

Seneca *Apocolocyntosis* Notes 7-9

7.1 “desine fatuari”: Claudius the fool.

7.1 where even mice gnaw iron, what must divine inhabitants be like? Eden notes that later such mice said to live on island of Gyarus, which was a favourite spot for emperors to send men into exile. Tables turned.

7.1 colloquial missing out “dic”.

7.1 Hercules “tragicus fit”- amusing swopping of roles from comic guise (we know he’s really a coward) plus incongruity in being aggressive towards wreck Claudius. nb like Sen *HF*-mocking self? iambic senarii; high style.

“Assuming an exalted tragic guise is a Menippean motif: at Lucian, *Pisc.* 39 the author makes his character Frankness prefer to express himself ‘more in the tragic style, because that’s grander’ and so to quote Euripides.” (Eden, 7.1)

7.2 threat of going “ad terram” includes actually falling down to earth.

reference to incomprehensible speech; then reference to shaking “mobile ... caput”.

Hercules killed 3 bodied Geryon at Erytheia (near Cadiz), took cattle; on way back to Argos (“Inachian ... urbem”- from founder, Inachus), passed through lots of places (including Rome: see *Aeneid* 8- and Lyons).

7.3 as if Hercules were in role of *furens*- i.e. not mentally in control; fears blow from a fool-usual phrase to fear “blow of god” (θεοῦ πληγή ie unexpected misfortune).

Claudius realized cock able to act powerfully on his own dung-hill: nb pun on gallus (cock/gaul) and idea of dung-hill (4.3).

7.4 “haec visus est dicere”- insubstantiality.

7.4 wants Hercules to be notor, i.e to vouch for legal identity

7.4 one of labours = to clean Augean stables; nb Claudius claims to have cleaned out dung: did he create it??

nb lacuna involving Hercules’ agreement, going to senate, asking for deification (probably speech by Claudius), questions to Hercules and possibly Claudius + uproar.

nb supporters of Claudius including Greek Hercules- not native; critics of Claudius include native Roman gods.

8.1 “impetum fecisti” suggests Hercules made violent approach into heaven.

8.1 C attacked by unknown god; “qualem deum”- doesn’t suggest he should become Claudius the god but tries to tie him to a philosophy Claudius can’t be Epicurean god- who lives apart, without disturbing mankind; Stoic god said to be spherical because associated with universal (logical approach ridicules it); Stoic god impersonal - no individuality- like Claudius.

8.1 quotes Varro: possibly acknowledging Menippean tradition.

8.2 nb cursing by Hercules when addressing him.

8.2 Claudius = “Saturnalicus”; celebrated Saturnalia all year round (in fact, extended it to 5 days)- i.e time when everything mixed up, slaves in charge etc

8.2 condemned L. Iunius Silanus Torquatus for incest with sister (dubious)- he committed suicide on day of Claudius’ marriage to niece Agrippina... Jupiter married sister Juno.

8.2 “quam omnes Venerem vocarent” - suboblique “whom everyone was said to call Venus”.

8.2 Eden says possibly hint of dynastic plans to supplant Claudius- in ruler cult brother-sister marriage could confer exalted status.

8.3 At Athens could marry sibling of same father (though not same mother too); in Alexandria Ptolemies had brother-sister marriage.

8.3 someone has interrupted to suggest Rome strict: mice lick millstones because can’t get to flour- supporting Claudius’ severity in punishment.

8.3 cf. Claudius unaware of what was going on.

8.3 again θεοῦ replaced by μωροῦ.

- 9.1 only just occurs to Jupiter- satire on chief god, who doesn't seem in control.
- 9.1 private members had to stay in vestibule of senate house; nb emphasis on Roman procedure.
p. c. = patres conscripti. nb "curia"
- 9.2 consuls designate should be asked first- hence Janus (nb "passageway"; god of beginnings- tends to be first).
- Calends of July- i.e, 1st July (nb designate until office taken up- here for afternoon of 1st); nb dig at short-term nature of consul terms under empire.
- 9.2 Eden suggests Seneca thinking of Janus' statue in precinct of the double archway of Janus Geminus.
- 9.2 Janus learnt from being near legal business.
- 9.2 reference to stenographer- spoof statement to bolster faith in sources. nb historians did usually make up speeches.
- 9.3 bean farce- relevance of beans? link to Roman cult of dead, ghosts etc- common life after death (contrast apotheosis).
- 9.3 given to spirits who would drive him mad enough to volunteer for games (though free).
- 9.4 Diespiter = native Italian sky-god.
- 9.4 Claudius and freedmen sold citizenship rights; nb if Diespiter did, apt he's trying to get citizenship of heaven.
- 9.5 mother Antonia d. of Octavia, sister of Augustus- not directly descended from Augustus; father Drusus son of Livia (who then married Augustus).
- 9.5 praised for wisdom...
- 9.5 "sit... e re publica" - senatorial vocabulary.
- 9.5 gobbling turnips- Romulus born in rustic time.
- 9.5 reference to literary work: *Metamorphoses* (where had, for example, Romulus and Julius Caesar becoming gods)- not official calendar.
- 9.6 iron in fire i.e. heating up, ready to be struck into right shape.
- 9.6 Hercules concerned because he had earned immortality.