet-speaker are evident and consistent. Our speaker reels from formal

to vulgar, from spite to joy, in a way that suggests celebratory release rather than detached moral observation.

A surprising feature of our text, probably also a feature of Menippean satire generally, is its liberal use of Greek along with the Latin—usually in literary quotations, occasionally for a proverbial phrase. Educated Romans (who often finished their education in Athens) typically read Greek literature and philosophy fluently in the original, and Cicero's letters to a variety of correspondents sprinkle Greek phrases liberally throughout. The presence of Greek, along with the jokes alluding to history-writing and to philosophical doctrines, marks the intended audience of the work as educated, but perhaps not super-educated: Cicero expects his wife Terentia, no intellectual and (like women generally) not educated at Athens, to understand phrases of Greek and to get rather subtle jokes of a philosophical nature.

Claudius and Nero

Assessments of the reign of Claudius have run the gamut from the harsh denunciation of Seneca and his contemporaries to the empathic approval of Robert Graves. The popularity of Graves's books *I, Claudius* and *Claudius the God*—not to mention the televised version of the former, in which the emperor is played by the peerless actor Derek Jacobi—have made most nonspecialists think of the man as brilliant, skillful, and basically kindhearted, these virtues being concealed by his physical disabilities. Although our two primary ancient historical accounts of Claudius—the *Annals* of Tacitus and the biography by Suetonius—derive from sources hostile to the emperor, a dispassionate look at the entirety of the evidence shows us that Graves was well off the mark—but so too, in some ways, was Seneca.

One thing they both get right is the physical disability. Claudius limped. He had a tremor that affected both hands and head. He had some type of speech defect, although it was said that when he spoke from a prepared text and was not nervous he could be understood perfectly well. Polio, cerebral palsy, Tourette's syndrome, and Asperger's syndrome have all been mentioned; probably cerebral palsy fits best with the symptoms. His own mother called him "a monster of a man, begun by Nature but not finished." Graves is right in suggesting

that his physical condition probably spared him from danger until the accession itself.

As an adult Claudius looked all right when he was sitting or standing still; but he had quite a few disgusting traits, including an unpleasant laugh, a love of loud farting, and a perpetually runny nose. He stuffed himself at the banquet table, and was proverbial for his love of gambling. On all this, Seneca is better than the too-friendly Graves. Because sexual relations with both men and women were the norm at Rome in this period (with many restrictions on the social class of the parties), Claudius is mocked by ancient authors for his single-minded focus on females—a topic of satire that Seneca neglects.

A point on which Graves has the better of Seneca is that Claudius was far from stupid. He did often seem to be gazing off into space, and he appeared to forget many of the executions he had ordered, commanding those same people to visit the court the following day. But he also wrote many books, including twenty volumes of Etruscan history in Greek, and in Latin the first history of the civil wars.

He was a competent leader. During his reign Rome successfully invaded Britain, and other military affairs were well managed. Known for his interest in public works, he built two aqueducts and many roads and canals. He also staged many popular games and shows—including one bizarre piece of theatre in which he personally wrestled with a killer whale that had become trapped in the harbor of Ostia. More constructively, he restored and adorned many cherished buildings. He took a keen interest in provincial affairs and extended the citizenship. All this Seneca omits or treats dismissively, although the genre excuses his single-minded focus on folly.

Claudius loved legal matters, extending the court sessions and often presiding himself. He introduced a few useful reforms, but on the whole our sources agree that he was meddlesome, inconstant, uninterested in evidence, and remarkably vindictive. (He thus created more business for trial lawyers while marginalizing legal scholars, a point Seneca turns into some good jokes.) His passion for promulgating edicts knew no bounds: on one famous occasion he announced an edict declaring that farting was good for public health. He loved to witness harsh punishments, and was even fonder of torture than was the Roman norm.

Claudius was installed originally not by the Senate, but by the praetorian guard. In consequence he had to face both danger and senatorial hostility throughout his career, Many criticisms made at the time derive from senatorial anxiety about his reliance on non-aristocrats, and thus express a class bias. That is perhaps a point for Graves. What Graves omits, though, is the moral damage that rejection and constant danger produced. Our sources portray Claudius as paranoid and ruthless—able to find threats everywhere, and determined always to extirpate their imagined source without a fair hearing. Seneca's portrayal of his opportunistic murders and thoroughly vindictive character is correct. The chilling incident in which he first has his wife Messalina executed and then asks why she has not come to the dinner table is just one example of his warped personality, and Seneca gets it right.

On balance, then, Seneca is right about the man's character, though—perhaps for reasons of genre—he underrates his intellectual capacity and political skill.

As for the other protagonist of the work, the young Nero—at the age of seventeen he must have seemed extremely handsome and promising. Already evident was the passion for acting and singing that later distracted him from weightier matters. Seneca's comparison to Apollo was one that Nero himself fostered through coinage and other public symbols. With a mother like Agrippina and a stepfather like Claudius he certainly had his share of evil moral influence, and he was probably already conspiring to murder his rival Britannicus. His mother would be one of his many subsequent targets and would prove remarkably hard to get rid of, swimming a long way back to shore just when he thought he had drowned her in the bay.

Friend and tutor as well as moral philosopher, Seneca probably would have seen signs of the disaster that was to ensue. Nonetheless, as long as Seneca and Burrus remained at the helm, Rome did know good governance, and that five-year period, known as the *quinquennium Neronis*, has been recognized as one of the early empire's high points. So Seneca would also have been right to welcome the new era—with the proviso that he himself would have a hand in it. Later, when he saw that he could no longer restrain Nero's excesses, he attempted to retire from politics, an attempt that Nero shrewdly repulsed. (A fascinating exchange on this point is reported by Taci-

tus.) At that point, in a political cul-de-sac, he apparently joined a conspiracy against Nero's life. Ordered to commit suicide, he died in 65, in a manner that imitated the death of Socrates. These grim events, however, are still far down the road in 54, and it is neither frivolous nor disingenuous of the work's speaker to claim that a new and better era is beginning.

Synopsis

Although our work is brief, it is far from simple, so we need to summarize the action before asking what it all means.

An unidentified speaker introduces the subject; describing himself as a historian, he discusses his evidence (1). After giving a flowery poetic description of the date and time, he states these facts in prose—then reverts to poetry again as he approaches his topic, the death of Claudius (2).

Mercury, messenger of the gods, talks to the Fates, begging them to give both Claudius and Rome a break by letting him die. Clotho grumbles that she has wanted to give Claudius time to extend Roman citizenship all over the globe, but she yields, granting him death in the near future (3).

A serious poetic passage follows, describing the spinning of the Fates: Claudius's thread is snapped, and a wonderful new life begins to be spun out: a thread of precious gold, inaugurating a new Golden Age. Apollo aids the work, remarking that the person in question is similar to himself in looks and grace, and every bit his equal in singing. He will bring an era of both prosperity and legality. Compared to both stars and sun, the man is finally named as Nero Caesar. Lachesis gives Nero many extra years. But she orders Claudius to die. This he does, while listening to some comic actors. His last words, after a very loud noise "from that part with which he found it easier to communicate," are the immortal statement, "Good heavens, I think I've shat myself." The speaker comments, "Well, I don't know about that, but he certainly shat up everything else" (4).

The speaker says he has no need to speak further of what happened on earth, since nobody forgets happiness. In heaven, Jupiter gets a message that an odd lame person has arrived, shaking his head and talking unintelligibly. He sends Hercules to deal with this new monster. Hercules is taken aback; this is a monster like none he has

ever seen. Quoting Homer in Greek, he inquires into the visitor's origin. Claudius is happy, thinking there will be scope here for his historical and scholarly activities. He replies, again citing Homer to establish his Trojan origins (5).

The goddess Fever now appears, telling Hercules that the tale is all lies: the man was really born in Lyons, in Gaul. Claudius gets angry that his elegant reference to the story of Aeneas has been misunderstood; he mutters and shakes his hand the way he used to do when giving the order for decapitation. But nobody pays attention to him (6). Hercules adopts a tougher tone and orders Claudius to tell his origins, this time in Latin verse. Claudius realizes that he does not hold supreme power in this new place, and now speaks more politely, asking Hercules to be his sponsor before the other gods.

After a gap in the transmitted text, during which Hercules and Claudius have evidently burst into the Senate house of the gods, an unnamed god poses some questions. What kind of god could Claudius be? Surely not an Epicurean god, for that god "has no trouble himself, nor does he give trouble to others." A Stoic god? But he is not spherical. And should Jupiter be the one to introduce him? But Claudius has killed his own son-in-law for incest, so Jupiter presumably wouldn't like that, since he himself is in an incestuous relationship. Besides, would a man like Claudius really be able to do any good for anyone? He won't even know what to do in his own bedroom (8).

Jupiter then realizes that debate about a motion should not be going on with visitors present; he makes Hercules and Claudius leave. Janus speaks equivocally, as suits his double nature: at any rate, he concludes, *after* this day no mortal should be made a god. Diespiter speaks in favor of Claudius. Hercules works the room, drumming up support (9).

Then the divinized emperor Augustus rises to speak. He delivers a damning indictment of Claudius for having killed people unjustly and cruelly. From public evils he then turns to the sufferings of his own family: Claudius killed the two Julias, Augustus's great-granddaughters, and L. Silanus, his great-grandson. Nor did he even examine the case or hear the evidence. The gods don't behave like this: the worst thing Jupiter ever did was to break Vulcan's leg and hang up his wife. Claudius, by contrast, killed his own wife, Messalina. Augustus then mocks Claudius's body, saying that nobody

could take him seriously as a god. He proposes a resolution that Claudius be deported from heaven and severely punished.

Mercury grabs Claudius by the neck and drags him to the underworld (10–11). On the way down, they pass Claudius's funeral. Seeing it, Claudius realizes that he is dead. Everyone is extremely happy—everyone except the trial lawyers. A dirge is sung, praising Claudius; he is delighted with the tributes and blind to the mockery in them. Arriving in the underworld, he is greeted by the freedman Narcissus (who, as Claudius's secretary, was forced by Agrippina, Nero's mother, to commit suicide shortly after Claudius's murder; he got to the underworld before Claudius because of the latter's detour in heaven). Narcissus is a little alarmed at Cerberus, the dog who guards the gates of Hades: he does not look very much like his little white dog at home. The inhabitants of Hell greet Claudius with chants from the Isis cult, led by the actor-dancer Mnester, whom Claudius had murdered to please Messalina. A large crowd gathers. Claudius is delighted to see so many "friends." One "friend" points out that they got to the underworld because Claudius murdered them all, and proposes that they go to court (12–13).

Taken before the underworld judge Aeacus, Claudius is indicted for countless murders. He can't find a lawyer to defend him, until a corrupt old crony steps up. The prosecution is successful. The punishment is discussed: should Claudius take the place of Sisyphus, Tantalus, or Ixion? No, some futile task more fitting to his life must be devised. He is ordered to play dice using a dice-box with a hole in it. The punishment is poetically elaborated. Then Gaius Caesar (Caligula) appears and asks for Claudius to be his slave; his wish is granted and Claudius is assigned to Gaius's freedman Menander as law clerk for petitions (14–15).

The *Apocolocyntosis* and Seneca's Philosophical Views

How is our text related to Seneca's Stoicism? According to Seneca's philosophical views, expressed with great consistency in the rest of his prose works, good people should attach importance only to their own moral purpose and will. External events that lie in the domain of chance should never be the objects of our eager attachment. For this reason, a Stoic who lives rightly never has reason for grief, anger, fear, or even hope: all these betray a mind that lies in suspense before

the accidents of life. Seneca frequently admits that his own moral development is incomplete, but elsewhere he consistently shows himself struggling with all his might to fulfill these Stoic norms. Those norms permit laughter—but only of a detached sort, looking down at the fools who vainly attach themselves to external things (as in Juvenal's tenth satire). What of the spirit that animates our text?

Let's begin at the beginning. How does the speaker present himself, and what sort of audience is he presented as addressing? He is a knowing political insider; the parodic use of official terminology marks his audience, too, as knowing insiders. This impression is further developed when he tells us that he has received the story in confidence from someone who has had his own experience with senatorial incredulity: he expects his audience to know the story of Drusilla's alleged ascent, a piece of gossip from the era of Caligula. All of this positions the speaker and his audience squarely inside the political world of the time, rather than at any remove from it. At the same time, the speaker also parodies the language of historiography and its protestations of bias-free truth, and obviously expects his audience to be in the know about this sort of writing as well, if they are to get the joke. (The joke being, clearly, that what is about to be a most spiteful and biased account of Claudius is being presented as only the plain and simple truth—as, in a sense, it may be.)

Such a self-presentation is not inconsistent with Stoicism, but making fun of the official and the historical in this lighthearted way is not a known Stoic tactic. Moreover, the speaker's cavalier attitude toward his audience, and his use of flippant vulgarisms alongside the pretend high style, certainly do not suggest sobriety. The chaotic mixture of styles gives the impression of fizz spraying from a bottle when the cork has been drawn: freedom has released a disorderly mixture of sentiments.

Marked among these sentiments is defiance. Defiance toward what? Above all, toward any restriction on political speech. The speaker presents himself as lightheartedly celebrating the end of a tyranny that has prevented him from speaking freely—thus, as someone who cares about politics and the changes it brings. An orthodox Stoic could not say "I know that I was emancipated from the day that . . . "—for, as the Stoics constantly insist, a Stoic wise man is always free, and the potential for freedom exists in any person re-

gardless of circumstances. Stoicism teaches that our true freedom is mental; in no way could it depend on the death of a fool.

And then there is the matter of the date: "October 13, in the new year that began an era of great happiness." This is hardly Stoic chronology; happiness is in our power at all times. It has no beginning and no end—and thus, most especially, it does not begin with the death of a fool and the accession of Nero Caesar. Just as the defiant parts of the opening express some non-Stoic emotions in the neighborhood of anger, spite, and celebration, so this phrase expresses a sentiment that can only be called hope, an emotion that the Stoics repudiate because it is the cousin of fear: you don't have hope unless you are hanging in suspense before the vicissitudes of life.

The work, as we've noted, was circulated very shortly after Claudius's death. Thus there can be no evidence at all that the era it inaugurates is really an era of happiness. (And of course it was not.) To call it that, therefore, is to hang in suspense before things uncertain. As we've said, there were some reasons for optimism, but also many reasons for fear. We might say that the speaker is expressing the hope that Seneca and his co-regent Burrus can keep Nero and his mother under control. Good luck.

On Clemency, written around this same time, assumes a Stoic attitude toward Nero's future: give him good moral advice, and then it's up to him to follow it. Don't let your own well-being depend on his choices. In the *Apocolocyntosis*, by contrast, we have not sound advice given from a position of stability, but a vulnerable prediction about the future of all Romans, including the speaker, and a mood of celebration about that prospect. These are not Stoic sentiments. Indeed, Stoicism urges constant meditation on the *bad* things that might happen, precisely so that we do not fall into the trap of hope.

The work's opening, then, already suggests a non-Stoic psychology. Turning to the bulk of the text, we find much that could be read as eliciting orthodox Stoic laughter: the scornful treatment of Claudius, the castigation of his physical and moral flaws, his dismissal by the gods, his trial and punishment. So we might think that after an opening addressing Nero with obligatory public sentiments, the work has shifted into an authentic Stoic register. Let us ask, however, what would be different if the work were fully Stoic.

First, the attack on Claudius would simply be shorter. We would

get a good sense of Claudius's badness as an *exemplum*, as Seneca uses Gaius Caesar (Caligula) as an *exemplum* in *On Anger*, but then we would move away to general moral sentiments. Instead, Claudius is the protagonist of the work throughout; its story is that of the surprise of his rejection and undoing. The speaker's attention to Claudius is obsessive, fascinated, and revolted—attitudes that are understandable in a speaker and audience who have lived with this man for many miserable years, their cherished projects impeded by his foolishness, their relatives killed by his unjust capriciousness, their whole lives laid waste by his cruelty and stupidity. We can easily imagine such sentiments at a time of regime change, when an unpopular leader is departing from the scene. Indeed, the familiarity of such sentiments is a large part of what makes this text still funny now, so far from its original moment.

What is clear, however, is that the pleasure the work gives by this obsessive focusing is very non-Stoic. Its constructed audience consists of people who care intensely about the political—who feel hatred, disgust, grief for the murdered, and hope for a better time to come. In his philosophical works Seneca portrays himself as a man with a very strong propensity for anger, which he must struggle to control. From *On Anger*, written around 43 CE, to the *Moral Epistles*, written in 63–64 CE, he depicts himself as having difficulty controlling his temper about insults, age, and so on. All his self-examination has not cured him, and he continues to struggle against the base emotion. In the *Apocolocyntosis*, however, we see a joyful explosion of anger unrestrained by any Stoic meditation. The work cultivates and satisfies similar angry passions in its audience.

Second, the portrayal of the gods in the work is very non-Stoic. It is all very well to have Hercules and Fever behave in a ridiculous manner—but Jupiter himself is forgetful, confused, simply a bad ruler and leader. This is unacceptable, as close to blasphemy as would be possible in a Stoic universe, where Zeus (Jupiter) exemplifies perfect rationality and perfect morality.

Third, the moral center of the work is the speech of Augustus. It is serious, dignified, admirable. But what is the mental state of Augustus, as depicted? He is very angry, so angry that he can hardly contain himself. He is also ashamed: he says that he feels shame before the office he himself created, when he sees it occupied as

Claudius has occupied it. Anger and shame are depicted as totally appropriate reactions to Claudius's murders of Augustus's kin. And Seneca is implicated too, for one of the two murdered Julias is the Julia with whom he was accused of committing adultery, and for whose sake he almost lost his life. Whether there was truth in the story or not, readers would assume that the author is not indifferent to her fate.

Nor is the ascription of anger to Augustus in any way necessitated by historical veracity. Augustus was famous for *clementia* and self-control. In *On Anger* he is offered repeatedly as a good example of non-anger, just as Caligula is the bad example of uncontrolled anger. But here Augustus is angry, despite his mild nature, because how could one not be angry at the murder of so many kin, the disregard of law, the combination of foolishness and cruelty in the entire reign? His indignation is represented as justified and rational. The work accepts the ordinary valuations of these external events, and endorses anger as a rational response to their significance.

Fourth, there is no mercy in the work, and mercy is actively repudiated. The work postdates *On Anger*, with its eloquent defense of a merciful understanding of human failings. And it is written more or less simultaneously with *On Clemency*, addressed to Nero, which contains Seneca's fullest account of his doctrine of mercy. Mercy is a very important part of Roman Stoicism, in keeping with the traditionally high Roman valuation of the virtue of *clementia*. Our work shows no mercy at all to the deformities and villainies of Claudius. There is no attempt to show them as arising from the difficult circumstances of human life or the follies of a corrupt culture. Moreover, when punishment is meted out by Aeacus, it is made explicit that there is to be no mercy. The work's spirit is ruthless, as befits a political fantasy of anger gratified, but as does not befit Senecan Stoicism.

Fifth, there is too much concern for a type of happiness that depends on chance. We have seen this emphasis already in the opening, but the portrait of Claudius's funeral shows it even more clearly. "Everyone was cheerful and happy; the Roman people were strolling about like free men." A Stoic text could of course contain such a narrative, but it would have to be followed by a reflection on the vanity of all such worldly hopes, and a denial that what these people were experiencing was true freedom or true happiness. (That is the

way the satirist Juvenal treats worldly happiness; his tenth satire is, on this point, a consistently Stoic work.)

Finally, right at the heart of the work is a staggering expression of hope. The poetic praise of Nero is not facetious. Attempts to understand it that way run up against the beauty of the poetry (which echoes Virgil's fourth *Eclogue*, with its prophecy of a golden age) and the ample contextual evidence that hope for a glorious future was a widely expressed, and possibly widely felt, sentiment at the time of Nero's accession. Who can say what the mental state of the real-life author must have been while composing these lines, in which Apollo declares Nero his equal in talent and beauty? Whatever the state of the new regent was, however, the text itself boldly expresses hope for an era of happiness and confidence in the man who has it in his power to bring it about. At the same time, that hope would have to be seen by its intended audience as fragile. In an orthodox Stoic text the fragile hope, and Nero himself, would have to be inside the satire, a part of its target. Instead there is real hope, and an utterly straight-faced portrait of Nero's virtues.

The work, then, is not Stoic. And yet, in its focus on disgust, it contains a first movement in the direction of Stoicism. The speaker draws attention to the disgusting effluvia that flow out of Claudius's body. He then constructs a parallel between the physical body and the body politic: both have been shat all over by stuff coming out of Claudius. The political scene is portrayed, then, as smelly and disgusting.

Disgust expresses an aversion to contamination and a rejection of a substance or person as a possible contamination to the self. Cross-cultural empirical research—particularly the important work of psychologist Paul Rozin—has found a remarkable consistency in the cognitive content of the emotion across societies. Disgust, Rozin argues from his experimental evidence, is not mere distaste, because the very same substance or smell elicits different disgust reactions depending on the subject's conception of the object: whether, for example, the smell is thought to come from feces or from cheese. Disgust is also different from the fear of danger, because disgusting animals (roaches, beetles) remain disgusting after all potential danger is removed. Moreover, disgust typically spreads from its "primary objects"—bodily wastes and decaying bodies—to people and groups

who are viewed as unsavory, contaminating the purity of the self even though these people do not pose any danger to the self.

Disgust, then, has a dynamic that is very different from that of anger. Like anger, it both registers a present pain and projects a future good. But the future good is one of separation and repudiation, not rectification (the goal of anger, as it is defined in both Stoic and non-Stoic ancient analyses). The disgusted person wants to get away from the disgusting person or thing, either by removing himself or by removing it. Anger seeks punishment; disgust seeks separation.

Suppose we now think about anger and disgust in politics. We often get angry at our politicians. We also often feel disgust or revulsion toward a politician or group of politicians. We say, "How disgusting"; we want to vomit. These two responses are importantly distinct. In anger we focus on a wrongful act or acts. We say, "That should not have happened, and the person deserves to be punished." We intend a rectification or righting of the balance. In our disgust we say, "Yuck. Let me out of here." We view our politicians as filthy contaminants and we want to get away from them, whether by tossing them onto the garbage heap or—where that is not possible—by taking ourselves away from politics. Disgust at politics typically seeks a purity that the world of politics does not offer.

Disgust does not have a large theoretical pedigree in Greek and Roman thought. But Robert Kaster's important study of *fastidium* enables us to understand the distinctive features of Roman disgust. Studying all occurrences of the term and its relatives in both republican and imperial Latin, Kaster argues that the term picks out two categories of emotional experience that are importantly distinct. One is the sort of disgust I have just been describing: a strong revulsion at the thought of a contaminant. Here, as Kaster points out, his material supports the arguments of modern psychologists. Disgust has certain primary objects, but the same response is frequently extended to people who are viewed as unsavory.

What is distinctive about the Roman configuration is that the same term, *fastidium*, also designates a rather different experience, drawing it closer to the experience of disgust than in many cultures. This is what Kaster calls "deliberative ranking": *fastidium* involves thinking something or someone is below something else. It is a relative of contempt, but need not be as strongly pejorative. The workings

of the word group create very interesting relations between the two types of *fastidium*. At times, a primary experience of bodily disgust leads someone to rank something or someone low; at other times, a primary low ranking leads to the imputation to the person or thing of traditional disgust properties.

This theory of *fastidium* illuminates the dynamics of our text. First, a low ranking of Claudius leads to an imputation of incontinence and smelliness. All human beings shit, but it is he who, because of his incompetence and cruelty, can be said to have shat all over everything. At this point, however, our text shows at least the beginning of a further movement: the fact that the goods of politics have shit all over them leads in the direction, at least, of a devaluing of those goods, a *fastidium* toward them of the deliberative-ranking sort. And of course that low ranking of the "goods of fortune" is exactly what Stoicism recommends. This low ranking is not stable in the text as it unfolds; for now a fantasy of purity is projected onto the body of Nero, and Nero becomes a locus of impossible hope for an unsullied political existence. But the speaker has, albeit briefly, taken a first step out of the world. By saying, "What shit all this politics is," he has taken the first step toward downgrading those evaluations in a more radical and systematic way—not just Claudius but Rome, emperors, and political change itself. In the world of Stoic norms, one would be able to live without disgust as without anger and fear; but disgust can help one begin to move in the direction of that world.

This satire, then, is the work of the Seneca whom history shows us: a complicated, ambitious, immersed, and highly competent political leader who also loved Stoic philosophy, and who wrestled throughout his life with this double allegiance. Given the seeds of Stoic detachment in the work, Seneca's later request for release from his duties should come as no surprise. Nor should the dignified and Socratic manner of his eventual suicide. The satire, still immersed in the world of "external goods," is already moving in that direction.

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The Pumpkinification of Claudius the God

LUCIUS ANNAEUS SENECA

TRANSLATED BY MARTHA C. NUSSBAUM

1. I want to put on record the motions that were passed in heaven on October 13,[1] in the new year that began an era of great happiness. My account will bear no taint of bias or spite: it is the objective truth. If someone should ask me where I got my information—first of all, if I don't feel like it, I won't answer. Who's going to force me? I know that I was emancipated from the moment he met his end—that man who was living proof of the proverb, "One should be born either a king or a fool." If I feel like answering, I'll say whatever the fuck I please.[2] Whoever required a historian to reveal his sources? But still, if I have to name my source, ask the man who saw Drusilla[3] going up into heaven. The same man will say that he saw Claudius taking that very route "with unequal steps."[4] Whether he wants to or not, he has to see everything that goes on in heaven: he's in charge of the Appian Way, along which, as you know, both the deified Augustus and Tiberius Caesar ascended to the gods. If you ask him, he'll tell you in private; he will never say a word when people are around. For after he swore in the Senate that he saw Drusilla going up into heaven—and, in spite of that helpful information, nobody believed him—he took a solemn oath that he would say absolutely nothing even if he saw a

1. The language of official Senatorial business.

2. Literally, "whatever comes into my mouth." But the word for mouth, *buccam*, is quite vulgar, just about as vulgar as (in 2009) the translation is—by which I mean very common in colloquial usage, but unacceptable in literary or journalistic usage.

3. Julia Drusilla (17–38 CE) had incestuous relations with her brother Gaius (Caligula) for many years. At her death he mourned elaborately, a decree of deification was voted, and a senator named Lucius Geminus swore on oath that he had seen her ascending into heaven. She was consecrated as Panthea.

4. *Non passibus aequis*, Virgil *Aeneid* 2.723, where it is used to describe the steps of Aeneas's little son Iulus, "unequal" to those of his adult father. Seneca turns the phrase into a joke about Claudius's limping gait: his steps are "unequal" to each other.

man being murdered in the middle of the Forum. What I heard that day from him, I shall narrate reliably and clearly—as surely as I wish him health and happiness.

2. Already Phoebus had drawn the arc of his light
Inward, taking a shorter path. The hours
Of shadowed Sleep were growing longer.
Already Cynthia, claiming victory,
Had increased her empire; ugly Winter
Plucked at the pleasing glories of ripe Autumn.
The vineyard owner, telling Bacchus to age,
Went out to pluck the last remaining grapes.[5]

I think you'll understand me better if I say: it was October 13th. I can't tell you the precise hour (it's easier to get philosophers to agree than clocks!), but still it was somewhere between noon and one p.m. "That's way too crude. Think about literary fashion:[6] poets aren't content any more to describe sunrises and sunsets; now they even intrude on our lunch breaks. Are you going to pass up such an appealing hour?"

Already Phoebus' chariot had traversed
The middle of his circuit, and toward Night
He shook his weary reins, bending his light
In a downward curve along a slanting path.

Claudius began to gasp for breath, but couldn't find the exit.

3. Then Mercury, who had always been delighted by Claudius's wit, took one of the three Fates aside and said, "You horribly cruel woman! Why do you allow the poor man to be tortured? Won't you ever give him a rest from his long agony? It's been sixty-four years now that he's been wrestling with his life. Why do you hold a grudge against him and against the Republic? Let the astrologers be right for a change. They've been predicting his death every year—no, every

5. Latin dactylic hexameters, roughly Virgilian in diction.

6. Text uncertain: with Eden, I accept Russo's *nimis rustice!* <*adeo his*> *adquiescunt* . . .

month—ever since he became emperor. But still, it's no wonder if they make mistakes and nobody seems clear about his final hour. For nobody ever realized he was alive. Do what has to be done:

> Give him to death: let the better king
> Reign in the empty hall.[7]

But Clotho replied, "By Hercules! I wanted to give him just a teensy bit more time, so that he could confer citizenship on the last remaining stragglers"—for he had decided to see all Greeks, Gauls, Spaniards, and Britons wearing the toga.[8] "But since you like the idea of keeping some foreigners for breeding stock, and that's what you are insisting on, so be it." Then she opened a small box and brought out three spindles. One belonged to Augurinus, the second to Baba, the third to Claudius.[9] "These three men," she said, "I shall decree to die in the same year, just a few minutes apart. I won't send him away without companions. For it is not right that a man who has been accustomed to seeing so many thousands follow him, precede him, and swarm around him should suddenly be left all alone. He will be satisfied with these pals in the meantime."

4. So she spoke; and, spinning the thread of fate
On a dirty spindle, snapped it, putting an end
To his royal stupid life. But Lachesis,
Sweeping her long hair up in a fancy knot,
And crowning her brow with the Muses' own laurel,
Pulls from the snow-white skein a shiny thread

7. Virgil *Georgics* 4.90, also cited at *On Clemency* 1.19.2: instructions to a bee-keeper about what to do with a drone who has lost the contest for leadership of the hive. (Virgil thinks that kings, not queens, rule in the bee kingdom.)

8. Claudius was controversial for his extensions of the citizenship, both through en masse grants to groups of provincials and through individual grants. The policy might be defended on military grounds: only citizens could serve in the legions.

9. Eden suggests that this may be the start of a nursery rhyme designed to teach children the letters of the alphabet. The first two are invented names, *Baba* being suggestive of stupidity. In the context, "Claudius" reminds us of *claudus*, "limping"—an apt connection.

Of white wool, guiding it with happy hand.
As she spins it out, it magically changes color.
Her sisters stand amazed: common wool
Has suddenly been changed to precious metal.
On that lovely thread a Golden Age spins down.
There is no end. Spinning the happy fleece
They joyfully fill their hands. Work is sweet.
The task goes rapidly, without effort.
Easily the delicate thread winds round
The whirling spindle. His years exceed those
Of Nestor and Tithonus. Phoebus too
Is there: he helps them on with singing,
Happy about the times to come. With joy
He now plucks the lyre, now helps the spinning.
With his voice he enchants them, making their work easy.
While they heap praise on their brother's lyre and singing
They spin out more than was their custom. Praise
Makes their work exceed the normal human life span.
"Don't make it shorter, Fates," Apollo says.
"Let him live beyond the span of mortal years,
That man so similar to me in grace
And beauty, and no less skilled at singing.
He will give happy years to his weary people.
He will break the long silence of the laws.
As Lucifer scatters the stars in headlong flight,
As Hesperus rises when they return at night,
Or as, when blushing Dawn dissolves the shadows,
Ushering in the day, Sun in his splendor
Looks at the world, and speeds his chariot on
From the starting gate: such a Caesar now
Approaches. Such a Nero, now, all Rome
Will gaze upon. His radiant face blazes
With gentle brilliance; his lovely neck
Displays the beauty of his flowing hair."[10]

10. Latin epic hexameters, again basically Virgilian in diction; lofty and quite beautiful.

So said Apollo. But Lachesis, since she too had a weakness for such a good-looking man, indulged it lavishly and gave Nero many years from her store. As for Claudius, they told everyone

> With celebration and auspicious words
> To send him out the door.[11]

And in fact he gushed out his life,[12] and from that moment on he ceased to have even the appearance of being alive. (By the way, he died while he was listening to the comic actors, so you can see that it's not without reason that I'm afraid of them.) His last words heard among mortals—after he had let out a louder sound from that part with which he found it easier to communicate—were as follows: "Good heavens. I think I've shat myself." Well, I don't know about that, but he certainly shat up everything else.

5. It would be superfluous to report the subsequent events on earth. You know them very well, and there's no danger of losing sight of what public joy has impressed on people's memories. Nobody forgets what makes him happy. Listen now to the business transacted in heaven. My informant will be held responsible for the accuracy of this report.

A messenger came to Jupiter saying that a man had arrived, fairly tall with very white hair. He seemed to be making some kind of threat, for he kept shaking his head back and forth. His right foot dragged behind. The messenger said that he had asked him what country he came from. The man stammered something unintelligible; his voice shook and his speech was garbled. The messenger couldn't tell what language he was speaking. He wasn't Greek or Roman or from any other familiar place.

11. In Greek, an iambic hexameter, a well-known fragment from Euripides' *Cresphontes* also quoted by Cicero (*Tusculan Disputations* 1.48.115). The original recommends grief (for future suffering) at a birth, joy (for an end to troubles) at a death. Seneca uses the line to comment on the joy all feel at Claudius's demise.

12. *Ebuliit*, which suggests liquid bubbling, though it does not specify the orifice from which the liquid is flowing.

Then Jupiter ordered Hercules, who had wandered all over the world and seemed to be familiar with all its countries, to go and figure out this man's national origin. Hercules was pretty upset at the first sight of him, even though he had always been undismayed by monsters.[13] When he saw that weird face, that strange gait, and heard that voice—which sounded like nothing belonging to a land animal, but the sort of the sort of hoarse barking sound that a walrus usually makes[14]—he thought that his thirteenth labor was at hand. When he examined the creature more carefully, it looked rather like a human being. He therefore approached and, as was very easy for a guy from Greece, said:

Who are you? Where from? Describe your city and your kin.[15]

Claudius was delighted to discover that there were classical scholars there; he hoped that they would appreciate his historical writings. So he too spoke with a line from Homer, signifying that he was Caesar, and said:

From Troy the wind blew me to the coast of Thrace.[16]

(But the next line would have been truer, and equally Homeric:

And there I sacked the city and destroyed the people.[17])

6. And he would have put one over on Hercules, who was not very sharp, if Fever hadn't been there.[18] (Deserting her temple, she had

13. A difficult and possibly corrupt passage. Another possible rendering is Eden's "who had had occasion to fear monsters, but not yet all of them."

14. Literally, "sea beasts"—but the idea is clearer if one imagines a concrete instance.

15. In Greek, from Homer *Odyssey* 1.170 (with one small variation), but a common type of question generally in Homer.

16. In Greek, *Odyssey* 9.39, Odysseus to Alcinoos. All Roman emperors followed Julius Caesar's practice of claiming descent from Aeneas, the Trojan prince.

17. In Greek, *Odyssey*. 9.40, omitting the first word of the line, "to Ismarus."

18. Fever was a recognized Roman divinity who had a shrine on the Palatine. Malaria was a common threat in the region, and this is probably the type of fever most connected to the goddess. Thus "I who have lived with him for

come as Claudius's only escort, leaving all the other gods behind at Rome.) "Lies, nothing but lies, that story of his," she said. "I'll tell you, I who have lived with him for so many years: he was born in Lyons.[19] He's a fellow townsman of Munatius. I tell you, he was born just sixteen miles from Vienne;[20] he's a native-born Gaul.[21] So he did what a Gaul should do: he captured Rome.[22] I guarantee you: he was born at Lyons, where Licinus reigned for many years. But you, who have trudged across more places than any long-distance mule driver, you ought to know that it's a long way from the Xanthus to the Rhône."[23]

At this point Claudius got blazing mad and spoke angrily in the loudest mutter he could manage. Nobody could understand what he said, but he was giving the command for Fever to be punished. Using that gesture he so often used to have people beheaded, with that trembling hand, steady enough for this purpose alone, he ordered her throat to be cut. You would think that all the people there were his freedmen: that's how little attention people paid to him.[24]

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so many years" links Claudius's tremors and uncontrolled movements to the shivering and shaking characteristic of malaria.

19. Claudius was born at Lugdunum (Lyons) on August 1, 10 BCE; his father Drusus was on campaign against the *Germani* and his mother Antonia was accompanying him.

20. A city in Gallia Narbonensis, a rival of Lyons—setting up the subsequent pun.

21. *Gallus germanus*, a pun: *germanus* means "genuine," but it also means *Germanus*, "German"—alluding to Claudius's birth as a "German Gaul," in enemy territory.

22. The Gauls captured Rome in 390 BCE; according to Tacitus (*Annals* 11.24.9), Claudius alluded to this event in a speech. The remark also refers back to the Homeric quote at the end of section 5.

23. The Xanthus is a river that flowed through ancient Troy; the Rhône flows through Lyons.

24. Claudius continued a trend begun by his predecessor, entrusting increasingly important functions to freed slaves. In 48, Narcissus was even made prefect of the guard for one day. Servants were often awarded honors comparable to those bestowed on senators. Narcissus obtained the *ornamenta quaestoria*, Pallas the *ornamenta praetoria* (ironically, to reward him for his proposal that free women who had affairs with slaves should themselves be enslaved).

7. Then Hercules said, "Listen to me! You, stop being an idiot. You've come to a place where even the mice chew iron.[25] Tell me the truth quickly, before I beat the nonsense out of you." And to make himself more awe-inspiring, he became a tragic character and said:[26]

"Reveal without delay your natal city,
Or, stricken by this club, you'll meet your end.
Oft has this cudgel slain ferocious kings.
What is that sound you make, with unclear speech?
What clan, what nation, reared your wobbly head?
Out with it. Once, seeking the distant land
Of the threefold king, as I drove the noble cattle
To the city of Inachus from the Western sea,
I saw a huge cliff looming above two rivers—
Phoebus always faces it as he rises—
Where the mighty Rhône flows in a rapid torrent
And the Arar, wondering where to turn his course,
Silently washes the banks with peaceful shallows.
Is that the land that nursed your vital breath?"

He said this boldly and vigorously enough: but nonetheless he was scared out of his wits, and feared "a dolt from the blue."[27] When Claudius saw what a he-man Hercules was, he forgot his nonsense. He realized that at Rome nobody had been his equal, but here he did not have the same influence: a rooster is king only on his own shit pile.[28] And so, he seemed to speak as follows (insofar as he could be understood): "Hercules, strongest of gods, I hoped that you would

25. The "even" is not expressed in the Latin, but seems clearly to be the sense of the joke: this is such a tough place that even mice, tiny and proverbially timorous, can gnaw iron.

26. The ensuing speech, a brilliant parody of tragedy, is written in Latin iambic senarii, the standard dialogue meter of Senecan tragedy. The diction and vocabulary are very close to Seneca's own in his *Hercules Furens*.

27. In Greek, *môrou plêgên*, "stroke of the fool." Seneca changes the common tragic phrase *theou plêgên*, "a stroke from the god," meaning Zeus's lightning bolt, by substituting *môros*, "fool," for *theos*.

28. A proverbial saying, but here with added humor: a pun on *gallus* (both "Gaul" and "rooster"), and a reference to the fact that Claudius has made Rome a pile of shit.

speak up for me in this group, and if anyone had asked me for a character witness, I was going to mention you, since you know me very well. For if you think back, you'll remember that it was I who heard lawsuits in front of your temple the whole day long in the months of July and August. You know what a lot of irritations I had to put up with, listening to the trial lawyers day and night. If you had had that experience, extremely strong though you seem to be, you'd prefer to clean the Augean stables: I drained off a lot more bullshit.[29] But since I wish **** "[30]

8. "... I'm not surprised that you've charged into the Senate chamber, for nothing is off-limits to you.[31] Only tell us what sort of god you want him to become. He can't be an Epicurean god: for that sort of god 'has no trouble himself, nor does he give trouble to others.'[32] A

29. Hercules' sixth labor was to clean the stable of the three thousand cattle of King Augaeus, which had not been cleaned for many years. The amount of bullshit ascribed to the lawyers is thus of monumental proportions. The further joke is that Claudius, far from cleaning up the bullshit, has himself been shitting all over everything.

30. This gap in the manuscripts must have contained the end of Claudius's speech, including an attempt to enlist Hercules' aid in the divinization project. Perhaps he made Hercules some offer, since Hercules later says, "This bill is close to my heart" (*mea res agitur*)—although that remark can also be explained in another way (see below). The two must then have burst into the Senate house of the gods and made an initial request that Claudius be deified. Weinreich suggests that this would have been a good time to parody the rambling and old-fashioned style of Claudius's speeches (of which we have fragments).

31. The speaker cannot be identified, but it is clear that he has read a lot of philosophy and is very hostile to Claudius.

32. In Greek, quoting the first of Epicurus's *Kuriai Doxai* (*Principal Sayings*), see Diogenes Laertius X.139. Epicurus held that the gods are serene and undisturbed and therefore have no need of mortals, no gratitude for their favor, and no anger at their neglect. According to the fuller account given by the Roman Epicurean poet Lucretius, priests have convinced us to fear the gods and the punishment they can inflict, but a rational understanding of the universe shows us that these fears are groundless. One source of humor here is the very attempt to make philosophical sense of the ad hoc politics of the cult of the emperor, suggesting that the divinized emperor must have a distinctive philo-

Stoic god? How can that be? Is he 'round like a ball,' as Varro says, 'without a head, without a foreskin?' There's something of the Stoic god in him, now I see: he has neither heart nor head.[33]

"By Hercules! If he should have asked this privilege of Saturn, whose holiday month this Saturnalian emperor[34] celebrates the whole year round, he would not have obtained it. But that he should be inducted into the company of the gods—not to mention by Jupiter, whom, insofar as he could, he convicted of incest! For Claudius killed his own son-in-law Silanus. 'For what, I ask you?' Because he had a sister, the most delectable of all young women; everyone else called her Venus, but he preferred to call her Juno.[35] 'Why his

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sophical pedigree. Another source of humor lies in the very idea that Claudius, like a detached Epicurean god, should lack an interest in punishment.

33. According to the Stoics, god was the rational and moral order inherent in the universe as a whole. In the famous *Moral Epistle* 41, Seneca says that people should therefore not bow down before images of a human being; they should revere moral rationality, which is within themselves as it is in the universe as a whole. But the Stoics were also physicalists, for whom all aspects of the personality were corporeal, so Varro's apparent attempt to describe the shape of divinity is not inherently absurd, though the context of the description remains obscure. With "neither heart nor head," reference is probably made to the Stoic doctrine that the wise person, cultivating his own divinity, comes to lack the passions—although this is not certain, since the Stoics situated both moral reason and the passions in the heart. The lack of "head" probably alludes to god's lack of historical particularity and, therefore, of partiality: Stoic mental exercises frequently urge the pupil to identify increasingly with the universe and to think of themselves not as individuals but, instead, as parts of an interconnected whole. The humor of thinking of Claudius as a Stoic god is just as great as in the Epicurean case: for perfect moral rationality, impartial and free from passion, is precisely what Claudius does *not* exemplify.

34. *Saturnalicus princeps*, a neologism. Claudius was fond of the Saturnalia, extending its duration and joining in the festivities with enthusiasm. But, more generally, he was the sort of ruler who turned things topsy-turvy: his entire reign was a Saturnalia, both prodigal and irrational.

35. Juno was both the sister and the wife of Jupiter. L. Junius Silanus Torquatus, great-grandson of Augustus (b. 24 CE), was betrothed by Claudius to his daughter Octavia. Agrippina then decided it would be good for Octavia to marry Nero, so she had to get rid of Silanus. The affection between Silanus and his sister Junia Calvina was made into a charge of incest, and Silanus was stricken from the senatorial roll. He committed suicide in 49 CE,

own sister?' you say. 'I'd love to know.' Listen up, stupid: you can go part way in Athens, but you can go all the way in Alexandria.[36] 'But since at Rome,' you say, 'you're required to have abstinence training,[37] is *he* going to straighten out this mess for us? He won't even know what to do in his own bedroom. He already has his head in the clouds.[38]

"*He* wants to be made a god? Isn't it enough that he has a temple in Britain,[39] where the savages worship him, and pray 'to come upon the fool when he is well-disposed?'"[40]

9. At long last it dawned on Jupiter[41] that it was not permitted for senators to express their views or hold a debate while outsiders were in the Senate chamber. He said, "Honorable fellow senators,[42] I allowed you to hold a hearing, but you've made a real mess of it. I want

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on the day that Claudius married Agrippina. A well-known irony in the whole situation is that Claudius was Agrippina's uncle, and the marriage was shocking by Roman standards, if not strictly illegal. Suetonius says he drew attention to the incestuous aspect of the match, calling her "daughter" and "nursling."

36. In Athens, children of the same father could marry, but not children of the same mother. In Alexandria, marriage between full brothers and sisters was practiced by the Ptolemies.

37. Literally, "mice lick the millstones," an obscure phrase that probably signifies austerity. (You only lick the flour dust off of the millstones if you can't find enough to eat elsewhere.)

38. Claudius was famous for *meteôria*, looking off into space, and *ablepsia*, not noticing things. But the passage also suggests some sort of sexual lack. Since Claudius was famous for his passion for women, and indeed for being too subservient to his wives, probably the reference is not to lack of virility so much as to lack of knowledge and lack of control. Messalina notoriously had multiple lovers, once competing with a prostitute to see who could have intercourse with more men in a single night, and yet Claudius for a very long time remained convinced of her fidelity.

39. At Colchester (Camulodunum).

40. In Greek, *môrou euêlatou tuchein*, a second substitution of "fool" for "god," this time in a common prayer formula.

41. Jupiter is portrayed as neglectful and incompetent—rather like Claudius himself.

42. Literally, *patres conscripti*, the formula of address to the assembled Senate.

you to respect the rules of the Senate chamber. What must he think of us (whatever sort of being he is)? They asked Claudius to leave. The first one who was asked for his view was father Janus.[43] He had been appointed to be consul for the afternoon, with a term scheduled to begin on July 1[44]—a man who could see "both behind and in front,"[45] at least where his own business was concerned. Because he lived in the Forum, he spoke copiously and with eloquence. The stenographer[46] couldn't keep up with him, and so I will not report what he said, not wishing to put words in his mouth. He said a lot about the greatness of the gods: that such an honor should not be given out to just anyone. "There was once a time," he said, "when it was a great thing to be made a god. Now you have made it into a cheap comedy.[47] And so, since I don't want to seem to make an ad hominem argument, I move that after this day not one be made a god from those 'who eat the fruit of the earth,' or those are fed by 'life-giving earth.'[48] Anyone who, contrary to this Senate resolution, is either made a god or said to be a god or depicted as one, must be given to the demons[49] and be thrashed along with the new recruits[50] at the next gladiatorial games."

The next who was asked to express his view was Diespiter, son of

43. Janus, god of doors and gates, proverbially looks in two directions.

44. Seneca is poking fun at the custom of honorary short-term consular appointments: Janus is apparently consul for only a single afternoon. He probably would not have any work at all, since the Roman Senate often stopped work at midday.

45. In Greek, a Homeric phrase used to describe older men's memory of the past and intimation of the future, here applied to Janus in a literal sense.

46. *Notarius*. By this time, a system of shorthand had been developed to record the daily *acta senatus*, which began to be recorded in 59 BCE under Julius Caesar.

47. *Fabam mimum*, "bean farce." The *mimus* was a vulgar and sensational form of entertainment; it is unclear what the reference to "bean" means. It could suggest the cult of the dead; it might also simultaneously allude to Claudius's theory and practice of flatulence.

48. Both Homeric phrases, quoted in Greek.

49. *Larvis*, malevolent spirits, often ghosts of the dead.

50. The *auctorati* were citizens who had sold themselves into the gladiatorial schools.

Vica Pota.[51] He too was a consul-elect, a small-time moneylender. He used to make his living by selling citizenship documents. Hercules walked up to him in a friendly way and touched his ear.[52] So he proposed the following motion: "Since the deified Claudius is a blood relative of the deified Augustus, and no less so of his grandmother the deified Augusta, whose deification he himself ordered; and since he far exceeds all mortals in wisdom; and since it is in the national interest for there to be someone who can 'wolf down steaming turnips' with Romulus,[53] I move that the deified Claudius should be a god from this day onward, in the same way as anyone else before him who became a god by due process of law, and that this event should be added to the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid."[54]

There were various speeches, and it appeared that Claudius was prevailing. For Hercules, seeing that his iron was in the fire, kept darting around, now here, now there, saying, "Don't hold out on me: this bill is close to my heart.[55] If you need anything some day, I'll return the favor. You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours."[56]

51. Diespiter is a native Italian sky god, sometimes identified with Iuppiter (the words are cognate)—though not here, where he is clearly a distinct persona. Vica Pota is another local deity who had a shrine at the bottom of the Palatine. The passage thus pokes fun at Claudius's antiquarian interests: he gets strong support from minor local deities. Cicero connects Vica Pota's name with gain and conquest (*De legibus* 2.11.28), which may be the reason for calling her son a "small-time moneylender." But Pota (with a short o) may also allude to drunkenness through the similarity to *pôta*, "drunk," and hence to Claudius's fondness for indulgence. According to Suetonius, "He was eager for food and drink at all times and in all places."

52. A common way of reminding a witness to think of what he remembered.

53. The fragment, the end of a Latin hexameter, is not elsewhere attested. Eden suggests, plausibly, that the crudity of *vorare*, "to wolf down," suggests a satiric origin—possibly in the work of Lucilius.

54. The fifteen-book epic by Ovid (43 BCE–17 CE) describes the apotheoses of both Romulus and Julius Caesar.

55. Perhaps, as several have suggested, because Claudius has promised Hercules some reward for his help; but it is sufficient to remember that Hercules himself is a man who has been turned into a god, so he would naturally have an interest in the fate of another mortal seeking divinization.

56. Literally, "one hand washes the other," *manus manum lavat*.

10. Then the deified Augustus stood up, when his turn came to express his view, and discoursed with great eloquence.[57] "Honorable fellow senators," he said, "you are my witnesses that, since the time I became a god, I have not said a word. I always mind my own business.[58] But I can conceal my views no longer, nor restrain the distress that shame makes heavier to bear. Was it for this that I brought peace to both land and sea? Was it for this that I brought the civil wars to an end? Was it for this that I established the city on a sound legal foundation, that I beautified it with public works, so that—? I can't think what to say, honorable senators. No words are a match for my indignation. So I must take refuge in the well-known saying of that eloquent man Messala Corvinus: 'I am ashamed of my office.'[59]

"This man, honorable senators, who looks to you as if he could not scare off a fly, used to kill human beings as easily as a dog squats.[60] But what should I say about so many fine men? I have no leisure to mourn for the city's catastrophe, focused as I am on the wrongs done to my own family. So I will omit the former and describe the latter. Even if my anklebone doesn't know it, I know: 'The knee is closer to the heart than the shin bone.'[61] This man whom you

57. Augustus was famous for his eloquence, and this speech, utterly serious in diction, is an impressive piece of rhetoric.

58. Augustus uses his well-known moderation and discretion to gain the audience's sympathy.

59. *Pudet imperii*, "I am ashamed of my position of command"—here used to refer to the *imperium* that Augustus himself had created: the principate. The statement by the distinguished soldier and politician Messala Corvinus (64 BCE–8 CE) is unknown elsewhere. It probably refers to an occasion when, having been appointed city prefect by Augustus, he resigned only six days later, presumably seeing that the office, which included being in charge of the city police, might be used in oppressive ways.

60. Another reference to defecation—this one more polite, in keeping with the high tone of the speech. Claudius's murders are compared to a dog shitting, presumably with the meaning that they contaminate the body politic.

61. A difficult and corrupt passage, but probably the sense is that Augustus knows Claudius's character above all through his murders of Augustus's own relations.

see there, after hiding out for so many years under cover of my name,[62] showed his gratitude to me as follows. He killed the two Julias, my great-granddaughters: one with the sword, the other by starvation.[63] He killed one great-grandson of mine, Lucius Silanus—you will judge, Jupiter, whether it was in an unjust cause; at any rate it was the same as yours, if you will look at it fairly. Tell me, deified Claudius:[64] why did you convict even one of the men and women whom you killed before you examined their side of the case, before you heard their testimony?[65] Where are things done this way? Certainly not in heaven.

11. "Look at Jupiter, who has reigned for so many years. The only thing he did was to break Vulcan's leg, and:

> Seizing him by the foot, he cast him down
> From the threshold of heaven.[66]

And then he got angry at his wife and hung her up.[67] But he didn't kill her, did he? *You* killed Messalina, whose great-great-uncle I was as much as I am yours. 'I don't remember,' you say? May the gods

62. Like his predecessors, Claudius took the *cognomen* Caesar. Suetonius tells us that his favorite oath was "By Augustus," and that he liked to emphasize the alleged closeness of his policies to those of the great man.

63. One Julia was the daughter of Drusus, son of Tiberius; the other was Julia Livilla, daughter of Germanicus. Both had incurred the enmity of Messalina, who got Claudius to condemn them, according to Suetonius, "on an unclear charge, with no opportunity to put up a defense." The former was slain; the latter died in banishment. One of the charges against Julia Livilla was adultery with Seneca, and Seneca went into exile with her in 41.

64. A complex irony—for, like Diespiter, though with hostile and ironic intent, Augustus alludes to Claudius as already deified. And of course he is.

65. According to our sources, a common practice of Claudius.

66. In Greek, Homer *Iliad* 15.18.

67. In the same passage, Zeus reminds Hera that on a previous occasion he hung her in the sky with anvils tied to her feet. But the allusions are complex: leg-breaking and hanging were common penalties for slaves, and so, as Eden suggests, Jupiter is shown to have treated his wife and her lover like slaves, a hardly flattering portrayal.

curse you. Not remembering that you killed her is a lot more disgraceful than the killing itself.[68]

"Beyond this, he didn't stop persecuting Gaius Caesar even after his death. Gaius had killed his father-in-law:[69] Claudius killed a son-in-law as well.[70] Gaius forbade Crassus's son to be called 'the Great.' Claudius gave him back the name, but took away his head.[71] In one family he killed Crassus, Pompeius Magnus, Scribonia[72]—not an exclusive clan of Assaracus, but nobles all the same.[73] Crassus in fact was stupid enough that he could have been a king. This is the man whom you now want to deify?

"Look at his body, shaped at his birth by angry gods. To put it in a nutshell, if he can string three words together rapidly, he can take me as his slave. Who will worship *him* as a god? Who will believe in him? If you deify people like this, no one will believe that you are gods. To go straight to the heart of the matter, honorable fellow senators: if I have acquitted myself with honor among you, if I have answered nobody in too aggressive a way, avenge my wrongs. I submit the following motion"—and he read from his notepad—"'Whereas the deified Claudius killed his father-in-law Appius Silanus,[74] his

68. Suetonius reports that after giving the order for Messalina's death, Claudius went to dinner and asked why she was not at the table.

69. Gaius ordered the suicide of M. Junius Silanus, a friend of Tiberius, in 38 CE.

70. The reference could be either to L. Silanus, already mentioned twice, or to Pompeius Magnus, mentioned subsequently, who married Claudius's daughter Antonia in 41 CE.

71. Caligula took away the title "the Great" (*Magnus*) from Cn. Pompeius. He was killed at Messalina's request in 47 CE.

72. Crassus is M. Licinius Crassus Frugi, father of Cn. Pompeius Magnus. He was a powerful aristocrat, and though the cause of his death is not recorded, the suggestion of murder is plausible. Scribonia, as we learn below, was a daughter of Crassus and sister of Magnus.

73. A difficult and possibly corrupt passage, but its sense is clear: these people were not from the most exclusive part of the nobility (the Assarici traced their ancestry back to Troy), but they were still nobles.

74. C. Appius Iunius Silanus, consul in 28 CE, married by Claudius to Messalina's mother Domitia. After he provoked Messalia by refusing her advances, she and Narcissus told Claudius they had dreamt that Appius assassinated him. Claudius promptly ordered his death.

two sons-in-law Pompeius Magnus and Lucius Silanus, his daughter's father-in-law Crassus Frugi (a man as like him as two peas in a pod), his daughter's mother-in-law Scribonia, his wife Messalina, and others too numerous to mention, I propose that he should be severely punished, should be given no immunity from prosecution, should be deported as soon as possible, and should leave heaven within thirty days and Olympus within three.'"

The motion passed on a voice vote. There was no delay. Mercury seized him, twisting his neck, and dragged him to hell from heaven,

That place from which they say no one returns.[75]

12. While they were walking down along the Sacred Way,[76] Mercury asked what was going on with this large crowd of people: could it possibly be Claudius's funeral? Indeed, everything had been arranged very lavishly and splendidly: you could see clearly that it was the funeral of a god.[77] Such a huge throng, such a great gathering of trumpet players, horn players, players of every brass instrument—even Claudius could hear it. Everyone was cheerful and happy; the Roman people were strolling about like free men. Agathon and a few lawyers were weeping; *their* grief was obviously sincere. Legal scholars were walking out from the shadows looking pale and emaciated, barely breathing, as if they were just at that moment coming back to life.[78]

75. *Unde negant redire quemquam*, a famous line from Catullus's poem on the death of Lesbia's sparrow (3.12), where the little bird, in tragicomic fashion, is imagined as making a gloomy journey to the underworld. Here, by contrast, heaven is the place "from which they say no one returns": once one gets into heaven, one usually doesn't get tossed out. Claudius, however, is an exception to that rule. Now, like the sparrow, he is on his way to the underworld.

76. The *Via Sacra* was the road along which Claudius's remains would have been carried from the Palatium to the Forum, where his funeral oration would have been delivered.

77. Both Suetonius and Tacitus describe the unusually lavish nature of the funeral, comparable to that of Augustus.

78. The trial lawyers were sorry that the good times of riotous litigation under Claudius were over. Legal scholars, *iurisconsulti*, had been sidelined by Claudius, who interpreted the law himself, but now they were hopeful of resuming their former dignity.

One, when he saw the trial lawyers putting their heads together and bemoaning their ill fortune, came up to them and said: "I told you the Saturnalia wouldn't last forever."

When he saw his funeral, Claudius realized that he was dead. For a dirge was being sung "with great song and dance":[79]

Weep torrents of tears,[80]
Beat your breasts.
Let the forum ring with the sounds of sadness.
A man of matchless mind is gone.

Who was braver? Not one man
In the whole wide world.
With rapid charge he routed the swift,
Parthian rebels vanquished, Persians
Pursued, using lightweight weapons.
With a sure hand he drew the bow
That pierced the rapidly running foe
And the painted backs of the fleeing Mede
With a tiny puncture.
Britons beyond the known seas,
Brigantes bearing deep blue shields,[81]
He forced to wear Romulus's yoke.
He made the very Ocean shake
Before the Roman axe and its new
Spheres of empire.

Mourn for a judge who cleared his cases
Quicker than anyone. Sometimes he heard
Only one side, often neither.
What judge remains who would hear lawsuits

79. In Greek, though of unclear source.

80. The dirge is in Latin anapaestic dimeters, a favorite choral meter in Seneca's tragedies. The alliteration is also a common Senecan device, though here it is used in a parodic manner. The dirge includes real accomplishments of Claudius but its tone is basically ironic, since even the good is so mixed in with the bad and the ridiculous that it cannot be taken fully seriously.

81. Britons used the deep blue dye called woad to stain many items, including shields.

The whole year round?
Minos, judge of the silent dead,
Ruler of a hundred Cretan cities,
Will retire and give you his seat on the court.

Strike your breasts with sorrowful fingers,
O lawyers, you highly suspect species.[82]
Grieve, grieve, you avant-garde poets.
Above all, grieve, you gamblers, who made
A fat profit from the dice box.[83]

13. Claudius was delighted with all this praise and he wanted to stay longer to watch. But Mercury, herald of the gods, seized him and, wrapping a scarf around his head so that nobody could recognize him, dragged him through the Campus Martius.[84] They entered the underworld through the gate between the Tiber and the Covered Road. The freedman Narcissus had taken a shortcut and gotten there before him.[85] Shining clean, fresh from a bath, he came to meet Claudius and said, "Why do the gods condescend to visit mortals?" "Get going," said Mercury, "And tell them that we are here."

Before he had finished speaking, Narcissus flew off. Everything slanted down, making it an easy trip. So, even though Narcissus had gout, it took him only a moment to get to the door of Dis, where Cerberus was lying—"the hundred-headed beast," as Horace says.[86] Narcissus had a favorite little dog, an off-white bitch, so he was rather upset when he saw that shaggy black hound, not the sort of

82. Literally, *venale genus*, a corrupt species.

83. There were laws against gambling, but Claudius's public addiction to the dice games made it impossible to enforce them.

84. Claudius's remains were probably cremated at a riverbank that was part of the Campus Martius.

85. Narcissus, the powerful freedman, was closely identified with Claudius's reign and therefore became a target of Agrippina's hostility. He had been out of town taking a cure for gout when Claudius was murdered, but was ordered to commit suicide as soon as he returned to Rome. Here, he gets to the underworld before Claudius because he has not taken the detour via heaven.

86. *Odes* 2.13.33 ff.

thing you'd like to meet in the dark. In a loud voice he said, "Claudius will soon be here." Amid cheering they came out singing, "We have found him; let us rejoice."[87] Here were Gaius Silius the consul designate, Juncus the praetor, Sextus Traulus, Marcus Helvius, Trogus, Cotta, Vettius Valens, Fabius, and some Roman knights whom Narcissus had put to death. In the middle of this crowd of singers was Mnester the actor, whom Claudius, observing the proprieties, had made shorter than Messalina by taking off his head.[88]

Soon the rumor spread that Claudius had arrived. The first to rush out were the freedmen Polybius, Myron, Arpocras, Ampheus, and Pheronaotus, all of whom Claudius had sent on ahead of him, so that he would never lack for attendants. Then the two Praetorian prefects Justus Catonius and Rufrius Pollio. Then his advisors Saturninus Lusius, Pedo Pompeius, Lupus, and Celer Asinius, all ex-consuls. Last of all came his brother's daughter, his sister's daughter, his sons-in-law, his fathers-in-law, his mothers-in-law—all relations, clearly. And forming a receiving line they came to greet Claudius. When Claudius saw them, he exclaimed, "'The whole world is full of friends.'[89] How did you all get here?" Then Pedo Pompeius[90] replied, "What are you saying, you paragon of cruelty? You ask how? Who else sent us here but you, you murderer of all your friends. Let's go to court. This time *I* will show *you* the defendant's table and the judge's bench."

87. In Greek, a ritual exclamation used in the cult of Isis. It greets the discovery of a new bull, thought to be a new incarnation of Osiris. Thus Claudius, who has just had a funeral on earth, is greeted as reborn among the dead.

88. Mnester was a much-admired actor and dancer. Unfortunately for him, he attracted the erotic attention of Messalina, who asked Claudius to order him to do everything she commanded. He apparently failed to comply sufficiently, and she ordered Claudius to execute him. Tacitus tells us that he took off all his clothes and showed the Emperor the marks of savage beatings on his body, to show that he was a victim of force. Claudius, however, said it didn't matter whether the affair was the result of compulsion or choice—and went ahead with the execution (*Annals* XI.36.1–3).

89. In Greek; probably a fragment from comedy.

90. Not otherwise known.

14. Pedo led him to the courtroom of Aeacus,[91] who presided over cases brought under the capital homicide law.[92] Pedo asked for permission to bring a charge against Claudius,[93] and read the indictment: thirty-five senators killed, three hundred twenty-one Roman knights, and others "as many as the grains of sand and the motes of dust."[94] Claudius couldn't find a lawyer to represent him. Finally Publius Petronius turned up: an old crony of his, and a man fluent in the Claudian tongue.[95] He asked for a continuance; he was refused. Pedo Pompeius read the accusation to loud cheers. The defense attorney began to try to argue his side of the case. Aeacus, a most fair-minded man, told him he couldn't. Having heard only one side of the case, he condemned Claudius, saying:

> Were you to suffer what you inflicted on others,
> Straight justice would be done.[96]

There was a long silence. Everyone was struck dumb, stunned by the novelty of the idea.[97] They said that such a thing had never happened. To Claudius, though, the idea seemed more unfair than novel.[98]

There was a long discussion about the sentence, what he ought to suffer. There were those who said that Sisyphus had pushed his

91. The traditional underworld judge. All the account of underworld court procedure is cast in terms of familiar Roman institutions.

92. In the original, the *lex Cornelia de sicariis*, enacted under Sulla in 81 BCE, which prescribed capital punishment for murder or attempted murder.

93. Prosecution could be initiated by any citizen.

94. In Greek, from Homer *Iliad*, 9.385.

95. P. Petronius had a reasonably distinguished career and was proconsul of Asia from 29 to 35. There is no other evidence that he was a crony of Claudius.

96. In Greek, from Hesiod frag. 286 M–W, but later a much-cited proverb. Here the point is that Claudius is getting the sort of perverted justice that he himself has dished out.

97. Presumably because justice has been turned so topsy-turvy under Claudius that any idea of balanced and reciprocal justice seems strange.

98. What is familiar to Claudius is holding a trial without hearing both sides.

load for a long time; that Tantalus would die of thirst unless someone helped him; that at some point poor Ixion ought to have the brake put on his wheel. But it was decided not to give a respite to any of the old-timers, lest Claudius at some point expect the same consideration. A new type of punishment would have to be dreamed up for him: some futile task involving the hope of a goal without any result. Aeacus then ordered him to play dice using a dice-box with a hole drilled in the bottom.

And already Claudius was starting to chase after the dice that always kept falling out, and he was getting nowhere:

15. Whenever he tried to throw from the echoing dice-box,
Both dice escaped from the hole cut in the bottom.
And when he boldly picked them up and tried
To throw again, like a man who is always
On the verge of playing, always trying to play,
The dice would cheat his hope. Always the stealthy
Double-dealing die slipped through his fingers.
Just so, touching the highest mountain peak,
Sisyphus drops the load from his shoulders,
But in vain.[99]

Suddenly Gaius Caesar turned up and asked to have Claudius as his slave. He called witnesses who had seen him beating Claudius with whips, canes, and his fists.[100] The decision of the court was read out: Aeacus gave him to Gaius Caesar. He, in turn, gave him to his freedman Menander, to be his law clerk in charge of petitions.[101]

99. Epic hexameters; in the original there is no incomplete verse.

100. The cruel conduct of Caligula toward Claudius is attested in several sources.

101. Claudius, who has always given freedmen unusual power, now ends up as a menial servant to one, with a powerless and boring task.

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