

A CRITICAL NOTE ON SEN. AD MARC. 3,4¹)

Si ad hoc maximae feminae te exemplum adplicueris moderatius, mitius, non eris in aerumnis nec te tormentis macerabis: quae enim, malum, amentia est poenas a se infelicitatis exigere et mala sua † non † augere!

malum A : maior γ non A : om. γ : uno Gertz : nouo (nouis *Hauler*) *Madvig* : ultro *P. Thomas* : non (minuere sed) *Koch*

In his commentary Manning²) reads *mala sua augere* and states: “The reading of the γ tradition makes perfect sense, and though it is difficult to explain the introduction of *non* into A and those manuscripts dependent upon it, it seems needless to make further conjectures.”

Nevertheless I venture upon another conjecture and will try to explain the corrupt reading *non* in (the tradition down to) A, that codex which “longe optimum esse inter omnes constat”³).

In holding before Marcia the examples of Octavia and Livia as mothers afflicted by the death of a beloved son Seneca heavily castigates Octavia’s self-torment (2,4–5; 3,3) as being an inclination testifying to δυσπάθεια which results largely from the *opinio officiosi doloris*⁴). Self-torment (being an instance of a voluntarily chosen evil)⁵) is a part of such attitudes as are described by e.g. *adesse dolori* (ad Polyb. 18,4; ad Marc. 7,2), *libido dolendi* (ad Polyb. 4,1); cf. also Sen. Ep. 99,2 *hi qui sibi lugere sumpserunt*; ibid. 16 *nihil vero maerori adiciamus nec illum ... augeamus*; Ps. Plut. Cons. ad Apoll. 3,102C τὸ δὲ πέρα τοῦ μέτρου παρεκφέρεσθαι καὶ συναύξειν τὰ πένθη παρὰ φύσιν εἶναι φημι καὶ ὑπὸ τῆς ἐν ἡμῖν φαύλης γίγνεσθαι δόξης. Quint. Inst. 6 prooem. 7 *non sum ambitiosus in malis nec augere lacrimarum causas volo* (cf. Sen. Ep. 63,2 *est aliqua et doloris ambitio*).

Against the background of these ideas, the denunciation of αὐθαίρετα πῆματα and the consolatory admonition τὸ ... μὴ δι’ αὐτὸν κακῶς πράττειν ... οὐ μικρὸν ... κούφισμα πρὸς τὰς τύχας⁶) the passage of ad Marc. in question might be read as follows: *quae enim, malum, amentia est poenas a se infelicitatis exigere et mala suo nomine augere!* ‘To aggravate sorrow on one’s own account’: for this we find a parallel in e.g. Cic. Tusc. 3,71 *quis tam demens, ut sua voluntate*

1) I give the text and app. crit. of L. D. Reynolds’ edition (L. Annaei Senecae Dialogorum Libri Duodecim, Oxford 1977, 133,27–134,3).

2) C. E. Manning, On Seneca’s “Ad Marciam”, Leiden 1981, p. 43.

3) Vid. Reynolds, op. cit., praef. p. VIII. For *malum* (an impressive testimony to A’s fidelity) cf. Manning, op. cit. ad loc. and e.g. H. A. Holden ad Cic. Off. 2,53.

4) Cf. Horst-Theodor Johann, Trauer und Trost. Eine quellen- und strukturanalytische Untersuchung der philosophischen Trostschriften über den Tod, München 1968 (= Studia et Testimonia Antiqua 5), indices s.v. Schuldgefühl; *culpa*; Meinung (falsche) bezüglich ... der Pflicht zu trauern.

5) Cf. Johann, op. cit., index s.v. Übel (selbstverschuldete) and s.v. *voluntas*.

6) Cf. Johann, op. cit., pp. 32–35.

maereat? ... et tamen fatentur graviores aegritudines suscipi quam natura cogat. Quae est igitur amentia?

For *suo nomine* cf. e.g. Cic. Verr. 1,80 *suo nomine ac non impulsu tuo*; 4,72 *suo nomine ac sua sponte* (Scaur. 41 *si sua sponte, si non alicuius impulsu*); for the thought cf. also Quint. Inst. 1 prooem. 3 *plus quam imponebatur oneris sponte suscepti*.

The corruption could have arisen from a misinterpreted (or rather, perhaps, a corrupted) abbreviation⁷), cf. e.g. Cappelli, Lex. Abbrev. (1961) p.229: \bar{N} = *nomine* (saec. IX f.), and Lindsay, Notae Lat. p.142: 181 (7) \bar{n} = *nomine*. Once *non* had been written the 'correction' *sua* for *suo* was ready at hand.

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7) Abbreviation might also account for the omission of *nomen ad Marc.* 10,1: *clarum* (*nomen* Madvig), *nobilis aut formosa coniux ...* (*clarum* A¹: *clara* A² γ).