SOME EVIDENCE IN DEFENCE OF THE TITLE *APOCOLOCYNTOSIS* FOR SENECA'S SATIRE

APOSTOLOS N. ATHANASSAKIS
University of California, Santa Barbara

Despite the fact that only one comparatively late manuscript, Vat. Lat. 4498, contains the title *apocolocyntosis*, most editions and translations of the pasquinade on the death of the emperor Claudius accept the word as the title by which the satire ought to be known. Most of the time implicit in this acceptance is also the acceptance of Senecan authorship and of an identification of this satire with the one mentioned by Dio Cassius (60.35). Dio maintains that Seneca wrote a satire on Claudius' death, "which he called the *Apocolocyntosis* playing on the word *Apathanatisis*." The title of the best of our three superior manuscripts, the Codex Sangallensis 569, is *Apotheosis Annaei Senecae Per Saturam*. Except then for the Sangallensis 569 and the Vaticanus Latinus 4498, all other manuscripts have entirely Latin titles in which *Ludus* is usually the key word. In the Sangallensis *Apotheosis* seems to be used as a synonym for *Apathanatisis*. Hence, editors are inclined to think that the satire we possess and the one mentioned by Dio are one and the same and ought to bear the title *Apocolocyntosis* on the strength of Dio's pronouncement. Yet, certain questions concerning the exact meaning of this peculiar title and its relationship with what actually happens to Claudius in the satire remain unanswered. What I propose to do here is not to discover a new meaning for *apocolocyntosis*, but rather to side with the more traditional view that *apocolocyntosis* means figurative transformation into a pumpkin, and to produce some hitherto unnoticed evidence from the satire that Claudius is transformed into something very much like a pumpkin.

Unavoidably, our discussion must begin with the meaning of the word *apocolocyntosis*. The theories on the meaning of this controversial word and the arguments pro and con have been discussed

lucidly and succinctly by Michael Coffey,[1] and there is no reason for me to duplicate his labor. I shall refer only to certain of his views which are pertinent to my own ideas about the word. Coffey takes issue with *LSJ* for defining *ἀποκολοκύντωσις* as "transformation into a pumpkin," because "in no part of the work is Claudius turned into a pumpkin."[2] Of course, he qualifies his statement by saying that this part of the definition in *LSJ* "cannot be true literally."[3] But the definition does not have to be literal in order to be correct. We may well be dealing with a figurative transformation. The fact remains that Dio, to whom we owe the word, tells us that it was built on the analogy of *ἀπαθανάτισις*, a word identical in formation and meaning to *apotheosis*, which is part of the title in manuscript S (full title: *Ἀποθέωσις Annaei Senecae per Saturam*). Both *ἀποθέωσις* and *ἀπαθανάτισις* mean transformation into a god and into an immortal respectively. *Ἀποκολοκύντωσις* then can quite naturally mean transformation into a *κολοκύντη*, a pumpkin. Apropos of this, I wish to express some reservations about Russo's statement that *apocolocyntosis* is to be taken "non tanto come 'transformazione in una zucca,' quanto 'deificazione di una zucca, di uno zuccone' ovvero 'zucconeria divinazzata.'"[4] Claudius is not deified, and the nature of the compound forces us to speak of a transformation into a *κολοκύντη*. But what is the significance of the pumpkin here, and what is so funny about having Claudius even figuratively transformed into one?

Robert Graves assumed that the *κολοκύντη* of our title is the purgative colocynth, a dangerous alkaline poison, and that the meaning of the title is: deification by means of a colocynth.[5] This view is not as improbable as it may seem, because, according to one report, in addition to the poison that Claudius swallowed, he was given a poisonous enema, which most likely finished him off (Suet. *Claud.* 44.3). Not altogether incongruous with this view is the possibility that

[1] M. Coffey, "Seneca, *Apocolocyntosis* 1922–1958," *Lustrum* 6 (1961) 245–54.

[2] *Ibid.* 247.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] C. F. Russo, *Divi Claudii ΑΠΟΚΟΛΟΚΥΝΤΩΣΙΣ* (Florence 1948) 17–18. See also note 21.

[5] R. Graves, "New Light on an Old Murder," *Sunday Times* London, May 18, 1958. Junius was the first one to put forth this theory which was rejected by Heinsius and Fromond: Coffey (above, note 1) 253.

apocolocyntosis is to be connected with Latin *culus* and perhaps even Greek κόλον as well as with the Petronian word *apoculare* (62.3, 67.3)[6] to which Seneca would be giving a new meaning here. Through suggestive partial homonymy, Seneca would have us believe that the travesty of Claudius' deification starts *de culo*, from his fundament, or ἀπὸ κόλου, from his lower intestinal tract. We may recall that Claudius' lower end was blocked and his *anima* (3.1)—notice the convenient ambiguity of the word: "soul," "wind"—could not escape. Then Hermes charitably interceded with the three Parcae, and Lachesis took three *fusi* out of a box, one for Claudius, and one for each of his two companions, Augurinus and Baba. The name Augurinus may be suggestive of *urina*,[7] an element which perforce accompanied the liberation of Claudius' *anima*, when, after letting a thunderclap loose, he exclaimed: *vae me! puto, concacavi me* (4.3).[8]

We should note that the *fusus*, which Lachesis takes out of the box (3.4), is ostensibly the "spindle" with which she will untwine the thread of Claudius' life in order to have it cut. On the other hand, we are told that

> Haec ait et, turpi convolvens stamina fuso,
> Abrupit stolidae regalia tempora vitae. (4.1)

We may well suspect that her *fusus* may be a "crank" or a "crossbar," and that it is called *turpis*, "filthy," "shameless," because with it she has

[6] A. Walde in his *Lateinisches etymol. Wörterbuch* takes *apoculare* to be a hybrid word derived from ἀπό and *culus*. Ernout-Meillet are inclined to see in it a corruption of ἀποχαλάω or ἀποκαλῶ (*Dict. Étymol. de la Langue Lat.*, s.v.). Walde explains *apoculare* with "sich rückwärts machen," "drücken," and compares it with French "reculer."

[7] *Augurinus* could be facetiously derived from *augeo* and *urina*. Its meaning may not be very different from the condition to which doctors jokingly refer as "pissalot." *Augurinus* is found in the *Fasti Capitolini* as a surname for the Minucii, and Pliny had a young friend who wrote poetry and whose name was *Augurinus* (*Ep.* 4.27.1; 9.8). The name is most likely derived from *augur*, but surely this could not prevent Seneca from associating the name of Claudius' escort with less flattering etymological components. The only other Baba we know of was a certain fool mentioned by Seneca in *Ep.* 15.9. The Baba of our passage may be a totally fictional character with a suggestive onomatopoetic name and as such no more than a personification of the *sonitus maior* of 4.3 (cf. the interjection *babae* and the late Latin *babulus*, "babbler," "fool"). That Baba (Bang-Bang) should also escort Claudius is quite natural since in life the emperor was habitually inclined to flatulence (cf. Suet. *Claudius* 32).

[8] All quotations come from the Budé edition of R. Waltz, *Sénèque: L'Apocoloquintose du Divin Claude* (Paris 1961).

performed the indelicate operation of unplugging the imperial κόλον. It is true that *abrupit* does not mean "unplugged" and that the language is only partly ambiguous. What goes on in heaven is not fully equivalent to what goes on on earth. Seneca merely drops a hint which would have been easily picked up by those familiar with the circumstances surrounding the emperor's death. The scabrous interpretation of these words and of chapters III and IV of the *Apocolocyntosis* finds historical support in what Suetonius relates to us as one of the rumors concerning the manner in which Claudius died:

> Nonnulli inter initia consopitum, deinde cibo affluente evomuisse omnia, repetitumque toxico, incertum pultine addito, cum velut exhaustum refici cibo oporteret, an immiso per clystera, ut quasi abundantia laboranti etiam hoc genere egestionis subveniretur. (*Claud.* 44.3)

That the application of the *fusus* by Lachesis, much like that of the *clyster* that might have administered the *venenum*, was what brought the emperor's faltering life to an end there should be little doubt. Indeed it is immediately after the end of the poem, the so-called *Laus Neronis* (4.1), which most inappropriately begins with the two lines cited above, that Claudius' *anima* is delivered from its travail with a concomitant intestinal effusion. Claudius' ascent to heaven is uneventful.[9] The only thing Seneca deigns to tell us is how Claudius arrived in heaven. But he does this so beautifully and with such comic effect that we can easily forgive him for ignoring the possibilities of what he might have felt as an overexploited motif.[10] When Claudius arrives in heaven Hercules greets him with:

Τίς πόθεν εἶς ἀνδρῶν πόθι τοι πόλις ἠδὲ τοκῆες;[11]

to which Claudius replies:

Ἰλιόθεν με φέρων ἄνεμος Κικόνεσσι πέλασσεν.[12]

[9] Seneca does not avail himself of the possibilities of a motif that must have been cleverly exploited by writers of Menippean satire (cf. Lucian's *Icaromenippus*).

[10] See R. Helm, *Lucian und Menipp* (Leipzig-Berlin 1906) 81 ff.

[11] The quotation comes from Homer's *Odyssey* 1.170. In Lucian's *Icaromenippus*, Zeus greets the cynic Menippus with the same formula.

[12] From *Od.* 9.39. That the ἄνεμος of this line in the Senecan context means "intestinal wind" may also be inferred by the possibility of a linguistic pun concealed in Ἰλιόθεν which in Latin would be *de Ilio*, a homonym of *de ilio* = from the lower belly (cf. *ilia ducere* = to break wind. For another pun involving *ilium/Ilium apud* Serv. *ad Virg. A.* 7.499 see Lewis and Short s.v. *ile*).

The ἄνεμος that brought Claudius to the land of the Kikones, heaven in this case, cannot be different from the *anima* that sought to escape through his lower end,[13] or from the *sonitus maior*, which he let loose at the moment of his death. By having Claudius catapulted to heaven by means of a mighty fart, Seneca becomes the inventor of a novel and very hilarious idea. So Claudius went to the gods, he reached heaven. It is interesting at this point to recall that *ire ad deos*[14] means to go to the gods in the sense of joining them, becoming one of them. In other words, this is part of his short-lived apotheosis. But this much he has clearly achieved *de culo* or, better yet, ἀπὸ κόλου, because the means by which he leaves the earth and is propelled to heaven all go back to his fundament. There is a temporary ἀποθέωσις ἀπὸ κόλου, but there is no reason for Seneca's fertile imagination to stop here. He hates Claudius so much that he wants to see him go through every form of humiliation and be reduced to a ludicrous nonentity. Three more syllables to his phrase and a new word is born[15]—ἀποκολο(υ)κύντωσις —so that Claudius' pathetic career from heaven to hell can be adequately described.

Let us return to κολοκύντη now. Most scholars take the κολοκύντη of our word not to be the bottle gourd (*cucurbita lagenaria*),[16] but the big round pumpkin (*cucurbita maxima*). My reasons for agreeing with this view will become evident in the course of this discussion. One of the principal views behind which many scholars have rallied is that of Wagenvoort, who takes ἀποκολοκύντωσις to be a word formed by analogy to ἀποραφανίδωσις, the well-known punishment inflicted on adulterers in Athens involving the thrusting of a radish up their anus.[17]

[13] Notice the phrase *animam agere coepit* (3.1), which must mean something like "he started driving—or perhaps pressing—his wind," and compare it with the inscription found over a figure in one of the rooms in the Bath of the Seven Wise Men at Ostia: *agita te celerius pervenies*, where the meaning must be something like "bear down faster, you'll get there!" Incidentally, answering this exhortation a second figure responds with *propero* and a third one wisely remarks, *amice fugit te proverbium bene caca et irrima medicos!* (Guido Calza, "Die Taverne der sieben Weisen in Ostia," *Antike* 15 [1940] 103).

[14] *Apocol.* 1.2.

[15] ἀποκολοκύντωσις is a *hapax legomenon*.

[16] There is a chance that, as F. A. Todd argues ("Some *Cucurbitaceae* in Latin Literature," *CQ* 37 [1943] 101–11), the *lagenaria* was used as a vulgar word for penis.

[17] H. Wagenvoort, *ΑΠΟΚΟΛΟΚΥΝΤΩΣΙΣ*, *Mnemosyne* 3, 1 (1934) 4–27.

He has the *cucurbita lagenaria* in mind, and he thinks that ἀποκολοκύντωσις means "cucurbitae per podicem traiectio."[18] He considers the whole thing a cruel and coarse joke, inspired by retaliatory oneupmanship: "immodicam ultionem significat per iocum ad absurdum perductam. Videtur quasi dixisse aliquis: me radicasti tu quidem, iam te cucurbitabo."[19] This view is not accepted by Coffey, who, however, admits the possibility of a connection between the two words, adding that "the connexion may have been based on verbal shape rather than on meaning, so that the new coinage did not necessarily convey the full implications of the substitution of 'pumpkin' for 'radish' even by way of jocular hyperbole."[20] Yet even if Wagenvoort's theory is not wholly correct, it does point to a compound parallel formation with implications that cannot have been too coarse for Seneca's intentions, and has the virtue of bringing into play a basic element of the satire, the emperor's anus. Most opponents to this theory side with Weinreich and, partly, Russo. Both scholars have taken the word κολοκύντη (*cucurbita maxima*) to be a symbol of stupidity.[21]

There is evidence from antiquity that the pumpkin, especially when construed to mean "pumpkinhead," meant a blockhead. Pertinent here is the line *nos cucurbitae caput non habemus ut pro te moriamur* (Apul. *Met.* 1.15.2), which must mean "we are not such blockheads as to die for you." The use of *cucurbitae* in Petronius 39.12, *in aquario copones et cucurbitae* (sc. *nascuntur*), may well mean "Under Aquarius innkeepers and blockheads (are born)." As Weinreich noted, in this line the reference is to people and not to plants, but the translation "blockheads" is based on conjecture and not on internal evidence.[22]

[18] *Ibid.* 8.

[19] *Ibid.* 24. This opinion was also accepted by H. J. Rose, *Handbook of Latin Literature* (London 1954) 366.

[20] Coffey (above, note 1) 251.

[21] Fromond in the seventeenth century had expressed the idea that Claudius was already a *cucurbita*, i.e., a blockhead, and that the whole joke rested on the ridiculous transformation of a pumpkin into a god "nam hominem in deum, aut in cucurbitam mutari, non adeo mirae et insolentis metamorphosis est; sed cucurbitam in deum, est maxime admirabile" (Elzevir Variorum ed. of Seneca (1672), v. 2, p. 953). Russo basically accepted this idea: Russo (above, note 4) 8.

[22] See O. Weinreich, *Seneca's Apocolocyntosis* (Berlin 1923) 11 note 2. J. C. Davies in *RhM* 114 (1971) 288 suggests that *cucurbitae* in *Sat.* 39.12 are cupping glasses metaphorically used here for inn-keepers who water their customer's wine. Cf. also J. De Vreese, *Petron 39 und die Astrologie* (Amsterdam 1927) 192–227 and 243.

Then, there is the fact that the Italian *zucco*, Modern Greek κολοκύθας (cf. *kolokythia* = nonsense), and German *Kurbiskopf* all mean a blockhead, a stupid fellow. It has been objected, of course, that these modern words constitute no evidence for antiquity.[23] But this is an exaggeration. They do not offer strong evidence, but they surely offer some evidence. Weinreich, however, associated the κολοκύντη of Seneca's *apocolocyntosis* with stupidity, but did not go so far as to say that the title implied a metamorphosis of any kind: "Statt einer Apo-theosis gibt Seneca eine *Apocolocyntosis*, statt einer Vergottung eine Verkürbsung. Das heisst nicht, Claudius werde in einen Kürbis verwandelt—er wird ja auch gar nicht Theos! Sondern Apocolocyntosis ist reiner Titelscherz."[24] It is true that in Seneca's satire no metamorphosis into a pumpkin is needed either for the title to be funny or for the satire to accomplish its aim. Yet, the nature of the compound and the semasiological associations of κολοκύντη, coupled with the proverbial stupidity of Claudius—and by this I mean the Claudius of our obviously biased sources—strongly suggest such a transformation in some fashion. But it has been held that no mention or suggestion of such a change can be found in our text.[25] It is my opinion that those who hold such views have been less awake to what Seneca subtly, but almost overtly, suggests in chapters VIII and XV of his satire.

The end of chapter VII and the beginning of VIII have both lost an indeterminate number of lines. Unfortunately, we shall never know whether something significant for the "pumpkinification" of Claudius was contained in the lost lines. The suggestion has been made that the pious hand of a monk removed a page of the manuscript, because something sacred to the Christians, perhaps even Christ, was ridiculed in it.[26] This goes too far, but it is not inconceivable, especially

[23] So Coffey (above, note 1) 249.

[24] Weinreich (above, note 22) 11. He reiterates this opinion, when on the following page (12) he says, "Mir ist aus meiner Heimat der Verwandte Ausdruck 'Mostäpfel' geläufig, und in der Tat würde für Apocolocyntosis die zutreffendste Verdeutschung 'Veräppelung' sein. So wenig dies eine Metamorphose in einen Apfel einschliesst, so wenig das antike Äquivalent."

[25] So Wagenwoort (above, note 17) 4: "Diu praevaluisse opinionem in saturae ultima parte nunc deperdita sermonem fuisse de imperatoris in cucurbitam mutatione, quoniamquidem frustra in toto contextu ulla eius rei mentio quaeratur, nemo ignorat."

[26] See J. C. Naber, "Christus Senecae Auditus," *Athenaeum* (1937) 180–86.

considering the beginning of VIII as we now have it, to think that something too offensive to ordinary decency may be responsible for the loss. Be that as it may, VIII begins as follows:

> ... Non mirum quod in Curiam impetum fecisti: nil tibi clausum est. Modo dic nobis qualem deum istum fieri velis. *Ἐπικούρειος θεός* non potest esse: *οὔτε αὐτὸς πρᾶγμα ἔχει οὔτε ἄλλοις παρέχει.* Stoicus? Quomodo potest rotundus esse, ut ait Varro, "sine capite, sine praeputio"?

Claudius has arrived in heaven and, after identifying himself to Hercules and asking him to present his case to the other gods, he obviously makes a forced entry into the divine senate. Hence, the angry remark by one of the gods: "you've entered the Curia by force; nothing can keep you out of places." Then, the same god turns most likely to Hercules, who is Claudius' lawyer, and asks him what sort of god he wants Claudius to be. It is not clear whether the remarks which follow that question are made by the same god or by different gods standing around. Perhaps the divine senators are doing unto Claudius as he did unto others in real life: they subject him to the indignity of a bodily search, especially since he entered the senate by force and he might be carrying some sort of weapon. Dio tells us that Claudius, seeing how Gaius had perished and knowing that the senate had proposed others as successors, had all those who approached him, men and women alike, searched *μή τι ξιφίδιον ἔχωσιν* (60.3). The heavenly senators are justified in exercising the same caution, but, as is appropriate to satire, they concentrate on another kind of *ξιφίδιον*. In any case, some sort of examination and deliberation follows during which certain characteristics of the aspirant are ascertained. The first one is that he cannot become an Epicurean god, because *οὔτε αὐτὸς πρᾶγμα ἔχει οὔτε ἄλλοις παρέχει*. The traditional way of translating this phrase, which is taken from Epicurean doctrine, is "he has not trouble and he gives none to others." This will do for the surface, but in satire we must always watch for the double-entendre, which here hinges on the meaning of *πρᾶγμα*. By its very nature the word *πρᾶγμα* can be made to mean anything. A word of this kind can also be made through context to mean something very specific. I submit that *πρᾶγμα* here means penis (cf. English "thing" and German "Ding," not to mention Modern Greek *πρᾶγμα*) and in support of my view

I produce the following lines (21–28) from the *Lysistrata* of Aristophanes. (Kalonike speaks first)

Καλ. τί δ' ἐστὶν ὦ φίλη Λυσιστράτη
ἐφ' ὅ τι ποθ' ἡμᾶς τὰς γυναῖκας συγκαλεῖς;
τί τὸ πρᾶγμα; πηλίκον τι;
Λυσ. μέγα.
Καλ. μῶν καὶ παχύ;
Λυσ. καὶ νὴ Δία παχύ.
Καλ. κ̣ᾆτα πῶς οὐχ ἥκομεν;
Λυσ. οὐχ οὗτος ὁ τρόπος· ταχὺ γὰρ ἂν ξυνήλθομεν.
ἀλλ' ἔστιν ὑπ' ἐμοῦ πρᾶγμ' ἀνεζητημένον
πολλαῖσί τ' ἀγρυπνίαισιν ἐρριπτασμένον.

Here, too, on the surface the big and fat thing that has kept Lysistrata awake tossing and turning is her proposed plan for the salvation of Greece, but on a lower level it is also the penis, which is the very object of her deliberations. The tenor in which the rest of the inquiry is conducted leaves no doubt that this is the case. The next question is whether he can be a stoic god. But for this, it is hastily explained, he would have to be round, "without head and without foreskin." The context of this quotation from Varro has been lost, but we can well imagine that it could have been taken from a Menippean satire in which the roundness of the stoic divinity was the subject of a racy parody. But what does the expression "without head and without foreskin" mean? Can it mean "headless and circumcised"? I doubt it. For how could Claudius be made round, when deprived of the roundest part of his body? It seems to me that the *caput* in question here is the *caput membri virilis.* The word "head" surely can have that connotation in English. In Greek it can refer to almost any topmost round extremity, and one speaks, for example, of the head of garlic, meaning its inflorescence, or the head of a poppy, or of a pillar (*LSJ* s.v. *κεφαλή* IIa–c). Italian and Modern Greek have identical expressions, which refer to the top of the penis as the "head," and Latin definitely uses the word to refer *sensu obscoeno* to the penis (cf. *ThLL* 410, 66 sqq.). Besides, it does not make much sense to couple the word *praeputium* with *caput, qua caput corporis.* Important also is that *iam video* in the phrase "there is something of the Stoic god in him, now I see!" which must have followed a closer scrutiny of Claudius.

It is inconceivable to think that the god would not have noticed that Claudius was headless when he entered. The result of this closer scrutiny is that the god finds that Claudius *nec cor nec caput habet*. *Cor* here must stand for "mind," "feeling," and *caput* must be the same as in the phrase *sine capite, sine praeputio*. There is a playfulness of the "does he—does he not?" type here, and the argument goes as follows: Claudius cannot be an Epicurean god, because he has no penis. But can he be a round Stoic god without a penis? Yes, he can, because he does not have one! Since his rotundity and his deification are made dependent upon his having a *caput* and a *praeputium*, and he does not have a *caput*, at least, we can say that he is *rotundus*, much like the Stoic god, whose shape was like that of the sphere of the universe. In my opinion, this is the closest Claudius comes to resembling a pumpkin. This is also the closest he comes to being recognized as some sort of god. And it is to this passage, more so than to any other in the satire, that Dio must refer in the frequently quoted lines *συνέθηκε μὲν γὰρ καὶ ὁ Σενέκας σύγγραμμα, ἀποκολοκύντωσιν αὐτὸ ὥσπερ τινὰ ἀπαθανάτισιν ὀνομάσας* (60.35).

It is interesting that this passage in which Claudius is subjected to what appears like an inspection to have his manhood certified is found after a considerable lacuna in the text. Is it possible that in the missing portion of the text the emperor went through some form of castration? For how else are we to explain the fact that all of a sudden that all-important part of his anatomy is missing, especially since there is no indication anywhere in our text that he left the earth without it? Could Seneca have vented his wrath on Claudius by having him go through this additional humiliation? The answer to this question, in the light of our passage, will have to be a conjectural yes. The rest of the satire offers no evidence supporting the notion that Claudius lost his head. Indeed, when he is cast out of heaven, after the scathing attack on him delivered by Augustus, Hermes drags him to earth *collo contorto* (11.6), and then to the Underworld *capite obvoluto* (13.1). Certainly, Claudius cannot have been found headless in one chapter and then with a head in a later chapter of the satire. The earlier of the two heads has to be the *caput penis*.

It would be odd if Seneca refrained from hinting again at the rotundity of Claudius in the remainder of the work. In the Under-

world Claudius is put on trial by a jury consisting of the shades of his former victims and presided over by Aeacus. The divine judge set the tone of the trial by saying *αἴκε πάθοι τά τ' ἔρεξε, δίκη κ' ἰθεῖα γένοιτο.* They would have him take over the place of Sisyphus, or Tantalus, or Ixion, but the precedent thus set might have given Claudius the hope of an end to his punishment some day. Seneca wants an endless punishment, because, as he argues elsewhere, that is the "cruelest punishment."[27] Thus, Claudius is condemned to the eternal frustration of playing dice out of a dice-box whose bottom disappeared each time he tried to rattle his dice before casting. Scholars have been puzzled by the fact that Seneca did not stop here, but proceeded to make Claudius end as a freedman's clerk. I think that Weinreich argued correctly that the first punishment of Claudius was too Sisyphian. Therefore, it was relegated to the unrealistic and remote realm of myth, where it could not satisfy Seneca's hatred and the emotions of his empathizing listeners, who would surely prefer a more Roman type of punishment. Now Seneca, who never forgot his long years of exile in Corsica, takes his revenge by making Claudius a lowly clerk for a court that cannot have been much different from the one that sent him to Corsica.[28] Thus, in a way Claudius suffers what he did to others "so that justice may be straight."

I think all this makes good sense, but I want to take one step further, a step that might somehow relate the end of the satire to the figurative "pumpkinification" of Claudius. We will do well to consider closely the concluding lines of the *Apocolocyntosis*: "Suddenly Caligula appeared and started claiming him as his slave. He produced witnesses, who had seen Claudius flogged, beaten with rods, and boxed on the ear. The court handed him over to Caligula. He gave him to Aeacus, who in turn made a gift of him to his freedman Menander, to be his clerk for legal matters." The remarkable thing about this passage is that Claudius does not utter one word of protest, and that the last witnesses of his humiliation pass him around rapidly and with

[27] Since in *De Beneficiis* 2.5.3, Seneca argued that only the sharpest cruelty prolongs punishment, he is being cruel by his own definition.

[28] See Weinreich (above, note 22) 131; also E. Bickel, "Der Schluss der Apokolokyntosis," *Philologus* 77 (1921) 219–27. This punishment, too, is without end and, therefore, as cruel and endless as the years of his exile must have appeared to Seneca.

effortless ease. First, he goes to Caligula. He passes him to Aeacus, and Aeacus hands him over to Menander. Does not this sound as though they are playing ball with him, *pila*, as they might have said, with what has been reduced to a pitiful round pumpkin of a would-be Stoic god *sine capite, sine praeputio!*[29]

Thus, the ἀποκολοκύντωσις to which Dio refers is a most appropriate title for the satire on the death of Claudius for several reasons of which the following are the most conspicuous: first, Claudius' temporary sojourn on Olympus, which constitutes some measure of ephemeral apotheosis, is obtained ἀπὸ κόλου, that is, thanks to the salutary *fusus* of Lachesis whose application to the imperial fundament makes the *sonitus maior* of 4.3 and the propelling ἄνεμος of 5.4 possible. In other words, half of our heptasyllabic title makes a crude but clever allusion to the means by which the emperor *it at deos*. Second, when the gods inspect the visitor closely, they find him without a *membrum virile* (πρᾶγμα, *praeputium*, *caput*) and, therefore, *rotundus* like a κολοκύντη.[30] Third, this ἀποκολοκύντωσις, which may well have been brought about by the gods themselves through some sort of sexual mutilation described in the lacuna of our text, is completed in Hades, when Claudius is made the object of sport and passed from hand to hand much in the way in which a round object would be in a ball game.

[29] It is pertinent here to point out that Caligula was such an avid ball-player that he remunerated each of the men who played with him with a hundred thousand sesterces (Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 2.6.5). For ball games in Greece and Rome see H. A. Harris, *Sport in Greece and Rome* (London 1972) 75–111.

[30] Incidentally, ἀποκολοκύντωσις does not have to mean transformation into a κολοκύντη. It may also mean transformation into something which is similar to a κολοκύντη. Thus ἀπογυναίκωσις, cited by *LSJ*, certainly means "making effeminate," "making womanish." This word came to my attention thanks to Michael Coffey (above, note 1) 249.