

The Use of Seneca's Texts in Antonii Radyvylovskyi's Sermons

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Abstract

In this paper, through the example of Antonii Radyvylovskyi's work, I examine the impact of Seneca's texts on the philosophical component of Ukrainian church sermons from the Baroque period. The objective of this study is to investigate Radyvylovskyi's use of Seneca's texts in his own writing. The result should help better understand the ideological influence of ancient philosophy on the formation of the national philosophical tradition of the Baroque epoch. The contents of ideological borrowings from Seneca's texts and the mechanisms of their use are traced. A list of Seneca's texts from which Radyvylovskyi quotes is provided. It is also shown that Radyvylovskyi uses Seneca's authority in his moral teachings and philosophical thinking about the characteristics of human nature. We conclude by commenting on Radyvylovskyi's creative use of Seneca's ideas and the significant philosophical component of his written legacy.

Key Words: the history of philosophy, Ukrainian philosophy, Antonii Radyvylovskyi, ancient philosophy, the Baroque, sermon, Seneca.



Turning to the issue of content in the philosophical heritage of Ukrainian Baroque thinkers, it is necessary to concentrate on its ideological grounds, specifically the sources from which the national philosophical culture of that era was formed. An important element of this culture consisted of the creative rethinking of ancient philosophers' texts, both Greek and Roman. One of the most respected thinkers for ancient Europe, including Ukrainian, intellectuals was Lucius Annaeus Seneca Jr. (4 BC–AD 65). For example, the study of Seneca's works including *On the Shortness of Life* (*De brevitae vitae*), *On the Happy Life* (*De vita beata*), *Moral Epistles* (*Epistulae morales ad Lucilium*) etc., long remained a compulsory part of the program in Jesuit education. It is natural that the interest in Seneca came to Ukraine from Western tradition due to the functioning of the Kyiv-Mohyla Collegium. The Collegium borrowed not only educational methodology, but also programs, books, and texts for study from Jesuit educational institutions.¹

1 R. Paranko and A. Masliukh, trans., *Ratio Studiorum / Uklad studii Tovarystva Isusovoho. Systema yezuitskoi osvity*. [*Ratio Studiorum / The Statute of Studies of the Society of Jesus: The Jesuit*

One of the Ukrainian thinkers-intellectuals of the 17th century was a student of the Kyiv-Mohyla Collegium, Antonii Radyvylovskiy. At present, we are witnessing a revival of interest in Radivilovskiy's texts, which continue to attract the attention of literary critics and philosophers. In particular, the works of S. Azovtseva,² Larysa Dovha,³ Ihor Isichenko,⁴ Olha Maksymchuk,⁵ Tetiana Levchenko-Komisarenko⁶ among others, deem mention. However, these researchers do not investigate the question of Radyvylovskiy's use of Seneca's ancient philosophical texts.

Literary researchers who drew their attention to the works of Radyvylovskiy include Mykhailo Markovskiy⁷ and Volodymyr Krekoten,⁸ but they only concentrate on Radyvylovskiy's literary borrowings of a number of Seneca's ancient texts. They, however, have omitted researching the issue from historical and philosophical perspectives. The impact of ancient philosophy (including Seneca) on the comprehension of human—world relations by Ukrainian church thinkers of the seventeenth century

Education System] (Lviv: Svichado, 2008).

- 2 S. Azovtseva, "Yevanhelski siuzhety u barokovomu propovidnytskomu dyskursi (Kyrylo Trankvilion-Stavrovetskyi ta Antonii Radyvylovskiy) [Stories from Gospels in Baroque Homiletic Discourse (Kyrylo Tranquilion-Stavrovetskyi and Antonii Radyvylovskiy)]" (PhD diss., Karazin Kharkiv National University, 2018).
- 3 L. Dovha, "Uiavlennia pro blaho u propovidiakh Antonii Radyvylovskoho (za zbirnykom *Vinets Khrystov*, 1688) [The Notion of Good in the Sermons of Antonii Radyvylovskiy (in *The Crown of Christ*, 1688)]," in *Shliakh u chotyry stolittia: materialy Mizhnarodnoi naukovoï konferentsii "AD Fontes — do dzherel" do 400-i richnytsi zasnuvannia Kyievo-Mohylianskoï akademii* (Kyiv, 12–14 zhovtnia 2015 roku) (Kyiv: NaUKMA, 2016), 72–81.
- 4 I. Isichenko, "Konotatsiina perspektyva yevanhelskoho tekstu v pasiinykh propovidiakh Antonii Radyvylovskoho [The Connotational Perspective of the Evangelical Text in the Passion Sermons of Antonii Radyvylovskiy]," *Medievist: latynomovna ukrainska literatura*, accessed March 29, 2017, http://www.medievist.org.ua/2017/03/blog-post_27.html.
- 5 O. Maksymchuk, "Motyv poshuku kokhanoho u propovidiakh Antonii Radyvylovskoho i dialohakh Hryhoriia Skovorody [The Motive of a Beloved's Search in the Sermons of Antonii Radyvylovskiy and the Dialogues of Hryhoriia Skovoroda]," *Pereiaslavski Skovorodynski studii* 2 (2013): 66–71.
- 6 T. Levchenko-Komisarenko, "Symvolika mista v oratorskii prozi ukrainskoho propovidnyka 17 st. Antonii Radyvylovskoho [Symbolism of the City in the Oratorical Prose of 17th Century Ukrainian Preacher Antonii Radyvylovskiy]," in *Slovanské jazyky a literatury: hledání identity* (Praha: Červený Kostelec, 2009), 301–07.
- 7 M. N. Markovskiy, *Antonii Radivilovskii, yuzhnorusskii propovednyk 17 veka* [Antonii Radyvylovskiy, a 17th Century South Russian Preacher] (Kyiv: Typ. Ymp. Un-ta Sv. Vladymyra V. Y. Zavadskoho, 1894).
- 8 V. I. Krekoten, *Opovidannia Antonii Radyvylovskoho* [Antonii Radyvylovskiy's Stories] (Kyiv: Naukova Dumka, 1983).

has been investigated by a number of Ukrainian scholars including Valeriia Nichyk,⁹ Vilen Horskyi,¹⁰ Yaroslav Stratii,¹¹ Halyna Palasiuk¹² and others. Nevertheless, such studies have not been concentrated on Radyvylovskyi's sermons.

The purpose of this article is to explore the use of Seneca's texts in Radyvylovskyi's writings. This review will clearly demonstrate the influence of ancient philosophy on the formation of national philosophical traditions of the Baroque. It is clear that it is impossible to comprehend all aspects of the function of Seneca's texts in the work of Radyvylovskyi in one article. Therefore, this initial research is only a preliminary review of the subject and an incentive for further research.

First of all, we would like to make some methodological remarks. Quoting Seneca, Radyvylovskyi refers to the specific work of the philosopher in his margin notes. He quite often notes only the philosopher's name or the title of work without stating directly from where the passages are taken. This can only be discovered by a comparison of Radyvylovskyi's text with the original Seneca's text. In some cases, when Radyvylovskyi uses only a brief quotation, a reference to the philosopher's name and works is absent.

For instance, Radyvylovskyi quotes from Seneca in the following passage: "Do not waste time in vain and for useless entertainment but to serve the Lord and good deeds, remembering that everything one can have on this Earth...*it is strange but only time is ours...*" (here and further, italics and translation of Radyvylovskyi's texts are mine.— V. S.).¹³ Note that an italicized fragment in Seneca's first letter to Lucilius in the original reads: "Omnia, Lucili, aliena sunt, tempus tantum nostrum est" ("Nothing, Lucilius, is ours, except time").¹⁴ Radyvylovskyi's general interpretation of the philosopher's words coincides with the thought that Seneca is conveying to an addressee. The fact of using

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- 9 V. M. Nichik, "Retseptsii grecheskoi dukhovnoi kultury na Ukraine v kon. 16–nach. 17 v. [Reception of Greek Spiritual Culture in Ukraine at the End of the 16th—Beginning of the 17th Centuries]," in *Otechestvennaia filofskaia mysl 11–17 vv. i grecheskaia kultura: sb. nauch. trudov* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1991), 241–58.
- 10 V. S. Horskyi, *Filosofia v ukrainskii kulturi (metodolohiia ta istoriia). Filosofski narysy [Philosophy in Ukrainian Culture (Methodology and History). Philosophical Essays]* (Kyiv: Tsentrr praktychnoi filofii, 2001).
- 11 Ya. M. Stratii, "Filosofia u Kyievo-Mohylianskii kolehii [Philosophy at the Kyiv-Mohyla Collegium]," in *Kyiv v istorii filofii Ukrainy* (Kyiv: Vydavnychy dim "Kyievo-Mohylianska Akademiia," 2000), 74–129.
- 12 H. B. Palasiuk, "Idei stoikiv yak pidgruntia khrystyianskoi filofii v Ukraini [Stoic Ideas as the Basis of Christian Philosophy in Ukraine]," in *Istoriia religii v Ukraini. Tezy povidomlen Mizhnarodnoho V kruhloho stolu. Ch. 3* (Lviv: LNU, 1995), 321–23.
- 13 A. Radyvylovskyi, *Vinets Khrystov* [The Crown of Christ] (Kyiv: Typohrafiia Kyievo-Pecherskoi Lavry, 1688), 239.
- 14 Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Epistulae morales ad Lucilium* [Moral Letters to Lucilium] (London: William Heinemann, Ltd, 1917–1925), ep. 1, accessed April 3, 2017, <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/sen.html>. Here and further, unless other is mentioned, the translation from Latin into English is taken from Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Ad Lucilium epistulae morales*, with an English

the letter fragment in a moral teaching shows Radyvylovskyi's admiration of the Roman philosopher's ideas and his recognition of Seneca's moral authority.

Sometimes, in reference to a specific text of Seneca, there are inaccuracies. For example, completing the story of the lepers who were healed by Christ, Radyvylovskyi likens them to sinners, the first step of whose healing has to be the recognition of their sinfulness, as well as of their disease, and their treatment should begin with the recognition of this. Here Radyvylovskyi, not identifying Seneca in the text directly, cites a quotation from his letters in order to enhance the effect of moral emphasis: "as one wise man says (in the manuscript — "philosophers."¹⁵ — V. S.) the sign of salvation is knowledge of sin, the signature of an improved heart is human knowledge of its sins."¹⁶ In the margin of both variants of the text (handwritten and printed) there is concrete reference to letter 29.¹⁷ However, this fragment is absent in the mentioned letter. We find it in letter 28 to Lucilius, with Seneca's reference to Epicurus: "Initium est salutis notitia peccati. Egrege mihi hoc dixisse videtur Epicurus; nam qui peccare se nescit corrigi non vult; deprehendas te oportet antequam emendes" ("The knowledge of sin is the beginning of salvation.' This saying of Epicurus seems to me to be a noble one. For he who does not know that he has sinned does not desire correction; you must discover yourself in the wrong before you can reform yourself").¹⁸ In the handwritten version of the sermon, the given fragment is specified by a reference to letter 6 (Marginalia: "Letter 6").¹⁹ In the comparison of Radyvylovskyi's text with Seneca's original, we see that Radyvylovskyi slightly modifies the original version "Et hoc ipsum argumentum est in melius translata animi, quod vitia sua quae adhuc ignorabat videt"²⁰ ("For, if the soul sees its shortcomings, which it previously did not know, it proves that it has turned out for the best" — the translation from Latin is mine. — V. S.). Consequently, Radyvylovskyi alters Seneca's text, but the idea of the passage of the letter of the Roman philosopher is reproduced unchanged, only adjusted for a teaching purpose.

In the moral teachings of his sermons Radyvylovskyi quotes extensively from the works of Seneca, especially to illustrate human nature and its vices. Commenting on the greed of the evangelic Rich Man, the preacher states that greed is more intense with more wealth, noting that "the pagan philosopher Seneca admitted such when he said: '...Maiora cupimus, quo maiora uenerunt, multoque concitator est auaritia in magnarum opum congestu conlocata, ut flammae infinito acrior uis est, quo ex maiore incendio emicuit'" (Marginalia: "the philosopher Seneca: book 2, *On Benefits*,

translation by Richard M. Gummere (London: Heinemann, 1917), accessed at https://sites.google.com/site/thestoiclif/the_teachers/seneca/letters.

15 A. Radyvylovskyi, *Ohorodok Marii Bohorodytsi* [*The Garden of the Virgin*], book 1 (Kyiv, 1671), 866.

16 Radyvylovskyi, *Vinets Khrystov*, 358.

17 Radyvylovskyi, *Vinets Khrystov*, 358; Radyvylovskyi, *Ohorodok Marii Bohorodytsi*, 866.

18 Seneca, *Epistulae morales ad Lucilium*, ep. XXVIII.

19 Radyvylovskyi, *Ohorodok Marii Bohorodytsi*, 867.

20 Seneca, *Epistulae morales ad Lucilium*, ep. VI.

chapter 27").²¹ Here, Radyvylovskyi references Seneca's work *On Benefits* (*De beneficiis*), rendering it in his preaching as: "...Maiora cupimus, quo maiora uenerunt, multoque concitator est auaritia in magnarum opum congestu conlocata, ut flammae infinito acrior uis est, quo ex maiore incendio emicuit" ("...The more we get, the more we covet; and just as the greater the conflagration from which the flame springs, the fiercer and more unbounded is its fury, so greed becomes much more active when it is employed in accumulating great riches").²² Here Seneca's words and general idea are reproduced without change.

Radyvylovskyi's pagan "awareness and recognition of shortcomings is a step to improvement" in his second tome of the handwritten *Ohorodok Marii Bohorodytsi* includes an attributed reference to Seneca, without mention of the source: "Seneca says, where there is a confession, there is forgiveness" (Marginalia: "Seneca").

Radyvylovskyi's fragments from Seneca's works are visible not only in his moral teachings, but also in his interpretations of the text of the Holy Scripture, thus examining a fragment of the Gospel in which the Savior asks Apostle Peter to sail in a boat from the shore, Radyvylovskyi explains that Christ asks rather than orders, "in order not to hold back Peter by His power-wielding order, as Seneca says, *a human character is gentle* and it is more quickly appealed to by a request than by an order."²³ Therewith, Radyvylovskyi makes no direct reference to the source, which is clearly Seneca's *On Anger* (*Ad Novatum de ira*), the general idea of which is conveyed by Radyvylovskyi in this segment. The Roman philosopher's original text reads: "An secundum naturam sit manifestum erit, si hominem inspexerimus. Quo quid est mitius, dum in recto animi habitus est? quid autem ira crudelius est? Quid homine aliorum amantius? quid ira infestius?" ("Whether, it is in accordance with nature will become clear if we turn our eyes to man. *What is more gentle than he while he is in a right state of mind?* But what is more cruel than anger? What is more loving to others than man? What more hostile than anger?").²⁴

Apart from moral teachings and interpretations of the Bible, Radyvylovskyi quotes Seneca for other purposes. Thus, he uses a stoic philosophical argument as a means of strengthening the rational argumentation of Orthodox dogma. For example, arguing

21 Radyvylovskyi, *Vinets Khrystov*, 331.

22 Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Ad Aebutium Liberalem de beneficiis* (London and New York: Heinemann, 1935), accessed March 2, 2018, <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/sen.html>. Here and further, translation into English is taken from Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Moral Essays*, translated by John W. Basore, volume III (London: W. Heinemann, 1928–1935), accessed March 2, 2018, http://www.stoics.com/seneca_essays_book_3.html.

23 Radyvylovskyi, *Vinets Khrystov*, 254.

24 Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Ad Novatum de ira* (London and New York: Heinemann, 1928), lib. 1, cap. V, accessed March 2, 2018, <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/sen.html>. Translation is taken from Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Moral Essays*, translated by John W. Basore, volume I (London: W. Heinemann, 1928–1935), accessed March 2, 2018, http://www.stoics.com/seneca_essays_book_1.html#ANGER1.

in favor of an orthodox understanding of the Trinity, Radyvylovskiy lays out evidence based on the Bible and embarks on providing arguments that are based on “reasons of conscience”: “In the fourth place, says Seneca, singular ownership of any good thing does not bring pleasure. If God, before time, had not had the Son and The Holy Spirit with Him, He would not have had infinite beautification, consequently, He wouldn’t be God” (Marginalia: “Seneca: letter 90”).²⁵ The given statement is not found in letter 90, but the letter itself contains thoughts about “the golden age” in which people collectively possessed nature and lived happily together: “Quid hominum illo genere felicius? In commune rerum natura fruebantur” (“What race of men was ever more blest than that race? They enjoyed all nature in partnership”).²⁶ Here Radyvylovskiy changes the text, transferring only the general thought of the philosopher for the purposes of his own teachings. In such a manner, Radyvylovskiy’s use of Seneca’s texts in his sermons acquires a dogmatic direction.

Another way Radyvylovskiy uses the works of Seneca is in strengthening the epideictic component of his preaching. When he expresses commendations to the Virgin, a saint or a respectable person, he uses Seneca. This is a rhetorical means of persuasion and the embellishment of speech. Moreover, this is not merely a rhetorical technique, it also acquires a philosophical significance because it is often associated with thinking about the structure of the world, human nature, and moral norms.

Thus, expressing praise of the Virgin, Radyvylovskiy writes: “The Philosopher Seneca said: You will see there (in the sky) countless stars, that one light illuminates all those stars. What the philosopher Seneca said in his time in praise of the natural sun, I shall say in praising Mary, an imaginary sun...”²⁷ Obviously, Radyvylovskiy is referencing Seneca’s *On consolation to Marcia* (*Ad Marciam de consolatione*).

In another passage, Radyvylovskiy, apparently referring to Seneca’s *Natural Questions* (*Quaestiones naturales*), writes: “God is the sea, as one philosopher says: The sea is the beginning of all rivers and water sources. So God is the beginning of all creation, as all water, rivers and springs originate from the sea and God gave life to all creations” (Marginalia: “Seneca, book 9, nature”).²⁸ In medieval tradition *On Land Water* (*De aquis terrestribus*) is number 3 in the mentioned treatise, with the total number reaching 7.²⁹

While praising the Archangel Michael, Radyvylovskiy refers to the Roman stoic’s thoughts on the properties of “carrier power,” transferring them to Archistratigus: “The philosopher Seneca said that the Prince’s duty is to use courage against the proud, and clemency with the humble. Saint Michael the Archangel showed both of these features. He used courage for the proud rioters, who were against God when they were dropped

25 Radyvylovskiy, *Ohorodok Marii Bohorodytsi*, 136.

26 Seneca, *Epistulae morales ad Lucilium*, ep. XC.

27 Radyvylovskiy, *Ohorodok Marii Bohorodytsi*, 365.

28 Radyvylovskiy, *Ohorodok Marii Bohorodytsi*, book 2 (manuscript), 519 back.

29 Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Quaestiones Naturales* (London and New York: Heinemann, 1928), accessed January 12, 2018, <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/sen.html>.

from the sky. He uses gentleness for people submissive to God and His laws when He defends them from all danger.”³⁰ Obviously, Radyvylovskyi borrows these thoughts from Seneca's *On Anger* (*Ad Novatum de ira*), in which the philosopher ponders the subject.³¹

In expressing considerable praise of prominent people, Radyvylovskyi turns to the problems of human relationships. For example, in the introductory dedication to *Ohorodok Marii Bohorodytsi* (*The Garden of the Virgin*), Radyvylovskyi thanks his patron Innokentii Gisel. He does so by pointing out the common signs of ingratitude, and proving his gratitude, writes “As for the other features of ungrateful people—silence; about good deeds, I do not hold back...remembering the words of the philosopher Seneca: who made good—let them be silent, and who took good—let them speak.”³² Radyvylovskyi refers to the third book of Seneca's treatise *On Benefits* (*De beneficiis*) (Marginalia: “Book 3, *On Benefits*”).³³ We find this passage in the second book of the aforementioned treatise: “qui dedit beneficium, taceat, narret, qui accepit” (“Let the giver of a benefit hold his tongue; let the recipient talk”).³⁴

Thus, we can conclude that Radyvylovskyi's active use of Seneca's writings results in the presence of a strong philosophical component in his sermons. It was found that Radyvylovskyi directly or attributing sources, uses works such as the *Moral Epistles* (*Epistulae morales ad Lucilium*), the most frequently quoted text, *On Benefits* (*Ad Aebutium Liberalem de beneficiis*), *On Anger* (*Ad Novatum de ira*), *Natural Questions* (*Quaestiones naturales*). This elaborates on some earlier statements made by Markovskii,³⁵ Krekoten³⁶ and others, who already mentioned that Ukrainian Baroque thinkers were acquainted with the Roman stoic's intellectual heritage, but without specifying concrete works.

This list somewhat complements our understanding of the set texts that were in circulation among Ukrainian church intellectuals in the Baroque period. However, the presence of a number of errors in Radyvylovskyi's references to specific works of Seneca, written in the margins of his texts, suggests the assumption that Radyvylovskyi may have borrowed Seneca fragments elsewhere, making mistakes rewriting references or rewriting already existing mistakes in unknown sources. In all probability Radyvylovskyi perceived a number of Seneca's texts in the light of the works of a popularizer of neostoicism, Justus Lipsius. However, this hypothesis requires verification, which will be the subject of our further studies. The comparison of Radyvylovskyi's printed and handwritten texts allows for excluding typographical errors as a source of inaccuracies as the margins, as a rule, coincide in both versions.

30 Radyvylovskyi, *Ohorodok Marii Bohorodytsi*, 404.

31 Seneca, *Ad Novatum de ira*.

32 Radyvylovskyi, *Ohorodok Marii Bohorodytsi*, 8.

33 Radyvylovskyi, *Ohorodok Marii Bohorodytsi*, 8.

34 Seneca, *Ad Aebutium Liberalem de beneficiis*, lib. II, cap. XI.

35 Markovskii, *Antonii Radivilovskii, yuzhnorusskii propovednyk 17 veka*.

36 Krekoten, *Opovidannia Antonii Radyvylovskoho*.

Seneca's texts are used by Radyvylovskiy for different purposes, corresponding to one or other of his needs. Most often, Radyvylovskiy uses the authority of Seneca's words as an example in his moral teachings and philosophical reflections on human nature and a number of other "life sense questions." Also, in the interpretation of Scripture texts, Radyvylovskiy presents arguments in favor of orthodox dogma and the beautification of sermons intended to praise the Virgin, saints and important people, using fragments from Seneca. Herewith Radyvylovskiy comments on the texts of Seneca, on their moral and philosophical nature.

The analysis of sermon fragments that are identified as Seneca's words by Radyvylovskiy, and their comparison with the original texts of the Roman stoic proves that Radyvylovskiy rather freely and creatively uses and interprets Seneca's heritage. Radyvylovskiy often departs from the original text, reproducing the philosopher's thoughts only in general terms, or correcting his words if a purpose of edification requires it. In attempting to imbue Seneca's ideas with Christian content, Radyvylovskiy often develops and completes the Letters with his own reflections, even making them sound different in theme and context. Considering this, we can comment with confidence on a certain originality of the ideological palette of Radyvylovskiy's sermons, in which elements of philosophy and Christian morality interweave.

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