Posidonian methodology and the self-sufficiency of virtue

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POSIDONIAN METHODOLOGY AND THE SELF-SUFFICIENCY OF VIRTUE

It was suggested when these *Entretiens* were first mooted that I should say something about the present state of Posidonian studies and their future direction. Certainly, as to the latter, I would not presume so far; Posidonian studies will go their own sweet way, as they have done in the past, whatever I have to say about them. To be sure, the student of Posidonius now has some modern tools: among much else, two editions of fragments, Theiler's commentary and shortly, I hope, my own which is now nearing completion; and on the historical side one may mention the recent thorough and learned spadework of Jürgen Malitz.[1] But none of this approaches anything like the last word on Posidonius; they are no more than tools for further investigation both of detail and of the larger questions of substance still far from understood or answered; and the tools themselves must be sharpened by

[1] Posidonius, I: *The Fragments*, ed. by L. EDELSTEIN and I. G. KIDD (Cambridge 1972); Poseidonios, *Die Fragmente*, hrsg. von W. THEILER (Berlin 1982); J. MALITZ, *Die Historien des Poseidonios*, Zetemata 79 (München 1983). In addition, of course there has been a great deal of recent work on Stoicism, which is of the greatest importance for Posidonius.

continual critical appraisal. I am reminded of Denys Page's remark on the appearance of Fraenkel's massive three-volume *Agamemnon*: the study of the *Agamemnon* may now begin. I would merely add 'again'.

In fact what impresses me more and more in my own long battle with Posidonius, is the difficulty and complexity of the operation as well as its fascination. I am a little chary of writing in general terms on Posidonius, which I regard still as a dangerous ploy, but I should like to begin with a few preliminary remarks on the problems of methodology with which we are faced, before trying to illustrate this in a particular passage which has important wider consequences.

One obvious problem facing a student of Posidonius is the wide diversity of his interests, which range over the whole range of intellectual enquiries and disciplines in the ancient world, the history of which the unfortunate commentator must himself attempt to master. For example, one can hardly begin to understand Posidonius' new definition of parallel lines in Proclus (F 197 EK) without some knowledge of the mathematical debate on the notorious fifth postulate of Euclid; or appreciate Posidonius' originality in the mapping of India in Pliny (F 212 EK) unless against the background of the common ancient disorientation of that continent; or assess the strange tale of Eudoxus of Cyzicus in Strabo (F 49, lines 146-293 EK) without some acquaintance with the history of the monsoon trade routes; or indeed investigate any question relating to mathematical geography unless one is familiar with the history of hellenistic astronomy. But this is by no means all, for Posidonius' range was not by any means merely a mark of *polymathia*, but an integrated organic whole, where the relationship of the parts to each other and to the whole makes it dangerous to consider one discipline on its own. For this reason, for example, I find it hard to subscribe to

the persistent view that the pompously grandiose conception of history in Diodorus' preface (I 1, 3) can be Posidonius.

But by far the greatest problems of methodology derive from the fragmentary nature of the evidence. It really is necessary to keep reminding oneself of this. Suppose, horrendous idea, that Plato's dialogues had not survived. How would we make out? I am not just thinking of the miserable pickings in the doxographies, or of the evidence of later intelligent and well-read characters like Plutarch and Cicero. But consider trying to reconstruct Plato from Aristotle, who knew him personally, presumably understood him, and was a philosopher of the first rank; which of course is exactly part of the trouble.

Accordingly, I think that the interpretation of fragmentary evidence tends to be far more complex than is sometimes assumed, or to put it another way, that ancient writers (as indeed modern authors) use and employ earlier and contemporary sources in highly diverse and complicated ways. Therefore it would be naive and unsafe to assume that all, or indeed any writers simply reproduce a single source at any given time as if they were impersonal unintelligent tape recorders.[2] We forget the greater amount of material available to them, the different forms of availability, transmission and accessibility (or inaccessibility), above all the continual oral discussion of common topics in learned subjects that was going on, and finally that even the most unoriginal writer, and most of our authors are far from that, transforms his material and adds his own contribution, at the lowest level in presentation and selection, but in most cases remoulded through his own thought.

Because of all this, I treat with considerable caution the method which starts from horizontal linguistic parallel

[2] Compare the remarks of A. E. DOUGLAS, *Cicero*, Greece & Rome, New Surveys in the Classics No. 2 (Oxford 1968), 27 ff.

without regard to context. Apart from the dangers of coincidence and of circularity of argument, it can expand too readily under the assumption mentioned above. A loose analogy occurred in the enquiry into the historical Socrates, where straightforward parallel passages in different authors led to confusion and contradiction. Progress came rather from attempting first to gauge and assess the report and reaction of each author, or in other words to attempt to understand by refocusing the report as seen through the lenses of each individual reporter.

This seems to me to be at least one way ahead in Posidonian studies where there is much yet to be done. So to some extent I stop thinking about a 'fragment' of Posidonius, and rather orientate the problem from the point of view of the reporter. Now this is no light matter, for there are nearly seventy different reporters who name Posidonius, apart from others who probably used him, and each reporter is different. The variation does not merely lie with the obvious differences between the doxographies and the writers of extended and continuous argument like Seneca and Galen. Of the former class, Stobaeus is different from Diogenes; even in Stobaeus, Aetius is different in character from Arius Didymus, and Arius' method and purpose on natural philosophy in Book 1 of the *Eclogae* is different from his excerpt on Stoic ethics in Book 2; while in my view, the so-called 'Diocles fragment' in D. L. VII shows a marked lack of homogeneity in use of sources. Of the latter category, Cicero, Strabo, Seneca, Plutarch, Galen, Diodorus, to name a few, write, think, argue, present and use evidence each in their own way, from their own point of view, related to their own beliefs, reading, education, understanding, purpose and subject in hand. So if one is going to have any hope of understanding the inevitable distortion of reports, one must proceed like Aristotle from the known to the unknown, and first and foremost know

the reporter better than your quarry. Ideally one has to read the whole of Seneca to be armed for a single Senecan 'fragment', because the basic question is: how is Seneca using Posidonius? And that should lead us back to Posidonius himself.

To begin with, one must not assume uniformity even in a single reporter. For example, it has been strongly held that Seneca is in a different position in *Naturales quaestiones* and in *Epist.*, in that in the former Seneca did not know and use Posidonius (i.e. his *Meteorology*) directly, but only through Asclepiodotus. In fact this rests on a false argument of analogy. Asclepiodotus almost certainly wrote an *Epitome* of Posidonius' *Handbook on Tactics*, and at least part of it still survives. Aelian and Arrian both name Posidonius in the credits, but used Asclepiodotus in fact, and so knew Posidonius through him. But although Seneca cites Asclepiodotus five times in *Nat.* it does not follow that he used only Asclepiodotus. In fact he cites Posidonius specifically more often, and at least in one place (F 228 EK), he *supplements* Posidonius with Asclepiodotus, and it seems to me little doubt that this is what happens throughout. So that turns out to be false quarry, but it need not have been.

One elementary point which is often forgotten is that Seneca wrote in Latin and Posidonius in Greek. This can create genuine problems, because the languages do not always match; the greater fluidity of Greek can cause real problems of translation. For example, in *Epist.* 94 and 95, where Seneca is discussing the ethical status of *praecepta*, he translates the generic term παραινετικὸς τόπος as *praeceptiva pars*. But in F 176 EK (*Epist.* 95, 65 ff.) where he presents Posidonius' list of species of this τόπος, such as *suasio*, *consolatio*, *exhortatio* etc. and wants a noun for the species *praecepta*, he coins *praeceptio* with apologies. *Praeceptiva pars* and *praeceptio* have subsequently been confused and caused

distortion in the understanding of these *Letters*.[3] Another instance is the Posidonian classification of arts in *Epist.* 88 (F 90 EK). Posidonius called the top class of arts (i.e. philosophy) τέχναι ἐλεύθεραι, which Seneca translated *artes liberales* pointing out quite fairly and openly that you must not confuse this with the usual reference of *liberales* in Latin to the ἐγκύκλιοι. But some commentators have in fact done so, with painful consequences.[4] The trouble is that Seneca alas, is not above using interlinguistic ambiguity for his own purposes. In a general, very characteristic attack on Stoic syllogistic argument in *Epist.* 83 (F 175 EK), he slams Posidonius' defence of Zeno's syllogism that the philosopher will not be drunk. Posidonius mildly pointed out the ambiguity between being drunk and being a drunkard. Seneca says caustically that there is no linguistic ambiguity. There is not in Latin, where a distinction is made between *ebrius* and *ebriosus*; but there could be confusion in Greek.

But of course the main problem in dealing with a continuous text like Seneca, is concerned with what part a Posidonian allusion plays in the argument, and in particular, with how far it extends. Seneca can be quite explicit and with explicit criticism, as he is on Posidonius' theory of the rainbow (F 134 EK). But in another place (F 132 EK) he omits to acknowledge by name Posidonius' theory of comets, and pins him out of context on comets as portents (from the *History*), throwing the balance of evidence completely out. Naturally, you find examples (F 105 EK) where Seneca cites Posidonius in brief rhetorical support out of context for a purely Senecan position, in this case on

[3] I. G. KIDD, "Moral Actions and Rules in Stoic Ethics", in *The Stoics*, ed. by J. M. RIST (Berkeley 1978), 247 ff.

[4] I. G. KIDD, "Philosophy and Science in Posidonius", in *A & A* 24 (1978), 7 ff.

chance or luck. An amusing and notorious example is *Epist.* 92 (F 184 EK), which Reinhardt used in large meaty chunks as the main evidence for Posidonius on virtue and the happy life. I am now pretty certain that the Posidonian contribution is an aside of four words, because the nub of the argument, the axis on which the argument is organised is a quotation from Vergil's *Aeneid*, which could not have come from Posidonius. But in another *Letter* (88, F 90 EK), it can be shown that Seneca uses Posidonius in a sustained argument in part of it, within his own Senecan framework. There are other cases (e.g. F 121 EK on parhelion or mock sun) where we simply have to admit that the evidence is insufficient to say how far Seneca follows Posidonius. One may always expect a *mélange*, but always the control is Seneca. In Aristippus' immortal phrase about the beautiful Lais: I have Lais, not she me.

From this general background, I now want to concentrate on a particular passage, Seneca *Epist.* 87, 31-40 (F 170 EK) and on a particular issue, which is itself of considerable importance, highly controversial yet very typical, indeed central to hellenistic ethics, namely the relationship of external and physical goods to happiness and to the end and goal for man.

Very briefly: in the whole history of Greek moral philosophy a central issue, naturally, was what is the end, aim, criterion of our actions and behaviour, or what was the content or definition of happiness (εὐδαιμονία). From Socrates on (apart from the Epicureans, who thought it lay in some form of pleasure, and Sceptics who were not going to commit themselves) there was a certain agreement that our end lay in moral excellence (ἀρετή), moral right and wrong. The Academics and Peripatetics added, however, that virtue (if I may use the convenient but inadequate label), although by far and away the chief ingredient, was

insufficient for happiness, which was only completed and perfected by those physical and external goods like health and wealth, which related to other aspects of our human condition. The Stoics said no. The only thing that mattered for happiness was virtue, the moral intelligence of what was the right thing to do. These other so-called 'goods', and the Stoics refused to call them 'goods' at all, were only the material or content of virtue, and could be used for good or evil, but in comparison with virtue itself, they were indifferent. However, they were not without value, and the Stoics had a whole sub-department of ethics devoted to a value system among these moral 'indifferents', where health and wealth were given precedence (προηγμένα), promoted, preferred to others in the class. But such value was only relative in comparison with virtue which was the only thing assigned absolute value as far as happiness was concerned. Virtue, in other words, was different *in kind* from the others, and the only good. And this became the distinguishing stamp of Stoicism.

But Diogenes Laertius in his report on the Stoics says (a) that Posidonius, who was not only a Stoic, but the chief Stoic of his time, placed health and wealth in the category of goods (F 171 EK), and (b) that he said that virtue was not sufficient for happiness (F 173 EK). If true this would be historically fascinating, because it is certainly the case that this is one of the main areas in which Stoics, particularly in the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C. were subjected to sharp criticism, under the impact of which it might be thought that they were driven to modify their views. Moreover, it is agreed that Posidonius devised a new analysis of moral psychology against Chrysippus, in which he recognized the natural goals of irrational aspects of the mind. Accordingly almost all Posidonian commentators have found plausibility in Diogenes' statements, and have

supported to a greater or lesser extent some unorthodox mitigation on his part of the central Stoic position.[5]

I have to say, however, that I find Diogenes incredible, for three categories of reason. First, philosophically, because Diogenes' claim would subvert fundamentally the whole Stoic philosophical system. Second, historically, because the evidence shows that although Stoics of this period rephrased, presented differently or even reanalysed the main positions on which they were attacked, they did not withdraw from the fundamental tenets; and this is assumed in general statements by Cicero and others. Lastly, in the particular case of Posidonius, the suggestion runs counter to all other evidence, especially in Galen's extended presentation of Posidonian ethics, but most crucially of all in Seneca's *Epist.* 87, where we have the benefit of complete context of argument. For this reason, Seneca's *Letter* deserves more detailed analysis than it has yet received.

What we must not do is start at § 31, where Posidonius' name is first mentioned. What is going on at this point in the *Letter*? From the beginning of the *Letter* Seneca was arguing that wealthy trappings are superfluous. Simple necessities are all that are needed. Wealthy possessions are *impedimenta*. Virtue is sufficient for the happy life (11). From § 12 a succession of rather boring and ineffectual Stoic syllogisms are offered to prove that riches are not a 'good'. Then at § 28 the following syllogism is given: that which, in desiring to attain it, involves us in many evils is

[5] K. Reinhardt, *Poseidonios* (München 1921), 336-342; L. Edelstein, in *AJPh* 57 (1936), 308 f.; M. Pohlenz, *Die Stoa* II (Göttingen 1949), 120; M. van Straaten, *Panétius* (Amsterdam 1946), 154 ff.; M. Laffranque, *Poseidonios d'Apamée* (Paris 1964), 364; 480 ff.; J. M. Rist, *Stoic Philosophy* (Cambridge 1969), 8 ff.; A. Dihle, "Posidonius' System of Moral Philosophy", in *JHS* 93 (1973), 51 n. 6; M. T. Griffin, *Seneca. A Philosopher in Politics* (Oxford 1976), 296 n. 5; F. H. Sandbach, *The Stoics* (London 1975), 127; W. Theiler (Hrsg.), Poseidonios, *Die Fragmente*, II 383.

not a good. In desiring to attain riches, we become involved in many evils. Therefore riches are not a good.

Now at this point, half way through § 28, Seneca brings in his alter ego, his own anonymous 'objector' (*inquit*), which is a common feature of his style, useful in rhetorical argument with himself. The objector offers two difficulties with the above syllogism: (a) (28) *unam*: but in desiring to attain virtue, we become involved in many evils, and so on that line of reasoning virtue would not be a good either; (b) (29) *altera*: anyway, if it is through wealth that we become involved in many evils, wealth is not only not a good, but is positively an evil. And yet Stoics maintain merely that it is not a good. Moreover, Stoics are accused by the 'objector' of granting that wealth is of some use—*inter commoda illas numeratis*; but wealth cannot even be an advantage, if it is through riches that we suffer *incommoda*. I shall return to this reference to *commoda* later.

Well, Seneca cannot take his own objections lying down, so he offers an interim counter-objection to these objections (30) from *quidam*, i.e. some Stoics, presumably: it is wrong to assign disadvantage (*incommoda*) to wealth. Wealth harms no one; it is man's own folly or another's wickedness that harms him. It is not the sword that slays. Wealth does not harm just because you are harmed on account of wealth. But Seneca is not satisfied with this, because at this point (31) he brings in Posidonius with a better answer (*melius*).

At this point, it might be helpful if I sketched the apparent bare spinal development of argument in the supposedly Posidonian sections (31-40).

(31-32): Posidonius' better answer to how wealth may be said to be a cause of evil is given in terms of a logical distinction of causes. Wealth is distinguished from 'goods' in this area.

(33-34): Seneca's rhetorical objector (*inquit*) suggests that wealth then is an evil, which is countered.
(35): A syllogism is specifically assigned to Posidonius which produces the conclusion that wealth, health and the like are not goods.
(36-37): Seneca's objector suggests that on this reasoning they are not even 'advantages' (*commoda*). This is countered.
(38-40): Posidonius reports a refutation by Antipater of a fallacious Peripatetic syllogism that wealth is not a good. Seneca comments.

At first sight this looks like a continuous argument. But one must remember that we have three elements here: Posidonius, Seneca, and his tame objector. So, whose argument is it? The rhetorical objector must come from Seneca, of course, and cannot therefore be Posidonius. But the arguments which specifically counter the 'objections' may either come from Seneca, or they may be based on Posidonius. I can prove that the latter happens elsewhere in Seneca, but it need not be so. Each section must be examined on its own and in relation to the whole.

What is Posidonius' answer a better answer to? Surely objection (b) of § 29, that if we become involved in many evils through wealth, wealth is not only not a good, but positively an evil. He argues that riches are a cause of evil, but not because they themselves do anything, but because they rouse men to do evil. In logical terms this is a distinction between *causa efficiens*, which necessarily harms straight off, and *causa praecedens*, an antecedent cause. As the latter, riches may swell the temper, beget pride, arouse envy and so derange the mind that a reputation for having money, even when it is going to harm us, delights us. But the implication is that since wealth is not a *causa efficiens*, i.e. a necessary principal and self-sufficient cause, it is not *the* cause of evil, and so is not itself an evil. And so the

objection is answered directly. Now I labour this point, because it has been inferred from this argument that for Posidonius wealth was an evil. This is clearly false, against both the sense of the argument, and above all the context. Actually this is the one paragraph where I feel fairly sure of myself. There may be some Senecan colouring and terminology in this passage, but the argument could hardly be more characteristic or in tune with our other evidence for Posidonius. He not only had a reputation as αἰτιολογικός (T 85 EK) and an interest in the classification of causes (F 190 EK), but there is extensive evidence in Galen that he applied a methodology of cause to ethical problems, and particularly to the central problem for him of πάθη (F 34 EK) and to the problem of evil (F 169 EK; F 35 EK). Seneca himself tells us elsewhere (F 176 EK) that it was Posidonius who insisted on a category called *aetiologia* in admonitory or precept ethics. The outcome is Posidonian too. Galen (F 169 EK) is quite explicit in making Posidonius deny that evil can arise outside us. The root is in ourselves, in our own mental powers or faculties. The names of the causes may be Posidonian too, because the labels are different from other Stoic technical terms for causes.[6] So far, so good.

But let us move to § 32 where the argument shifts to contrast the *effect* of goods with that of wealth. Goods should be free of blame; unmixed, they do not corrupt nor disturb or seduce the mind. It is true that they elate and expand the spirit, but *sine tumore*. Goods produce *fiducia* and *magnitudo animi*; wealth produces *audacia* and *insolentia*. Is this Posidonius or Seneca? Well, the area of discussion is still right—function within cause and effect. Also the terms *extollunt* and *dilatant* recall the Stoic technical terms ἔπαρσις and διάχυσις, which Posidonius also used (F 152 EK;

[6] Cf. e.g. Cic. *De fato* 40-41.

F 34 EK) and the distinction *sine tumore* may mark the difference between ἄλογος ἔπαρσις (πάθος) and λογικαί, i.e. εὐπάθειαι (such as the wise man experiences). But there are disturbing factors. In the first place the terms of result, *fiducia* etc., look Senecan not Posidonian; but worse still, while the general conclusion would be that wealth is not a good, the contrast between the two is pushed further by implying that wealth corrupts (*corrumpunt*), which is definitely not Posidonius' theory of διαστροφή (F 169 EK). Indeed the contrast between *bona* and *divitiae* is pushing the argument back to the thesis that wealth is an evil, which is in sharp contrast to the argument in § 31. I want to suggest that § 32 is Seneca, and its purpose is to answer objection (a) of § 28, i.e. desiring to obtain virtue, we become involved in many evils, and so on that line of reasoning virtue would not be a good either. So my working hypothesis now is that Posidonius was brought in to answer objection (b), while Seneca, following Posidonius' lead, deals with objection (a).

My suspicions seem to be confirmed by §§ 33-34, where the irrepressible objector chips in with "By that way of arguing, wealth is actually an evil, not only not a good". But *isto modo* can only refer to § 32, and has to be countered by reiterating the argument of § 31. Seneca has as it were to pull himself back in line with Posidonius. But you have to watch him like a hawk, for again he twists slightly out of position. The antecedent cause not only rouses but drags on (*adtrahentem*) the mind. Now Posidonius actually coined the phrase ἡ παθητικὴ ὁλκή (F 169, line 80 EK), but the emotional pull was not explained by *speciem boni veri similem* (§ 33); that was Chrysippus' theory which Posidonius attacked by demanding to know what made the image (φαντασία) persuasive (*credibilem*) (F 164 EK), and answered his question in terms of δυνάμεις of the mind (F 169, lines 66 ff. EK). And when the objector continues (§ 34): but

virtue too incorporates an antecedent cause leading to envy (which clearly relates to objection (a) of § 28 again), Seneca's reply is confused from the Posidonian point of view: (a) it does not have this cause of itself, but virtue is a *causa efficiens* and so, of itself, can only produce good (which is Posidonian but also looks to § 32), and (b) the power of its image of truth is overwhelming, which reverts to Seneca and Chrysippus, as I argued above. So the objector interlude here adheres closely to § 32, and pulls together §§ 31-32 as a combined answer to the earlier double objection (a) (b) of §§ 28-29. It all develops from the Posidonian base of § 31, but the only part we can take as genuine Posidonius is the argument from causes that wealth is not an evil.

If Seneca has been ploughing his own furrow with Posidonius' work horses, and wants to return to him, it makes sense now to reiterate his name, as he does. He appears to quote him (35): Posidonius says that we should syllogise (*interrogandum*) like this. Things which do not give to the mind *magnitudo*, *fiducia*, *securitas* are not goods. Wealth, good health and the like produce none of these; therefore they are not 'goods'. This sounds positive enough, but it is where the short hairs on the back of my neck begin to rise. If I am offered a Latin quotation of Posidonius, I assume that I should be able to translate it back into Posidonian Greek. But what is the Greek for *fiducia*? I am astonished that no one has ever thought of asking this question. You can of course translate practically anything into Greek, which is a noble and subtle language, provided that is that you know exactly what you mean. But we are talking about technical terms, and which came first. *Magnitudo animi* is μεγαλοψυχία, which is a Stoic sub-virtue.[7] *Securitas* in Seneca is the opposite of *sollicitudo*, freedom

[7] D. L. VII 92-93; 128.

from cares or πάθη;[8] Cicero uses it to translate either ἀταραξία (*Nat. deor.* I 53) or εὐθυμία (*Fin.* V 23). *Fiducia* in Seneca is not far from *constantia*: unshaken confidence, assurance, even boldness, and I suppose could have relations with θαρραλεότης, which is in the same Stoic sub-class as μεγαλοψυχία;[9] and Cicero can use *constantia* for εὐπάθεια (*Tusc.* IV 14). Now none of these terms survives in Posidonian ethics, which admittedly is a dangerous argument in a fragmentary tradition. But also they have, especially *fiducia*, a powerful Roman stink. So this is where it was necessary to read large swatches of Seneca, and what emerged was that for Seneca the three terms form again and again in the *Letters* and *Moral Essays* a kind of holy trinity, that comprise the content of the *beata vita*.[10] Does this destroy the Posidonian evidence? I don't think so. I suggest that Seneca imported his own terms into the framework of a Posidonian syllogism. But worse is to come. Seneca says that Posidonius went on to intensify (*intendit*) his syllogism: what gives not *magnitudo animi* etc., but on the contrary *insolentia* etc. are evils. But we are driven to these things by chance things (*a fortuitis*); therefore they are not goods. Now we may ignore the problem of terms (*fortuita* is a Senecan term for external and physical goods), but the form of the syllogism this time is weird. The major premise leads us to expect that the conclusion will be, X is an evil. But the conclusion is that *fortuita* are not 'goods'. And indeed if the subject is still health, wealth etc., and this is after all an extension of the first syllogism, the conclusion must be that they are not goods, but not evils either. Seneca must be telescoping, and in his own

[8] Sen. *Epist.* 24, 1-2.

[9] *SVF* III 269; 264.

[10] E.g. *Epist.* 92, 3; 44, 7; *Const. sap.* 10, 3; 13, 5. Compare I. HADOT, *Seneca und die griechisch-römische Tradition der Seelenleitung* (Berlin 1969), 126 ff.

terms again (*fortuita*). But our evidence is still that Posidonius argued syllogistically that wealth classified with health was not a 'good'.

In § 35 Seneca had managed to twist the argument again to imply that if wealth is not a good, yet it incites to evil (although not itself an evil). So the ever-handy objector is brought in to clarify (36): by that line of reasoning, these things (i.e. wealth too) will not even be 'advantages' (*commoda*). This is answered (36/7) by distinguishing *commodum* and *bonum*. 'Advantage' is what has a preponderance of usefulness over distress; 'good' should be pure and totally free from harm. So what has a greater proportion of benefit is not a good; good is what benefits and nothing else. Also *commoda* are applied to animals, *imperfecti homines* (προκόπτοντες) and *stulti* (φαῦλοι); *bonum* applies to the σοφός only.

Does Seneca have a Stoic technical term in mind in *commodum*? One has to be careful, because different Latin writers use different terms in translation. Cicero, for example, in *Fin.* III 69 uses *commodum* to translate εὐχρήστημα ('advantage' distinguished from 'benefit', ὠφέλημα, which belongs only to 'goods'), which he says belongs to the class of *praeposita*, which is his technical term for προηγμένα. But it can be shown that Seneca used the term *commodum* precisely for προηγμένον itself. G. Kilb amassed the evidence in 1939,[11] but he missed the clinching example (*Epist.* 74, 17), where Seneca equates *commodum* with *productum*. Therefore the argument places wealth and health firmly and explicitly in the category of προηγμένα, as having a preponderance of benefit, within the class of indifferents. As such it is still radically distinguished from 'good' both in its effect and in its application. And this is orthodox Stoicism.

[11] G. Kilb, *Ethische Grundbegriffe der alten Stoa und ihre Übertragung durch Cicero im dritten Buch de finibus bonorum et malorum* (Freiburg 1939).

Is the *commodum* argument Seneca or Posidonius or both? Again the sequence of thought is curious. Our objector, repeating again *eadem ratione ne commodum quidem erunt* ("on this reasoning they will not even be an advantage") of § 29, demands at this point to know why wealth and the like should not be regarded as *incommoda* (ἀποπροηγμένα). But the answer, by concentrating exclusively on the difference between *commodum* and *bonum*, ignores *incommoda* and explains how wealth can be *commodum* although not a *bonum*. Apart from the mismatch of the argument, from the Senecan side it comes as something of a surprise that he now suddenly classifies wealth as προηγμένον after all his stress on the negative side of the corrupting dangers of wealth. In fact this ambivalent attitude to wealth is very characteristic of Seneca, abundantly common in his writing.[12] Posidonius, on the other hand, proved that wealth is not an evil, nor a good. He paired it with health; as goals of our irrational δυνάμεις such factors operate in animals as well as in morally imperfect humans (F 150-160 EK), and have relative value (F 161 EK). The evidence fits exactly. Also Posidonius was brought in to answer objection (b) of § 29, which included the problem of *commoda*. I am now suggesting that if the Senecan fat, cosmetics and distortions are removed, the spine of Posidonius' argument emerges: wealth is not κακόν (the argument of causes); wealth, health and the like are not ἀγαθά (they do not cause ἀγαθά); such things are προηγμένα, of relative value. If this is Posidonius' position, it is completely orthodox.

Before attempting a final judgement we must untangle the somewhat mystifying appendix of §§ 38-40, about which much unconsciously hilarious comment has been written. Seneca presents us with a herculean knot. Herculean knots were a popular feature, as the reef knot, in

[12] M. T. GRIFFIN, *Seneca*, 295.

hellenistic jewellery, where it had amuletic associations.[13] So we have a magical knot difficult to unloosen, but I think that Seneca is being sarcastic. Posidonius said that Antipater refuted the following syllogism: good does not arise from evil; riches result from many cases of poverty; therefore riches are not a good. Edelstein [14] and others have thought that Posidonius was expressing approval of Antipater's refutation of the conclusion, and that therefore he held that riches *are* a good. I am afraid that this is nonsense because it ignores context. The syllogism was not a Stoic syllogism; it was fabricated (*fingunt*) by Peripatetics who also *solvunt* it, i.e. loosen or prove it wrong. It is the Peripatetics who hold that wealth is a good, and here are making up and aping a Stoic syllogism in order to counter it. Such 'counter' syllogisms were common in inter-School debate.[15] Antipater was not denying the conclusion, but trying to wreck the minor premiss. Seneca gets sidetracked into criticising Antipater on detail and showing off his Greek, and then using this for a general attack on the verbal sophistry which he thought was unfortunately characteristic of ethical arguments in the Schools of the time.[16] It has nothing to do with the previous Posidonian argument, and only confirms that Posidonius approved of Antipater's destruction of a Peripatetic attack on the Stoic dogma that wealth was *not* a good.

My analysis of the complex nature of the Senecan report, or so-called 'fragment', despite its many puzzles, leads me to think that on the crucial subject of the self-sufficiency of virtue, Posidonius remained an orthodox Stoic. For him, the moral status of wealth in relation to

[13] R. A. Higgins, *Greek and Roman Jewellery* (London ²1980), 154; cf. e.g. Plate 46.

[14] *AJPh* 57 (1936), 309.

[15] Sen. *Epist.* 87, 38; cf. *Epist.* 82, 9 f.

[16] Sen. *Epist.* 82, 19-20; 87, 41.

virtue was no different from Chrysippus and standard Stoicism. And this is entirely in tune with the evidence from Galen, indeed with all the evidence except Diogenes. But within this orthodox framework, there are plenty of signs of individuality and innovation, a situation which seems to me to be typical of Posidonius in general.

What is new and distinctively Posidonian is the approach and method of argument (as Seneca implies), namely an analysis of cause applied to the problem of wealth in the psychology of action. This immediately gives a reorientation for the moral evaluation of wealth. For the older Stoa the evaluation of wealth was based on worth (ἀξία) related to 'the things according to nature', which derive from our initial natural human characteristics later superseded by rational adulthood. For Posidonius it was linked also to its effect and function in moral psychology. It is thus tied to the problem of the explanation of the emotions (πάθη and εὐπάθειαι), which, as Posidonius said at the beginning of Περὶ παθῶν, was the starting point for him of all ethical problems (F 30; 150 EK). Again and again in the extended evidence in Galen's *De Placitis*, Posidonius criticises Chrysippus for not asking, and anyway even if he were asked, for being unable to answer through his psychology, what is the real cause or explanation of mental disturbance and immoral decision (e.g. F 34; 157; 163-167; 169 EK). Chrysippus said that it came from outside, Posidonius that the root lay within our own mental structure (F 169 EK). So wealth cannot be a real cause of distorting emotion. So it may be that the 'causes' argument was also part of an argument against Chrysippus in internal discussion within the School. Nevertheless, wealth could be a factor as an antecedent cause, and we can trace the pattern of this in Posidonian thinking from Galen. For as an antecedent cause it can provoke false beliefs, which, if the rational aspect of the mind is in a weak state, an irrational

power (ἄλογος δύναμις) in us could develop an 'overreaching impulse' (πλεονάζουσα ὁρμή), which by its 'emotional pull' (παθητικὴ ὁλκή), can demand an assent to an evil action (F 169, lines 78-84 EK). On the other hand, external and physical advantages are natural goals of the irrational aspects of our mind for which we have a natural affinity (οἰκείωσις). Such things are οἰκεῖα φύσει (F 160 EK); but they are not goods, because they are always subject and relative to the absolute authority of moral reason; they are not ἁπλῶς οἰκεῖα (F 161 EK). In his *History*, which I believe was for Posidonius the descriptive canvas of human behaviour which supplied material for the explanations of moral philosophy, Posidonius opposed Plato and Lycurgus in their desire to banish gold from their cities. The behaviour of certain Celtic tribes showed, he said, that it was not gold itself, but their own character which governed their actions (F 240 EK). If we overreach ourselves and take a bribe, or embezzle what is entrusted to us, it is precisely because we do not understand the relative value of money. It is no use blaming money itself for our moral mistake, or society or other people or environment, although all these may be relative factors as antecedent causes. Now there is no doubt that Posidonius was interested in and addressed himself to all forms of causation both in the natural philosophy of physical cosmology and in the microcosm of human behaviour. He was not content to let the matter rest with the fundamental general explanations of the Stoic principles, which he considered an incomplete picture of actuality, but was concerned to investigate if he could the whole chain of causation and explanation, including antecedent causes. Hence his interest in environment and φυσιογνωμονία (F 169, lines 84 ff. EK) as an antecedent factor, illustrated both in his ethical works and in the Περὶ ὠκεανοῦ. So in his preoccupation with πάθη as a key topic in moral philosophy, he was bound to consider the role of wealth and

luxury, illustrated so abundantly as fact in his *History*, in the ethical analysis of his moral psychology. And so a superficial reading could overstress the relative value placed on such a factor. But, as in more common Stoic parlance, external and physical 'goods' are κατὰ φύσιν and have relative value or disvalue, yet are moral 'indifferents' in relation to virtue and no more than its ὕλη or content, so in Posidonian aetiology, antecedent causes are οἰκεῖα, and so part of our human situation, but they are not principal or perfect causes. Only virtue (or vice) is the *causa efficiens*. For Posidonius, that which was responsible for such disturbance of our moral balance or ὁμολογία is our own moral intelligence and understanding, and nothing else, and each of us in the end is solely responsible for that.

DISCUSSION

M. Long: Perhaps I might begin discussion by taking you up on Seneca, *Epist.* 87, 35. I fully share your uncertainty about what Greek term, if any, underlies *fiducia*, and I am impressed by your observation concerning Seneca's liking for the triad, *magnitudo animi*, *fiducia*, *securitas*. However, the Posidonian tenor of these terms is confirmed, I think, by the fact that they are plainly the contraries of *insolentia*, *tumor*, *arrogantia* in the 'intensified' syllogism which follows. The latter set of terms evidently refers to πάθη, which, as you rightly emphasized, were Posidonius' particular interest in ethics. It is tempting, then, to take *magnitudo animi, fiducia* and *securitas* as 'good states of mind', which the later doxographical tradition called εὐπάθειαι. To be sure, they do not correspond exactly to the standard trio, χαρά, βούλησις, εὐλάβεια; but εὐθυμία, which you suggested as a possible Greek original for *securitas* is listed as a species of χαρά in Andronicus' classification (*SVF* III 432). From the absence of the term εὐπάθεια in Stobaeus' doxography of Stoic ethics we can perhaps infer that the precise demarcation of these 'good states of mind' was a late entry into Stoicism. Be that as it may, there seems no reason to doubt that Posidonius himself would have acknowledged the existence of 'good states of mind', antithetical to the πάθη which are the product of κακά.

M. Kidd: I think that this is a valuable suggestion for the original content of Posidonius' syllogism, and may well be right. I would still wish to argue, because of the peculiar Senecan trinity of *magnitudo animi*, *fiducia* and *securitas*, that we should not be looking here for a straight translation of Posidonian terms, but rather accept that Seneca substituted his own. But the Posidonian syllogism may well have been in the terms you suggest.

M. Dihle: May I ask a question with regard to § 31? You were saying that the terminology in which the distinction of the two causes is

introduced has got a Posidonian flair. Could you explain this observation in more detail? For neither the distinction between αἰτία προκατάρχουσα and αἰτία αὐτοτελής is typical of Posidonius nor is its application to moral questions, as can be seen from the well-known Stoic simile of the cylinder.

M. Long: You said, I think, that Posidonius' originality was particularly evident in his method of analysing the causes of moral weakness (e.g. the distinction between *causa efficiens* and *praecedens* in Seneca, *Epist.* 87, 31), and you seemed to endorse his criticism of Chrysippus for explaining the origin of moral weakness solely by reference to external causes. But how original is Posidonius here, and is his criticism justified? Chrysippus himself based his concept of moral responsibility upon the distinction between 'antecedent' (external) and 'principal' (internal) causes, identifying the latter with the mind or character of the agent. Moreover, in Aulus Gellius' seemingly excellent evidence for his position (*SVF* II 100), which uses this distinction between causes, Chrysippus treats the wrong-doing of *mala ingenia* as a 'fated' consequence, not of external causes, but of the way these *ingenia* are fashioned 'by nature'.

M. Kidd: May I answer the questions of Professors Dihle and Long together? In my remarks on § 31 I was speaking of individuality of nomenclature only. The terms used by Seneca seem to be different labels from those generally used, for example by Cicero in *De fato* 40-41. Of course I agree that the distinction between principal internal cause and antecedent external cause was already made by Chrysippus and common Stoic analysis, and I do not think that Posidonius would have differed from the Chrysippean account in Aulus Gellius. But in the older Stoa this analysis seems to have been principally directed to the problem of fate and free will. When I talked at the end of my paper about a distinctive Posidonian approach I meant that while the older Stoa tended to argue about external 'goods' in terms of ἀξία, Posidonius seems to have been the first to apply, in tandem with his new psychology, the argument of causes in his analysis of the effect and valuation of external 'goods' in the psychology of action.

M. Flashar: Wie steht es mit Diogenes Laertius VII 103 (= F 171 EK)? Wenn seine Berufung auf Poseidonios nicht das Richtige trifft, wie ist das Zeugnis zu erklären? Hatte Diogenes unglaubwürdige Quellen? Ist peripatetischer Einfluss im Spiel?

M. Kidd: If my paper is right, this is an important question. Either we must believe Seneca or Diogenes. Seneca, where we have the benefit of context and argumentation must be preferred to isolated statements in Diogenes. So, if my arguments convince, Diogenes must be wrong. This seems to me far from inconceivable. As I mentioned, the so-called Diocles 'fragment' on Stoic philosophy in D. L. VII is very uneven in its report on sources. In the section on cosmos, Posidonius is the most important source quoted, even for the standard Stoic account. In meteorology the case is surprisingly different, where Posidonius is important but not dominant. In the ethical section Posidonius fades to insignificance; here the source certainly does not come however indirectly from Posidonius, and therefore misrepresentation may occur. But to explain misrepresentation, we are now in the realm of conjecture. I can briefly offer three different possibilities; no doubt you can contribute more!

1. Misunderstanding over the use of a term could arise. For example, Stoics sometimes used ἀγαθόν loosely or untechnically, no doubt in argument with opponents; so Chrysippus, in Plut. *De Stoic. repugn.* 30, 1048 A.

2. There could arise misunderstanding or distortion of a Stoic argument, or from the implications of opponents. Confusion or distortion of the Stoic classification of ἀξία (D. L. VII 105) may have bolstered the anti-Stoic argument in Alex. Aphr. *De an.* p. 163, 4 Bruns (=*SVF* III 192) to the effect that δῆλον ὡς χρείαν ὁ σοφὸς ἕξει τούτων (i.e. προηγμένων). Similarly, debate and confusion could arise over the classification of προηγμένα (D. L. VII 107), as to whether one should be preferred for its own sake, or for the sake of something else; cf. Cicero, *Fin.* III 57 on *bona fama* (εὐδοξία).

3. Posidonius' new psychology could have led to misunderstanding. In particular his statement that the goals of the irrational δυνάμεις of soul

were οἰκεῖα φύσει could have been seized on without regard for the crucial addition that they were ἁπλῶς οἰκεῖα.

M. Dihle: I cannot offer an additional explanation but supplement your last one. As we know from Strabo, Posidonius was denigrated within his own school for having peripatetic inclinations. Perhaps Posidonius' doctrine that the objectives of irrational striving are οἰκεῖα was misrepresented as identification of Stoic προηγμένα with Peripatetic (non-moral) ἀγαθά.

M. Kidd: Strabo's ascription to Posidonius of τὸ 'Αριστοτελίζον (T 85 EK) was in relation to aetiology not ethics, but the possibility of Peripatetic confusion is very real, as Cicero makes clear to us.

M. Gigon: Es ist nicht leicht, D. L. VII 103 und VII 127-8 wegzuschaffen. D. L. VII 103 ist vielleicht nur eine grobe Zusammenfassung von VII 127-128. Doch dieser Text steht einerseits in fester Verbindung mit D. L. III 78, V 30 und VI 11 (Problem der αὐτάρκεια) andererseits in deutlicher Beziehung zu aristotelischen Thesen (χορηγία, χρεία), muss also als poseidonisch anerkannt werden. Weiterhin halte ich Seneca *Epist.* 87, 35 mit den zwei Syllogismen, die sorgfältig voneinander unterschieden werden, für eine recht genaue Umsetzung eines Textes des Poseidonios (sonderbar bleibt der leicht epikurisierende Charakter von *fiducia* und *securitas*. Sollte Poseidonios hier demokritische Termina gegen Epikur ausgespielt haben?).

Aristotelisierend ist auch Seneca *Epist.* 87, 37: die Reihe von ζῷα und ἀτελεῖς ἄνθρωποι (= παῖδες) ist aristotelisch, ebenso die Formel *a maiore sui parte*, die an Cic. *Fin.* V 91-92 erinnert.

M. Kidd: Philosophically, I think that D. L. VII 103 and 127-128 must stand (or fall) together. But I agree that 127-128 has peculiarly suspicious features. Χορηγία is certainly an Aristotelian term and does not seem to have been used in Stoic sources; χρεία has the same ambience, and appears significantly in the passage from Alexander which I already mentioned. This increases the likelihood of a Peripatetic origin

for this confusion, but may still be combined with one of my suggestions.

I am not persuaded, for the reasons given in my paper, that the syllogisms in § 35 are exact translations. I cannot believe that in this context and with this author, *fiducia* and *securitas* reflect Epicurean tones. The recurrence of the triad in Seneca's works convinces me that the words are Seneca's.

The sequence in § 37 of *animalia*, *imperfecti homines* (in the sense of children) and *stulti* seems to me Posidonian. He was much interested in animals (F 33; 165, line 149; 166, lines 11-17 EK) and in children (F 159; 169 EK).

M. Dihle: Do you think that Seneca's *imperfecti homines* are the προκόπτοντες? I'd rather think of the ἀτέλειοι, children, for instance, who are not yet fully equipped with mental force. Thus the sequence *animalia - imperfecti - stulti* would make sense.

M. Kidd: I am grateful for this suggestion. It had not occurred to me, and I think that it may well be right.

M. Long: In regard to Diogenes Laertius VII 128, it is easy to see how *even orthodox* Stoics could be described as denying the 'self-sufficiency' of ἀρετή. Chrysippus has insisted against Aristo that virtue cannot function without the availability of προηγμένα for it to 'select', and a preponderance of ἀποπροηγμένα was the official ground for the wise men's 'well-reasoned' suicide.

M. Kidd: Yes, this is possible, but I am not sure to what extent if any the earlier debate between Chrysippus and Aristo was still at a later period a live issue within the School.

M. Dihle: The use of the word χρεία is ambiguous throughout the history of Hellenistic philosophy. Perhaps Diogenes (=Posidon. F 173 EK) simply misunderstood χρεία which denoted 'use' in his source—which would fit in with traditional Stoic doctrine in the given context—as meaning 'need'.

M. Kidd: An interesting suggestion. I think that the ambiguity of χρεία could be involved either unconsciously or deliberately in misrepresentation.

M. Flashar: Ich möchte noch einmal nach dem Verhältnis Ihrer Fragmentensammlung zu derjenigen von Theiler fragen. Theilers Fragmentensammlung ist um etwa 25% umfangreicher als die Ihre, weil er auch Texte aufnimmt, die in der Überlieferung nicht explizit mit dem Namen des Poseidonios verbunden sind. Es handelt sich dabei teilweise um ganz wichtige Texte, die in der Poseidoniosforschung eine grosse Rolle spielen. Was machen Sie mit dem Material? Es war ja eine wohlerwogene, methodische Maxime, in Ihre Edition nur die namentlich bezeugten Fragmente aufzunehmen, aber für die Rekonstruktion eines Poseidoniosbildes kann man ja von dem anderen Material nicht generell absehen.

M. Bringmann: Sie haben in sehr überzeugender Weise gezeigt, wie Seneca Poseidonios in einer Argumentationskette benutzt, die seine eigene, und nicht die des Poseidonios ist. Die Argumentationskette Senecas haben Sie von § 31 bis § 40 in Ihre Fragmentsammlung (F 170) aufgenommen. Mit Sicherheit können aber nur § 31 und, mit gewissen Anstrichen, § 35 für Poseidonios in Anspruch genommen werden. Meine Frage geht nun dahin: Was soll man als 'Fragment' abdrucken? Den Text, dessen poseidonische Herkunft gesichert ist? Oder den gesamten Kontext, auch wenn er nicht Poseidonios, sondern dem 'Berichterstatter', in diesem Falle Seneca, zuzuweisen ist?

M^me Decleva Caizzi: Pare anche a me, come osservava il professore Bringmann, che l'esempio da Lei scelto, e cioè l'interpretazione della *Lettera* 87 die Seneca, mostra che il taglio della citazione offerta nella Sua edizione (F 170) potrebbe forse essere oggi modificato.

Più in generale, vorrei chiederLe se, dopo aver lavorato alla stesura del commento ai frammenti, riterrebbe opportuno apportare qualche modifica all'edizione Edelstein-Kidd.

Secondariamente: sono del tutto d'accordo con il criterio ivi adottato nella selezione dei frammenti, e cioè la presenza del nome: ma poichè è ovvio che esso non ha valore assoluto, ma di necessario punto di partenza, mi interesserebbe sapere se, nel commento, Lei ha utilizzato alcuni dei testi che compaiono nella raccolta di Theiler, o eventualmente altri, dove Poseidonio non sia espressamente citato.

M. Kidd: May I answer Professors Flashar, Bringmann and Decleva Caizzi together?

I am well aware that I am regarded as a 'minimalist' and Theiler as a 'maximalist' in our collections of fragments. Well, Posidonian studies are a broad church and admit beneficially different approaches. I am a 'minimalist' only in so far that I believe that we must start from the primary evidence which has still been insufficiently studied, before proceeding as one must and should do to the wider possible field. I am also aware of course that the name Posidonius in a source carries no absolute or exclusive force, but I do not see how we can form criteria for the judgement of possible unnamed evidence, unless we distinguish and exhaustively examine the named evidence as our primary sources. It is widely believed, I think correctly, that Diodorus used Posidonius in Books V and XXXIII-XXXVI. But so far no special study has produced criteria which will free us from the alternative of either printing the whole of these books of Diodorus as Posidonius or none of them. Such criteria can only come from a double examination, first of the evidence of the named fragments, and secondly from the detailed study of Diodorus himself, as Jane Hornblower attempted for Hieronymus of Cardia. And each reporting author will be different in this respect.

As for the internal form of my own edition in respect to a fragment such as F 170, I believe that the reader should be given enough context and related argument, so that he can exercise his own judgement on the extent and character of the imputed evidence for Posidonius. My own judgements, distinctions and argumentation may then be consulted in the Commentary in which related passages from other authors can also be brought into play.