

## POSIDONIUS' SYSTEM OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY

SENECA devoted two of his letters to Lucilius to a problem which had been treated quite differently in previous philosophical doctrine. Letter 94 is written against philosophers who believe that there is no need for praecepta, for single precepts and moral sentences or proverbs concerning individual and specific situations in human life. Moral progress rests solely and entirely upon the knowledge of some basic decreta which belong in the context of a scientific theory and provide sufficient help for every occasion in human life. The second letter, 95, deals polemically with those who admit nothing but praecepta in their educational programme and who reject every kind of dogmatic knowledge. The first group is represented by Aristo the Stoic, whose contempt of praecepta is also attested by Sextus Empiricus.<sup>1</sup> For the other group, Seneca does not quote an authority. He does not mention Cynics and Sceptics who rejected moral and general dogmatism alike, and it seems to be very likely that he was thinking of his own teacher Sotion and the Sextian school who had no interest in ethical theory, but were very famous for their use of moral and psychagogic sentences.<sup>2</sup>

Seneca's own opinion is far from being original. He says that both—praecepta and decreta—are useful and even necessary, and this position was already held by Cleanthes, Panaetius and the majority of Stoics, by Aristotle and other philosophers. But the authority he quotes in order to explain the importance of the *τόπος ὑποθετικός* or *pars praeceptiva* within the system of moral philosophy is Posidonius. In chapter 64 of the second letter, Seneca describes the detailed division Posidonius made of the *τόπος ὑποθετικός*, and this verbal quotation can be illustrated with further evidence from Clement the Alexandrine.<sup>3</sup> Posidonius' name is mentioned half a dozen times in the course of the two letters. So we may assume that Seneca was writing these little essays with a book of Posidonius on his desk, and that at least some passages about the importance of praecepta are Posidonian as well as the systematical fragment quoted in the letter under his very name.

There were philosophers before Posidonius who believed that praecepta or moral sentences apart from any philosophic system could be useful and important. But we do not know any teacher before the great Apamean who explicitly inserted a special *τόπος ὑποθετικός* into his system. Cleanthes liked proverbs as a practical help for moral education; Panaetius and other Stoics attached praecepta to their doctrine of *καθήκοντα*, of duties; Aristotle argued that the sentences of the vulgar tradition were the remains of a primeval philosophy;<sup>4</sup> but nobody treated praecepta as a genuine and independent part of a system of moral philosophy.

Within the general ideas of Hellenistic anthropology, there are two possibilities to justify the admission of praecepta.

(1) Praecepta as a medium of moral education have to be applied to children, to beginners in the struggle for virtue, and to persons intellectually incapable of getting a philosophic instruction. Those persons must be guided by the authority of a teacher, by the influence of moral examples, and by the fascination of well formulated sentences, because they can't—or cannot yet—understand the reasons for which something is called

<sup>1</sup> Sext. *adv. math.* vii, 12 = *SVF* i, 359.

<sup>2</sup> Sotion ap. Stob. 5, p. 972 Hense. The Cyrenaics, too, rejected ethical dogmatism (Sext. *adv. math.* vii 191; hyp. i 215 = fr. 216 Mannebach), and Seneca knew their doctrine (*Ep.* 89, 12).

<sup>3</sup> fr. 176 Edelstein-Kidd ~ *Paed.* 1,1. Posidonius is considered the outstanding moral teacher alongside Chrysippus; Sen. *Ep.* 104, 22.

<sup>4</sup> *SVF* i 582; Cic. *de off.* iii 5; Aristot. *fr.* 13 Rose. The chapter *περί προτροπῶν καὶ ἀποτροπῶν* in the orthodox system of the Stoics does not constitute a non-dogmatic section of moral philosophy as the *τόπος ὑποθετικός* does in Posidonius' system.

good and something bad. This kind of education appeals to the irrational part of the pupils' souls, and in the case of children and intelligent beginners it has to precede the training of the rational forces. Moral perfection means the state of soul, when every action is a result of a thorough rational control in the field of moral decisions, even if irrational parts of the soul are also concerned. This general conception produces a programme of education, where dogmatic teaching always follows preceptive guiding: as for the intellectually weak, they are to be educated by praecepta and exempla only. The anthropology which such an education can be based upon is not that of the Stoic orthodoxy. Orthodox Stoicism does not acknowledge the existence of independent irrational forces within the ἡγεμονικόν of the human soul, and an orthodox Stoic is firmly convinced of the natural equality of all human beings, for everybody is a ζῶον λογικόν per definitionem. Only Panaetius and Posidonius<sup>5</sup> introduced the conception of natural inequality of men into the Stoic doctrine, whereas the opinion that the human soul, particularly its ἡγεμονικόν, also includes independent irrational forces, was held by Posidonios only,<sup>6</sup> as far as we can see. Both conceptions were derived from Platonic and Peripatetic traditions.

(2) The other justification of moral praecepta is admissible in Stoic orthodoxy, too. Supposing that the pupil has been taught the elements of moral knowledge at the very beginning of his career, as Stoic education requires (*cf.* Sen. *Ep.* 109, 2), he must afterwards get used to applying these principles of his intellectual instruction to all situations of his further life. This moral training does not constitute virtue, as ἐθισμός does according to the Peripatetic doctrine, but, following the basic instruction, it is able to transform the mere knowledge of moral principles into an indestructible part of the pupil's personality. Thus virtue, being mainly knowledge, receives the character of ἐκτικόν.<sup>7</sup> For this kind of moral training after intellectual instruction which is supposed to be performed, above all, as the perfect consummation of all human duties according to accepted basic knowledge, praecepta are useful or even indispensable. The beginner will apply his basic knowledge far more easily if he is enjoying the help of specific advice, given by a skilful teacher in every new and incomparable situation of life. That is why praecepta in Stoic literature are mostly attached to the doctrine of καθήκοντα or officia.<sup>8</sup>

Seneca, however, argues in favour of praecepta in both ways. The arguments put forward from the orthodox point of view mainly occur in earlier chapters of letter 94, whereas the unorthodox arguments which are based on the conceptions of irrational education and of inequality of men are reported in later passages.<sup>9</sup> But this distribution does not mean that Seneca must have derived the two kinds of arguments from different

<sup>5</sup> Panaetius' opinion concerning the inequality of men has been discussed by M. Pohlenz (*Die Stoa* i 202). *Cf.* also Hecato *fr.* 14 Fowler.

<sup>6</sup> K. Reinhardt, *RE* 22, 732 ff. There is a recent tendency to underrate the heterodoxy of Panaetius and Posidonius by pointing to those fragments where both obviously stick to Stoic orthodox traditions; *cf.* the articles quoted by J. Hadot, *Seneca und die griechisch-römische Tradition der Seelenleitung*, Berlin 1969, 76 f. Posidonius, however, completely disagreed with traditional Stoicism on very important subjects such as psychology and doctrine of values, and his heterodoxy is duly referred to in extant doxographic literature (see notes 13 and 18). So he did not consider virtue the only ἀγαθόν, as Mrs Hadot concludes from the famous anecdote Cic. *Tusc.* ii 61 (l.c. 76). He included, as did the Peripatetics and Platonists, good health and wealth (Diog. Laert. vii 103) and, perhaps, good reputation

(A. D. Leeman, *Mnemosyne* v [1952] 57-59, with reference to Sen. *Ep.* 102, 3 ff.). Cicero's report, graviter et copiose de hoc ipso, nihil esse bonum nisi quod est honestum cubantem disputavisse, does not contradict. No Peripatetic has ever called wealth or health a value unless accompanied by virtue (*cf.* Stob. ii 7.14, p. 126 Wachs.).

<sup>7</sup> ἄσκησις following intellectual instruction and leading to the ἐκτικόν of virtue: *SVF* i 370; iii 138; 214; 471 ff. Accordingly, the therapy of affections begins with intellectual understanding and has to be completed by ἄσκησις = *SVF* iii 490. *Cf.* also G. Scarpata, *La lettera 65 di Seneca*, Brescia 1967, 213.

<sup>8</sup> The special relation between officia and praecepta is frequently discussed in Stoic texts: *SVF* iii 496; 685 ff.; Cic. *ce off.* iii 5; Clem. Al. *paed.* i 107; Simplic. in Epict. ench. 30 p. 82 ff. Dübner.

<sup>9</sup> 'Orthodox' arguments: 23; 25-26; 31-34; 36; 47-49, 'unorthodox' arguments 27/28; 40-46; 50-51.

sources, because at least one argument which belongs to the orthodox group has been modified in quite an unorthodox way.

Seneca explicitly opposes the parallel between physical health and moral perfection, a comparison which is very common in the orthodox Stoic tradition, where virtue is frequently called health of the soul.<sup>10</sup> The difference between the two kinds of sanity, as Seneca puts it, is explained as follows: Si insaniam (sc. corporis) sustuleris, sanitas reddita est; si falsas opiniones exclusimus, non statim sequitur dispectus rerum agendarum (94, 36). This passage recalls a topic which occurs in Posidonius' polemics against Chrysippus. In his work on affections Posidonius pointed out that in its state of health the human body is not only structurally intact but also able to perform exclusively right actions and reactions. So we can predict what a healthy body is going to do in any given situation. The normal state of the human soul is also denoted by the absence of organic deficiencies and, of course, of false opinions. But this condition cannot possibly be compared with physical health because of what Posidonius, using an older term of Stoic psychology, called *εὐεμπτωσία τῆς ψυχῆς*.<sup>11</sup> Even without being influenced by organic deficiencies or false opinions a man's soul is able to cause morally bad actions. It inevitably contains the *σπέρμα τῆς κακίας*. That is the price man has to pay for the freedom of choice he enjoys as a predominantly rational being. So right actions in moral life can never be warranted by intellectual and dogmatic instruction only, as we know—non statim sequitur dispectus rerum agendarum.<sup>11a</sup>

We know the details of that Posidonian doctrine from the report Galen gave in his treatise *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*, which is based, in its first books, upon Posidonius' work on affections, and which has been carefully studied by Max Pohlenz and Karl Reinhardt.<sup>12</sup> Seneca refers to this Posidonian doctrine in the context of orthodox arguments in favour of praecepta. Thus Posidonius probably adopted the general Stoic opinion that praecepta are useful during the period of intellectual training after dogmatic instruction. But Posidonius gave new arguments in favour of that opinion, which were provided by his own, unorthodox, psychology.

As for the unorthodox arguments, based upon the assumption that irrational education has to precede intellectual instruction, they are introduced by Seneca in chapter 38 with a verbal quotation from Posidonius. Among them we find some close parallels to well attested Posidonian doctrines<sup>13</sup> about the possibilities of irrational education, and about the natural inequality of men. Moreover, the Aristotelian distinction between practical and theoretical intelligence—extremely contrary to Stoic orthodoxy—is introduced by Seneca, in order to prove the utility of praecepta. This distinction was adopted by Panaetius and

<sup>10</sup> *SVF* i 375 (Aristo) ἀρετή = ὑγίεια; iii 197 (probably Diogenes of Babylon) ὑγίεια τῆς ψυχῆς = ἀρετή ἀθεώρητος; iii 278 (Arius Didymus' survey of Stoic ethics) ψυχῆς ὑγίεια = ἐδκρασία τῶν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ δογμάτων. The third definition seems to be explicitly refuted in Seneca's letter.

<sup>11</sup> *SVF* iii 421/422; cf. Sen. *Ep.* 94, 13: aut inest pravis opinionibus malitia contracta aut, etiam si non est falsis occupatus, ad falsa proclivis est.

<sup>11a</sup> Seneca does not always argue very consistently in these two letters. 94,36 and 94,13, for instance, clearly refer to the Posidonian concept (cf. Galen, *ὅτι ταῖς τοῦ σώμ. κρᾶσει* p. 78, 8 ff. Müller; Sen. *de ir.* ii 19/20), but 94,55 apparently reproduces a different anthropology: erras, si existimas nobiscum vitia nasci (cf. M. Pohlenz, *Die Stoa* ii 120), which can be found in 94,29, too: omnium honestarum rerum semina animi gerunt (cf. Cic. *de fin.* v 43).

<sup>12</sup> M. Pohlenz, *De Posidonii libris περὶ παθῶν* (Fleck. Jb. Suppl. 24) 1898; K. Reinhardt, *RE* 22, 559 ff.

<sup>13</sup> Education begins with the irrational part of the soul: Gal. *ὅτι ταῖς τοῦ σώμ. κρᾶσει* p. 78 f. Mü.; Gal. *Plac.* p. 445 Mü.; Sen. *de ir.* ii 18 ff.~Sen. *ep.* 94, 40 ff. 51. Possibilities of influencing the irrational part: Gal. *Plac.* p. 451 ff. Mü.~Sen. *ep.* 94, 28; 47; Gal. *Plac.* p. 392 f. Mü.~Sen. *ep.* 94, 40 f.

Natural inequality of men: Gal. *Plac.* p. 443 Mü.; Gal. *ὅτι ταῖς τοῦ σώμ. κρᾶσ.* passim~Sen. *ep.* 94, 30; 40; 50; 95, 36 f.

*Σπέρματα τῆς κακίας* and the like: Gal. *ὅτι ταῖς τοῦ σώμ. κρᾶσ.* p. 78 f. Mü.; Gal. *Plac.* 437 Mü.; Gal. *π. ἠθῶν* p. 88, Walzer~Sen. *ep.* 94, 13; 7; 36 but, on the contrary, *ep.* 94, 56. Refutation of the parallel between physical health and moral sanity: Gal. *Plac.* p. 410 ff. Mü.

further maintained by Posidonius.<sup>14</sup> In this very context Seneca opposes Aristo's definition of virtue by a formulation which is obviously Posidonian or at least Middle-Stoic: *contemplatio veri et actio*.<sup>15</sup>

We can't penetrate into all the details. But it seems to be very likely that Seneca took all the important arguments in letter 94 from a work of Posidonius, probably the same one that furnished the systematic division of the *pars praeceptiva* in letter 95, where Posidonius' name is mentioned.<sup>15a</sup> Here we are told that *praeceptio* has three subdivisions: *Suasiones* concerning *πράξεις*—as we hear from Clement (*paed.* 1, 1)—*exhortationes* related to *ἡθῆ*, and *consolationes* for the *πάθη*.

The trichotomy of *πράξεις/ἡθῆ/πάθη*, which is thought to denote the sum of moral life, has been taken from Peripatetic anthropology. The closest parallel to the Posidonian tripartition can be seen in a passage of Aristotle's *Poetics* (1447a28), where dance is supposed to imitate *πράξεις/ἡθῆ/πάθη*, that is to say the total of human affections and activities. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle points out that *ἡθῆ*—fundamental *ἕξεις* or moral attitudes—are created by *ἔθισμός*, by permanent and conscious acting according to the standards of vices or virtues. They produce, in their turn, morally good and bad reactions to the affections of the human soul: *ἕξεις καθ' ἃς ἔχομεν πρὸς τὰ πάθη εἶ ἢ κακῶς*.<sup>16</sup> Obviously, Posidonius divided his *praeceptio*, his theory of specific advising, according to Peripatetic psychology. This is by no means surprising, for Aristotle also believed that intentionality, which is indispensable for the moral relevance of whatever action, does not depend on general or scientific knowledge but only on intellectual understanding of actual situations, where decisions cannot be made in a strictly scientific way. Every situation of life can be classified as *ἐνδεχόμενον καὶ ἄλλως ἔχειν*, thus implying a problem that admits of several solutions which can be equally correct.<sup>17</sup> Therefore Aristotle separated practical from theoretical intelligence (*φρόνησις* and *σοφία*), of which only the former is needed for practical purposes, whereas Plato as well as the Stoics did not distinguish between these two kinds of intellect. Aristotle's theory is likely to have been most convenient to Posidonius, when he tried to lay the foundations of a *τόπος ὑποθετικός*, that is to say a doctrine of practical ethics, within his philosophic system. According to his *τόπος ὑποθετικός*, too, right actions can result from the limited understanding of special situations and particular duties apart from all general knowledge.<sup>18</sup>

Next to the tripartition of direct advice, Posidonius' *τόπος ὑποθετικός* contains the *causarum inquisitio* or *αἰτιολογία*,<sup>19</sup> that is to say the explanation of single precepts apart from dogmatic instruction, thus appealing to the practical intellect only, and a further item called *ἠθολογία* sive *χαρακτηρισμός*. The latter means, as Seneca says, moral exhortation not by direct advice but by the description of good and

<sup>14</sup> Panaet. *fr.* 108 v. d. Str. As for Posidonius, he distinguished between virtues of the *ἄλογον*, being merely *ἕξεις*, and virtues of the *λογικόν*, being *ἕξεις* as well as *ἐπιστημῆμαι* (Gal. *Plac.* p. 590 Mü.).

<sup>15</sup> Aristo: *scientia et habitus animi* (Sen. *ep.* 94, 47) or *disciplina et exercitatio* (94, 48); cf. Scarpat 1. c. 195.

<sup>15a</sup> A. D. Leeman (*Mnemosyne* vi [1953] 307–313) assumes that Seneca's project of writing a comprehensive work on moral philosophy was inspired by Posidonius' *ἠθικός λόγος*, and that he was deeply influenced by Posidonius' systematics and dialectics (*Mnemosyne* vii [1954] 233–240).

<sup>16</sup> *ἡθῆ/πάθη/πράξεις*: *EN* 1103a17 ff.; 1105b25 ff.; cf. *hist. an.* 631b7.

<sup>17</sup> *Ἐνδεχόμενα καὶ ἄλλως ἔχειν*: *EN* 1134b31 ff.;

1143b3; *φρόνησις* defined as the understanding *καθ' ἕκαστα* and opposed to *σοφία*: *EN* 1140b21 ff.

<sup>18</sup> Strabo (xiii 1. 54) blames Posidonius for his *ἀριστοτελλίζεν*. That seems to refer to very substantial Peripatetic elements in his doctrine rather than to a general attitude, as K. Reinhardt was inclined to believe. But Reinhardt was certainly right in stressing the fact that Posidonius is repeatedly referred to as a quite unorthodox Stoic throughout the literature of the imperial period. The Platonist Galen spoke of him as the *ἐπιστημονικώτατος* of all the Stoics (*ὅτι ταῖς τοῦ σώματος κράσεσιν* p. 77 Müller).

<sup>19</sup> *Αἰτιολογία* apart from moral dogmatism was also taught by the Cyrenaics: Sext. *adv. math.* vii 10 f.; Sen. *ep.* 89, 12.

bad behaviour. The same purpose, by the way, can be observed in Posidonius' famous historiography.<sup>20</sup>

We are probably allowed to conclude that it was Posidonius who introduced the *pars praeceptiva* into the systematic sub-division of ethics. Most of the previous Stoics admitted *praecepta* as a means of advice and education in connection with their doctrine of *καθήκοντα*. They were even willing to practice psychagogics and psychotherapeutics, if necessary, without regard to their own dogmatic teaching.<sup>20a</sup> But they were far from setting up an independent non-dogmatic section in the system of moral philosophy. When Aristo rejected any kind of moral *praecepta*, he was by no means unorthodox. Since every *praeceptum*, he argued, has to be derived from a fundamental *decretum*, it is, in fact, the latter which produces the right action. That is why *praecepta* are as superfluous as nursery rhymes. Later Stoics, too, as we learn from Epictetus, avoided *praecepta* and recommended instead continuous meditation of some basic *decreta* as the best method of moral training.<sup>21</sup> So it was Aristo<sup>22</sup> who was to be opposed by Posidonius, when he tried to establish the *pars praeceptiva* as important and independent section of his moral system. For this refutation Posidonius made use of the general recommendations of *praecepta* he found in Stoic tradition, and also of fresh arguments provided by his own, unorthodox psychology. In Posidonius' system, *praecepta* became an independent method of irrational education, sufficient for ordinary people, preliminary and subsidiary for persons, who were capable of philosophic instruction and moral perfection.

Not only the *pars praeceptiva* is new in Posidonius' system. Seneca's 95th letter, complementary to the 94th, contains a refutation of all Sceptics and Empiricists who do not believe in the need for moral dogmatism.

The first argument put forward by Seneca in order to prove the indispensability of *decreta*, sounds very Posidonian: in primeval times, when life was simple and healthy, medical art was entirely based upon experience and transmitted in single precepts. Now, people being depraved by the influences of a highly developed civilisation, it has become so difficult to recognise the various diseases and their causes that a scientific and dogmatic medicine has to be applied. The same proportion between past and present subsists in the field of ethics. We badly need moral dogmas, since our social conditions are distorted and demand for a scientific therapy. We know that idea of progress from Seneca's 90th letter, which rests entirely on Posidonius.<sup>23</sup>

The other arguments Seneca mentions are neither typical of Posidonius nor incompatible with his philosophy.

But Seneca does not only collect arguments in favour of moral dogmatism. He also gives a very interesting description of the dogmatic part of moral philosophy, which is different from all comparable distinctions in scholarly, particularly in Stoic, tradition.<sup>24</sup> It begins with three main topics of moral dogmatism: *Quomodo dei sint colendi, quomodo hominibus sit utendum, quomodo rebus sit utendum*. That such a tripartition of ethical

<sup>20</sup> K. Reinhardt, RE 22, 631–633. Perhaps Seneca's tragedies have to be understood as contributions to *ἠθολογία*; cf. J. Hadot l.c. 190 f.

<sup>20a</sup> *SVF* iii 474 (Chrysippus); cf. J. Hadot l.c. 21.

<sup>21</sup> Refutation of *praecepta*: Epict. *diss.* ii 2. 31; ii 16. 24; meditation of basic *decreta*: Epict. *diss.* vii 2. 1; xi 34. 1; cf. Sen. *de benef.* 7. 3. Cf. J. Hadot l.c. 53; 60 f.

<sup>22</sup> Aristo invented the parable of the archer in order to refute the teaching of moral *praecepta* (Sen. *ep.* 94, 3): The Bowman has to learn to handle his bow, not to study the objects he is going to aim at. Chrysippus (Cic. *de fin.* iii 22) and Panaetius (*fr.* 109 van der Straaten) approved of the comparison,

whereas Plutarchus (*de comm. not.* 1071 C) objected, perhaps influenced by Posidonius.

<sup>23</sup> L. Edelstein, *The Idea of Progress in Classical Antiquity*, Baltimore 1967, 167 ff.

<sup>24</sup> The subdivision of the *pars moralis philosophiae* according to the orthodox Stoic tradition can be seen from Diog. Laet. vii 84. Panaetius' system is described by Cicero (*de off.* ii 18) and Seneca (*ep.* 89, 14; to be added in van der Straaten's collection).

Diogenes Laertius ascribes the orthodox subdivision to Posidonius as well. This is apparently wrong (A. Dihle, *Der Kanon der zwei Tugenden*, Köln 1968, 27 f.).

theory is Posidonian, has already been concluded by Willy Theiler<sup>25</sup> from parallels in Dio Chrysostom, Marcus Aurelius and other authors. But, what does it really mean, if Posidonius replaces the usual method of division, known from Stoic, Epicurean, and Academic sources, by so different a system?

Human morality classified as behaviour towards gods and men is a commonplace of popular ethics inside and outside the Greco-Roman world.<sup>26</sup> In classical antiquity principles and concepts of vulgar ethics were continuously reformulated and transmitted in the rhetorical tradition, where human perfection is, in fact, very frequently described by the juxtaposition of piety and justice or piety and philanthropy.<sup>27</sup> But the same bipartition does not occur in strictly philosophical texts, since Plato and Aristotle explained the fundamental difference between interhuman relationships on the one hand and man's attitude to god on the other.<sup>28</sup> So despite the fact that philosophy is frequently described as *scientia divinarum et humanarum*,<sup>29</sup> particularly in the Stoic tradition, the corresponding subdivision of its *pars moralis* is widely unknown. Only from the first century B.C. onwards does the old popular concept of the two basic virtues reappear in philosophical texts, even in those of a more scholarly type.<sup>30</sup> So we may conclude that Posidonius took the bipartition according to gods and men from the vulgar or rhetorical tradition and added a third item concerning the human relation to objects.

Posidonius' propensity to vulgar ethics is not surprising. He introduced, as we saw, a *pars praeceptiva* into his ethical system. That meant the admission of all the old sentences and proverbs of popular ethics, collected and refined mainly in the rhetorical tradition. Posidonius' predilection for such sentences corresponds to his admitting of a scheme of vulgar ethics into the dogmatic part of his moral philosophy.

The third item which seems to have been introduced by Posidonius is particularly interesting. Seneca's explanation runs as follows: *Qualem de quacumque re habere debeamus opinionem, de paupertate, de divitiis, de gloria, de ignominia, de patria, de exilio; aestimemus singula fama remota et quaeramus, quid sint non quid vocentur.* This is not, of course, a chapter on man's relation to objects as distinct from his attitude to gods and fellow creatures. The third chapter, *de rebus* according to Seneca's terminology, seems to have corresponded to what was treated under the headings *π. ὀρμῶν* and *π. ἀγαθῶν καὶ κακῶν* in the traditional Stoic system. Seneca clearly describes a chapter on the classification of *ἀγαθά, κακά, ἀδιάφορα* and on the evaluation of *φαντασίαι*,<sup>32</sup> that is to say on ethical values and the psychological presuppositions of their classification. So the third chapter did not merely contribute, at the same level, a supplement to the first two chapters. Its content applied to the problem of human relations to the gods as well as to the question of inter-human activity, and it dealt with some important subjects of the traditional theory of ethics.

This interpretation of the heading *de rebus* is confirmed by the fact that Seneca enumerates a fourth item in his report on the dogmatic part of Posidonius' moral philosophy: *Transeamus ad virtutes.* We are told that it does not suffice to recommend individual virtues, even if we possibly could act bravely or wisely after such an exhortation. *Virtus et aliorum scientia est et sui: Discendum de ipsa est ut ipsa discatur.* Thus the fourth chapter of Posidonius has its counterpart in the *τόπος π. ἀρετῶν (καὶ κακῶν)* of the orthodox

<sup>25</sup> *Die Vorbereitung des Neuplatonismus*, Berlin 1930, 104 f.; 140 ff. Cf. H. R. Neuenschwander, *Mark Aurels Beziehungen zu Seneca und Posidonius* (Noctes Romanae 3), Bern 1951, 60-65.

<sup>26</sup> A. Dihle, l.c. *passim*.

<sup>27</sup> J. Kabiersch, *Untersuchungen zum Begriff der Philanthropie bei Kaiser Julian*, Wiesbaden 1960, 49 ff.

<sup>28</sup> D. Loenen, *Eusebeia en de cardinale deugden* (Med.-Nied. Akad. Wet. Lett. 23, 4), 1960.

<sup>29</sup> *SVF* ii 35 f.; Sen. *ep.* 88, 26; 89, 5; cf. M. Pohlenz, *Die Stoa* ii 106. Posidonius himself described poetry as *μίμησις θεῶν καὶ ἀνθρωπέων* (Diog. Laert. vii 60).

<sup>30</sup> A. Dihle, l.c. 23 ff.

<sup>31</sup> Marcus Aurelius offers both the bipartition and the tripartition (iii 1; vii 31 and vi 23; viii 27). Slightly different is Epict. *diss.* ii 14.19.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. M. Pohlenz, *Die Stoa* i 88 f.; 105.

Stoic doctrine, where the nature of virtue and the psychological presuppositions of its coming to be are expounded. Accordingly, Seneca speaks of some basic psychological concepts, such as *voluntas/προαίρεσις* and *habitus animi/διάθεσις* or *ἕξις*, in this very context.

So the third and fourth chapters of the dogmatic part in Posidonius' system are likely to have comprehended the essential details of the more scholarly tradition of Stoic theory with particular emphasis laid on ethical psychology, whereas chapters one and two offered the more general rules according to which man has to apply his ethical knowledge in the various fields of his activity.

The rules which Seneca mentions in his report on the first two chapters are, in fact, widely known in the philosophical and non-philosophical tradition;<sup>33</sup> one has to perceive and to imitate the goodness of the gods and to realise that all human beings are members of the same body, and to act accordingly. These maxims were far from being new or original in the first century B.C. But Posidonius used them for the first time as a structural element in his ethical theory. They were derived from the philosophical but generally accepted concepts of the unity of mankind and the close interrelation between social and cosmic (or divine) order. They bridged the gap between the popular *praecepta* treated in the *τόπος ὑποθετικός* and the scholarly doctrines in the third and fourth chapters of the dogmatic part. Such a link was needed, since the independent *τόπος ὑποθετικός* and its popular content replaced, in Posidonius' system, the *τόπος περὶ προτροπῶν καὶ ἀποτροπῶν*<sup>34</sup> in the older Stoic theory, where elements of popular ethics had never been explicitly admitted.<sup>35</sup>

Posidonius' system is extremely interesting, for it is different from all schemes and divisions we are able to reconstruct from Stoic, Epicurean, Academic, and Peripatetic sources. As a whole, it seems to be quite original, though we could discover important details of Stoic and Peripatetic psychology as well as elements of popular experience, which had been treasured in the gnomic tradition. Obviously, Posidonius faced very seriously the consequences of Panaetius' and his own opinion, that men are not equal by nature, and that a person's moral qualification is deeply influenced not only by social conditions but even more by his physical *κρᾶσις*, by climate and other physical factors. The refutation of the old Stoic conception of equality produced the need for a comprehensive system of ethics, where both ordinary people and philosophers could get their moral instruction. Thus Posidonius tried to incorporate the gnomic tradition of vulgar ethics into a scientific system, which had to withstand the competition from other philosophical doctrines. In Posidonius' times, the gnomic tradition was by no means a matter of folklore. It had been refined and enlarged in the school of rhetoricians for stylistic as well as for educational purposes, as was already foreseen in the programme of Isocrates. When Aristo, the most

<sup>33</sup> A selection from the great bulk of parallels is given by A. Dihle, l.c. 25 f.

<sup>34</sup> Diog. Laert. vii 84. The treatment Reinhardt gives to the *τόπος ὑποθετικός* in Posidonius' philosophy seems to me not quite satisfactory (RE 22, 769). Neither he nor H. I. Marrou (*Clément d'Alexandrie, Le pédagogue*, Paris 1960, Introduction 10) has duly noted that Seneca coined the term *praeceptio* or *pars praeceptiva* (Sen. *ep.* 95, 1; 65) in order to denote the whole non-dogmatic section in Posidonius' system, of which *suasio*, *exhortatio*, *consolatio* are merely sub-sections (95, 66; 94, 49). Marrou is right in objecting the parallel between *praeceptio* in Seneca and *διδασκαλικὸς λόγος* in Clement (*praed.* i 1.2.1). *Præceptio* in the more general sense of instruction is widely used in the language of Roman

law, in Cicero and elsewhere (*cf.* Cic. *part. or.* 123), but Seneca took the word to translate the Greek term *παρανηγική*. Reinhardt, Marrou, and Marie Laffranque in her most learned book (*Poseidonios*, Paris 1964, 466 f.) do not fully take into account the strict bipartition into a dogmatic and a non-dogmatic part Posidonius had in his system. This is, in fact, the most striking innovation. Diogenes Laertius says that all the distinguished Stoics from Chrysippus onwards adopted the same subdivision of the *pars moralis*. This cannot possibly be true in the case of Posidonius (*cf.* A. Dihle *loc. cit.* 27).

<sup>35</sup> This does not apply, perhaps, to the *τόπος περὶ τοῦ καθήκοντος*; *cf.* Hierocl. ap. Stob. i 3 p. 63 f.; ii 9 p. 181 f W.

severe teacher during the early period of Stoicism, discredited those sentences, he opposed a very serious competitor in the field of moral education.

Posidonius was a brilliant writer. He knew about the authority and the moral influence exercised by striking formulations,<sup>36</sup> which appeal to common sense and to sentiment rather than to rational understanding. That is why he combined in his system both moral principles of a philosophic conception and elegantly formulated rules of popular experience with his explanations.

Posidonius' system produced various effects in the literary and philosophic tradition. Official Stoicism during its last three centuries generally rejected the innovations made by Panaetius and Posidonius, as we know from Epictetus and Hierocles. Epictetus rejected preceptive teaching and recommended meditation of basic doctrines instead. Posidonius' influence was far more remarkable on the Platonic school of the centuries of Roman empire, as Werner Jaeger has already shown 50 years ago in his book on Nemesius. All the divisions of moral philosophy we know from Middle-Platonic sources include the *τόπος υποθετικός*,<sup>37</sup> which had been unknown to the earlier authors. Philo the Alexandrine, a typical representative of philosophic syncretism of his time, wrote a book entitled *ὑποθετικά*.<sup>38</sup> It dealt with popular sentences which were considered and explained as witnesses of natural and pre-philosophic morality, based upon and appealing to, common sense.

The most important texts, from which the evidence for our knowledge of the Posidonian system really comes, are not provided by strictly professional philosophers, but by cultivated men of the imperial society, whose erudition was literary and philosophic in the sense of a broad general education: Seneca the prime minister, Marcus the emperor, Galen the famous physician, Dio Chrysostom the publicist, Plutarchus the provincial nobleman. Men of that social standing were likely to have a predilection for philosophic authorities, who were not too doctrinaire in their approach, who admitted various ways of moral progress for persons of different origin and of different qualities. Moreover, educated men in the period of the Roman empire were deeply interested in the problems of self-education, meditation, and psychagogic practices.<sup>39</sup> So they were attracted by a system of moral philosophy which included within its framework the gnostic tradition of popular experience as a most important instrument for meditation and psychagogic activity. But, nevertheless, it was a system which enjoyed the scientific authority of a great scholar.

A. DIHLE

*The University of Köln*

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Hor. *ep.* ii 1.127 and the quotation from Phaedo, Sen. *ep.* 94,41. The topic is treated by A. M. Guillemin, *REL* xxxii (1954) 272 f., and J. Hadot, l.c. 16.

<sup>37</sup> Phil. Lariss. and Eudor. ap. Stob. ii 7.2 W. The subdivision of *δικαιοσύνη* according to the partners of man (*θεοί, ἄνθρωποι, ἀποιχόμενοι*) may also be inspired by Posidonius (Ps. Aristot. *virt. et vit.*

1250b15 ff.; Diog. Laert. iii 83; Cic. *part. or.* 78), whereas the orthodox Stoic subdivision is different (Stob. ii 7 p. 60, 23 W.).

<sup>38</sup> Euseb. *praep. ev.* viii 7.5.

<sup>39</sup> P. Rabbow, *Seelenführung*, München 1954, and J. Hadot, *Seneca und die griechisch-römische Tradition der Seelenführung*, Berlin 1969, 8 ff.