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**The Apocolocytosis**  
**- The Title and Seneca's Authorship reconsidered -**

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## 1. Introduction

"Bei einem solchen in jedem Wort zugespitzten Meisterwerk soll man nicht ruhen, bis das volle und gesicherte Verständnis jedes Wortes erreicht ist."

Richard Heinze (49)<sup>1</sup>

In unintentional imitation of Eden, who begins his edition<sup>2</sup> with this quote, I shall begin this essay, too. Considering that Heinze makes this comment in the beginning of his essay, too, one could assume that in the 80 years passed since then - if not already by Heinze himself - the fully understanding of this satire - usually called *Apocolocyntosis* - must have been reached. But its discussion went on and goes on. Two very comprehensive bibliographies have been published<sup>3</sup> containing works until 1982, and even in the following years up to now, publications did not stop. Heinze's quote sounds almost sarcastical if one takes a look at the still very controversial title discussion. So actually, an understanding of the first word has not even been reached, and that is far from 'jedes Wort'.

This essay shall be an attempt to give a critical overview of the controversy regarding the satire's title but additionally, also an attempt to deliberate on the arguments for and against Seneca's authorship.

The fact that this literary work belongs to the satirical genre, and more precisely to the Menippean satire, does not make this undertaking easier; unappreciated irony and unknown jokes may still be hidden from today's reader because there is a lot about this genre that we simply do not know. Similarly, we do not know much about this satire's particular circumstances historically and regarding its publication. Nevertheless, a collection of titles of Varro's Menippean satires has been passed on to us, and they are referred to and taken into consideration when they seemed helpful for this paper's title discussion. But "vor diesem Hintergrund [today's ignorance of the Menippean

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\* Hereby I want to express a big "Thank You" to my 'Favourite American Cousin' Julie Kretzmer, my English proofreader in this essay.

<sup>1</sup> Richard Heinze: "Zu Senecas Apocolocyntosis", *Hermes* 61, 1926, 49-78.

<sup>2</sup> P. T. Eden: *Seneca - Apocolocyntosis*, Cambridge, 1984, p. vii.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Coffey: "Seneca, Apocolocyntosis 1922-1958", *Lustrum* VI, 1961 (1962), 239-271. Klaus Bringmann: "Seneca 'Apocolocyntosis': Ein Forschungsbericht 1959-1982", *ANRW* II, 32.2 (1985), 885-914. Additionally, Coffey (Bibliography 239) notes the Münscher Jahresbericht, which has according to Otto Weinreich, (*Die Satire auf Tod, Himmel- und Höllenfahrt des Kaisers Claudius*, Berlin, 1923) the following references: J. B. Münscher: "Berichte über die Sen. Lit. 1915-1921", *Bursians Jahresber.* 1922, 192, 1922. Coffey points out the pages 148-154.

satire J. T.] empfiehlt sich eine werkimmanente Interpretation der *Apocolocyntosis*, die auf close-reading beruht".<sup>4</sup>

Although this essay will not contain a full interpretation, it seemed necessary to talk sufficiently about the content even though the title and author discussion are the main focuses. Therefore, Chapter 2 deals with the most important facts of the satire's content, regarding its Claudius picture, its possible messages and in connection between these two items, the probable attitude of the narrator and the audience. In Chapter 3, the title question is raised. The point of departure will be the factual basis and then, the linguistic backgrounds of different titles will be analysed. Afterwards, various *cucurbita* passages from Latin literature will be discussed because the Greek equivalent κολοκύντη plays a very important role in the title discussion. The following pages will then provide a survey of theses regarding the interpretations of the most commonly used coinage, namely Dio's ἀποκολοκύντωσις. In the next subchapters alternative title suggestions will be explained, including a new suggestion.

In Chapter 4, Seneca's probable authorship will be presented and thought through. At first, Seneca's position at that time and the factual basis for his authorship will be introduced, and secondly, the reasons found in this piece of literature for or against his authorship are discussed. Other literary works by Seneca will be taken into consideration, as well as his position as a moral philosopher and his possible motives to write this work.

## **2. The Satire *Apocolocyntosis* and its Possible Messages**

### **2.1 What the Reader is taught in the *Apocolocyntosis***

In order to get a better basis for the discussion about the possible titles of this satire and their respective meanings, as well as about Seneca as its probable author, one should take a look at the satire itself, to get an idea of the Claudius picture it provides, and consequently also an idea of the narrator's - and maybe even the author's - attitude towards the late emperor.

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<sup>4</sup> Allan A. Lund: *L. Annaeus Seneca - Apocolocyntosis Divi Claudii*, Heidelberg, 1994, 19.

While finding out characteristics, one should take into consideration that "die stereotypische Charakterschilderung des Claudius in der *Apocolocyntosis* [...] sich einigermaßen mit dem Bild seiner Person in den zeitgenössischen Quellen [deckt]".<sup>5</sup> Those sources are e. g. Tacitus, Sueton, and Dio Cassius.<sup>6</sup>

That is to say that despite the fact that one is dealing with the literary genre of satire, which increases the range of interpretations and hides the 'true reading' even better than other genres, the statements of the narrator: *nihil nec offensae nec gratiae dabitur. haec ita vera* (1.1), and *dicam quod mihi in buccam venerit*, (1.2) may convey more 'truth' than at first imagined.<sup>7</sup>

Claudius' outward appearance is described in a rather detailed way even though hyperbolically. His monstrous looks, *facies novi generis* (5.3), shock even Hercules (*perturbare* 5.3) who thinks his thirteenth labour is approaching when meeting the emperor, although Hercules has certainly seen and fought various monsters before (5.3).

*Bene canus*, [...] *assidue* [...] *caput movere*, *pedem dextrum trahere* (5.2) are the first mentioned characteristics of Claudius. The latter two are disabilities from which Claudius apparently suffered. There are possibly more references to his club foot found in the *Apocolocyntosis*. *Non passibus aequis* (1.2) - probably a quote from Virgil's *Aeneis* (II<sub>724</sub>) - could also hint to Claudius' club foot which causes his unusual way of walking, as proposed e.g. by Konrad Kraft (103)<sup>8</sup>; and again in 5.3, *insolitum incessum* refers to the way the emperor walks. Moreover, Claudius' way of speaking is described as *turbatus sonus et vox confusa*, *linguam non intellegere* (5.2). His sounds are even referred to as *vox nullius terrestris animalis*, but as one of a *marina belua*, a *vox rauca et implicata* (5.3).<sup>9</sup>

As a matter of fact, however, it is admitted in a rather neutral way that Claudius - while Hercules *diligentius intuens* - is *quasi homo* (5.4) and is of

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<sup>5</sup> cf. Lund, Edition 17.

<sup>6</sup> However, in this essay these authors shall neither be compared nor referred to extensively. An overview on this idea gives Michael Coffey: *Roman Satire*, London, New York 1976, 169ff..

<sup>7</sup> As a matter of fact, exaggerations cannot be denied and shall not be denied which is made clear just by the genre of satire itself. Cf. e. g. 217f., Hans Kloft: "Marginalien zur *Apocolocyntosis* und zum Prinzipat des Nero", *Archiv zur Kulturgeschichte* 54, 1972, 205-222.

<sup>8</sup> Konrad Kraft: "Der politische Hintergrund von Senecas *Apocolocyntosis*", *Historia. Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 15, 1966, 96-122.

<sup>9</sup> Additionally, see 14.2, where another sarcastic remark on Claudius' language, the *Claudiana lingua*, is found, which Publius Petronius as Claudius' advocate is *disertus* of, cf.

"good build"<sup>10</sup>, *bona statura* (5.2).

Only from these few remarks, Claudius is introduced as someone whose presence can frighten people, and indeed, he even frightens Hercules. Furthermore, the emperor's *bona statura* seems to be, together with his other features, rather to the disadvantage for him, making him even more frightening.

In addition to these characteristics, the reader learns that Claudius is considered a *μωρός* (7.3; 8.3), at least by gods.<sup>11+12</sup> While Hercules' statement (7.3) could be regarded as 'just a saying', the god in 8.3 addresses Claudius humiliatingly this way. Even the emperor's life itself is simply said to be a *stolida vita* (4.1).

There are a few passages that even hint to the fact that his *vita* was not always as brilliant for Claudius himself, as one might imagine the life of an emperor to be, for instance in 3.1 when Clotho is supposed to cut Claudius' life off: *annus sexagesimus et quartus est, ex quo cum anima luctatur*, which may refer to his continuously poor health. In the same context, 3.2 can be read: [...] *qui illum, ex quo princeps factus est, omnibus annis omnibus mensibus efferunt*. However, this quote includes probably another aspect of Claudius' reign. It is said, e. g. by Hoyos (70)<sup>13</sup>, that especially the emperor's freedmen and his wives ruled him and over him, therefore he might have died in a transferred sense a lot earlier and again and again, and therefore might have suffered also more 'deaths'. Then, finally, with his physical death, he only *desiit vivere videri* (4.2) which Lund (37) translates very meaningful and appropriate into German as "von dem Moment [Claudius' death J. T.] an hörte sein Scheindasein auf".

More important is, however, the reaction of the *populus Romanus* to

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even further 6.2.

<sup>10</sup> cf. Eden, 37.

<sup>11</sup> The one and only direct comment on Claudius by one of his former 'earthly friends' found in this satire is by Peto Pompeius who calls Claudius *interfector omnium amicorum* (13.6); this one comment may reveal that people were not able to make fun of him, but simply feared him. Cf. the following pages and chapters.

<sup>12</sup> It is remarkable that the same Greek word also occurs in Suetonius, *Claudius Divus* 38.3 *μωροῦ ἐπανάστασις* as the title for a collection of stories of foolish emperors, which is lost.

<sup>13</sup> "He was pushed around by manipulative wives and freedmen" (70), B. Dexter Hoyos: "Gourd God! The Meaning of Apocolocyntosis", *Liverpool Classical Monthly* 16, 1991, 68-70. Similarly: "So wird Claudius im Tode, wie er es im Leben war, zum Hörigen eines Freigelassenen bestimmt [...].", Ulrich Knoche, *Die römische Satire*, Göttingen, 1957, 66-67.

their emperor's death. In fact, there is not even a little information about its reaction found in this satire. The narrator himself says about the immediate time after Claudius' death: *ego scio me liberum factum, ex quo suum diem obiit [...]* (1.1), and equally important: *nemo felicitatis suae obliviscitur* (5.1). One can realize from these statements that even the narrator was relieved after Claudius' death and felt free again, just as most people must have done. After *Claudium autem iubent omnes χαίροντας εὐφηοῦντας ἐκπέμπειν δόμων* (4.2), most of them were *laeti, hilares* and *liberi*, only very few were truly sad (12.2). Especially mentioned are "die wirklichen Juristen"<sup>14</sup> - *iurisconsulti* (12.2) - who, although they had turned *pallidi, graciles*, and *vix animam habentes*, begin to *revivescere* again after the late emperor's death (12.2). The latter seems rather important since one accusation against Claudius is his way of dealing with the jurisdiction (cf. Chapter 4).

Unfortunately, there is a lacuna in the manuscripts of the *Apocolocyntosis* after Claudius' talk of his *miseriae*, when he had to listen to *causidicos [...]* *diem et noctem*, which is apparently worse than cleaning Augias' stables (7.5), and therefore Hercules' immediately following reaction is lost. However, as one knows from other sources<sup>15</sup>, how Claudius ran his legal offices, the hint to the emperor's unjust practices in this field are rather obvious.<sup>16</sup> An idea of his arbitrary measures, the reader gets to know in 6.1. Claudius disapproves of Febris' probably true accusations against him, and after *excandescit hoc loco Claudius et quanto potest murmure irascitur*, he tries to use the *gestus solutae manus* (6.1) to have the goddess Febris simply decapitated (*decollare*) as a solution.

It has been several times<sup>17</sup> suggested that Claudius' trial in the underworld is an image or portrait of the unfair trials in Rome under the rule of Claudius, whose own position of power has changed and who experiences such a trial now from the opposite side, namely as the accused person. So especially, the contemporary reader is reminded of the Claudian trials by the

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Additionally, cf. Tacitus *Annales* XII, 1.

<sup>14</sup> cf. Lund, Edition 49.

<sup>15</sup> cf. beginning of Chapter 2, including footnote 6.

<sup>16</sup> cf. Chapter 4 for the charges which are brought up against Claudius.

<sup>17</sup> cf. e.g. p. 62, Klaus Bringmann: "Senecas Apocolocyntosis und die politische Satire in Rom", *Antike und Abendland. Beiträge zum Verständnis der Griechen und Römer und ihres Nachlebens* 17, 1971, 56-69.

underworld trial in the *Apocolocyntosis*.

Summarized, the narrator, perhaps even the author, of the satire views the emperor's death as a relief, especially due to the latter's unpredictable character and reactions, and it is implied that the majority of the Roman people shares these feelings (10.3).

The *Apocolocyntosis* ends with Claudius finally becoming a slave of his nephew Caligula's<sup>18</sup> freedman, after various charges had been suggested previously (14ff.). Claudius' attempt to get a seat among the gods, is first and foremost opposed by the deified Augustus, who speaks for the first time in this *concilium* and who - besides accusing Claudius of his outrageous number of and outrageous murders in a moralizing way (e.g. 10.4) - also humiliates Claudius personally by making remarks as: *hunc nunc deum facere vultis? videte corpus eius dis iratis natum* (11.3). Another goddess even says - maybe provoked by Claudius' behaviour - that from now on, nobody of human origin shall be deified anymore (9.2-9.3), since due to Claudius Augustus *pudet imperii* (10.2).

In conclusion, there are two essential points to keep in mind, on the one hand Augustus' statement (10.3):

Claudius non posse videtur muscam excitare,  
tam facile homines occidebat quam canis adscidit.

and on the other, Claudius own last words. Those were very important to Romans as Kloft points out by calling these words "eine Art Vermächtnis", and Coffey by "a characteristic of his life"<sup>19</sup>:

ultima vox eius haec inter homines audita est, cum maiorum sonitum emisisset illa parte, qua facilius loquebatur: 'vae me, puto, concavi me.' quod an fecerit nescio: omnia certe concavit (4.3).

Interesting to notice is the narrator's own remark following the emperor's last utterance. Claudius' own last words do not seem humiliating enough, so the

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<sup>18</sup> Before, however, Claudius is passed over to Caligula. The emperor's nephew "gilt bei Seneca immer als böses *monstrum*", according to Niels Bruun (75), "Neue Bemerkungen zur Apocolocyntosis des Seneca", *Analecta Romana Instituti Danci* 19, 1990, 69-78. This could be seen as another humiliation of Claudius', and it would additionally emphasize the author's attitude towards the late emperor. Besides it would yield to Seneca's authorship, cf. Chapter 4.

<sup>19</sup> Kloft: "In ihr [vox J. T.] glaubte man so etwas wie ein unverstellte Interpretation der eigenen Person zu sehen, eine Art Vermächtnis [...]". Similarly Coffey (Roman Satire 173) considers this remark as 'true' joke by Seneca to the expense of the late emperor: "A great man's last words were considered characteristic of his life. Claudius' final [...] [words were] interpreted by Seneca as particularly suited to the quality of his government."

narrator has to confirm that basically the emperor was this way his whole life.

So, what does this short analysis tell today's reader about the relationship of original sender, message, and recipient.<sup>20</sup> Most scholars agree that this satire was published quickly after Claudius' death in October 54, so one can assume that the first recipients belonged more or less to the same group as the people described in the satire. If the author can be compared to the narrator of the satire, his attitude does not vary much from that of the audience. Everyone is happy and relieved that *non semper Saturnalia erunt* (12.2).<sup>21</sup>

## 2.2 One Theme?

Even though it is rather difficult to put the topic or the main theme in a nutshell, a little attempt must be made. Nauta<sup>22</sup> e. g. says:

"The erstwhile terrifying monarch is consistently depicted as a shitting, slobbering, stammering, and stumbling creature. [This reduction of the high and the formidable to the low and the ridiculous is a feature of carnival literature (...)]."

*Der Neue Pauly*<sup>23</sup> expresses it even harder by saying the *Apocolocyntosis* "rechnet gnadenlos mit den körperlichen und geistigen Gebrechen des Kaiser Claudius ab". And as shown above, the reader is indeed provided with such characteristics of Claudius. Moreover, as Lund<sup>24</sup> explains, people with "physischen Handicaps" were regarded as a "menschliches *mostrum*", and that e. g. a clubfoot had to be ridiculed on scornfully and made fun of.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> This relationship is more intensively discussed by Ruurd Nauta: "Seneca's Apocolocyntosis as Saturnalian Literature", *Mnemosyne. Bibliotheca Classica Batava* 40, 1987, 69-96.

<sup>21</sup> For me, the fact that the Saturnalia are over, refers to life on earth, to the way Claudius acted as king or not-king; since he was not the right person to be king, his reign was more like the Saturnalia. To see the whole *Apocolocyntosis* as Saturnalia literature as such - that is to say as a change of opposite positions - is rather illogical, since in heaven Claudius does not change position with the gods, the god remain superior to him; this seems often forgotten in terms of talking about Saturnalian literature.

<sup>22</sup> cf. 95, Ruurd Nauta: "Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis* as Saturnalian Literature", *Mnemosyne. Bibliotheca Classica Batava* 40, 1987, 69-96.

<sup>23</sup> cf. 415-416, Joachim Dingel, "L. Annaeus Seneca (der Jüngere, Seneca Philosophus)", *Der Neue Pauly: Enzyklopädie der Antike*, hrsg. von Hubert Cancik und Helmut Schneider, Band 11, Stuttgart; Weimar, 2001, 411-419.

<sup>24</sup> cf. 169, Allan A. Lund: "Zur Darstellung von Claudius als Homo nonarticulatus", *Rheinisches Museum* 1996, 165-170.

<sup>25</sup> In Cicero's *De oratore* (2.239) another person, who has a clubfoot, is described as someone to have *iocus* with and about: *est etiam deformitatis et corporis vitiorum satis bella materies ad iocandum*. Similarly, Coffey (Roman Satire 170): "That Seneca ridiculed Claudius' bodily infirmities and handicaps is not surprising, for the ancient tradition of

Nevertheless various scholars - especially those who set their mind on viewing this satire as literature for the Saturnalia in 54 - put their main emphasis on the 'fun-part', and seem to overlook the serious and eventually also embittered tone e. g. in Augustus's speech. Horstkotte<sup>26</sup>, on the contrary, regards these accusations of murder, especially those within Claudius' family, as central within all accusations, and as the main passage of the entire work. These two at this point very generalized ideas provoke contradiction in various interpretations.

Reconsidering what the reader gets to know from the satire about the reaction of the *populus Romanus*, it is questionable who of or if the audience at all could have felt like 'laughing'. Since even Nauta, who supports the idea of Saturnalian literature, throws in (93) that "one should not forget that almost anyone at the court and on the highest echelons of Roman society had been simply afraid of him [Claudius J. T.]: when exile and execution are the burden the tune becomes sinister".<sup>27</sup>

In addition, a lot of people and not only the emperor's family had got hurt in one or the other way by Claudius' actions (cf. 'victim-list' in Augustus' speech (10-11)), therefore it can after all be doubted if e. g. these murders are an amusing topic.

Having in mind what the reader learns, the text could be understood as an opportunity and a way to express freely how much suffering had taken place during Claudius' reign, especially the bitter voice of the narrator yields to it.

Moreover, even though it might sound too modern, the satire seems to provide a picture of the poetic justice which even Claudius as a former emperor had to face, and therefore the final end of the satire might have caused some smiles, probably not laugh, but rather some feelings of relief that this time is over.

This outline might be helpful for the following discussion on the title

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invective allowed malicious representation of an enemy's physical characteristics. [...] the physical disabilities were part of a contemptible warped personality."

<sup>26</sup> cf. 143, Hermann-Joseph Horstkotte: "Die Mordopfer in Senecas *Apocolocyntosis*", *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 77, 1989, 113-143.

<sup>27</sup> Therefore this author concludes that the audience laugh "was caused also by a more powerful drive than amused awareness of inadequacies: fear". Thus it remains still questionable if one feels free and ready to laugh at this point or if the fear is still too strong.

regarding meaning and interpretation. In the same manner, the narrator's comments and position can be interesting for the thoughts on the authorship.

### 3. The Title

#### 3.1 The Factual Basis

Most editions use *Apocolocyntosis* as the title for this satire. In fact, however, this is just one of a number of possibilities that the sources offer.

In fact, none of the satire's manuscripts offer the title '*Apocolocyntosis*' as used today, except for one, but that (Vat. Lat. 4498) is a rather late manuscript<sup>28</sup>, and most scholars agree that the citing of '*Apocolocyntosis*' in this case, is a humanist insertion.

Today three main manuscripts are distinguished: Sangallensis (S), Valentianensis (V), and Londiniensis (L), from which "[die] vorhandenen mehr als 40 Handschriften" are derived.<sup>29</sup> It seems to be agreed that S is the oldest and best preserved manuscript. Its title is: *Divi Claudii (incipit) Apotheosis (Annei Seneca) per satiram*.<sup>30</sup> The V as well as the L manuscript give *Ludus de morte Claudii (Caesaris)* as the title for this satire. It seems important to remark that despite the different titles all manuscripts cite Seneca as the author.<sup>31</sup>

The only source revealing '*Apocolocyntosis*'/'*Ἀποκολοκύντῳσις*' for this satire's title is Cassius Dio, more precisely only his epitomes, and then just one of the two surviving manuscripts. Some scholars have even maintained that Dio's passage refers to a another satire by Seneca, and not to the one most regarded as the *Apocolocyntosis* today.<sup>32</sup>

Furthermore, it must be emphasized again that even if our satire is the

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<sup>28</sup> The manuscript is roughly from late 15th century and probably deriving from L (Eden, 25), cf. the next paragraph.

<sup>29</sup> cf. p. 548, Joachim Adamietz: "Seneca, Ed. Roncali *Ἀποκολοκύντῳσις*", *Gnomon* 65, 1993, S. 548-549.

<sup>30</sup> This title has negligible variants in its later manuscripts; cf. Coffey (Bibliography 245). In general all titles are cited as in Weinreich (2).

<sup>31</sup> cf. Chapter 4 for Seneca's authorship.

<sup>32</sup> The discussion if Dio's epitome refers to this satire or to a different satire that is not preserved today, shall be left out. We just assume it is the same satire. According to Coffey (Bibliography 247-248) this idea of two works is proposed by O. Roßbach: "Der Titel der

same as the one mentioned by Dio, only one manuscript L (Laurentianus) of Dio's claims this reading:

συνέθηκε μὲν γὰρ καὶ ὁ Σενέκας σύγγραμμα,  
ἀποκολοκύντωσιν αὐτό ὥσπερ τινὰ ἀθανάτισιν ὀνομάσας.  
(60, 35, 3 respectively 61, 35, 3)

The manuscript VC (Vaticanus Coislinianus) offers for this passage ἀποκολοκέντωσιν, which is in fact also considered in the discussion and interpretation of the title.<sup>33</sup>

So, if one considers *Apocolocyntosis* as the original title for this satire, the probability of this variant is so to say 'mathematically' rather small; and we are left to wonder how exactly this choice became so established. As easy as Coffey formulates it in his bibliography (247), namely that "*Apocolocyntosis* is Seneca's title, for no one but the author is likely to have invented such a title"<sup>34</sup>, is the discussion about the original title certainly not, which is already proven by the number of scholarly debates, following Coffey's essay over the next 50 years.<sup>35</sup>

### 3.2 The Title *Apocolocyntosis* and its possible Background.

Besides the problem of having no further information about the original title, another remaining VC problem is the structural analysis of any possible title. However, especially the analysis of the Greek suggestions, not so much because they are Greek but because most word-coinages suggested are almost unknown to us today, either completely or partially. That is to say that the title-word's possible components appear uncertain and very difficult to figure out, because the entire word as such does probably not exist. Therefore Henriksson seems right when he says regarding various existing interpretations that "die Phantasie der Gelehrten sich so manchmal auf dem Gebiet des Grausam-Perversen getummelt hat".<sup>36</sup>

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Satire des jüngeren Seneca, *PhW* 44, 799-800.

<sup>33</sup> cf. following subchapter and Chapter 3.4.

<sup>34</sup> In his book on Roman satires, Coffey (166) formulates it similarly: "*Apocolocyntosis* could hardly have been invented by anyone other than the author."

<sup>35</sup> cf. footnote 3.

The literary work we are dealing with, belongs to the genre of Menippean satire.<sup>37</sup> The first Roman author writing in this style was M. Terentius Varro, but from his works only fragments have survived. Nevertheless, we know that his titles were mostly written in Greek, even though most of them have come down to us translated into Latin by St. Jerome. Additionally, Varro's titles used to have a head title and a subtitle which usually began with περί, and which explained the main title and was linked to the content.<sup>38</sup> One can assume that Seneca knew Varro's writings, since he quotes his predecessor even in the *Apocolocyntosis* (8.1): *rotundus est, sine capite sine praeputio* (Varro, Men. 583 B).

As mentioned above, the coinages of ἀποκολοκύντωσιν or ἀποκολοκένωσιν are not found in any extant ancient literature, and have accordingly provoked many and diverse discussions (cf. the following pages). But one should be aware that Varro has already titles - as e. g. the coining *Logistorica*<sup>39</sup> - which are neither found anywhere in the extent of ancient literature; and just because the latter seems easier to be understood and is more accessible today, one cannot simply proclaim Varro's choice is adequate and accurate, and *Apocolocyntosis* a nonsense word.<sup>40</sup> In a similar way Coffey expresses this idea (Roman Satire 153):

Varro called his satires in a mixture of prose and verse Menippeans (*Menippeae*). They were also called Cynic satires (*cynicae*). Each satire seems to have had a **distinctive imaginative title**. According to the elder Pliny (N. H. Praef. 24), unlike some Greek writers who gave resplendent titles to drab and vacuous works, Varro gave an enterprising title to interesting contents, such as Sesculixes (Ulysses and a Half<sup>41</sup>).

As a consequence, one should keep in mind that we might just not understand every 'imaginative title' since our cultural background knowledge

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<sup>36</sup> Karl-Erik Henriksson, *Griechische Büchertitel in der römischen Literatur*, Helsinki, 1956, 70.

<sup>37</sup> Its main characteristic is the so called 'Prosimetrum', that is to say that parts are written in prose and others in verse.

<sup>38</sup> cf. Henriksson, 24 ff..

<sup>39</sup> There is another similar example mentioned by Hendriksson (27): "Ecdemeticus (93): Ein Wort ecdemeticus / ἐκδημητικός, das wir in den griechischen Texten nach Varro erst in einem späten astrologischen Werk finden können, ist als Fremdwort in den lateinischen Texten sonst nicht vertreten."

<sup>40</sup> cf. e.g. Coffey, Bibliography 256, and Chapter 3.2.

<sup>41</sup> Although Coffey's (probably) own coinage its interpretation shall not be discussed here, but perhaps this coinage could be laid out as *sex* and *cullex*, meaning six mosquitoes, as well.

may just be too little. Henriksson (73) agrees to this in defence of ἀποκολοκύντωσις as the satire's title:

Falls wir im Titel ein Schimpfwort sehen, haben wir dazu in der antiken Literatur keine Parallele. Wenn wir aber erwägen, wie wenig satirischpolemische Literatur überhaupt erhalten ist, so kann das Fehlen von Parallelfällen kein schlagendes Argument für die Unmöglichkeit eines solchen Titelwitzes sein.<sup>42</sup>

### 3.3 Assuming Dio's Suggestions

By number most discussions about the title are based on Cassius Dio's suggestion "ἀποκολοκύντωσιν"; and a 'gourdification' of some sort is usually read into it and the title is 'translated' that way; even though κολοκύντη itself, which is today's bottle gourd, has not that many literary references in the extant ancient Greek literature.

As a result, various essays can be found on how to interpret a 'gourdification' within the context of the satire. But we shall start from the beginning by considering the various word-formations themselves.

#### 3.3.1 Some Greek Linguistics

The Greek word ἀποκολοκύντωσις is considered a *nomen actionis* and then falls into the prefix ἀπο-, the nominal stem of κολοκύντη with the ending of -ωσις. According to e. g. Eisenberger<sup>43</sup>, this word-formation expresses a 'Verwandlung' into a pumpkin, which is especially due to the prefix ἀπο- and the suffix -ωσις; he supports his view by reminding the reader of many analogous word-formations in the Greek language.

It seems that Coffey<sup>44</sup> has considered some of these analogous word-formations more deeply, and came up with four different categories of meanings for this kind of formations, especially for those deriving from nouns.

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<sup>42</sup> In the same manner Rikikonen formulates it: "The titles of Varro and other Roman writers of Menippean satires were very often Greek and in themselves vivid and colorful." H. K. Rikikonen: "Menippean Satire as a Literary Genre - with special reference to Senecas's Apocolocyntosis", *Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum* 83, 1987, 10.

<sup>43</sup> cf. 267-268, footnote 11, Herbert Eisenberger: "Bedeutung und Zweck des Titels von Senecas Apocolocyntosis", *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 82, 1978, 265-270.

<sup>44</sup> cf. Coffey, Bibliography 249.

"1. transformation into: e. g. ἀποθέωσις (Cic. *Att.* 1, 16, 13),<sup>45</sup> ἀποχοίροσις Eustath. 1656, 32). [One may compare the meaning of such a formation as ἀπελευθέρωσις (Dem. 17, 15)].

2. change into something resembling: ἀπογυνναίκωσις (Plut. *Bruta ratione uti* 2, p. 987E) 'make womanish'.

3. separation: ἀποδόντωσις (Σ on Pollux 2, 48) 'cleaning of teeth'.

4. use of instrument: ἀποραφανίδωσις (Σ on Ar. *Plut.*, 168). The compound verb in -όω is not extant; the simple verb occurs at Ar. *Clouds* 1083."

In addition to these - after having read various articles - a fifth category can be recognized:

The fifth possibility, as proclaimed by Szilágyi in imitation of the word ἀποβίωσις: 'deliving' ⇒ decease, demise' (cf. 3.2).

In Chapter 3.4 we shall see that categories 1 and 4 have been especially considered to find out the meaning of Dio's suggested title. Since particularly Eisenberger considers the Greek words in rather general terms without paying attention to if they can also be found in Latin literature, it seems noteworthy that, in fact, not that many are found in Latin literature in the first century after Christ.<sup>46</sup>

Currie<sup>47</sup> took interest in the Dio's title found in the VC manuscript for this work. He suggests to 'delete' the 'τ' of VC's ἀποκολοκέντωσιν; and as a result, one gains so to say 'true Greek words'.<sup>48</sup> On the one hand, ἀποκενώω or κένωσις which is "employed in physiological contexts" and on the other κόλον which "is an anatomical term relating to the intestines" (188). Currie additionally explains that there is proof that κόλον was already taken over to Latin at that time (188); so his suggestions would mean something like 'the emptying of the bowles'.

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<sup>45</sup> cf. footnote 104, for a closer look at this passage.

<sup>46</sup> e. g. : *apocatastasis*, *apodixis*, *apophasis*, *apophysis*, *aposiopesis*, *apotheosis* can be found rarely. (Following roughly Georges, Karl Ernst, *Ausführliches Lateinisch-deutsches Handwörterbuch*, Digitale Bibliothek, 8. Auflage, Darmstadt, 2003.)

<sup>47</sup> MacL. Currie, Harry: "Apocolocyntosis - A Suggestion", *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 105, 1962, 159-173.

### 3.3.2 Latin or Greek-Latin Mixtures - Regarding the Components of the Title

Despite the analysis of the Greek components of the word ἀποκολοκύντωσις, other scholars have tried to solve 'our problem' with the help of the Latin language, or with a Greek-Latin language mix, as Apostelos Athanassakis does.<sup>49</sup> He divides ἀποκολοκύντωσις, and explains that ἀποκολο = ἀπό κόλου which is in Latin *de culo*, and that this again refers to Claudius' way to and from heaven. Then Athanassakis proposes for the second part –κολοκύντωσις and refers it to the vegetable κολοκύντη, too. However, he neither pays enough attention to the fact that he uses the two syllables 'κολο' twice nor does he explain it.

Hoyos, in his collection of suggestions to the meaning of ἀποκολοκύντωσις mentions, similarly to the above, the Latin verb *apoculare*<sup>50</sup>, which is found only twice in the preserved Latin literature, and both times in Petronius' work *Satyricon* (62.3; 67.3). Despite its rare use, *apoculare* is nevertheless found in a contemporary Neronian work, which is additionally also written by an author of Nero's close literary circle, to which Seneca belonged, too.<sup>51</sup> The latter part of ἀποκολοκύντωσις he refers to κολοκύντωσις/κολοκύντη, and just as Athanassakis, he interprets the middle part - κολο - twice without explanation.

Zappacosta<sup>52</sup>, as Bringmann (Bibliography 890) unfortunately just summarizes but does not explain, divides ἀποκολοκύντωσις in ἀπο – κολο - κύντωσις and "'übersetzt' die so gewonnenen Wortfragmente mit claudi (= Claudii) exauguratio" (Bringmann FS 890), which would mean as much as 'The desecration of Claudius'. Verdière<sup>53</sup> proceeds with the same

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<sup>48</sup> cf. Chapter 3.5.1 for the interpretation.

<sup>49</sup> Apostelos Athanassakis: "Some Evidence in Defence of the Title *Apocolocyntosis* for Seneca's Satire", *Transaction and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 104, 1974, 11-22. For his interpretation cf. Chapter 3.4.2.

<sup>50</sup> apoculo, are: "(v. apokalein, s. Walde, Etym. Wörterb.2 S. 52), unsichtbar machen, se, sich fortmachen, sich drücken, Petron. 62, 3; 67, 3.", Karl Ernst Georges, "apoculo", *Ausführliches Lateinisch-deutsches Handwörterbuch*, Digitale Bibliothek, 8. Auflage, Darmstadt, 2003.

<sup>51</sup> At this point Seneca is simply assumed to be the author, cf. Chapter 4 for Seneca's authorship.

<sup>52</sup> Zappacosta, V.: "Senecae ΑΠΟΚΟΛΟΚΥΝΤΩΣΙΣ", *Latinitas* 17, 1969, 86-95.

<sup>53</sup> Verdière, R.: "Notes critiques sur l'*Apocolocyntosis*", *RSC* 11, 1963, 149-263.

division, but arrives at a different conclusion. For him ἄπο is 'cessation', κολο = κόλον meaning as much as 'côlon' or 'gros intestin', and κύντωσις = κύντατος stands for 'impudent'. Thus his final French translation for the title is roughly 'cessation d'une impudence intestinale'.

After presenting various different readings only of title coinages mentioned in Cassius Dio's manuscripts, one has hopefully gained an impression of the range of scholars' thoughts and ideas. If the 'factual' ideas differ already so much, one can imagine how much more the interpretations of each word coinage can vary.

### **3.4 Apocolocyntosis - ἀποκολοκύντωσις - κολοκύντη - cucurbita - and the Meaning of Gourd**

As mentioned above, most scholars agree on the title *Apocolocyntosis*, nevertheless, they do not have the same opinion on how 'gourd' should be interpreted within the context of the satire. There are two major possibilities, on the one hand, it refers in fact to the vegetable and on the other hand, the title is a metaphorical expression of some sort.

#### 3.4.1 Gourds in Passages from Latin Literature

Today's information on gourds in antiquity rely mainly on Pliny's *Historia Naturalis*. Pliny, "der [for example] den gemeinen auf den Boden kriechenden Kürbis (*genus plebeium, quod humi crescit*), von dem bis zum Dach hinwachsenden (*genus camararium*) unterscheidet", gives a quite detailed portray of the types, growing, uses, and characteristics of this vegetable, for instance, it is healthy and mild but not easy to digest.<sup>54</sup>

The metaphorical passages in the Latin literature are not many. There are two essential passages (Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 1.15; Petronius, *Satyricon* 39.12; cf. following paragraph) which are often quoted in the discussion of the *Apocolocyntosis* and its title, but in addition to those two, Seneca's father e. g. uses the vegetable at least in a vivid comparison:

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<sup>54</sup> cf. p. 2105, Orth, "Kürbis", *Pauly's Realencyclopädie der Classischen Altertums-wissenschaft*, hrsg. von Wilhelm Kroll, 21ster Halbband, Stuttgart, 1922, 2104-2105.

Albucius: 'quare calix, si cecidit, frangitur, spongia, si cecidit, non frangitur?' aiebat Cestius: 'ite ad illum cras: declamabit vobis, quare turdi volent, cucurbitae non volent.'. (Sen. *contr.* 7. praef. §8)

Apuleius refers twice to *cucurbitae* in his *Metamorphoses*. In *Met.* V. 9 he uses *cucurbitae* in a comparison as well:

At ego misera primum patre meo senioem maritum sortita sum, dein cucurbita calviorem et quovis puero pusillioem, cunctam domum seris et catenis obditam custodientem.

One can already assume from these two passages that *cucurbita* was not an uncommon word for this kind of language. It is filled with vivid expression and utterances, and that a *cucurbita* was therefore quite present in the common or even oral Latin language. The next two 'famous' passages may support this idea.

The first belongs to Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, too, and is the first passage to be quoted in the 'metaphorical gourdiffication - discussion' of the *Apocolocyntosis*. A janitor explains to a murderer the reason why he will not open a door in the middle of the night and explains:

nos cucurbitae caput non habemus ut pro te moriamur  
(*Metamorphoses* 1.15)

The second important passage is found in Petronius' *Satyricon*, a contemporary and even a satirical work, too. The fact that Seneca's work belongs to the satirical literature, too,<sup>55</sup> could make a similar meaning feasible. In this passage Petronius explains what kind of people are born under what sign of the zodiac:

in Aquario (nascuntur) copones et cucurbitae (*Satyricon* 39.12)

In most cases, *cucurbita*, is translated with 'fool', 'blockhead', 'numskull' or a similar expression in both passages, but in the first quote with more certainty than the second one. That is to say that the first quote is 'rather' restricted within the field of interpretation whereas the second one offers a lot more freedom for various ideas.<sup>56</sup> But you can find objections regarding this

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<sup>55</sup> Another interesting aspect to note may be that Rikikonen (9-10) lists this work just as Seneca's as a Menippean Satire.

<sup>56</sup> One argument which resolves from a close reading of the *Satyricon* passage and not from some, so to say, idealistic interpretation shall be briefly explained here. F. A. Todd ("Some Cucurbitae in Latin Literature", *Classical Quarterly*, 1943, 101-111.) says that "blockhead" cannot be a translation of *cucurbita* since *bubulcus* who are born under the sign of taurus are

common interpretation to both passages.<sup>57</sup> However, in these two passages, one can be sure that "the reference is to people and not to plants" (Athanassakis 16<sup>58</sup>); furthermore, Athanassakis conveys some truth in continuing that "the translation 'blockhead' is based on conjecture and not on internal evidence". Nevertheless, scholars who believe a gourd stands for stupidity base their - after all still varying interpretations - mainly on these passages.

Eden (3) gives as a reason for the association of this vegetable with stupidity namely that it has to do with the vacuity of dried pumpkins. Support gets this entire thesis additionally from modern languages although again Athanassakis (17) - referring to Weinreich - is right when he says: "They [the modern languages J. T.] do not offer strong evidence but they surely offer some evidence." (17).<sup>59</sup> Todd (101) e. g. refers to the English 'pumpkin-head' and to the Modern Greek 'κεφαλι κολοκύνενιον'; Athanassakis (17, relying on Weinreich) adds the Italian 'zucco', another Modern Greek expression 'κολοκύνθας'<sup>60</sup>, and the German 'Kurbiskopf' (sic)<sup>61</sup>, which are all applied as a kind of "swearword"<sup>62</sup> for someone stupid.

But just as right is Campbell (9)<sup>63</sup>: "There is little proof beyond modern usage that κολοκύντη or *cucurbita* might suggest a fool to Seneca's audience. Moreover, the text of Seneca does not in fact describe the 'foolification' of Claudius [...]"; since "no emphasis is laid on the stupidity of

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already blockheads, which Todd quotes firmly, and nearly self-explanatorily (cf. 101-102). Nevertheless, a dictionary as the *Georges* ('bulbulcus') reads only 'Ochsentreiber' or 'Ochsenknecht' (both kind of cowboys) as a translation of *bulbulcus*.

<sup>57</sup> Todd e. g. has objection to a stupidity connotation in both passages.

<sup>58</sup> Weinreich (11 footnote 2) mentions those passages, too, "wo der Zusammenhang erweist, daß nicht von der Pflanze die Rede sein kann".

<sup>59</sup> Jon Marius Haarberg in his essay ("The Emperor as a Saturnalian King: On the Title of *Apocolocyntosis*", *Symbolae Osloenses* 57, 1982, 109-114) enlarges on the influence of modern languages, and refers often in a too far-fetched way to today's time. For instance, he mentions a festival today celebrated in Paris, and the symbolism of a pumpkin in Asia (China). To my mind although it is interesting to read, those references do no help to trace the satire's original title.

<sup>60</sup> In brackets he adds without remark "cf. kolokythia = nonsense".

<sup>61</sup> Actually, the spelling is: Kürbiskopf.

<sup>62</sup> cf. Todd, 101.

<sup>63</sup> J. S. Campbell: "Pisspots and Gourds: A footnote to *Apocolocyntosis*", *Liverpool Classical Monthly* 10, 1995, 9-10.

<sup>64</sup> [...] but rather his enslavement in the afterlife; the presumption of the text is that he was already a fool in life." As claimed earlier, the discussion if Claudius can be considered a fool (and not better a criminal) shall not be touched more intensively, it will, however, have to be mentioned sometimes.

Claudius, of which indeed there is no mention whatever in the invective of Augustus which leads to the expulsion from heaven, nor in the funeral dirge, nor during the proceedings in the underworld"<sup>65</sup> (Todd 104). Remembering Chapter 2, it seems as if Todd's statement gains credibility, and Claudius had all the flaws mentioned, which may suggest Claudius as a fool to some readers, already during his lifetime. Additionally, it is already mentioned in 1.1 that one *aut regem aut fatuum nasci oportere*.<sup>66</sup>

The following pages shall serve as an overview of various suggestions on the title and of their respective interpretations. The emphasis is laid on a gourdification of some type since an enormous amount of literature can be found. Rather shortly will be dealt with other alternative possibilities.

#### 3.4.2 Critical Survey of 'Gourdifications' –

##### Interpretations of ἀποκολοκύντωσις

One way of justifying a 'gourdification' is to assume that Claudius is in fact literally turned into a pumpkin. Scholars assuming this, maintain that this transformation took place either in the passage missing between §7 and §8, or at the end of this literary work. If the latter assumption is correct, one would have to assume that the satire is incomplete which seems rather unlikely. Considering the facts that the ending is quite satisfactory and more important that there is no external reason to make such an assumption since there is no lacuna or hint in the manuscript, these assumptions are even more unlikely.<sup>67</sup> Furthermore, the explicits are extant in L and S, and only manuscript V lacks the explicit-*subscriptio*. Another open question to raise remains after all, namely, what would be the point of this type of 'gourdification'? An answer to or discussion about this seems missing. Eden (2) calls the idea of an additional ending "bathetic and incongruous", and Todd (104) regards this suggestion as "only another way of saying that the title is inexplicable".<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> cf. Todd, 104.

<sup>66</sup> cf. additionally Currie, 187: "The real point of the satire is surely that although he has been officially deified, Claudius is nevertheless treated in the next world with the same contempt and disrespect that he suffered in life; he is not made more of a fool but is one just as much."

<sup>67</sup> cf. Coffey, Bibliography 247, and Bringmann, Bibliography 889-890.

<sup>68</sup> The title's inexplicability for some authors may be shown by the fact, that Baldwin, refers in his essay on this piece of literature - without even discussing the title - to it only as the *Ludus* ("Executions under Claudius : Seneca's *Ludus de morte Claudii*" , *Phoenix* 18, 1964, 39-48).

In fact, it has also been suggested that the reader is just dealing with a curious title, or a nonsense word, which might, however, offer "grounds for a giggle or a guffaw".<sup>69</sup> As e. g. Coffey (Bibliography 251), who explains that Seneca "intended to degrade Claudius and his apotheosis by creating a jocular nonsense word for his title, in which something squalid was substituted for the exalted notion of deification". Many scholars have strong rejections against this suggestion because it would include for many a degradation of Seneca's literary skills and professionalism, and would be therefore equal to an inappropriate title for them.<sup>70</sup>

Bringmann takes the characteristics of a real gourd into consideration. He interprets Claudius' long struggle in this satire - though probably including his previous indispositions in life - as one of becoming healthy; and thus the author refers to the Greek connotation of this vegetable, 'health'. The choice of the Greek connotation is further supported by the fact that the title is written in Greek. But after all, a positive interpretation seems "something far from obvious in the text", as Hoyos (69) formulates it. In addition to this improbability, Eisenberger points out that the Greek connotation of 'health' might not have been so obvious to the Roman audience because there are just one or two passages known to us where *κολοκύντη* refers to health.<sup>71</sup>

Another suggestion for 'gourd' as the main and last part of the title is H. Junius' thought on the medical characteristic of this vegetable.<sup>72</sup> He sees a reference to the *citrullus colocynthis*, from which people apparently gained a laxative. Then the title would contain a 'double-coinage'. On the one hand, a reference to a pumpkin and on the other hand to the moving of the bowels as

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Eisenberger (270) seems to compromise and at the same time he goes somewhat around the title problem by saying: "Seneca hat also das Wort *Apocolocyntosis* geprägt und als *inscriptio* gewählt, um schon mit diesem Titel im Leser verschiedenen Wirkungen hervorzurufen, die ihn in die rechte Stimmung für die Lektüre der Satire versetzen und ihn erkennen lassen sollten, dass er eine gegen Claudius gerichtete Schrift, eine Parodie auf dessen Vergötterung vor sich habe."

<sup>69</sup> cf. Coffey (Roman Satire 168) who compares this word to the word sausage in today's English.

<sup>70</sup> Todd, for instance, makes even a sarcastic remark for scholars who argue in favour of a 'nonsense word title': "As well might Milton have called *Paradise Lost* 'The Pumpkinification of Satan'." (104).

<sup>71</sup> Those two are *ὑγιώτερον κολοκύντας* [Epicharm, fr. 154 Kaibel; Sophron, fr. 34 Kaibel; similar: Apostol. 17, 48 c, Photios (Photios and Suda)] and *ἡ κρίνον ἢ κολοκύντην* [Diphilos, fr. 98 Kock, Menander, fr. 934 Kock; Zenob. 4, 18, Diogenian(?) 5, 10.]. Cf. Eisenberger, 269, especially footnotes 14 and 15.

<sup>72</sup> cf. Coffey, Bibliography 253 and Bringmann, Bibliography 890.

e.g. Verdière suggested it.<sup>73</sup> Then this laxative was given to Claudius in his hour of death, what actually might find some references in the text if one remembers the emperor's last words.<sup>74</sup>

Heller among others (cf. next passages) refers for his interpretation to the applications of a real gourd. According to Bringmann, Heller explains that a dried bottle gourd was a useful vessel for a poor or average person. As a consequence, he maintains that Claudius became a useful but a low status instrument towards the end of the satire, too. Bringmann's objection that we are dealing with a 'gourdification' and not with a gourd turning into a vessel, seems to convey some truth after all. However, one could consider e. g. κολοκύντη/*cucurbita* as a term<sup>75</sup> used as a name for a vessel equal to the word vessel itself because it might have been so familiar to everyone. Similarly, one could make out the 'transformation into something useful' as the *tertium comparationis* if that is what people associated mainly with a pumpkin. Besides this uncertainty of this meaning of the word, precisely the 'idea of usefulness' remains a little awkward in the context of this satire. First of all, how useful can someone or something be that people do not mind to pass on, as Claudius is given from one person to the next at the end of the satire (14).

In his article "Some Cucurbitae in Latin Literature", Todd states as his interpretation that the solution for the title must lie in something eternal since a ἀποθέωσις is something eternal, too. Regarding Todd, its solution must be found in Claudius' passion for dicing which turns out to be his first punishment in the underworld, therefore his suggestion is that "the *Apocolocyntosis* is the 'Fritillification' of the Deified Claudius" (105). The author derives his conclusion from his assumption that another application for pumpkins was to be used as diceboxes by poor people, and he assumes additionally that every person was so familiar with this "use of gourds as *fritilli* [...] that a contemporary reader could not fail to infer from Claudius' punishment the meaning and aptness of the title *Apocolocyntosis*" (105). Consequently, a gourd must have been almost a synonym for dicebox. It seems as if Todd has overlooked the real ending of the satire if considering his thought of 'eternity' because Claudius' series of punishments does not end there, he is passed on

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<sup>73</sup> cf. Chapter 3.2.2.

<sup>74</sup> cf. Chapter 2.

and degraded even further while not dicing. If one followed Todd's track of thoughts, the right solution would then have to be connected with Claudius being an *a cognitionibus*. Furthermore, the author tries to backup his point that the emperor is a "*fritillus, non homo*" (105) by various quotes from Latin literature<sup>76</sup>, in which, however, these are first of all stated as an explaining comparison and moreover, do seem to serve in terms of stylistic features e. g. as an exaggeration, but do not stand for an abstract synonym into which people are turned.

A rather recent idea was published by Campbell<sup>77</sup>, who considers the applications of a dried gourd, too, and who regards "*Apocolocyntosis* clearly [...] as a pun on ἀποθέωσις or the like"; but also that "the heart of the wordplay is κολοκύντη and its meaning". His plan resolves in a colloquialism containing "so-and so is a pumpkin" (9).<sup>78</sup> The author quotes Pliny the Elder - who besides Petronius is another Senecan contemporary - who apparently calls chamber pots *cucurbitae*.<sup>79</sup> Then Campbell refers to the passage from Petronius quoted above (39.13), and maintains that *cucurbitae* could mean 'chamber pot carriers' in this case (λασανοφόροι), too.<sup>80</sup> He supports his suggestion by referring to Martial 9.3 who is supposed to use the lower status of λασανοφόροι in terms of degradation. In addition, Campbell quotes Petronius once more (45.8) whose "use of *matella* to describe an unfaithful and lascivious wife suggests a possible distinction between *matella*, a 'pisspot', and *cucurbita*, a 'pisspot carrier'"(9).<sup>81</sup> For the *Apocolocyntosis* and correspondingly for Claudius, *cucurbita/κολοκύντη* stands thus for the experienced degradation, since the late emperor has according to Campbell, become a freedman's pisspot carrier at the end of the satire. One can agree

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<sup>75</sup> A term perhaps comparable to a *pars pro toto*, or to a synonym.

<sup>76</sup> He mentions: Petronius 44.7 *piper, non homo*; Petronius 74.13 *codex, non mulier*; Martial XI 92 *non vitiosus homo (...) sed vitium*.

<sup>77</sup> It should be pointed out that he is one of the few authors who admits to the fact that "since relatively few colloquialism survive in either Latin or Greek, any interpretation of *Apocolocyntosis*, and the following is no exception, necessitates a skein of speculations" (9).

<sup>78</sup> It shall be mentioned here that the author does not differentiate between the Greek and Latin word, since he believes the Romans were with both equally familiar.

<sup>79</sup> Pliny the Elder, *NH* 19. 24. 71: (*cucurbitae*) *nuper in balnearum usum venere urceolorum vice*.

<sup>80</sup> Their responsibilities are apparently also described in Petronius' *Satyricon* (27.3).

<sup>81</sup> Regarding the other famous passage for *cucurbita* in Latin literature (*Met.* 1. 15. 2), Campbell explains that its context is a different one, therefore *caput* had to be added, and " 'a

that "the point is humiliation; instead of becoming a god, Divus Claudius becomes a slave", but if - even though it appears somewhat logical - a slave can be called "a *cucurbita*"<sup>82</sup>, seems to be rather collected bit by bit. That dried *cucurbitae* were used as vessels no one probably doubts, however, Campbell needs two authors and three different passages for his suggestion, in which meanings are simply assumed, including an obvious change of meaning for one word, and this together might evoke some scepticism. After all, considering his suggestion within the context, its interpretation would resolve next to humiliation also close to that of 'stupidity' since both - a stupid and a slave - do what other people tell them. But one more point needs to be criticised, Campbell seems to neglect the mention of *a cognitionibus* (15.2) as Claudius' new profession in the *Apocolocyntosis*. At least a suggestion for the relation or connection between this final degradation and Campbell's own suggestion should have been considered if an author maintains such an idea.

In the range of interpretation, you find even scholars as Düll, who interprets a gourd as a rather positive symbol for the emperor, similarly positive as the Greek connotation of health. Düll considers a gourd "als die größte, [...] einem Kaiser adäquate Pflanze", and as the "Schmuck"<sup>83</sup> of every dung heap. He believes that the gourd hints to a dung heap with which Claudius coped in his life, but furthermore, according to Düll, will cope with in the underworld due to his new profession as *a cognitionibus*. Moreover, the author supports his idea by the fact that Claudius compares his efforts to Hercules' when the latter had to clean the dung out of Augias' stables (7.4). The content of the satire, though, does not seem to support the idea of a pumpkin as such a symbol. First of all, Claudius does not seem to have much power in the underworld, secondly, what is the connection between being the pumpkin of a dung heap and having to clean it 'as a pumpkin' in the view of content, and thirdly what is the bridge to the entire context.<sup>84</sup>

Another suggestion<sup>85</sup> is the declaration that Claudius is a featureless character just like a pumpkin. If one reconsiders the outline in Chapter 2,

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head like a gourd' seems [then] self-evident" (9).

<sup>82</sup> cf. Campbell, 10.

<sup>83</sup> cf. Bringmann, Bibliography 891.

<sup>84</sup> Nevertheless, it is ironic that the pumpkin as a vegetable, according to Haarberg (112), is in China the 'Emperor of the Garden'.

<sup>85</sup> cf. Eden, 4; Hoyos (referring to Coffey, Bibliography 251-252), 69.

Claudius does not at all appear 'featureless' in the satire, after all it is a satire on him, therefore this idea was limited to Claudius lacking positive characteristics. However, this does not make the interpretation more acceptable, since the *tertium comparationis* of the 'featurelessness' of a gourd and of Claudius is lost by his 'bad features' in the same way. A further thought would be to claim, an ordinary gourd had only 'bad features', but as seen above this is actual not the case (health/vessel).

In contrast to the last suggestion, one of Hoyos' is even based on one of Claudius' possible features. Admitting "an initial factor from guesswork" as a requirement, Hoyos proposes that Claudius had the nickname *cucurbita* respectively *κολοκύντη*. The author refers (69) to several other important personalities of the Roman Empire who had a nickname, as e. g. Claudius' own nephew Gaius 'Caligula'.<sup>86</sup> If the nickname theory conveys truth, the implications for this name is the next question. Three different explanations are briefly outlined by Hoyos (70): a) gourd refers to Claudius' body shape; b) his excellent health;<sup>87</sup> c) or his stupidity in various ways. Another suggestion could be that the Emperor used to play with pumpkins just like Caligula 'played' with *caligula*; and if one wants it, many interpretations of the assumed nickname could be added, which already shows how vain this undertaking is, "even though [...] their [the nicknames' J. T.] existence cannot be ruled out".<sup>88</sup> Skipping also therefore the discussion of the degree of probability of each nickname's explanation, two aspects generally remain questionable: a) for what reason did the author use the prefix 'apo' if the nickname was already *κολοκύντη/cucurbita*; and what would it tell the reader; b) is it not rather strange that we have no further evidence for Claudius' nickname. After all, there is rather much information from various sources on him extant today.<sup>89</sup> Consequently, should not a nickname which is striking enough to become a name of a satire be mentioned anywhere - "even though joke names given in

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<sup>86</sup> "Caligula, als scherzh. Beiname des Kaisers Gajus, weil er als Knabe in der Kleidung eines gemeinen Soldaten, also mit Soldatenschuhen an den Füßen, im Lager war, Suet. Cal. 9 u.a.", Karl Ernst Georges, "Caligula", *Ausführliches Lateinisch-deutsches Handwörterbuch*, Digitale Bibliothek, 8. Auflage, Darmstadt, 2003.

<sup>87</sup> Apparently, despite all his illnesses, Claudius was fond of doing sports.

<sup>88</sup> cf. Hoyos, 69.

<sup>89</sup> cf. Chapter 2.

court circles do [and did J. T.] not survive"<sup>90</sup>? Nevertheless, there are scholars like Eisenberger (269) who do not deny the possibility of 'pumpkin' as Claudius' nickname.

As explained above a gourd might have been a symbol for someone stupid. As a consequence, this could have lead even to a nickname or swearword against one person. Almost the opposite idea is formulated by Szilagyi<sup>91</sup> who is one of the scholars trying to find a solution with the help of other Greek words. He sees a similarity between ἀποβίωσις = decease/demise and ἀποκολοκύντωσις, which would then mean something like 'degourdification'. Because he connects a gourd with stupidity, too, his interpretation would mean as much as 'destupidnessation'. Szilagyi supports his thoughts with the help of a passage in Sueton's *Nero* in which Nero's statement on his stepfather's death is cited:

[...] nam et morari eum desisse inter homines producta prima syllaba iocabatur [...](33).<sup>92</sup>

However, according to e. g. Eisenberger (265-266), this does not certainly have to mean that Claudius' behaviour changes for good; on the contrary, *inter homines* might already restrict the meaning to Claudius 'not being stupid' on earth any longer but still in the underworld. Then, very far-fetched, it would perhaps have to be a 'destupidnessation' of Claudius' environment after his death. Regarding the content and context, Szilagyi's suggestion of having a 'recovered' Claudius would yield to the health-interpretation, namely to something positive for the late emperor, which is again "something far from obvious in the text"<sup>93</sup>. One just needs to recall the ending of this satire, since after all Claudius will live in total dependency as a freedman's slave.

Bannert and Wagenwort<sup>94</sup> used the same procedure as Szilagyi but their point of departure was the Greek word ἀποραφανίδωσις (cf. 3.1). Ἀποραφανίδωσις was a way of punishment, a "Strafvergewaltigung

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<sup>90</sup> cf. Hoyos, 69.

<sup>91</sup> For Szilagyi's idea see Bringmann (Bibliography 891-892) and Eisenberger (265-266).

<sup>92</sup> Sueton, *Nero* 33: "Certe omnibus rerum uerborumque contumeliis mortuum insectatus est, modo stultitiae modo saeuitiae arguens; nam et morari eum desisse inter homines producta prima syllaba iocabatur multaue decreta et constituta, ut insipientis atque deliri, pro irritis habuit; denique bustum eius consaepiri nisi humili leuique maceria neglexit."

<sup>93</sup> cf. Hoyos, 69.

<sup>94</sup> For this idea see Coffey, Bibliography 249ff.

[originally with a radish and for Claudius] mittels eines Kürbis".<sup>95</sup> Although the suggestion of a rape does not find any proof within the satire, and it "deserves the scepticism it has received"<sup>96</sup>; the idea of punishment, however, is rather appealing. Considering Pierre Grimal's statement<sup>97</sup> that Claudius - in this satire - is "nur noch ein armseliger Mensch, dessen wahres Wesen unverhüllt zutage tritt" and that it is his "menschliche Wahrheit", which is revealed without any "Verpflichtungen", one could see exactly this as a punishment, since the details mentioned in the satire<sup>98</sup> are everything but nice to be remembered for. In this case, one would have to interpret ἀποκολοκύντωσις simply as a harder punishment than a ἀποραφανίδωσις but not as an exaggeration of punishment against rape.<sup>99</sup> If seen as a punishment in general, the content of the satire is not unsuitable. Linguistically seen, this word is the only one suggested that has an identical word-formation and semantic background, namely a vegetable.<sup>100</sup>

Several other scholars subscribe to the thesis that *Apocolocyntosis* is "pure and simple"<sup>101</sup> a wordgame of the Greek word ἀποθέωσις since the piece of literature is dealing with this event making it "a ludicrous sham"<sup>102</sup> J. Adamietz writes:<sup>103</sup> "Das Bild des Kürbisses soll den Eindruck des Lächerlichen erzeugen und den Gedanken nahelegen, daß die Apotheose des Claudius eine Farce sei. Ob darüberhinaus für den antiken Leser in dem Hinweis auf den Kürbis eine spezielle Pointe lag, ist heute mit dem vorhandenen sprachlichen Material nicht mehr zu erkennen." And he claims that "alle übrigen Lösungen werfen noch größere Probleme auf" which is probably the reason for many scholar to agree to this suggestion. The same thesis is also excessively and clearly stated by Haarberg namely "that whoever coined it [*Apocolocyntosis* J. T.] had 'apotheosis' in mind, when he

<sup>95</sup> cf. Bringmann, bibliography 891.

<sup>96</sup> cf. Hoyos, 69.

<sup>97</sup> Pierre Grimal: *Seneca: Macht und Ohnmacht des Geistes*, Darmstadt, 1978, 73.

<sup>98</sup> cf. Chapter 2.

<sup>99</sup> According to Coffey, *Roman Satire* 167: It is "the Greek punishment for adultery in which a horseradish was thrust into the adulterer's body *per anum*".

<sup>100</sup> Coffey, *Roman Satire* 167, has a more restricted view on the act of punishing, sees it nevertheless as an exaggeration as well, but emphasizes that we have nowhere else a link to this kind of punishment in Latin literature.

<sup>101</sup> Miriam T. Griffin: *Seneca. A Philosopher in Politics*, Oxford, 1976, 131.

<sup>102</sup> cf. Coffey, *Roman Satire* 168.

<sup>103</sup> J. Adamietz as quoted in Lund (Edition, 12).

did it" (109). This suggestion seems, due to its fitting into the context, very appealing and possible. However, one should not forget that the evidence for ἀποθέωσις/*apotheosis* is rare in Latin literature, too.<sup>104</sup> Moreover, the wordgame's reference to this word would just rely within the common prefix ἀπο-/apo-.

Hoyos suggests a different explanation for ἀποκολοκύντωσις in connection with a wordgame, namely the latinized verb *apoculare* (cf. 3.3.2) with the meaning of '(to) disappear' etc. *Apoculare*, despite its rare evidence, is a slang expression, translated by Hoyos (70) with reference to American slang as "butt off" and with reference to the *OLD* as "arsed off". By sticking to 'gourd' for the second part, his interpretation could be translated as 'the disappearance or departure of a gourd'.<sup>105</sup> Hoyos calls this pun alone too "feeble" (70), but if one would consider this coinage further as an allusion to ἀποθέωσις, it would gain an extra meaning. He continues that if gourd, after all, should have been Claudius' "irreverent imperial nickname", ἀποκολοκύντωσις would reflect the "grotesquerie of [Claudius'] latest official deification" with additional help of a sarcastic slang word for Claudius' leave taking. The suggested allusion of *apoculare* and ἀποθέωσις seems more plausible than an allusion between ἀποκολοκύντωσις and ἀποθέωσις. As a matter of fact, it is feasible that people connect a departure of someone with a deification of the same one, especially if the person has passed away<sup>106</sup>; in any case more feasible than other words whose only similarity to ἀποθέωσις lies only within the prefix ἀπο-/apo-. The "nickname theory" remains a suggestion without provability.

Considering Athanassakis, who begins his approach by declaring ἀπο

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<sup>104</sup> One more comment shall be made upon *apotheosis*. This word might seem very familiar to today's reader, but when (cf. Chapter 3.3) one considers the Latin literature from the time of this satire, we have only one extant passage (Cicero Ad Att. I, 16, 13) where *apotheosis* can be found: 'heus tu, videsne consulatum illum nostrum, quem Curio antea *apotheosin* vocabat, si hic (scil. Afranius) factus erit, fabam mimum futurum?' Without going into further details it seemed important for me to remark on the fact that precisely in this Cicero passage, we find also a reference to the *fabam mimum facere* as in the Apocolocyntosis (9.3), in which passage Augustus faces the same trouble of too many deifications. Heinze (65) suggests that Seneca knew Cicero's passage.

<sup>105</sup> In his essay, Hoyos suggest 'the departure of our Lourd' (70), which is probably a typing error.

κόλου (*apoculare*) is Claudius' way to and from heaven and then to the underworld, one has to admit that it sounds attractive so far. However, he adds that this happens to Claudius "via a fatal diarrhoea *de culo*"<sup>107</sup>, what is "thanks to the salutary *fusus* of Lachesis whose application to the imperial fundament makes the *sonitus maior* of 4.3 and the propelling ἀνεμος of 5. 4 possible".<sup>108</sup> This view is also supported by Roth who says that ἀνεμος "can be nothing other than the noisy expulsion of intestinal gases marking the flatulent emperor's death".<sup>109</sup> Next, Athanassakis also agrees to the word pumpkin but interprets it quite differently. He notices two references for a pumpkin in the satire. In both cases, they refer to the shape of pumpkins. On the one hand, he believes that Claudius is emasculated, since the gods "find him without a *membrum virile* (πρᾶγμα, *praeputium*, *caput*), and, therefore, *rotundus* like a *κολοκύντη*"<sup>110</sup>; on the other hand, the *κολοκύντη* refers metaphorically and in a transferred sense to Claudius, namely that he is 'thrown like a ball' from one to the next person while the accurate punishment for him is figured out (14-15). How odd the first part of his interpretation may sound, and how 'provocative' it seems to propose something extraordinary like an 'emasculatation' for a lacuna, there is above all one major argument against his second part interpretation, namely against the round shape of the pumpkin. Today's wide spread 'garden pumpkin' was introduced in Europe as late as the 16th century, so any *cucurbita* referred to, refers to today's 'bottle-gourd', whose shape is very seldom totally round like a ball.<sup>111</sup>

Bringmann (Bibliography 890) already points out that several assumptions must be made and that a lot has to be read into the satire to follow Athanassakis' interpretation. Moreover, it does not seem clever at all, to

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<sup>106</sup> According to Coffey, Roman Satire 172, one could be deified either alive or dead.

<sup>107</sup> cf. Hoyos, 69.

<sup>108</sup> cf. Athanassakis, 13.

<sup>109</sup> "... and which has evidently jet-propelled him up to heaven" (807), Paul Roth: "Two notes on Seneca's Apocolocyntosis", *Latomus* XLVI, 1987, 806-809. Moreover, though it is not necessary to know for the above discussion, Roth has an interesting interpretation of Claudius' arrival in the underworld. He believes it is an imitation of 'the mystery cult of Isis' (807), and accordingly in a 'reunion of husband and wife', and thus in reunion of Claudius and Messalina (808).

<sup>110</sup> cf. Athanassakis, 13.

<sup>111</sup> *Lagenaria siceraria* is today's scientific name for the bottle gourd, whereas *Cucurbita pepo* is the name of our 'garden-pumpkin', which seems very surprisingly if one takes into account, that the Romans referred to the bottle-gourd as *cucurbita*.

base any interpretation on a lacuna.<sup>112</sup> Besides, the passage Athanassakis quotes in favour of an emasculation, is in fact a quote Seneca has taken from Varro. That is to say that especially this passage might contain a joke, a saying or even a wordgame which we do not understand, and rather improbably an emasculation. Therefore the "excruciating Senecan pun" as Hoyos (69) calls the entire results of Athanassakis' idea, can perhaps be called an 'excruciating Athanassakisan pun' itself.

In his last idea, Hoyos refers as the only scholar to Cassius Dio's passage, where ἀποκολοκύντωσις is actually cited, and he examines its context more closely, and Seneca's brother's remark catches his attention. He says:

(ἐκεῖνος δὲ ἐν βραχυτάτῳ πολλα εἰπὼν ἀπομνημονεύεται.)  
 ἐπειδὴ γὰρ τοὺς ἐν τῷ δεσμοτηρίῳ θανατουμένους ἀγκίστροις  
 τισὶ μεγάλοις οἱ δήμιοι ἕς τε τὴν ἀγορὰν ἀνεῖλκον κἀντεῦθεν  
 ἕς τὸν ποταμὸν ἔσυρον, ἔφη τὸν Κλάυδιον ἀγγίστρῳ ἕς τὸν  
 σὺρανὸν ἀνενεχθῆναι. (60 respectively 61.35,4)

"Claudius had been elected to heaven on a hock: as the public executioners were accustomed to drag the bodies of those executed in prison to the Forum with large hooks, and from there hauled them in to the river" (Hoyos 70). Eden refers (1, footnote 1) this exclamation to the satire in order to explain its mention at this point of Dio's work at all, and because generally "the corpses of executed criminals could be subjected to public abuse" (1). Transferring this now, the Apocolocyntosis "takes Claudius to heaven and then tosses him out" (Hoyos 70), which "might do" but does not satisfy Hoyos. Therefore he raises at last one question which shall be simply quoted, since it remains almost uncommented as a further suggestion.

"Dried-out gourds were much in uses as containers. Were they sometimes hung up on hooks to dry out, or for storage; and if so, is Gallio's joke another reference to the deceased ruler's possible nickname, wrapped in the suggestion that he really merited the fate of a criminal?"

As a matter of fact, Hoyos leaves out Eden's footnote, and just refers to Gallio's exclamation. Although not discussed further by Eden, the 'public

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<sup>112</sup> Rather Konrad Kraft (107) is right that one has to assume a "Gegenrede des Claudius" for the missing passage, with which help he gains Hercules as the "Schutzgott der Antonier" as his own supporter in order to be allowed to enter the council of the Gods.

abuse' reference seems not unfitting. For now, this shall not necessarily be viewed as Agrippina might have 'executed' Claudius as a link to her possible murder, but one could read the satire as 'public abuse' since Claudius' negative sides are exposed without pardon.<sup>113</sup> Nevertheless, the title itself remains unclear, so Hoyos' unsatisfied questioning seems reasonable.

### 3.5 Alternative Possible Titles

After having discussed so many interpretations and ideas on 'ἀποκολοκύντωσις', it might be surprising how little the debate on the other possibilities mentioned above, Chapter 3.1-3.3, is.

#### 3.5.1 Currie's Suggestion.

As explained at the end of Chapter 3.3.1, Currie analysed the possible title ἀποκολοκέντωσιν which is found in Dio's second manuscript (VC), and translated this suggestion would mean 'the emptying of the bowles'.

The author had started by searching words apparently fitting to the context, and according to Currie this suggestion fits to Claudius' *ultima vox* (4.3), in which he admits that his 'bowles are now empty'. Furthermore, the author suggests that this problem could have been another unknown defect of Claudius, but actually, Sueton (*Claudius* 31) already mentions that the late emperor used to have a stomach problem. "Interpreting this evidence we may be able to assume a scatologically humorous title ἀποκολοκέντωσις"<sup>114</sup>, by which the reader apparently knows from the beginning that this writing will be about the humiliation of Claudius. Moreover, Currie is not averse to see here a connection to Agrippina's murder by a poisoned mushroom-dinner which might have caused this accident to happen.

One has to admit that Currie's suggestions are appealing, it is true that ἀποκολοκέντωσις "would relate distinctly to a crucial incident in the text", and "would have more meaning as a title"<sup>115</sup> than at least some of the other interpretations suggested above. Moreover, it would fit into the context of

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<sup>113</sup> cf. the suggestion by Bannert and Wagenfort in Chapter 3.4.2.

<sup>114</sup> cf. Currie, 188.

humiliating Claudius. Maybe this word then would have given "grounds for a giggle or a guffaw" as Coffey (Roman Satire 168) suggested for the satire's title in general. Nevertheless, some scepticism remains, perhaps, regarding this defect as the essence of the work, but there seems to be no evident reason.

### 3.5.2 The Titles given in the Manuscripts

As mentioned above the best extant manuscripts (S) cites *Divi Claudii (incipit) Apotheosis (Annei Seneca) per satiram*, whereas the other two, related manuscripts (V and L) suggest *Ludus de morte Claudii (Caesaris)*.

It seems that the majority of scholars agree that *Ludus de morte Claudii (Caesaris)* is a medieval coinage due to *ludus* in the title.<sup>116</sup> On the one hand, *ludus* is apparently not found until Ausonius (ca. 310-395) as a name for a specific literary work or title. However, it is found in case "of the activity of literary composition"; but on the other hand, it seems not impossible that this former usage was also known in classical times for linguistic reasons, and for the chance that it is a rendering of Greek *παίγνιον*. Nevertheless, Coffey (Roman Satire 167) says:

"'Ludus de morte Claudii' may have been added by Seneca himself or by contemporaries not as a double title in combination with *Apocolocyntosis* in the manner of Varro, but merely as a convenient alternative title which described the contents; it is, however, more likely to have been added in late antiquity or Carolingian times."

Hoyos' (70) explanation is more practical, "[...] a pun [as *ἀποκολοκύντωσις* J.T.] that depended on such ephemeral references would be a total mystery to later copyists of the satire. No surprise then if it was eventually dropped and a more functional title *Ludus de morte Claudii* substituted", which monks in the Middle Ages might have done.

*Divi Claudii (incipit) Apotheosis (Annei Seneca) per satiram* is regarded in a similar way by scholars as *Ludus de morte Claudii (Caesaris)*. Coffey (Bibliography 246; Roman Satire 166) explains that it seems logical that the unclear and possibly even incomprehensible Greek title [*ἀποκολοκύντωσις*

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<sup>115</sup> cf. Currie, 188.

<sup>116</sup> cf. Coffey, Roman Satire 166.

J. T.] was edited by a Latin title which seems to be a lot more descriptive. In contrast to the idea of having no backgrounds for Dio's and the S title, other scholars point out the similarity between Dio's explanatory remark and its clear connections to the title of the manuscript S: ὡσπερ τινὰ ἀθανάτισιν ὀνομάσας (60/61. 35, 3).

Otto Weinreich (2, footnote 1) has other objection to S possibly quoting the actual title. He says, "ἀποθέωσις kann schon deshalb nicht richtig sein, weil Claudius ja gar nicht Gott wird, sondern nur werden will, aber abgelehnt wird". This objection sounds rather idealistic since although Claudius is denied a place among the gods, the satire, in fact, deals with this procedure. Additionally, Eden - especially with regards to Varro's titles - is convincing when he states firmly (2): "That a works title must be descriptive of its contents is manifestly false."

Reeve's<sup>117</sup> objections are based on the word *satura/satira*. He claims that *satura* does nowhere in literature of that time - and not even in the time when the manuscript was probably written, according to Eden (23) late 9th century, - mean satirical or satire in our sense. Knoche maintains that "das lateinische Wort *satiricus* [...] erst seit dem dritten Jahrhundert nach Christus bezeugt [ist und zwar] als Prädikat des Dichters Satirenschreibend".<sup>118</sup>

To support his view Reeve quotes a passage from a commentary on Boethius' *Consolatio* from the same time period as manuscript S. According to this commentary, *satura/satira* means a mixture of prose and verse. Even if *satura/satira* might not have the meaning of 'satirical' etc., this new connotation seems also very fitting for Seneca's work. The evidence, however, from what point in time this word was used with this meaning is uncertain. While referring to Hendrickson<sup>119</sup>, Reeve says that it can probably only be traced back to Martianus Capella, who might have "introduced the figure of Satura because he was writing in a mixture of prose and verse".<sup>120</sup> Besides, the author does not claim to deal with title but more with descriptions which manuscripts use to have.

Therefore the title - if it is a title - provided by the manuscript S seems

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<sup>117</sup> Reeve M. D.: "Apotheosis...per saturam", *CPh* LXXIX, 1984, 305-307.

<sup>118</sup> Ulrich Knoche, *Die römische Satire*, Göttingen, 1957.

<sup>119</sup> G. L. Hendrickson: "Satura - The Genesis of a Literary Form," *Cp* 6, 1911, 139.

to be from late antiquity or early medieval times, too. Perhaps as a consequence of these arguments against those more descriptive titles, most scholars prefer the title *Apocolocyntosis* cited in Dio's Epitome.

### 3.5.3 Another suggestion

The following idea shall be regarded as just another suggestion, not that there are not enough different ideas found, but none of them seemed to be absolutely convincing; most of all various interpretations regarding a gourd, in one or another way. Maybe it is just a coincidence fraught with consequences that [ἀπο-] κολοκύντη can be and perhaps even too easily be read into Dio's ἀποκολοκύντωσιν. After all, one has to admit that various 'gourdification' - interpretations remain very questionable, and the very common solution of a stupid 'Kürbiskopf' is still doubtable (3.4).

Due to these unsatisfactory suggestions and in addition to those, also the nearly ignoring of the manuscript titles evoked the following suggestion.

As mentioned above (3.4.2), the Latinized Greek verb *apoculare*<sup>121</sup> is appealing as a part of the title's coining. It fits<sup>122</sup> within the content of the satire, because Claudius would disappear in any case from earth, either to heaven or earth. Moreover, as it was pointed out before, a certain connection or allusion can be seen between *apoculare* and ἀποθέωσις.<sup>123</sup>

Taking this verb as the first part of this coinage suggestion, the only part left is -κύντωσιν if one does not use the middle section -κολο- twice as other scholars have done even unexplained. If one further cuts the ending -ωσις/ν of the *nomen actionis*, the only syllable remaining is -κύν(τ). It seems as if one should not substantiate such an undertaking on just three letter, nevertheless it seems still worth a try.

As Coffey<sup>124</sup> explains, already Varro used to call his writings of this type

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<sup>120</sup> cf. Reeve, 306.

<sup>121</sup> apoculo, are: "(v. apokalein, s. Walde, Etym. Wörterb.2 S. 52), unsichtbar machen, se, sich fortmachen, sich drücken, Petron. 62, 3; 67, 3.", Karl Ernst Georges, "apoculo", *Ausführliches Lateinisch-deutsches Handwörterbuch*, Digitale Bibliothek, 8. Auflage, Darmstadt, 2003.

<sup>122</sup> cf. Hoyos, 70.

<sup>123</sup> cf. the end of Chapter 3.4.2.

<sup>124</sup> cf. Coffey, Roman Satire 153: "Varro called his satires in a mixture of prose and verse

*menippeae* but also *cynicae*, which derives from the Greek word κυνικός or similar. One has to admit although this connection is only based on three letters, the connection sound appealing because the *Apocolocyntosis* belongs to this genre. Furthermore, Coffey (Roman Satire 155) tells us that Varro used this word in his titles, too, and there, the connection lies only within three letter, too: "Cynicus, Cynodidascalica (The Dog's Handbook of Instruction) and κυνορήτωρ (Dog the Orator)."<sup>125</sup>.

If one would combine now those two possible parts of ἀποκολοκύντωσιν/ς in meaning, it could mean as much as 'A Disappearance by/with the help of a Menippean Satire'. A little far-fetched but possible would still be an association of a ἀποθέωσις by the reader with this title.

Although *apoculare* seems so appealing, another word could explain the first part of ἀποκολοκύντωσις, namely the Greek verb ἀποκολλούω. This verb has the meaning of 'to cut short off'<sup>126</sup>, its simplex ἀποκολλούω can also have the meaning of "to put down; abase those who are exalted".<sup>127</sup> If the latter meanings could be applied to the complex as well, another good translation of the title is possible 'Abasing via a Mennipean satire' which is exactly what Claudius experiences throughout the satire. Moreover, this Greek word would make an original Greek title more probable, where *apoculare* leaves both possibilities open.

As explained in Chapter 3.4 the manuscripts provide apparently more descriptive titles if not even just descriptions.<sup>128</sup> Moreover, *Divi Claudii (incipit) Apotheosis (Annei Senece) per satiram* and *Ludus de morte Claudii (Caesaris)* are seen as titles deriving from medieval times, and are not regarded as the original, due to the uncertain beginning of use of *satira*

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Menippeans (Menippeae). They were also called Cynic satires (cynicae)."

<sup>125</sup> "These titles may owe something to the Roman Atellans, but probably more to Hellenistic mockery and particularly to Cynic reinterpretations of myths. Some titles are Cynic: Cynicus, Cynodidascalica (The Dog's Handbook of Instruction) and κυνορήτωρ (Dog the Orator).", cf. Coffey, Roman Satire 155.

<sup>126</sup> cf. its entry in: Liddell, Henry George and Scott, Robert, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, reprinted, revised, augmented, Oxford, 1968.

<sup>127</sup> cf. 'ἀποκολλούω', Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, reprinted, revised, augmented, Oxford, 1968.

respectively *ludus* within literary fields. For both, such a use is at the latest possible after the 6th century (cf. Chapter 3.4), and both manuscript branches start in the 9th century. The point that is tried to bring across is that both of these medieval titles could perhaps be regarded as more or less a translation of the first possible title, that is described above.

The following entry from a Boethius commentary, which is also mentioned in Chapter 3.4, was probably written around the 9th, too:<sup>129</sup>

"Hos libros *per satiram* edidit imitatus videlicet Marcianum Felicem Capellam qui prius libros de nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii *eadem specie poematis* conscripserat; sed iste longe nobiliore materia et facundia ei praecellit, quippe qui nec Tullio *in prosa* nec Virgilio *in metro* inferior floruit."

This quote gives rise to speculate even more on the connection between Dio's comment and the manuscript titles. For the S manuscript's title a translation could be 'The Deification of Divus Claudius via a Menippean Satire'.

Unfortunately, the meaning of *ludus* at that time remains more uncertain. The *Georges* gives various passages from antiquity that show that the word *ludus* was used for unofficial writings but also for making fun of other people; the first official use of *ludus* as a part of a title is found at the end of the 3rd century (cf. Chapter 3.5.2).

The question remaining is if and how *apoculare* or ἀποκολοῦω is then found in the manuscripts, S provides *apotheosis* whereas V *de morte*. About a possible connection between *apoculare* and *apotheosis* it was speculated before<sup>130</sup>; *de morte*, however, does not seem to be too obviously related to *apoculare*. If one wants to, one could maintain that this verb is a slang expression of '(to) die'.<sup>131</sup>

*De morte* may, in fact, be already more related to Dio's comment. If one takes a closer look at the verses following Dio's title remark, one sees that the reader gets there already more information on the satire's content: "ὥσπερ τινὰ ἀθανάτισιν ὀνομάσας.". Indeed, this addition reminds one of Varro's two title system, especially due to ὥσπερ which might be comparable

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<sup>128</sup> cf. Reeve, 306.

<sup>129</sup> cf. Reeve, 306.

<sup>130</sup> cf. Chapter 3.4.2, especially Hoyos' suggestion.

<sup>131</sup> cf. Hoyos (Chapter 3.4.2) suggested translation for *apoculare* as "arsed off" or "butt off".

to Varro's περί, and also to the Latin *de*.<sup>132</sup> The reader learns that this mentioned work will be dealing with ἀθανάτισιν, which means usually immortalisation not necessarily a deification, so *de morte* could have its root there.

So, Dio tells the reader that Claudius is basically facing some sort of immortalisation, and this, Seneca might have also achieved by writing this satire, respectively by making fun of Claudius' death since one can also gain immortality by unwanted attention. That is to say by being exposed in an extraordinary way, positively or negatively, and in our case Claudius will probably be remembered for the incapability and inability, he showed as an emperor and his negative but true sides. Writing in this way and style shows "den humorigen Ernst (gr. σπουδαιογελοῖον) und die hämische Kritiklust (philophthonia nach Varro Men. 542), die seit Lucilius die Satire kennzeichnen".<sup>133</sup> This might also explain why Dio mentions this satire among other bitter jokes about Claudius, and not while talking about literary works at that time.

#### **4. Some Remarks on the Authorship of *Apocolocyntosis***

Baldwin<sup>134</sup> begins his article by claiming: the "[...] *Apocolocyntosis* ascribed by tradition to the philosopher Seneca [...]"; but is it really just tradition? Although scholars have written a lot more on the title of this work, some discussions concern the author, too; and some doubt Seneca as the author.

##### **4.1 Seneca's Position - Three Main Events**

One needs to reconsider the time before Claudius' death to get an idea of the tricky situation for Seneca among the 'important' people of the imperial court; which after all forms the background of the *Apocolocyntosis*.

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<sup>132</sup> cf. Hendriksson, 26.

<sup>133</sup> J. P. Sullivan, *Petronius-Satyricon - Seneca-The Apocolocyntosis*, London (reprint), 1986, 440.

<sup>134</sup> B. Baldwin: "Executions under Claudius: Seneca's Ludus De Morte Claudii", *Phoenix* 18, 1, 17-18, 1962-1964, 39-48.

Seneca had already been *quaestor*, and had gained recognition as a writer and philosopher when he was sent into exile in 41 by Claudius, who probably acted according to Messalina's will. Apparently, Seneca and Julia Livilla, the daughter of Germanicus, were charged with adultery, but were never really convicted. Claudius' wife Messalina probably tried to banish Julia Livilla due to her own jealousy of Julia (cf. Eden 120; Lund 103). Even though, Seneca should have been charged with death, Claudius for some reason mitigated the punishment for them. After eight long years in exile on Corsica, Seneca was called back to Rome on request of Claudius' new and fourth wife Agrippina. Seneca was to become "Nero's *amicus* or *magister*"<sup>135</sup> in 49; only five years later, Claudius died,<sup>136</sup> and the time of Seneca's most influence in government began since Nero was still too young to rule by himself.

Although this is only a very rough outline it shows how Seneca was trapped between influential people.

## 4.2 The Factual Basis

It is not as simple as Baldwin formulates his objection ('by tradition') because the extant references to the text of this satire include Seneca as the author. The earliest reference (early third century) is found in Cassius Dio's epitome who "as the sole evidence from antiquity"<sup>137</sup> claims Seneca to be the author of a satire called *Apocolocyntosis* or similar.<sup>138</sup> Consequently, all scholars considering *Apocolocyntosis* as the title, should regard Seneca as the author, since Dio says both facts in the same breath.<sup>139</sup>

Even if one does not consider Dio's remark, all three main manuscripts cite Seneca as the author of this text, despite their different titles. Only in some *deteriores* the satire is handed down without references to author or title. Still, there are a few scholars who believe that - just like the titles<sup>140</sup> - the satire was ascribed to Seneca in the Middle Ages.<sup>141</sup> Indeed, we have also a

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<sup>135</sup> Miriam T. Griffin, *Seneca. a philosopher in politics*, Oxford, 1976, 77.

<sup>136</sup> If Claudius died a naturally death or was murdered by Agrippina shall be left out.

<sup>137</sup> cf. Eden, 6.

<sup>138</sup> cf. Chapter 3.1.

<sup>139</sup> "συνέθηκε μὲν γὰρ καὶ ὁ Σενέκας σύγγραμμα, ἀποκολοκύντωσιν αὐτό ὡσπερ τινὰ ἀθανάτισιν ὀνομάσας". (60, 35, 3 respectively 61, 35, 3).

<sup>140</sup> cf. Chapter 3.5.2.

<sup>141</sup> e.g. R. Roncali: "L'anonima 'Apoteosi del divo Claudio'", *Belfagor* 29, 1974, 571-573. cf. Bringmann, Bibliography 886.

"willkürliche Paraphrase"<sup>142</sup> of a passage from the *Apocolocyntosis* by Paschasius Radbertus who died around 865, which is quoted without any reference neither to title nor to author. In addition, Boccaccio (1313-1375) apparently states Seneca as the author with reservation.

Moreover, one knows of several works ascribed to incorrect authors during this time, even to Seneca himself. A letter correspondence with St. Paul, which turned out to be false, was ascribed to him.<sup>143</sup> Although the latter turned out to be alleged, the motives for this ascription seem probably to most Seneca readers more understandable than to promote Seneca as an author for the *Apocolocyntosis*. After all, Seneca was generally regarded as very moralistic and sometimes also as a 'Christian', therefore it seems somewhat illogical that at the same time as the 'Letters with St. Paul', the *Apocolocyntosis* should have been ascribed to him.<sup>144</sup> On the other hand, it is similarly odd that e. g. neither Tacitus nor Sueton mention this work, either in connection with one of the emperors (Claudius respectively Nero) or in connection with the author himself, as Knoche (63) remarks.

One can see that the ancient, and especially the medieval material does not really point the way ahead. However, taking into account that the oldest references and the best manuscripts - on the premiss that Dio and the scripts refer to discussed satire - refer to Seneca's authorship, the probability might support Seneca's authorship, but the opposite cannot be excluded.

### 4.3 Speculations on the Authorship

The satire *Apocolocyntosis* itself has also been examined for hints that yield to or from Seneca's authorship. Above all, one has to notice that whoever wrote this piece of literature, must have been very familiar with the court as such, and acquainted with Claudius. Although the satire is rather short, it contains much and very detailed information on Claudius as well as about his personal characteristics as allusions to his way of reigning.<sup>145</sup> Seneca

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<sup>142</sup> cf. 19, Niels W. Bruun: "Kritische Bemerkungen zur *Apocolocyntosis* des Seneca", *ARID* XV, 1986, 19-35.

<sup>143</sup> cf. e. g. Alfons Fürst: "Pseudepigraphie und Apostolizität im apokryphen Briefwechsel zwischen Seneca und Paulus", *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, 41, 1998, 77-117.

<sup>144</sup> There are even speculations that these letters were written exactly in the same year as the *Apocolocyntosis* (cf. Fürst, 98).

<sup>145</sup> cf. the following and Chapter 2.

belonged to the immediate members of the imperial court, and was - being responsible for Nero - even involved within the close family and their interpersonal relations;<sup>146</sup> to get much closer without being related would have been quite difficult.

At the same time, Seneca was also a senator, and several scholars as e. g. Bagnani<sup>147</sup> have said it to be impossible that Seneca as a senator would have attacked the Senate's decision on the official deification of Claudius by such a denunciating literary work as the *Apocolocyntosis*.<sup>148</sup> Coffey (Bibliography 256) counters saying that the Senate's decree is not directly attacked, since "[...] throughout the work it is Claudius the man who is attacked, his character and policy, and not his deification as such".<sup>149</sup> Griffin (130) adds that the deification as such had been political in purpose: "Nero could now style himself *divi filius*; his *pietas* was demonstrated [...]",<sup>150</sup> and Griffin assumes (129) that "the farce [the *Apocolocyntosis* J. T.] was probably presented to the court and specially favoured senators and knights soon after Claudius' funeral and consecration". The fact that a number of senators had been a victim of Claudius' murders, adds to the assumption that the deification as such was more or less a political act, and not a decision, that all senators found personally worth of making.

Important regarding Claudius' deification as such seems further that Seneca does not call Claudius *divus* in any of his later works (*Naturales Quaestiones* 7,17,2 (21,3); *De Beneficiis* 1.15.5+6) in contrast to Augustus. This could mean that Seneca never ever personally agreed to a deification,

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<sup>146</sup> At this stage, it shall not matter if or to what extent Seneca supported various actions by Agrippina, as for e. g. Claudius' murder, or preferring Nero to Britannicus.

<sup>147</sup> cf. Coffey p. 265 (G. Bagnani: *Arbiter of Elegance, Phoenix Suppl. 2*, Toronto 1954, 27-46: The date, purpose and authorship of the *Ludus de morte Claudii*). Bagnani further argumentation is not convincing: The author, according to Coffey, suggests that Seneca has written a satire *Apocolocyntosis* a lot later, including even a more offensive topic for Agrippina as an account on her poisoning of Claudius; additionally, the author mentions a "propaganda bureau" that apparently should have published the satire, which Bagnani imagines, under the rule of Seneca.

<sup>148</sup> That the deification of Claudius was ratified by the senate shows Tacitus, *Annales* 13.2.

<sup>149</sup> Since the deification is, in fact, not as a separate topic attacked within the satire, the remark of the god (9.2 ff.) that from now onwards no one human should be deified, shall be left out. If at all, it might be seen as an indirectly "attack [...]" on the deification of unworthy emperors" (Coffey quoting Altmann, Bibliography 256-257).

<sup>150</sup> [...] perhaps most important, those who had prospered under Claudius were assured that there would be no reprisals. But within the court, Claudius' memory was not sacred. Nero's own jokes were aimed at Claudius' *stultitia* and *saevitia*: he would not have hesitated to sanction Seneca's writing on the same themes.

just as it is expressed in this satire.<sup>151</sup> Furthermore Seneca also rebukes Claudius openly in other works for his behaviour (*De clementia* 1, 23, 1; *De beneficiis* 1, 55, 5).

It has been claimed that Seneca who was from Spain could not have written this satire due to a historical mistake in the *Apocolocyntosis*.<sup>152</sup> The Spanish citizen law quoted in 3,3 does apparently not follow the historical truth, and Seneca being from Corduba should have known it better. Bringmann tries to outweigh this argumentation by referring to the genre satire, and to the fact that the law changed quickly, and therefore the author would not have cared or could not have known better. Despite those objections, Seneca was first of all a Roman citizen, who probably had himself not more to do with the Spanish citizen law than all other 'Roman' senators.

Another argument against Seneca as the author of this literary work is the joke on Stoicism which is found in 8.1:

"Stoicus? quomodo potest 'rotundus' esse, ut ait Varro, 'sine capite, sine praeputio'? est aliquid in illo Stoici dei, iam video: nec cor nec caput habet."

Since Seneca is the quintessential Stoic of the Romans for us, scholars find it hard to believe that he would ridicule his own philosophy. Furthermore, Seneca would not only make fun of his philosophical school, but would 'experience' a second degradation by calling Claudius of all, a possible Stoic god. Without paying attention to this double ridicule, Coffey protests against this objection by saying, one would "ignore the traditional jokes in satire at the expense of philosophy". Similarly Griffin formulates it (131): "The quarrels of philosophers are good for a laugh, but that does not show that Seneca hated philosophy or despised philosophical disagreements." Moreover, she refers to several passages in Seneca's works, in which he compares Stoic freedom with Epicurean dogmatism, or in which Seneca himself quarrels with his own sect,<sup>153</sup> what might show that Seneca did not treat his philosophy as an uncritical superior truth.

Despite of sullyng his own philosophy, various other authors cannot

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<sup>151</sup> cf. 692, Karlhans Abel: "Seneca: Leben und Leistung", *ANRW* II 32.2 (1985), 653-775.

<sup>152</sup> Among them is D. Nony ("Claude et les Espagnols, sur un passage de L'Apocoloquintose", *MCV* 4, 1968, 51-78) whom I did not read, but this objection was quoted in several essays (e. g. Bringmann, Bibliography).

<sup>153</sup> Epicurean dogmatism: Ep. 33. 4; 87. 26-7; 113. 23; quarrels with his own sect: Ep. 58. 13;

picture "de[n] Vorkämpfer hoher moralischer Prinzipien und stoischen Philosophen" to have written "die perfide Satire auf den toten Kaiser"<sup>154</sup>, mainly due to Seneca's own demand for morality and *clementia*. Although Seneca would have had many different reasons (cf. following pages), even reasons deriving from an immoral behaviour of Claudius (e. g. his murders), to write such a pamphlet, the idea that Seneca's own moral attitude does not fit within this immoral satire remains. But Seneca had trouble to combine his philosophy with his lifestyle throughout his entire life, so Griffin (141) concludes by stating three major controversial areas and that Seneca therefore "was at pains to soften the image of Stoic philosophy".

The three gaps are: 1) They abandoned politics for philosophy.

2) Their political activities or parts of life conflicted with their philosophical creed.

3) Their philosophical beliefs were unsuitable for being active in politics (Seneca right from the beginning suspected of it).

Weinreich (5) notices this conflict between the philosopher and the human being Seneca as well; and points out that Seneca became desperate in exile, and that Seneca " [es immer liebte, sich] mit dem ganzen geistigen und materiellen Luxus der Zeit, den er als Philosoph verachtete, [...] behaglich zu umgeben".<sup>155</sup>

Finally, one has to agree that there is in fact a certain discrepancy, but this discrepancy is so to say continuous, and therefore does not need to worry scholars too much regarding Seneca's possible authorship.

As a matter of fact, if one considers other writings by Seneca, another discrepancy seems to open up, namely Seneca's different attitudes in *Ad Polybium* and in the *Apocolocyntosis* towards the emperor Claudius. In *Ad Polybium*, Seneca portrays Claudius "mit Schmeicheleien überhäuft"<sup>156+157</sup>, whereas no compliment is found in the satire. With regards to Claudius' actual way of reigning, some scholars apparently remark that the flattery (*Ad Polybium*) is so grotesque that it must really be considered satirical (e.g. 6.1;

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74. 23; 80. 1; 82. 9; 85. 33; 117.1.

<sup>154</sup> cf. Bringmann, Bibliography 886.

<sup>155</sup> Furthermore, Eden remarks, that "savage criticism of his [Seneca's J. T.] disparity between his preaching and his practice has persisted from his own time (Tac. 13.42)" onwards.

<sup>156</sup> Bringmann, Bibliography 886.

<sup>157</sup> Kraft (96) calls it a "überschwengliches lobendes Bild der hervorragenden Qualitäten des

12.3).<sup>158</sup> According to Eden (7), "the discrepancies are no doubt to be explained in terms of different literary rôles, devised at different times, for different audiences". This idea certainly conveys truth, a satire is very different from a panegyric text, especially if the writer aims to achieve something, in this case Seneca wanted to be recalled from exile. Moreover, Seneca's own position was very different in those two situations; in the first, he was a powerless depending exile, and in the next, he had reached a powerful position, with the authority to rule to a certain degree at least for the next few years.

Similar reasons must be taken into consideration for the *laudatio funebris* which was definitively written by Seneca and read out loud by Nero at Claudius' funeral. This speech is not only written to praise the late emperor, but moreover falls into the same time of publishing mostly proposed for the *Apocolocyntosis*. Beforehand, it shall not be forgotten that the *Apocolocyntosis* might be Seneca's own attitude while he wrote the *laudatio funebris* for someone else, namely Nero whose attitude - at least the one he aimed for - might be accurately described by Seneca's writing. It seems as if Grimal (75) has a good explanation for the manner of the *laudatio* at all. *Pietas* was calling again, "[um eine] wohlausgewogene, geschmackvolle, den Traditionen entsprechende Rede zu verfassen, die ein nach schönem Stil verlangendes Publikum erwartete - eine Rede, die als fester Bestandteil in das Festprogramm eingebaut war". How strong this call for *pietas* must have been - although Seneca might have fulfilled it "notgedrungen"<sup>159</sup> - is also reflected by other emperors who praise their predecessor as a "fester Bestandteil"<sup>160</sup>: e. g. Tiberius is praised by Caligula in *Dio* 59, 16; and Caligula himself is honoured by Claudius in Sueton, *Claudius* 11,1 and *Dio* 60, 3-4.

Nevertheless, it must be mentioned that according to Tacitus (*Annales* 13.3 ff., including a summary of this speech), the listeners paid careful attention to Nero's *laudatio*, until he reached his stepfather's *sapientia* and *providentia* when rumors and laugh spread among the listeners; and Maurach (35) concludes "die Feier war zur Farce geworden". Grimal (75) among others claims that one has to differentiate the official attitude from the true feeling of

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Kaisers".

<sup>158</sup> cf. Griffin, 415.

<sup>159</sup> Gregor Maurach: *Seneca - Leben und Werk*, Darmstadt, 1991, 35.

the audience.<sup>161</sup> Considering this burst of laugh, Coffey (171 ff.) proposes "that the *laudatio* which Seneca wrote for Nero may have suggested the opportunity for the satire". The other way round, Baldwin (44) thinks that the audience might have laughed because they were already acquainted with Seneca's satire.

For the above mentioned ideas, one should not exclude Seneca from the authorship, even if he wrote the *laudatio funebris* around the same time, and especially even if together with the *Ad Polybium*, it seems to give a whole different picture of Seneca's attitude toward Claudius to the reader.

The *laudatio funebris* is not the only speech written by Seneca for Nero, Nero's inaugural speech, which is only known from Tacitus' *Annales* 13.4 and Dio 61.3, belongs to Seneca's writings of this time as well, and it might even reveal his authorship for this satire.<sup>162</sup>

If one reconsiders the accusations brought up against Claudius in the satire, four different main insults can be distinguished:<sup>163</sup>

- a) wilful murder (6.2, 10-1, 13.4-14.1)
- b) arbitrary administration of justice (10.4, 12.2, 3.19-23, 14.2-3)
- c) concentration of power in the imperial household (6.2, 13.2, 15.2)
- d) anomalous position of the imperial freedman (cf. c)).

If one compares these points of accusations against Claudius with the promises made by Nero in his inaugural speech, the similarities are astonishing. "Nero will refrain from violence (*nulla odia, nullas iniurias nec cupidinem ultionis afferre*; cp. (a)), keep his jurisdiction within bounds (*non enim se negotiorum omnium iudicem fore, ut clausis unam intra domum accusatoribus et reis paucorum potentia grassaretur*, cp. (b)), and restore the imperial household and the senate to their respective rightful positions (*nihil in penetibus suis venale aut ambitione pervium; discretam domum et rem publicam. teneret antiqua munia senatus*, etc.; cp. (c))".<sup>164</sup> So one almost has

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<sup>160</sup> cf. footnote 159.

<sup>161</sup> cf. this statement to Chapter 2, in which the general attitude of the audience is characterised, as found in the *Apocolocyntosis*. Moreover e. g. Kloft (212-213) suggests that the *nenia* of the *Apocolocyntosis* (12) might even be a parody of Seneca's official version of the *laudatio funebris*.

<sup>162</sup> Similarities as the following can also be found between the *Apocolocyntosis* and *De Clementia*, but regarding the latter work, this would demand a study all by itself.

<sup>163</sup> cf. authors as Griffin, 130 ff., and Grimal, 76-77; but the following is closely related to and cited from Nauta (75-76).

<sup>164</sup> cf. Nauta, 76.

to realize that even if one doubts the connection between these two works, the similarity of the "Prinzenbild"<sup>165</sup> found in Seneca's inaugural speech and later in *De Clementia* written for Nero is similarly striking.

Closely linked to these charges is the topic of Ryneveld's<sup>166</sup> essay.<sup>167</sup> He wants to point out that "perhaps the most striking item of proof has been overlooked: Seneca is a most insistent ancient authority for the basic rule of fair judgement usually formulated as *audi alteram partem*" (83). In the offence against the neglect of this procedure, as Bringmann (67) points out, lies one of the major final clues of the satire, namely just as Claudius did not use to hear both parties, he does not get a correct trial in the underworld either (14 ff.). After explaining various *audire* passages in the *Apocolocyntosis*, Ryneveld compares these to other Senecan passages e.g. to *Medea* (199-200). His results show a certain connection, but one must admit that it is difficult to determine if such passages are typically Senecan, or if it is rather not a common process to accuse someone who does not hear both parties of this offence.

Finally, various scholars have found similarities between the Hercules as portrayed in the *Apocolocyntosis* and the Hercules of Seneca's *Hercules Furens*. According to Coffey (Bibliography 265), Heller<sup>168</sup> explains that Seneca cannot be the author since the satire parodies his own tragedies; the majority of scholars, however, regards this parody in favour for Seneca as the author. It seems that the Hercules appearing in the *Apocolocyntosis* is a *Hercules comicus* which should be seen as "eine Travestie des tragischen Herkules"<sup>169</sup>, therefore in opposition to the *Hercules furens* by Seneca.<sup>170</sup>

When trying to determine the author of this satire, one stumbles sooner

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<sup>165</sup> cf. Kloft, 220-221.

<sup>166</sup> L. F. van Ryneveld: "On the Authorship of the *Apocolocyntosis*", *LCM* 13.6, 1988, 83-85.

<sup>167</sup> It must be pointed out that Ryneveld says "There are numerous coincidences of thought and expression between such works as the *Medea*, *Hercules Furens*, *Quaestiones Naturales* and *de Clementia* on the one hand and the *Apocolocyntosis* on the other that point to Senecan authorship of the latter". For text 'numerous other instances' he points out Eden's work, which after all does not show that many additional passages. Nevertheless, Eden (7) says that stylistically, "the verse passage of section seven has close lexical, metrical and stylistic affinities with Seneca's tragedies, especially *Hercules furens*".

<sup>168</sup> Besides, Heller suggests that apparently the *μωροῦ ἐπανάστασις* (Sueton 38.3) is the work by Seneca, moreover on no evidence, he claims Phaedrus to be the author of the *Apocolocyntosis*.

<sup>169</sup> cf. Kloft, 212.

<sup>170</sup> cf. 343, Hermann-Joseph Horstkotte: "Die politische Zielsetzung von Senecas *Apocolocyntosis*", *Athenaeum* 73, 1985, 337-358.

or later, about the so-called victim list, presented to the *concilium deorum* by Augustus. Several very different approaches have been made, and probably Baldwin gives the most exact and most detailed account on every single victim. The question why the author chose precisely them, results in an idea as that one is either dealing with a propaganda pamphlet for Nero or Britannicus, a party manifesto, or even an anti-emperor (cult) writing, or finally a personal revenge taking, and there are probably more possibilities. No matter what aim is traced, Baldwin (48) 'gives up' by saying: "If Seneca wrote the *Ludus*, his selection of cases is inept." Following various discussions on the choice of victims, it really seems that they do not reveal anything particular about the author; they do actually help to exclude all possible motives of a possible 'known' author in one or the other way, mainly - if one simplifies the problem - because all important court people (Claudius, Messalina and Agrippina) are involved in one or the other murder cited; that is to say that none of them profits from this list. Moreover, many scholars use this list to maintain that Seneca did not write this satire because he did not take revenge on a Publius Suillius Rufus whom Seneca had prosecuted not very successfully before. However, the *Apocolocyntosis* has actually Claudius as its main victim and topic; therefore it does not seem reasonable to exclude Seneca from the authorship this way.

Maybe the following idea about the reasons for this victim list is too simple but seems possible. It is based on Horstkotte's statement (Political Aims 351) that all murders belong to time before the marriage to Agrippina<sup>171</sup> and on Toynbee's<sup>172</sup> additional hint (85) that this also means that Seneca was not yet back in Rome. Tracing this idea a little further, Seneca might have tried to avoid a discussion about his non-intervention in Claudius' murder by using the victims of this time-period. Therefore he might use this victim list as his own excuse and claim for his 'innocence'.<sup>173</sup>

But what would have been Seneca's motives for writing this satire? Was it as Toynbee (84) suggests the idea of revenge "which spurred him [Seneca J. T.] on to snatch the earliest opportunity of paying off old scores? It

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<sup>171</sup> Since there is an allusion to her incest-like relationship to Claudius, she is involved, even though the murders took place mainly under Messalina's influence.

<sup>172</sup> Jocelyn M. C. Toynbee: "Nero Artifex: The *Apocolocyntosis* reconsidered", *Classical Quarterly* 36, 1942, 83-93.

<sup>173</sup> And Seneca was neither present at the emperor's new marriage.

is hardly conceivable" for a person as Seneca after all. Revenge sounds too hard, but maybe one can find a possible answer again with reference to Varro. Knoche (37) says: "Wie Menipp wollte Varro in seinen Satira im Scherz das Ernste sagen, um dadurch zu Besinnung an die echten Lebenswerte aufzurufen." Keeping this and the above mentioned similarities among Seneca's work of that time in mind, one has to agree with Kloft (221-222):

"Wohl aber zeigt sich in hohem Maße die politische Geisteshaltung Senecas, seine Auffassung vom Herrscher und seinen Werken, der man eine eindrucksvolle Einseitigkeit nicht absprechen kann."

Merchant<sup>174</sup> who has examined "Seneca the philosopher and his theory in style" provides maybe another part of a possible solution, by arriving at the following conclusion (52):

It is disgraceful, in his [Seneca's J. T] view, for the philosopher to say one thing and think another. There should be harmony between thought and word, life and speech. And it is the thought, the character that should receive the greater attention."

So, after all this might link to *vera dicere* (cf. 2) within this satire since not a small correspondence between Claudius' real life characteristics and the picture of him in this satire has been realized without even touching this topic separately.

Having experienced Claudius' inability to reign himself, Seneca might had to wait until the emperor's death, and had therefore no better 'harmony' between thought and word before. We have already seen that Seneca had a certain discrepancy between his life on the one hand and the ideals he demands on the other. The discrepancy in this case, he might be able to overcome now, after the emperor's death. Now he is even in charge of forming the next emperor; one could say that Seneca tries this by telling Nero positively in *De Clementia* and negatively in the *Apocolocyntosis* how to reign better.<sup>175</sup>

An additional factor, which is pointed out by Bringmann (Political Satire 69ff.), might support this thought. He explains that in the *libera res publica* writers had more freedom to write, and that in the Imperial Rome this liberty was restricted, also because emperors rather followed their predecessors and

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<sup>174</sup> Frank Ivan Merchant: "Seneca the philosopher and his theory of style", *American Journal of Philology* 26, 1905, 44-59.

<sup>175</sup> cf. Bringmann, Political Satire, 69ff.

did apparently not try to distinguish themselves from them as before. Furthermore, Seneca, as mentioned above, had already experienced Claudius' way of ruling himself, and had to wait basically until the emperor's death in order to escape further punishment, and to reveal in great detail Claudius' incapability to reign, who did not only lack *providentia* and *sapientia*.

## 5. Conclusion

In this paper an attempt was made to discuss the *Apocolocyntosis* regarding the genuineness of the title and the Senecan authorship. As regards the title various approaches and interpretations were taken into consideration and deliberated on. For this discussion, a brief analysis of the satire's content that is to say its possible messages regarding the late emperor, seemed necessary; more and more important became also the role of the satire's recipients, and both analyses' turned out to be helpful for the question of the author afterwards.

The results of the characterization of the Claudius' picture have shown that the late emperor is described personally (e. g. his defects), privately (e. g. his wives and freedman ruled over the obsequious ruler), and as an emperor (his way of jurisdiction; his murders), that is to say that the reader is provided with a detailed and even accurate picture of Claudius. Moreover, one gets an idea of the positive and relieved reaction of the *populus Romanus* at their emperor's death.

Afterwards, the two most contradictory questions on the actual topic have been briefly outlined as a contradiction between humiliation of the emperor and a relieved but still frightened audience on the one hand, and a satire, which is making fun and fools the late emperor together with a fun-seeking and laughing audience on the other.

After having introduced the factual basis on the title, the heritage of Varro regarding Menippean satires and his titles have been mentioned, and his very arguable model character for this satire's title has been pointed out. Varro's probable way of coming up with titles for his works, gave away that imagination might play an important role for the reader, even in order to

understand the author's imagination.

Next, the possible titles found in Dio's epitomes have been explained regarding their different linguistic coinages. Even at this stage, the results made clear that the main emphasize in the scholarly debate is based on Dio's ἀποκολοκύντωσιν, and that the scholarly opinions head partially in totally opposite directions ("stupidation versus destupidation").

As a consequence of the central position of ἀποκολοκύντωσις in the title debate, the next subchapter concentrated on the use of *cucurbita* in Latin literature around Claudius' time. Besides its use for the common vegetable, the quoted passages reveal that *cucurbita*, in general, was a word found in different ways in vivid and the spoken language. Therefore, the discussion made clear that one cannot simply say that *cucurbita* had the one and only connotation of stupidity although this idea remains tempting and probably the most commonly accepted one.

The results of the following survey showed that most suggested explanations contain a reference to a gourd in one way or another. With regards to Chapter 3.2, one can say now that "a transformation into a gourd of some type" and the "use of the gourd as an instrument in different ways" have captured most scholars' eyes. Moreover, the discussion has made clear that many suggestions are quite far fetched (e.g. the castration of Claudius or his turning into a pisspotcarrier). Eye-catching regarding the coinage and interpretation has been the double use of -κόλο- or the neglect of the prefix ἀπό- in several scholars' interpretations. Additionally, the connection of certain approaches (e. g. a pumpkin as a dung heap plant symbolizes Claudius and his work [Düll]) to the satire's actual content seem rather forced than probable. Finally, this analysis made one aware that no proposed 'gourdification' is very convincing in the title debate.

Currie's suggestion based on the other reading in Dio's epitome ἀποκολοκέντωσις makes sense, although Currie's own argumentation is rather short; and perhaps as a result of this, he leaves out helpful arguments for his own suggestion (unknown defect versus Suetonius' mention of it). The author's cross-reference to the text (Claudius' *ultima vox*) supports the choice well. One might question why not more scholars have deliberated on this

choice since it cannot be excluded.

Then the surprising agreement in the rejection of titles of the manuscripts has been pointed out, and the fact that no one apparently even considers them as a help to trace the possible original title down, too, what results in their almost total neglect in the debate. Scholars generally dismiss those as medieval descriptions or more describing titles due to a not understandable original (as e. g. *Apocolocyntosis*).

Afterward another, hopefully new, suggestion regarding the coinage and interpretation of ἀποκολοκύντωσις has been made, which shall remain a suggestion and is not supposed to sound to be the true original title version. This suggestion is based on the attempt to avoid the mistakes mentioned above, and takes into account what we know about Varro's titles, the manuscripts titles, and the satire's content. This try results in title-translations as "Disappearing via a Mennipean satire" or "Humiliation via a Mennipean satire".

Whereas the title is still the object of controversy, the discussion on the satire's probable author seems to have settled down. It was pointed out that the oldest evidences, the manuscripts of Dio's epitome and of the satire itself, cite Seneca as the author. During the Middle Ages, however, Seneca's authorship was apparently called in question (Radbert; Boccaccio; general belief in Seneca's letter correspondence with St. Paul).

Of course, the *Apocolocyntosis* as such (e. g. the ridiculing a Senate's decision) as well as certain passages (e. g. the derogatory remark on the Stoic philosophy) have been discussed by scholars for hints in favour of or against a Senecan authorship, too; the discrepancy between the philosopher or politician and the human being Seneca, which turns almost out as a characteristic of his life, is often evident and leaves one perhaps in doubts of his authorship. After a closer look, however, most doubts can be ruled out and the majority of scholars agrees to a Senecan authorship. In favour of Seneca as the author were also emphasized the similarities to other works which are definitely written by Seneca (the *laudatio funebris* and Nero's inaugural speech) and which are from the same time-period. Furthermore, scholars claim even similarities to Seneca's tragedies, especially the *Hercules furens*.

In the final passage, the so called victim list of the *Apocolocyntosis* has

been mentioned, which led to a lot of speculation regarding two aspects, who profits from naming exactly those people, and who is exposed to his disadvantage by this list. The different scholarly ideas do not provide a solution, they do, however, seem to reveal that no one of the close court members would gain an obvious advantage from this list, and could therefore have written or supported to write this satire.

At last, possible reasons for Seneca to choose this list were proposed. Afterwards, some more speculations about Seneca's possible motives to write this satire were suggested. Their results point on the one hand to Seneca's lifelong struggle between his moral views as a philosopher and human being, and on the other hand perhaps also the attempt to unite those two sides.

The essay in general has shown that especially concerning the title, the scholarly debate has not proved very much, and that most suggestions are based on more or less vague speculations, which, probably will not end until we find an ancient clue somewhere. It became clear that ἀποκολοκύντωσις has been discussed extensively while other possibilities are nearly totally neglected which might be a mistake. Regarding Seneca's authorship the results of the essay make a correspondence very probable; one would probably need another probable author to approach and discuss this matter again. The satire itself leaves no positive light on the late emperor at all, but who else might have profited or suffered from this writing remains in the dark, nevertheless, one might agree at last to the following two statements on Menippean or Cynic satires, in which tradition this one was written, and which fits for Seneca as a human being as well as as a philosopher in his urge to educate and improve:

"Ihre [Cynic's] Richtung ist [...] gar nicht ausgesprochen politisch, ihr Absicht ist vielmehr vorwiegend moralisch und hat besonders eine sittliche Reform der herrschenden Schicht im Auge."<sup>176</sup>

"Der Historiker sucht die Wahrheit, der Satiriker ist Moralist. Dazu paßt, daß das Ziel der Satire nicht nur das Moralische, sondern auch das Unterhalten sein sollte. Eben das bezwecken die vielen spoudaiogeloia', von denen die Apocolocytosis voll ist."<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Knoche, 35.

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<sup>177</sup> Lund, 29.

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