

THE MANUSCRIPT TRADITION OF SENECA'S *NATURAL QUESTIONS*: ADDENDA

(1) *Ninth-century excerpts*

Two new manuscripts have come to my attention since I made a study of the MS. tradition of Seneca's *Natural Questions*.¹ The first is Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 18961, part ii (foll. 25–46^v), which I shall call Y, a late-ninth-century manuscript from Brittany or the lower Loire. It contains a short collection of theological and philosophical excerpts from a variety of authors, a collection emanating from the circle of Alcuin, probably from the generation after Alcuin himself.² Included in the collection are three extracts from the preface of Book I of Seneca's *Natural Questions*. Since the earliest surviving manuscripts of the Seneca work hitherto known are from the twelfth century, it is of considerable interest to see how the text of the *Natural Questions* in these excerpts relates to the later MS. tradition.

The passages from the *Natural Questions*, on foll. 36^v–37^v, are edited below: I give a transcription of the MS., preserving its spelling, but with my own capitalisation and punctuation. The apparatus criticus records all the readings of the two main branches of the later mediaeval MS. tradition, Z and Ψ (see below), and readings of the individual descendants of Ψ where appropriate. An asterisk indicates the reading I believe to be correct; cases where there is room for doubt are discussed below. The sigla used are as follows:

- A Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, Voss. Lat. 0.55 (s. XII¹)
- B Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Class. 1 (M.IV.16) (s. XII)
- F Oxford, Merton College, 250 (s. XII)
- H Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 8624 (s. XII²)
- L² corrector of Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, Voss. Lat. F.69 (s. XII)
- P Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 6628 (s. XII²)
- R El Escorial, Real Biblioteca, O.III.2 (s. XIII)
- U Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 11049 (s. XV)
- V Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. lat. 1579 (s. XII²)
- W Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, Lat. Z.268 (1548) (s. XIV)
- Y Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 18961 (s. IX²)
- Z Geneva, Bibliothèque Publique et Universitaire, lat. 77 (s. XII^m)

- δ consensus of ABV
- α consensus of R δ
- θ consensus of FH
- ν consensus of UW
- π consensus of P ν
- Ψ consensus of $\alpha\theta\pi$
- Ω consensus of Z Ψ

* indicates the true, or more probable, reading.

¹ 'Escorial MS. O III 2 and Related Manuscripts of Seneca's *Natural Questions*', *CQ* 28 (1978), 296–311; 'The Manuscript Tradition of Seneca's *Natural Questions*: Some Manuscripts Related to Z', *Prometheus* 5 (1979), 63–72; 'The Manuscript Tradition of Seneca's *Natural Questions*', *CQ* 30 (1980), 183–217. I am grateful to the various library authorities who provided me with microfilm of the MSS. discussed in this note.

² I am grateful to Professor D. A. Bullough for bringing this MS. to my attention; its contents are described in C. Ineichen-Eder, 'Theologisches und philosophisches Lehrmaterial aus dem Alcuin-Kreise', *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 34 (1978), 192–201, with identification of the Seneca passages on pp. 193 and 196; cf. J. Marenbon, *From the Circle of Alcuin to the School of Auxerre: Logic, Theology and Philosophy in the Early Middle Ages*

praef. 3

SENECAE philosophi:– Dic, rogo te, quae uniuersi materia sit, quis auctor aut custos, quid sit deus, totus in se ostendat, ad nos aliquando respiciat, faciat cotidiae aliquid an semel fecerit, pars mundi sit an mundus, liceat illi hodieque discernere et ex lege [fol. 37] factorum aliquid derogare, an maiestatis diminutio sit et confessio erroris mundanda fecisse. neccesse eadem placare ei, cui nisi optima placare non possunt. nec ob hoc minus liber est ac potens; ipse est enim neccessitas sua.

Dic rogo te Y: *cum disco Ω *custos Y² Ω : custos Y¹ *quid Y Ψ : quis Z ostendat Y: *tendat ZR $\theta\pi$: intendat δ ad Y: *an et ad (an om. R, et om. A¹W) Ω *faciat (facit R) Y Ψ : faciet Z cotidiae Y: *cot(t)idie Ω discernere YL²A¹U: *decernere ZRA²BV θ PW factorum Y: *fatorum (statorum R) Ω diminutio Y Ψ : *deminutio Z, ut conii. Muretus mundanda Y: *mutanda Ω (sed muntanda Z ante corr.) neccesse Y: necesse est Ω : *〈sed〉 necesse est Diels placare bis Y: *placere Ω *ei (ante eadem δ) Y δ : et ZR $\theta\pi$ *liber est ac potens YZL²: liber est potens θv : liber (esse add. P²) P: liber et potens est R: liber est et potens AV: est liber aut potens B neccessitas Y: *neccessitas Ω

praef. 13–14

Item eiusdem: Quid est deus? quod uides totum et quod non uides totum. sic demum magnitudo sua illi redditur, quia nihil maius cogitari potest, si solus est omnia, si opus suum et intra et extra tenet. [14] quid ergo interest naturam dei et nostram? nostri melior pars animus est, in illo nulla pars extra animum est. totus est ratio.

sua illi Y post corr., BV: *illi sua Y ante corr., ZA $\theta\pi$: illi R quia (quod R) Y Ψ : *qua Z interest Y: *interest inter Ω

praef. 16–17

quanti estimas ista cognoscere et rebus terminos ponere, quantum deus possit, materiam ipse sibi formet, an data utatur, [fol. 37^v] utrum utro prius sit, materiae superuenerit ratio an materia rationi, deus quicquid uult efficiat, an multis rebus illum tractanda destituant, et a magno artifice praue multa formentur, non quia cessat ars, sed quia id in quo exercetur inobsequens arti est? [17] haec inspicere, haec discere, his incubare, nonne transilire est mortalitatem suam, et in meliorem transcribi sortem? quod tibi, inquis, ista proderunt? si nihil aliud, hoc certe: sciam omnia angusta esse mensus deum.

prius sit YZ: *sit prius $\delta\theta v$: prius RP *〈in〉 multis Erasmus et...formentur Y Ω : *ut...formantur Badstübner inobsequens YR: *s(a)epe inobsequens Z $\delta\theta\pi$ quod Y: *quid Ω *inquis ista Ya θ PU: ista inquis ZW *si nihil Y: si nil (simul R) Ω certe sciam. Omnia Y: *certe. sciam omnia Ω

We may make the following observations about Y's readings and its relationship to the other MSS.:

(1) Y three times agrees in error with Ω , first at praef. 3 where Diels supplied 〈sed〉 *necesse est*, and twice at praef. 16, where Erasmus supplied an 〈in〉 *multis rebus*, and Badstübner plausibly changed *et...formentur* to *ut...formantur*.

(2) Perhaps Y alone has the truth at praef. 17 *nihil*; for the collocation *nihil aliud* is found 40 times in Seneca's prose (including *Nat.* 1.9, 2.29, 2.54.3, 4b.3.6, 5.18.11,

(Cambridge, 1981), p. 57; Marenbon edits some of the texts in the MS., but not the Seneca, in Appendix 1. On the date and provenance of Y see B. Bischoff, *Die südossteischen Schreibschulen und Bibliotheken in der Karolingerzeit*, i (Wiesbaden, 1960), pp. 161–2.

6.14.1, 7.2.2), but *nil aliud*, here offered by Ω , occurs elsewhere only at 2.21.1 (where δ alone has *nihil*). (At 1.15.7 ζ 's *amplius* is preferable to *aliud*.) But confusion between *nil* and *nihil* is very easy, and $Z\Psi$'s agreement need not be significant. At praef. 13 Y's first reading *illi sua* agrees with all manuscripts except BV, but Y then altered this to *sua illi*, also in BV; there is nothing to choose between the two readings rhythmically, but the separation of noun from adjective recommends *magnitudo illi sua*.

(3) There are several errors unique to Y, the result of either minor corruption or deliberate alteration such as one often finds in excerpts.

(4) In two places $Y\Psi$ agree in error and Z has the truth:

(i) praef. 3 *deminutio* is the better attested form in Senecan manuscripts,³ so $Y\Psi$'s *diminutio* is an error, but a slight one that could have occurred by chance coincidence;

(ii) praef. 13 *quia nihil maius cogitari potest* is wrong; Z has the correct *qua*. This error also might occur in $Y\Psi$ by chance coincidence, or Ω could have had *quia* and Z corrected it.

(5) At praef. 3 Y has *mundanda* and the first hand of Z has *mundanda*, corrected, probably by the original scribe, to *mutanda*. The similarity of the errors could be significant, or they could have arisen independently under the influence of *mundus* two lines above.

(6) $Y\Psi$ share the true reading at praef. 3 *quid* (*quis* Z⁴) and ibid. *faciat* (*faciet* Z). At praef. 17 *quid tibi, inquis, ista proderunt* (Ya θ PU) seems a better word order than ZW's *quid tibi ista, inquis, proderunt* (because the latter has three words before *inquis* and only one after).

(7) YZL^2 share the true reading at praef. 13 *liber est ac potens*. YZ probably share the true reading at praef. 16, where *utrum utrō prīus sīt* (double trochee) is a slightly better rhythm than *ūtrum ūtrō sīt prīus*.

(8) Other agreements are probably due to chance: praef. 3 *discernere* YL^2A^1U ; ibid. δ 's *ei* is very likely conjecture, since R agrees with $Z\theta\pi$'s *et*; Y's reading may be conjecture too; praef. 16 YR's omission of *saepe* looks like accidental coincidence.

In view of the brevity of Y's extracts, it is not surprising that one cannot draw firm conclusions about Y's affiliations from the above evidence. $Z\Psi$ probably agree once in error against Y (2. above), $Y\Psi$ twice agree in error against Z (4. above), and once YZ^1 have very similar errors against $Z^2\Psi$ (5. above); but in each case we have seen that the error is slight and maybe not significant. It is safest to treat Y tentatively as representing a third branch of the stemma, independent of Z and Ψ .

Although Y contributes little new to the establishment of the text, except *nihil* at praef. 17, it adds something significant to our patchy knowledge of the early mediaeval tradition of the *Natural Questions*, for it shows that the work was known in the ninth century not only at Reichenau⁵ but also in the circle of Alcuin, where the theological preface to Book 1 attracted attention. Furthermore, as Professor Bullough points out to me, this collection of excerpts, or a similar one, may solve the

³ Taking forms of *deminuo* and *deminutio* together, *de-* is the paradosis at *Dial.* 3.13.1, 4.14.4, 7.20.5, 10.15.4, *Epist.* 20.1, 47.8. *di-* is the paradosis at *Ben.* 7.6.3. and *Dial.* 2.5.4 (*de-* con. Muretus). The MSS. are divided at *Epist.* 85.5, *Oed.* 147, *Nat.* 6.22.3. At *Nat.* 1.15.2 Gercke restored *deminutionem* (*re-* $\zeta\theta\pi$: *di-* δ).

⁴ Z's *quis* is not impossible, but cf. praef. 13 where *quid sit deus* occurs twice; and in praef. 3 Z could be influenced by *quis auctor aut custos* just before.

⁵ See P. Lehmann, *Mittelalterliche Bibliothekskataloge Deutschlands und der Schweiz*, i (Munich, 1918), p. 266. On possible connections with pseudo-Bede, *De mundi terrestris celestisque constitutione* see H. M. Hine, 'Seneca and Anaxagoras in Pseudo-Bede's *De mundi celestis terrestisque constitutione*', *Viator* 19 (1988), 111–27.

puzzle of Anselm's possible acquaintance with the *Natural Questions*. A key phrase in *Proslogion* 2 first appears in the form *aliquid quo nihil maius cogitari possit*, and is repeated several times with slight variations (*aliquid quo maius nihil cogitari potest*, *id quo maius cogitari nequit*, et sim.). There is a striking resemblance to a phrase in Seneca, *Nat.* 1. praef. 14 ... *magnitudo* ..., *qua nihil maius cogitari potest*, a resemblance that makes one wonder whether Anselm knew the Seneca work. In the past the verdict has been *non liquet*, but now that the key Senecan phrase is seen in these ninth-century excerpts, one may speculate that Anselm had seen this collection or a similar one.⁶

(2) *Barcelona, Archivo de la Corona de Aragón, Fondo de San Cugat, MS. 11*

The second MS. that has come to my attention is Barcelona, Archivo de la Corona de Aragón, Fondo de San Cugat, MS. 11 (s. XIV), which I shall call Barc. The *Natural Questions* is on foll. 194^v, col. 1–258^r, col. 1,⁷ and its books are arranged in the *Quantum* order, that is, the order of our modern printed editions. The work is divided into six books, Books 3, 4a and 4b being treated as a single book. Its text clearly falls into the large group of composite MSS. that derive from the δ group from the start of Book 1 up to 3.25.6 *paene tota* (where a large lacuna begins in the δ MSS.), and from the η group thereafter (see *CQ* 30 [1980], 202–4 for further detail). Thus in the first section Barc. shares the following transpositions which are characteristic of the δ MSS. (see *CQ* 28 [1978], 299):

1. praef. 13 *extra et intra*, 1.6 *mediocriter collisae*, 2.4 *potest fieri*, 2.11 *sidera cetera*, 3.6 *imaginem unam*; 2.1.4 *uidebitur mirum*, 3.2 *manus ossa nerui oculos* [sic, Barc.: *oculus cett.*]; 3.7.2 *potest imber suggerere*, 7.4 *aqua pluuiialis*.

After 3.25.6, Barc. shares characteristic errors of η , such as (see *CQ* 30 [1980], 203):

7.8.1 *suo om.*, 8.2 *uerbis utar*] *utar uerbis*, 9.1 *-que* (post *celsioribus*) *om.*, 12.2 *esse et sui iuris*] *et sui iuris esse*, 12.4 *defectio siderum*] *siderum defectio*.

(3) *Basle, Öffentliche Bibliothek der Universität, MSS. F III 34 and F IV 62*

H. Geist showed that Bas. = Basle F III 34 (s. XIV) is a descendant of θ and related to F. In *CQ* 30 (1980), 205 I said that Bas. 'is a close relative, maybe even a descendant, of F', and showed that on Geist's evidence it is heavily interpolated.⁸ I have now acquired microfilm of the MS. One form of error that usually survives interpolation is transposition, so long as the sense is not affected. In books 1 and 2

⁶ For earlier views cf. R. W. Southern, *Saint Anselm and his Biographer; a Study of Monastic Life and Thought, 1059–c. 1130* (Cambridge, 1963), p. 59; K.-D. Nothdurft, *Studien zum Einfluss Senecas auf die Philosophie und Theologie des zwölften Jahrhunderts* (Leiden, 1963), pp. 192–7; G. M. Ross in *Seneca*, ed. C. D. N. Costa (London, 1974), pp. 134–5; H. M. Hine in *Texts and Transmission*, ed. L. D. Reynolds (Oxford, 1983), p. 377; R. W. Southern, *Saint Anselm: a Portrait in a Landscape* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 129. In Y the crucial phrase reads *quia nihil maius cogitari potest*, as we have seen; Anselm could have divined the correct reading, or could have had a more accurate MS.

⁷ For a fuller description of the contents of the MS., see L. Rubio Fernández, *Catálogo de los manuscritos clásicos latinos existentes en España* (Madrid, 1984), pp. 31–2; I learnt of the MS. from this work. I have not seen F. X. Miquel Rosell, *Catàleg dels llibres manuscrits de la Biblioteca del Monestir de Sant Cugat del Valles existents al' Arxiu de la Corona d' Aragó* (Barcelona, 1937). The MS., which has suffered damage, has at some stage been rebound with folios 249 and 246 transposed, though they retain their original numbers; i.e. the sequence is now 245, 249, 247, 248, 246, 250.

⁸ H. Geist, *De L. Annaei Senecae Naturalium quaestionum codicibus* (Diss. Erlangen, publ. Bamberg, 1914), pp. 14–16.

there are 32 transpositions unique to F among the principal MSS. 29 of these are found in Bas., e.g.:

1. praef. 1 *posuisset natura*; praef. 3 *eius secretiora*; 2.1 *urbem post reuersus*; 2.5 *nautici uentum*; 2.10 *a circumposito aere facilius*; 3.11 *solis imago*; 3.14 *est inquisitio*; *causas duas*; 5.6 *cesar nero*; 5.11 *apparet undique*.

Of the three passages where Bas. does not have F's transposition, in two the transposition materially affects the sense, so correction of Bas. by conjecture or contamination is plausible (2.9.4 *nisi quod*] *quod nisi* F; 2.34.3 *ad se fidem*] *ad fidem se* F). This leaves only 2.45.3 *quia sine illo nihil geritur* (*geritur nihil* F). So it is plausible enough that Bas. is a descendant of F, though given the degree of contamination one could never prove it conclusively. But there must have been at least one intermediary between F and Bas., for, although F does contain marginal and interlinear corrections, there are many interpolated readings that Bas. shares with other manuscripts that are not in F².

Martin Steinmann, keeper of manuscripts at Basle, has kindly given me further information about Bas.: it is English, from Oxford, written c. 1300, so it is likely that F was already in England by that date. Dr Steinmann has also confirmed that Basle F IV 62 is a direct copy of F III 34, for an entry on fol. 47^r says it was written at Basle in 1470, and F IV 62 gives the title *Seneca de officiis* to a treatise of Alkindi: the same title was added c. 1400 to the treatise in F III 34.

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SENECA'S HORRIBLE BULL: *PHAEDRA* 1007–1034

When Seneca comes to describe the appearance of the monstrous bull which appears out of the sea to kill Hippolytus in answer to his father's curse, he uses (among other things) a metaphor of birth: the sea's wave is said to be 'heavy with burdened womb' (1019f.: *onerato sinu / gravis unda portat*). If line 1016 is genuine – it was athetized by Leo¹ – the sea is said to be 'pregnant with a monster' (*tumidumque monstro*). The metaphor has not passed unnoticed in modern commentaries² but it has not been fully appreciated. I want to examine further linguistic aspects of the metaphor, and to consider its significance in its literary context. Seneca is a writer who likes – as he himself acknowledges – to re-work tradition:³ all the more significant, then, when he introduces a conspicuous metaphor into his text which does not appear to have literary antecedents.

Hippolytus sets off dejectedly from Athens in his chariot. Immediately the sea humps on the horizon, although there is no wind or other meteorological commotion, and surges toward the coast (1015: *consurgit ingens pontus in vastum ag-*

¹ F. Leo, *De Senecae tragoediis observationes criticae*, Berlin, 1878.

² Michael Coffey and Roland Mayer (edd.), *Seneca, Phaedra* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 178: '*onerato sinu* suggests pregnancy'; A. J. Boyle (ed.), *Seneca's Phaedra* (Liverpool, 1987), on lines 1016ff.: 'The imagery of pregnancy and birth here... seem Seneca's own. It occurs neither in Euripides nor in Ovid, *Met.* 15'. W.-L. Liebermann, *Studien zu Senecas Tragödien* (Beiträge zur Klassischen Philologie, 39) (Meisenheim am Glan, 1974), p. 37: '...wobei letzteres (*sc.* *gravis*, line 1020) freilich "schwanger" mitmeint'.

³ Cf. *Epist.* 79.5–6 and Mayer's note on this passage (1990: above n. 2), p. 121. Cf. J. T. Gahan, 'Imitation in Seneca, *Phaedra* 1000–1115', *Hermes* 116 (1988), 122–4; P. Grimal, 'L'originalité de Sénèque dans la tragédie de Phèdre', *REL* 41 (1963), 297–314.