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CREMUTIUS CORDUS AND SENECA'S SELF-PROMOTION  
IN THE *EXORDIUM* OF THE *CONSOLATIO AD MARCIAM*

The figure of Aulus Cremutius Cordus, Marcia's father, occurs in Seneca's *Consolatio ad Marciam* already from the *exordium* of the work. In his attempt to console Marcia, who mourned the loss of her son Metilius for over three years, the philosopher reminds her of her stance when she lost her father, praises Cremutius Cordus' brave opposition to his enemies, while at the end of the treatise Cremutius Cordus is given a speech and is presented as enjoying eternity and immortality in the heavens. As I shall attempt to demonstrate in this article, Seneca's references to Cremutius Cordus play a very important role in the work, as they both reinforce the philosopher's consolatory attempt and argumentation in multiple ways and facilitate his intention to promote his image in the context of the consolatory tradition.

Cremutius Cordus was a famous Roman historian who wrote on the civil wars and the reign of Augustus. Under Tiberius he incurred the disgrace of Sejanus, the powerful prefect of the Praetorian Guard, was accused of *maiestas* for having eulogised Brutus and styling Cassius as the last of the Romans, and committed suicide by starving himself to death in A.D. 25. His books were burnt, but a few years later, under Gaius, they were re-published<sup>1</sup>. Marcia's contribution to the survival of her father's work is highly praised by Seneca, who presents it as an outstanding service to Roman literature: *Optime meruisti de Romanis studiis* (SEN. *dial.* 6.1.3)<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> On Cremutius Cordus' life and his work, cfr. also SEN. *suas.* 6.19; QUINT. *inst.* 10.1.104; TAC. *ann.* 4.34-35; SUET. *Aug.* 35.2; *Tib.* 61.3; *Cal.* 16.1; D. C. 57.24.2-4 and see, for instance, C. FAVEZ, *L. Annaei Senecae Dialogorum liber VI: Ad Marciam de Consolatione*, Paris 1928, pp. xv-xviii; R.S. ROGERS, *The Case of Cremutius Cordus*, in *TAPhA* 96 (1965), pp. 351-359; W. SUERBAUM, *Der Historiker und die Freiheit des Wortes: Die Rede des Cremutius Cordus bei Tacitus, Ann. 4, 34/35*, in G. RADKE (ed.), *Politik und literarische Kunst im Werk des Tacitus*, Stuttgart 1971, pp. 61-99; G. GUTTILLA, *La morte di Cremuzio Cordo nella Consolatio ad Marciam: Appunti per una storia degli exitus*, in *ALGP* 9-10 (1972-1973), pp. 153-179; C.E. MANNING, *On Seneca's Ad Marciam*, Leiden 1981 (Mnemosyne, Suppl. 69), pp. 29-30; J. BELLEMORE, *The Dating of Seneca's Ad Marciam De Consolatione*, in *CQ* 42 (1992), pp. 219-234; L. CANFORA, *Il processo di Cremuzio Cordo (Annali, IV, 34-35)*, in ID. (ed.), *Studi di storia della storiografia romana*, Bari 1993, pp. 221-260; M. MEIER, *Das Ende des Cremutius Cordus und die Bedingungen für Historiographie in augusteischer und tiberischer Zeit*, in *Tyche* 18 (2003), pp. 91-127; M.R. MCHUGH, *Historiography and Freedom of Speech: The Case of Cremutius Cordus*, in I. SLUITER-R.M. ROSEN (eds.), *Free Speech in Classical Antiquity*, Leiden-Boston 2004 (Mnemosyne, Suppl. 254), pp. 391-408; A.M. GOWING, *Empire and Memory: The Representation of the Roman Republic in Imperial Culture*, Cambridge-New York 2005, pp. 32-33; R. MARINO, *Sul processo a Cremuzio Cordo*, in *Hormos* n.s. 5 (2013), pp. 44-52; J. WISSE, *Remembering Cremutius Cordus: Tacitus on History, Tyranny and Memory*, in *Histos* 7 (2013), pp. 299-361; B.M. LEVICK, *A. Cremutius Cordus*, in T.J. CORNELL et al. (eds.), *The Fragments of the Roman Historians*, vol. I: *Introduction*, Oxford 2013, pp. 497-501, with a rich bibliography; D.J. KAPUST, *The Case of Cremutius Cordus: Tacitus on Censorship and Writing under Despotic Rulers*, in G. KEMP (ed.), *Censorship Moments: Reading Texts in the History of Censorship and Freedom of Expression*, London 2014, pp. 17-23.

<sup>2</sup> Throughout this article, for Seneca's text I follow the OCT edition of L.D. REYNOLDS, *L. Annaei Senecae Dialogorum libri duodecim*, Oxford 1977, reprinted with corrections 1991.

Seneca refers to Cremutius Cordus from the very beginning of the text<sup>3</sup>, immediately after a few laudatory words for Marcia's *mores*, where the latter appears free from the weakness of a female mind and all other kinds of fault and is deemed to be a paragon of ancient virtue (*antiquum exemplar*)<sup>4</sup>. To justify the traits he attributes to Marcia, the philosopher focuses on her behaviour towards her father, which is regarded as indicative of the above and demonstrative of her strength of mind (*robur animi*) and courage (*uirtus*). As we shall see in due course, by highlighting Marcia's conduct in relation to her father, the philosopher continues his attempt at *captatio benevolentiae*, while at the same time this choice seems to fulfil many other purposes.

Marcia's conduct is described in detail. Seneca stresses her love for her father noting that it was no less than her love for her children, highlights her familial *pietas*<sup>5</sup>, and mentions her attempts to delay his passing and the human, but dignified manner in which she dealt with it. He also focuses, at length, on her efforts to preserve and re-publish his work, while commending the service she offered in doing so both to Roman letters and to her father's memory (SEN. *dial.* 6.1.2-4):

*Non est ignotum qualem te in persona patris tui gesseris, quem non minus quam liberos dilexisti, excepto eo quod non optabas superstitem. Nec scio an et optaueris; permittit enim sibi quaedam contra bonum morem magna pietas. Mortem A. Cremuti Cordi parentis tui quantum poteras inhibuisti; postquam tibi apparuit inter Seianianos satellites illam unam patere seruitutis fugam, non fauisti consilio eius, sed dedisti manus uicta, iudistisque lacrimas palam et gemitus deuorasti quidem, non tamen hilari fronte texisti, et haec illo saeculo quo magna pietas erat nihil impie facere. Ut nero aliquam occasionem mutatio temporum dedit, ingenium patris tui, de quo sumptum erat supplicium, in usum hominum reduxisti et a uera illum uindicasti morte*

<sup>3</sup> It is worth noting that the strong presence of Cremutius Cordus in the *Consolatio ad Marciam* has reasonably been interpreted by scholars as an argument in favour of its early date of composition, a date that is closer to the historian's death and the re-publication of his books; see e.g. MANNING, *op. cit.*, p. 3. The prominent role Cremutius Cordus plays in the treatise has led L. GLOYN, *The Ethics of the Family in Seneca*, Cambridge 2017, p. 26 to state: «In some ways, the *ad Marciam* serves as a double consolation, in that it devotes a significant proportion of its content to Marcia's father», a view for which see also A. TRAGLIA, *L. Anneo Seneca, La consolazione a Marcia, Introduzione, testo, traduzione e note*, Rome 1965, p. 9 and M. WILSON, *Seneca the Consoler? A New Reading of his Consolatory Writings*, in H. BALTUSSEN (ed.), *Greek and Roman Consolations: Eight Studies of a Tradition and its Afterlife*, Swansea 2013, pp. 93-121, at p. 95.

<sup>4</sup> SEN. *dial.* 6.1.1: *Nisi te, Marcia, scirem tam longe ab infirmitate muliebris animi quam a ceteris uitii recessisse et mores tuos uelut aliquod antiquum exemplar aspicere, non auerem obuiam ire doloris tuo, cui uiri quoque libenter haerent et incubant, nec spem concepissem tam iniquo tempore, tam inimico iudice, tam inuidioso crimine posse me efficere ut fortunam tuam absolueres. Fiduciam mihi dedit exploratum iam robur animi et magno experimento adprobata uirtus tua.* For Seneca's views on the female *uirtus* and the way the gender of the addressee affects his consolations to women, see R. LANGLANDS, *A Woman's Influence on a Roman Text: Marcia and Seneca*, in F. MCHARDY-E. MARSHALL (eds.), *Women's Influence on Classical Civilization*, London-New York 2004, pp. 115-126; G. REYDAMS-SCHILS, *The Roman Stoics: Self, Responsibility, and Affection*, Chicago-London 2005, pp. 134-141; A. WILCOX, *Exemplary Grief: Gender and Virtue in Seneca's Consolations to Women*, in *Helios* 33 (2006), pp. 73-100.

<sup>5</sup> On Marcia's *pietas*, see M. MAUCH, *Senecas Frauenbild in den philosophischen Schriften*, Frankfurt am Main 1997 (Studien zur klassischen Philologie 106), pp. 77-78. For the *figura etymologica* of *pietas ... impie* at Sen. *Dial.* 6.1.2: *et haec illo saeculo quo magna pietas erat nihil impie facere* and the way it contributes to both Cremutius Cordus' and Marcia's praise, see I. CHIRICO, *Scemi retorici nella Consolatio ad Marciam*, in L. NICASTRI (ed.), *Contributi di filologia latina*, Naples 1990 (Università degli studi di Salerno, Quaderni del Dipartimento di Scienze dell'Antichità 7), pp. 143-164, at p. 157.

*ac restituisti in publica monumenta libros quos uir ille fortissimus sanguine suo scripserat. Optime meruisti de Romanis studiis: magna illorum pars arserat; optime de posteris, ad quos ueniet incorrupta rerum fides, auctori suo magno inputata; optime de ipso, cuius niget uigebitque memoria quam diu in pretio fuerit Romana cognosci, quam diu quisquam erit qui reuerti uelit ad acta maiorum, quam diu quisquam qui uelit scire quid sit uir Romanus, quid subactis iam ceruicibus omnium et ad Seianianum iugum adactis indomitus, quid sit homo ingenio animo manu liber. Magnum mebercules detrimentum res publica ceperat, si illum ob duas res pulcherrimas in oblivionem coniectum, eloquentiam et libertatem, non eruisses: legitur, floret, in manus hominum, in pectora receptus uetustatem nullam timet; at illorum carnificum cito scelera quoque, quibus solis memoriam meruerunt, tacebuntur.*

By reminding Marcia of her conduct towards her father and of her efforts contributing to the preservation of his memory, Seneca avails himself of the opportunity to praise her virtues and extol her abilities. By doing so he is improving his chances of predisposing Marcia favourably towards his person (*captatio benevolentiae*) and creates a suitable, positive context for the best possible reception of his consolatory attempt<sup>6</sup>. The particular reference to Cremutius Cordus, however, does not only ensure *captatio benevolentiae*, but also proves to be a pertinent move with multiple advantages in a number of directions.

By highlighting the fact that Marcia is the daughter of a distinguished person, Seneca indirectly urges her to honour her family's reputation and not mar it by excessive expressions of grief for the loss of her son. Such behaviour would not be in keeping with her family's tradition and her social position<sup>7</sup>, while it would also conceal the danger of her being exposed as an unworthy descendant of a worthy ancestor. Furthermore, as her father was a heroic figure who fought and risked his life for what he believed in against powerful figures of his day and did not hesitate to go as far as to choose suicide when his freedom and dignity were threatened, he is a model of brave resistance to adversity which Marcia should inherit<sup>8</sup> and continue.

At the same time, Marcia's own behaviour following the loss of her father is also an example worthy of imitation. In that case, despite her efforts to avert his suicide, she realized that death was the only escape from enslavement for him and her grief was restrained and dignified. Not only did she not give up on life, but at the first

<sup>6</sup> Cfr. J.-A. SHELTON, *Persuasion and Paradigm in Seneca's Consolatio ad Marciam 1-6*, in *C&M* 46 (1995), pp. 157-188, at pp. 166-167, who eloquently notes that one of the functions of this account is «to establish the credentials of Seneca as a friend, as someone familiar with and sympathetic to Marcia's situation and therefore an appropriate advisor». For the first part of the *exordium* (SEN. *dial.* 6.1.1-4) as a sort of *captatio benevolentiae*, see also C.C. GROLLOS, *Seneca's Ad Marciam: Tradition and Originality*, Athens 1956, pp. 20-21; MANNING, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

<sup>7</sup> Similar thoughts are frequently found in consolatory literature; cfr. e.g. CIC. *fam.* 4.5.5 and 5.16.5-6, where the mourning person is warned against the risk of marring his public image by excessive expressions of grief and see, for instance, G.O. HUTCHINSON, *Cicero's Correspondence: A Literary Study*, Oxford 1998, pp. 58-59, 72-73; A. WILCOX, *Sympathetic Rivals: Consolation in Cicero's Letters*, in *AJPb* 126 (2005), pp. 237-255, at pp. 242-243, 248.

<sup>8</sup> This interpretation is further reinforced a few lines later, at SEN. *dial.* 6.1.6: *studia, hereditarium et paternum bonum*, where Marcia is explicitly presented as inheritor of her father's interest in literature. Cfr. also MANNING, *op. cit.*, pp. 3 and 11, who notes that Cremutius Cordus is cited as *exemplum* at SEN. *dial.* 6.22.4-8 and draws attention to Seneca's suggestion to Marcia that she should attain «the *libertas* which it was her ancestral inheritance to honour» (p. 11).

opportunity she fought to have her father's work published again, making a great contribution both to the *ingenium* and the *memoria* of the man, as well as to Roman literature. According to Seneca, this fact proves that Marcia has the necessary strength of character to overcome the grief of losing a loved one and to ensure that his memory is preserved. If she succeeded in the case of Cremutius Cordus, then she could succeed in the case of her son, Metilius. Besides, as Seneca aptly states, Marcia did not love her father any less than she loved her children (SEN. *dial.* 6.1.2: *Non est ignotum qualem te in persona patris tui gesseris, quem non minus quam liberos dilexisti*). By appearing to grieve the loss of her son much more than that of her father, Marcia risks rendering Seneca's statement and her image of familial *pietas* invalid and presenting her love for Cremutius Cordus as wanting. Thus, the present plea to her to cease her grieving also constitutes a subtle urging to her to be careful not to appear to be wanting in her love for her father.

Consequently, Seneca skilfully juxtaposes Marcia's grief-stricken present situation with the image of the 'former' Marcia, when she overcame her earlier grief and fought to preserve her father's work<sup>9</sup>. He is implicitly appealing to her to find her old self again and encourages her effectively by reminding her of her earlier victories against the same adversary, *dolor*. Within this context, Seneca's mention of Marcia's stance towards Cremutius Cordus is skilfully placed within the spirit of the legal atmosphere dominating the first part of the *exordium*, in which the author comes across as hoping to contribute to the exoneration of Marcia's fortune in such a hostile time, against such a hostile judge, for such a hateful crime, as he characteristically says (SEN. *dial.* 6.1.1: *nec spem concepissem tam iniquo tempore, tam inimico iudice, tam inuidioso crimine posse me efficere ut fortunam tuam absolueres*)<sup>10</sup>. Thus, combined with the legal metaphor, Marcia's earlier reaction to a similar problem functions as a *res indicata* or *praeiudicium*, according to which the present case is also expected to be tried. More specifically, just as she then had the strength to overcome her pain for the loss of her beloved father, she could now find the strength to overcome the pain for the loss of her beloved son.

A similar thought process is repeated later, when Seneca justifies the delay of his attempt to console Marcia with the argument that the greatness of spirit she exhibited

<sup>9</sup> The contrast between the 'former' Marcia and the 'present' Marcia is perfectly illustrated by SHELTON, *art. cit.*, pp. 185-188; cfr. also K. ABEL, *Bauformen in Senecas Dialogen: Fünf Strukturanalysen: dial. 6, 11, 12, 1 und 2*, Heidelberg 1967 (Bibliothek der klassischen Altertumswissenschaften, N.F., 2 R., 18), p. 33; MANNING, *op. cit.*, p. 9, who interprets it as a «picture of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour». For Seneca's intention to present Marcia's previous brave reaction to her father's death as an *exemplum* of her own *magnitudo animi* that should be repeated in her current predicament, see also MAUCH, *op. cit.*, p. 80; C. WIENER, *Die therapeutische Konzeption von Senecas Consolationes*, in U. SCHLEGELMILCH-T. THANNER (eds.), *Die Dichter und die Sterne: Beiträge zur lateinischen und griechischen Literatur für Ludwig Braun*, Würzburg 2008 (WJA N.F. Beiheft 2), pp. 67-99, at p. 77; GLOYN, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

<sup>10</sup> The legal terminology that is evident in the first part of the *exordium* has already been noticed by MANNING, *op. cit.*, p. 27, who also notes the rhetorical devices employed here and concludes: «The basic theme of praise of Marcia, the judge, corresponds with the approach recommended by the rhetoricians in the *exordium*, when past good judgements may be properly brought forward in the way that Marcia's reaction to the death of her father is described»; cfr. also FAVEZ, *op. cit.*, p. 2; MAUCH, *op. cit.*, p. 76; WIENER, *art. cit.*, p. 76. For the rhetorical elaboration of this passage (SEN. *dial.* 6.1.1), with special emphasis on the anaphora of *tam* and the alliteration of the three adjectives here, see also CHIRICO, *art. cit.*, pp. 153-154.

in the case of her father, made him believe that it would also apply in the case of the loss of her son. Furthermore, the same approach is also presented through a medical perspective, when the philosopher claims that the reason why he reminded Marcia of old sorrows was to convince her by showing her the scar of an old, equally devastating wound that this new wound too could be made to heal<sup>11</sup> (SEN. *dial.* 6.1.5):

*Haec magnitudo animi tui uetuit me ad sexum tuum respicere, uetuit ad uultum, quem tot annorum continua tristitia, ut semel obduxit, tenet. Et uide quam non subrepam tibi nec furtum facere adfectibus tuis cogitem: antiqua mala in memoriam reduxi et, ut scires banc quoque plagam esse sanandam, ostendi tibi aequae magni uulneris cicatricem.*

Consequently, the author's emphasis on the manner in which Marcia handled the death of her father also seems to serve his literary aims: on the one hand it offers Seneca a valid excuse for the three-year delay in the composition of the particular *consolatio*, a delay which seems excessive and could lead to a number of assumptions that would be unflattering for the author<sup>12</sup>; on the other hand, the emphasis prepares the ground for the philosopher's therapeutic method of choice. The fact that Seneca does not hesitate to remind Marcia of past sorrows, combined with the medical imagery with which he approaches his subject, reveals that he will not imitate the mild approach favoured by others and will prove harsher in his handling of the situation<sup>13</sup>, a situation which has had time to become entrenched and thus requires more drastic therapeutic treatment.

Crementius Cordus' image, as it is portrayed from the very *exordium* of the work<sup>14</sup>, also contributes to the justification of Seneca's harsher approach in the consolation

<sup>11</sup> For the medical imagery in the second part of the *exordium* (SEN. *dial.* 6.1.5-8), see e.g. FAVEZ, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8; MANNING, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-28; CHIRICO, *art. cit.*, p. 158; SHELTON, *art. cit.*, pp. 167-168; MAUCH, *op. cit.*, pp. 80-81; LANGLANDS, *art. cit.*, p. 116; WIENER, *art. cit.*, p. 77.

<sup>12</sup> For example, it has been argued that there was political motivation behind Seneca's publication of the *Consolatio ad Marciam*, as by praising Crementius Cordus, one of Sejanus' victims, and consoling the historian's daughter the philosopher intended to dissociate himself from the *Seianiani*, who had fallen in disgrace in around A.D. 39; see e.g. Z. STEWART, *Sejanus, Gaetulicus, and Seneca*, in *AJPb* 74 (1953), pp. 70-85; cfr., however, ABEL, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20 with n. 22 and MANNING, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5. For other possible political motives behind Seneca's publication of this consolation, see V. RUDICH, *Dissidence and Literature under Nero: The Price of Rhetoricization*, London-New York 1997, pp. 22-27; WILSON, *art. cit.*, pp. 113-114; J. SAUER, *Consolatio ad Marciam*, in G. DAMSCHEN-A. HEIL (eds.), *Brill's Companion to Seneca, Philosopher and Dramatist*, Leiden-Boston 2014, pp. 135-139, at p. 138, with a survey of the previous bibliography.

<sup>13</sup> Seneca's approach to Marcia is criticized by S.J. BOAL, *Doing Battle with Grief: Seneca, Dialogue 6*, in *Hermathena* 116 (1973), pp. 44-51, while it is defended by SHELTON, *op. cit.*, pp. 157-188, who believes that «despite his warning about drastic treatments, Seneca proceeds cautiously» (p. 168).

<sup>14</sup> His bravery is also described in greater detail later on in the work, at SEN. *dial.* 6.22.4-8. According to ABEL, *op. cit.*, p. 41, this passage is a «Hymnus auf den Tod» and is tailored to the addressee. According to RUDICH, *op. cit.*, p. 24, however, Seneca's description of Crementius Cordus' suicide at SEN. *dial.* 6.22.4-8 could offend Marcia: «And the lengthy evocation of her father's suicide, perhaps the most terrifying moment in her life, whatever may be the verbal beauty of the scene, would hardly cheer the daughter: her inevitable counter-rhetorical response might even have found it offensive». As GUTTILLA, *art. cit.*, pp. 153-179 notes, Seneca's description of Crementius Cordus' death follows the conventions of the *excitus uirorum illustrium* genre.



he is to offer. In his work the historian expressed himself freely, did not hesitate to come into conflict with the powerful men of his time and remained free and untamed, when all others, as is characteristically mentioned, had bowed their heads to the power of Sejanus' followers, wrote his books in his own blood and voluntarily chose death as a way out of enslavement<sup>15</sup>. By recalling Cremutius Cordus' proud and unyielding character already from the beginning of the *consolatio*, Seneca implies the similarity between Cremutius Cordus and himself, as he too refuses to give in to Marcia and approach her sorrow with mildness and sweet words, but chooses to confront it violently. Thus, as the philosopher's dynamic stance is no different from that of Marcia's father's, it follows that she should not be offended by it, but, on the contrary, she should understand it and accept it more naturally.

Furthermore, Seneca's literary aims are also facilitated by his attempt to lend Cremutius Cordus' image Stoic characteristics already from the *exordium* of the work. When he describes Cremutius Cordus' decision to commit suicide as the only way of escaping enslavement (SEN. *dial.* 6.1.2: *postquam tibi apparuit inter Seianianos satellites illam unam patere seruitutis fugam*), he seems to be adopting a Stoic approach to the subject and the relevant Stoic term for rational suicide εὐλόγως ἐξάγειν<sup>16</sup>. His description of Cremutius Cordus as *uir fortissimus* (SEN. *dial.* 6.1.3: *restituisti in publica monumenta libros quos uir ille fortissimus sanguine suo scripserat*) also carries Stoic undertones, since the adjective *fortis* is a central term to Stoic thought, as it is one of the terms used in Latin for the expression of the Stoic concept of the "sage"<sup>17</sup>. Moreover, Cremutius Cordus' depiction with Stoic traits is further reinforced by the emphasis on his *libertas* (cfr. SEN. *dial.* 6.1.3: *quid sit homo ingenio animo manu liber*; 6.1.4: *Magnum mehercules detrimentum res publica ceperat, si illum ob duas res pulcherrimas in oblivionem coniectum, eloquentiam et libertatem, non eruisse*), since, as is known, the notion of freedom is crucially important to Stoic thought<sup>18</sup>. Finally, the Stoic atmosphere

<sup>15</sup> As G.O. HUTCHINSON, *Latin Literature from Seneca to Juvenal: A Critical Study*, Oxford 1993, p. 16 rightly notes, in Seneca's words *quid sit uir Romanus, ... quid sit homo ingenio animo manu liber* (SEN. *dial.* 6.1.3) Cremutius Cordus and his work «are powerfully related, in a perspective above all national and moral»; the historian embodies the moral and political significance of his work in a way that moves from «stark and noble patriotism» to «something more universal».

<sup>16</sup> On the particular term, see e.g. S.E. HOFFER, *The Anxieties of Pliny the Younger*, Atlanta, Georgia 1999 (American Classical Studies 43), p. 147, n. 16, who cites D. L. 7.130 and Y. GRISÉ, *Le suicide dans la Rome antique*, Montreal 1982, p. 232. More generally, for the Stoic views on suicide, see, for instance, J.M. RIST, *Stoic Philosophy*, Cambridge 1969, repr. London 1990, pp. 233-255; R. WYLLIE, *Views on Suicide and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy and Some Related Contemporary Points of View*, in *Prudentia* 5 (1973), pp. 15-32; F.H. SANDBACH, *The Stoics*, London 1975 (Ancient Culture and Society), pp. 48-52; M. GRIFFIN, *Philosophy, Cato and Roman Suicide: I and II*, in *G&R* 33 (1986), pp. 64-77 and 192-202; S. TZOUNAKAS, *Seneca's Presence in Pliny's Epistle 1. 12*, in *Philologus* 155 (2011), pp. 346-360, esp. at p. 347; E. KECHAGIA, *Dying Philosophers in Ancient Biography: Zeno the Stoic and Epicurus*, in K. DE TEMMERMAN-K. DEMOEN (eds.), *Writing Biography in Greece and Rome: Narrative Technique and Fictionalization*, Cambridge 2016, pp. 181-199, esp. at pp. 183-190.

<sup>17</sup> For the adjective *fortis* as a central term to Stoic thought, see e.g. D. TSEKOURAKIS, *Studies in the Terminology of Early Stoic Ethics*, Wiesbaden 1974 (Hermes Einzelschriften 32), p. 126; S. TZOUNAKAS, *Stoic Implications in the Exordium of Cicero's Pro Milone*, in *Sileno* 34 (2008), pp. 179-190, at p. 187.

<sup>18</sup> For the idea of freedom as central to Stoic dogma, cfr. e.g. the famous Stoic paradox, according to which the *sapiens* is the only free man and all the others are slaves (ὄτι μόνος ὁ σοφὸς ἐλευθερὸς καὶ πᾶς ἄφρων δοῦλος), treated by Cicero at *parad.* 33-41, and see, for instance, FAVEZ, *op. cit.*, p. 4; MANNING, *op.*

of the passage is also enriched by Seneca's reference to Marcia's *magnitudo animi*, another term that is central to Stoic thought<sup>19</sup>, a term that will be attributed to Cremutius Cordus himself in the peroration of the work (SEN. *dial.* 6.26.3), while the extensive medical imagery employed by the author here seems to move in the same direction, since, as is known, medical imagery is very common in Stoic authors<sup>20</sup>. By approaching Cremutius Cordus' image and the apt example of Marcia's reaction to his death through a Stoic prism, Seneca sets the tone from the beginning for the Stoic perspective<sup>21</sup> through which he shall attempt to console Marcia for the loss of her son and is, in fact, promoting it. Not only does this perspective appear to be in keeping with the addressee's family tradition, but it has proven to be effective in a similarly traumatic situation concerning her loved ones in the past.

At this point it should be mentioned that Seneca's attempt to attribute Cremutius Cordus Stoic characteristics culminates at the end of the consolation with the famous *prosopopoeia* of Cremutius Cordus (SEN. *dial.* 6.26.2-7), which recalls Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis* in the last book of his *De republica*<sup>22</sup>. Thus, by opening and closing his treatise with the figure of Cremutius Cordus, Seneca provides his work a ring-composition structure<sup>23</sup> and offers Marcia's father a dominant role in this consolation<sup>24</sup>. Moreover, as in his *prosopopoeia* Cremutius Cordus asserts that Metilius enjoys a blessed life in

*cit.*, p. 11; S. BOBZIEN, *Determinism and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy*, Oxford 1998; B. INWOOD, *Reading Seneca: Stoic Philosophy at Rome*, Oxford 2005, pp. 302-321; TZOUNAKAS, *art. cit.* (2008), pp. 185-186.

However, apart from attributing Stoic characteristics, at the same time Seneca's emphasis on Cremutius Cordus' *libertas* associates him with the historiography of the Republican period (see e.g. MANNING, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-32) and complies with the well-known historiographical motif that the writer is free from ulterior motives and his approach to events is unbiased, a motif for which cfr. e.g. Tacitus' famous phrase *sine ira et studio* at *ann.* 1.1.

<sup>19</sup> For the notion of *μεγαλοψυχία* / *magnitudo animi* as a commonplace of Stoic ethics, see e.g. TZOUNAKAS, *art. cit.* (2008), p. 182, with a relevant bibliography. On Marcia's *magnitudo animi* in the past, see e.g. MAUCH, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-80. For *magnitudo animi* as a linking thread that runs through the consolation, since it is attributed to Marcia (SEN. *dial.* 6.1.5), Aemilius Paulus (SEN. *dial.* 6.13.4), Cornelia (SEN. *dial.* 6.16.4) and Cremutius Cordus (SEN. *dial.* 6.26.3), see MANNING, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11 and cfr. ABEL, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-33, who also remarks on the way Seneca connects it with the notion of *libertas*.

<sup>20</sup> See e.g. TZOUNAKAS, *art. cit.* (2008), pp. 184-185, with a rich bibliography.

<sup>21</sup> This does not mean that arguments from other philosophical schools are absent from this treatise or that Seneca never deviates from earlier Stoic teachings. On the variety of his sources and his indifference to attribute ideas to specific philosophical schools, see, for instance, GROLLIOS, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-60; WILSON, *art. cit.*, esp. pp. 104-112.

<sup>22</sup> See e.g. FAVEZ, *op. cit.*, pp. xliii-xliv; ABEL, *op. cit.*, p. 42; MANNING, *op. cit.*, pp. 133 ff.; REYDAMSSCHILS, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-36; M. ARMISEN-MARCHETTI, *Échos du Songe de Scipion chez Sénèque: La géographie de la Consolation a Marcia 26.6 et des Questions naturelles I Praef. 8-13*, in G. HINOJO ANDRÉS-J.C. FERNÁNDEZ CORTE (eds.), *Munus Quaesitum Meritis: Homenaje a Carmen Codoner*, Salamanca 2007, pp. 71-79 and cfr. G. MAGGIULLI, *L'«Apocalisse» di Cremuzio Cordo nel finale della Consolatio ad Marciam*, in *Involuc* 33 (2011), pp. 169-179, where Platonic and neo-pythagorean views are also investigated.

<sup>23</sup> See P. LI CAUSI, *De Consolatione ad Marciam*, in *The Literary Encyclopedia*. First published 20 October 2015 [<http://www.litencyc.com/php/sworcs.php?rec=true&UID=35607>, accessed 18 June 2017]. The notion of *pudor*, which is evident in both the *exordium* and the *peroratio* of the treatise (see ABEL, *op. cit.*, p. 34), could be regarded as another indication of ring composition.

<sup>24</sup> See RUDICH, *op. cit.*, p. 24. It is worth mentioned that Cremutius Cordus' important role in the consolation has recently been interpreted through the lens of the Stoic theory of *οἰκείωσις* by GLOYN, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-33.

the heavens in the company of his grandfather<sup>25</sup>, he confirms Seneca's argument that nothing bad has happened to Marcia's son (SEN. *dial.* 6.19.4 ff.)<sup>26</sup>. In this way Seneca's views appear to be reinforced by a second opinion that supports his own position and enhances his credibility<sup>27</sup>. Consequently, Seneca's attempt to connect himself with Cremutius Cordus, which was implied in the *exordium* of the treatise, becomes now even stronger.

The advantages of Seneca mentioning Cremutius Cordus and Marcia's stance following his death do not stop here, however, but seem to reinforce the author's self-promotion both in his role in the particular consolation, as well as in the broader context of the consolation tradition. The philosopher skilfully highlights the fact that by ensuring the re-publication of her father's books Marcia brought his spirit back to the people and saved him from the real death, that of oblivion<sup>28</sup>. Through Marcia's actions, Cremutius Cordus was ensured that he will be remembered (*memoria*) in perpetuity, was ensured eternity; he earned the place he deserved in Latin letters, is portrayed as the model Roman citizen, became accessible to the later generations and was spared the ravages of time. It is no coincidence that the entire passage is bursting with references that point to the power of literature to survive the ravages of time and ensure immortality. A characteristic example of this is passage *legitur, floret, in manus hominum, in pectora receptus uetustatem nullam timet; at illorum carnificum cito scelera quoque, quibus solis memoriam meruerunt, tacebuntur* (SEN. *dial.* 6.1.4), which recalls similar statements foreseeing the immortality of literary works<sup>29</sup>.

By consolidating the notion that literature has the power to defeat the ravages of time, by putting forward the tangible example of Cremutius Cordus' books which were salvaged thanks to Marcia's actions and by alluding to well-known literary statements of a similar content, Seneca is implicitly praising and promoting his own part in the present *consolatio*. Just as Marcia saved Cremutius Cordus from real death (SEN. *dial.* 6.1.3: *a uera illum uindicasti morte*), so will Seneca save her son, Metilius. As oblivion is the only real death, by composing and publishing the present *consolatio* Seneca is saving Metilius from oblivion and granting him eternity through his work. Thus, the memory of Metilius will also survive, and will be read and will flourish in people's hands and will not fall into silence.

<sup>25</sup> For Seneca's attempt to draw a direct connection between Cremutius Cordus and Metilius, see GLOYN, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-33.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. MANNING, *op. cit.*, p. 148: «We may notice how Seneca puts in Cremutius' mouth the same description of his work and fortune and some of the arguments which Seneca has earlier used in his own person»; ABEL, *op. cit.*, p. 30; SHELTON, *art. cit.*, p. 186; WIENER, *art. cit.*, p. 76; GLOYN, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

<sup>27</sup> This rhetorical strategy is especially frequent in the case of a *prosopopoeia* or a *sermocinatio*; see e.g. S. TZOUNAKAS, *The Personified Patria in Cicero's First Catilinarian: Significance and Inconsistencies*, in *Philologus* 150 (2006), pp. 222-231; S. TZOUNAKAS, *The Peroration of Cicero's Pro Milone*, in *CW* 102 (2009), pp. 129-141.

<sup>28</sup> SHELTON, *art. cit.*, pp. 169, 187-188 convincingly argues that, while praising Marcia for having saved her father from oblivion, at the same time Seneca implicitly criticizes her for doing nothing to preserve the memory of her son.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. e.g. Ennius' famous self-epitaph quoted at CIC. *Tusc.* 1.34: *uolito uiuus per ora uirum* and see MANNING, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-31; CATULL. 95.6: *Zmyrnam cana diu saecula peruoluent*; CIC. *Mil.* 98: «*De me*» *inquit* «*semper populus Romanus, semper omnes gentes loquentur, nulla umquam obmutescet uetustas*», a passage for which see TZOUNAKAS, *art. cit.* (2009), pp. 129-141, esp. at pp. 134-136.



By separating the end of mortality from real death (*uera mors*), which is nothing but oblivion (*obliuio*) and silence (*tacebuntur*), and by deeming that a person's life continues as long as their *memoria* is preserved, Seneca implicitly extols his own role and contribution in the preservation of Metilius' memory. His intimation that it is he who with his work will ensure Metilius' survival also reveals his confidence in the power of his consolation, skilfully foretelling its own survival and immortality. The implicit connections between Seneca and Cremutius Cordus that we have established so far and the common ground they seem to share effectively facilitate Seneca's intentions in the particular direction. By praising the notions of *eloquentia* and of *libertas*, which are so characteristic of Cremutius Cordus' work and which he refers to as *res pulcherrimas*, Seneca indirectly also ensures the positive reception of his own work. If these notions, dangerous though they might be, could ensure the historian's literary immortality, then by appearing in the philosopher's work they could do the same for him and ensure his own literary immortality.

The matter of Seneca's self-promotion within the context of the consolatory tradition appears to be preoccupying the author on a more general level in the *exordium* of his work, a place which favours such reflections. Apart from the references to the immortality granted by literature and the ability of the latter to prolong memory and survival, there are other indications which are at play here and move in the same direction.

The apposite use of a Priamel, which is often found in cases of a literary programme<sup>30</sup>, allows Seneca to draw a line between his 'harsh' approach and that of others who choose milder methods, while the philosopher's harsher stance is further illustrated by the apt use of a military metaphor<sup>31</sup> (SEN. *dial.* 6.1.5):

*Alii itaque molliter agant et blandiantur, ego configere cum tuo maerore constitui et defessos exhaustosque oculos, si uerum uis magis iam ex consuetudine quam ex desiderio fluentis, continebo, si fieri potuerit, fauente te remediis tuis, si minus, uel inuita, teneas licet et amplexeris dolorem tuum, quem tibi in filii locum superstitem fecisti.*

As three years have passed since the loss of Metilius and Marcia still cannot free herself from grief, it is cleverly implied that the mild approach chosen by others (*alii itaque molliter agant et blandiantur*) failed to deliver the desired results. Thus, the need for a new consolatory logic is stressed, one that will not hesitate to challenge grief and even go against the will and desires of the recipient and this is the vacuum Seneca comes to fill. This interpretation is further reinforced by the words of the philosopher in the very next lines, where it is clearly stated that all other attempts at consoling Marcia were unsuccessful, whether they came from friends, men of prominence, or from studies (SEN. *dial.* 6.1.6):

<sup>30</sup> Cfr., for instance, H.-J. VAN DAM, *P. Papinius Statius, Silvae, Book II: A Commentary*, Leiden 1984 (Mnemosyne, Suppl. 82), pp. 474-475.

<sup>31</sup> For the military metaphor of *ego configere cum tuo maerore constitui* at SEN. *dial.* 6.1.5, see, for instance, FAVEZ, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-6. The military imagery in the second part of the *exordium* culminates at SEN. *dial.* 6.1.8: *leniore medicina fuisset oriens adhuc restringenda uis: uebementius contra inueterata pugnandum est.*

*Quis enim erit finis? Omnia in superuacuum temptata sunt: fatigatae allocutiones amicorum, auctoritates magnorum et adfinium tibi uirorum; studia, hereditarium et paternum bonum, surdas aures inrito et nix ad breuem occupationem proficiente solacio transeunt.*

This statement of Seneca's includes all those who failed to provide a satisfactory solution to Marcia's problem, not only his contemporaries, but also his predecessors, who are implied with the reference to the *studia*. Given her family tradition and paternal model, it is expected that Marcia would have turned to *studia* during the period of her grief. As these proved to be ineffective, it is implied that the earlier literary tradition was itself ineffective and thus, Seneca's consolation is presented as something new and original<sup>32</sup> which is offering a solution where others failed. The philosopher is subtly implying that he will not resort to familiar arguments, nor will he follow trite strategies, as these have already been tried by Marcia to no avail, but he will look for innovative solutions. In fact the philosopher highlights the difficulties of his task even further, reminding both Marcia and his readers of the challenges anyone would face who tries to treat an old wound. This is presented as an additional reason why Seneca will be forced to abandon others' mild practices (SEN. *dial.* 6.1.8):

*Cupissem itaque primis temporibus ad istam curationem accedere; leniore medicina fuisset oriens adhuc restringenda uis: uehementius contra inueterata pugnandum est. Nam uulnerum quoque sanitas facilis est, dum a sanguine recentia sunt: tunc et uruntur et in altum reuocantur et digitos scrutantium recipiunt, ubi corrupta in malum ulcus uerterunt. Non possum nunc per obsequium nec molliter adgredi tam durum dolorem: frangendus est.*

By pointing this out, Seneca not only justifies his innovative approach, but he also adroitly and in advance safeguards and promotes his image in any eventuality: if he fails to console Marcia, his failure has to be excused as the circumstances were adverse at best, while, in the event that he succeeds, he will appear to have achieved a truly remarkable feat.

It appears that the matter of originality in the context of the consolatory tradition is one of great importance to Seneca who implies it at every opportunity. It should not be forgotten that in the *exordium* of the *Consolatio ad Helviam* the philosopher also avails himself of every opportunity to stress the originality of the particular work<sup>33</sup>, as he mentions that despite his search through earlier literature he failed to find an example of a person consoling his loved ones while being himself the object of their grief, and he draws attention to his need for *noua uerba* (SEN. *dial.* 12.1.2-3):

<sup>32</sup> It is worth noting that the originality of the treatise is disputed by MANNING, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20, who states: «It is unlikely that Seneca would have claimed any originality for the arguments used in the *Ad Marciam*» (p. 19); however, it is defended by A. TRAINA, *Lucio Anneo Seneca, Le Consolazioni a Marcia, alla madre Elvia, a Polibio, introduzione, traduzione e note*, Milan 1987, repr. 1996, pp. 9-28, esp. pp. 21 ff. According to GROLLIOS, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-77, Seneca's originality in this consolation consists in the display of a human, personal element and in what he calls «the 'retreat of rationalism'».

<sup>33</sup> The *exordium* of the *Consolatio ad Polybium* did not survive in the manuscript tradition and thus we cannot determine whether, or not, it also included a comment regarding originality.

*Praeterea cum omnia clarissimorum ingeniorum monumenta ad compescendos moderandosque luctus composita euoluerem, non inueniebam exemplum eius qui consolatus suos esset, cum ipse ab illis comploraretur; ita in re noua haesitabam uerebarque ne haec non consolatio esset sed exulceratio. Quid quod nouis uerbis nec ex uulgari et cotidiana sumptis adlocutione opus erat homini ad consolandos suos ex ipso rogo caput adleuanti?*

It has already been successfully supported by scholars that by the composition and publication of the *Consolatio ad Marciam* Seneca was not only aspiring to relieve Marcia's pain, as in such a case a private letter would have sufficed, but had a broader audience in mind: an audience to whom he aspired to present a work of timeless value for any parent who suffered the loss of a child, to present the development of the consolatory rhetoric eighty years after Cicero and to offer a more general model for handling sadness, mainly according to the Stoic dogma, though he does not hesitate to employ arguments from other schools of philosophy if he deems them effective<sup>34</sup>. As we have seen, these intentions are all most effectively served with the example of Cremutius Cordus in the *exordium* of the work, whose role appears to acquire programmatic dimensions and to be in keeping with the author's literary ambitions.

#### ABSTRACT

Seneca's references to the historian Cremutius Cordus, Marcia's father, in the *exordium* of his *Consolatio ad Marciam* seem to serve multiple purposes. Apart from facilitating the philosopher's attempt at *capitatio benevolentiae*, they also pave the way for the best possible reception of his treatise, reinforce his argumentation and justify both his Stoic handling of the situation and his harsh approach. At the same time, the fact that Cremutius Cordus was a famous man of letters is skilfully exploited by Seneca in order to allude to the power of literature to survive the ravages of time and thus to promote his own literary ambitions in the context of the consolatory tradition and imply the originality and the immortality of his consolation.

Il semble que les références de Sénèque à l'historien Cremutius Cordus, le père de Marcia, dans l'*exordium* de sa *Consolatio ad Marciam* servent à des fins multiples. En plus de faciliter la tentative du philosophe à *capitatio benevolentiae*, ils ouvrent aussi la voie à la meilleure réception possible de son traité, renforcent son argumentation et justifient à la fois son traitement stoïcien de la situation et son approche sévère. En même temps, le fait que Cremutius Cordus était un homme de lettres célèbre, est habilement exploité par Sénèque pour faire allusion au pouvoir de la littérature de survivre aux ravages du temps et ainsi promouvoir ses propres ambitions littéraires dans le cadre de la tradition de consolation et implique l'originalité et l'immortalité de sa consolation.

KEYWORDS: Seneca; Cremutius Cordus; *Consolatio ad Marciam*; self-promotion; consolatory tradition.

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<sup>34</sup> Cfr. MANNING, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7, 14-15, 18-19; WILSON, *art. cit.*, esp. pp. 112-113; H.M. HINE, *Introduction to Consolation to Marcia*, in E. FANTHAM-H.M. HINE-J. KER, and G.D. WILLIAMS (trans.), *Seneca: Hardship and Happiness*, Chicago-London 2014, pp. 3-5, at pp. 3-4.