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Pride Aside: James Dundas as a Stoic Christian

Giovanni Gellera

ORCID IDENTIFIER 0000-0002-8403-3170

Section de philosophie, Université de Lausanne
giovanni.gellera@unil.ch

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Abstract

In the manuscript *Idea philosophiae moralis* (1679), James Dundas (c.1620−1679), first Lord Arniston, a Presbyterian, a judge and a philosopher, makes extensive use of Stoic themes and authors. About one third of the manuscript is a close reading of Seneca. Dundas judges Stoicism from the perspective of Calvinism: the decisive complaint is that the Stoics are 'prideful' when they consider happiness to be within the grasp of fallen human reason. However, pride aside, Dundas is willing to recover some Stoic insights for his Calvinist faith. In what ways? The promise of the practical rewards of Stoicism (control of the passions, tranquillity of the mind, strength of character) drives Dundas's interest in arguing that Stoicism can play a crucial psychological and moral contribution to a Christian's life. The investigation of Stoicism in the *Idea philosophiae moralis* sheds new light on the backdrop of the Scottish Enlightenment's relationship with Stoicism, commonly characterised as 'Christian Stoicism', as well as on the variety of the early modern Christian-Stoic syntheses, such as the *Religio Stoici* (1663) by George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh, a friend of Dundas's.

PRIDE ASIDE: JAMES DUNDAS AS A STOIC CHRISTIAN

INTRODUCTION[1]

On 2 January 1679, a marriage contract was signed between Katherine, the daughter of Marion Boyd and Sir James Dundas, Lord Arniston, and James Dalrymple, the second son of Dame Margaret Ross and Sir James Dalrymple, later Viscount Stair. One of the witnesses was Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh, Lord Advocate. The close acquaintance of Dalrymple, Mackenzie and Dundas was set against the politics and confessionalism of Restoration Scotland. At the time of the wedding, Mackenzie was presiding over the repression of the Covenanters, a faction to which Dalrymple and Dundas had belonged until 1663, when the Scottish Parliament passed an Act preventing those who had not offered a formal renunciation of the Covenant to 'exerse any publick trust or office'. Dalrymple eventually signed the renunciation but failed to convince Dundas to do the same. Dundas demitted as ordinary judge of the High Court of Session in late 1663 and retired to private life in his estate south of Edinburgh. Omond, the biographer of the Dundas family, comments that 'Sir James Dundas had not suffered from his refusal to renounce the Covenants, and was on terms of intimate friendship with the members of the ruling party in Scotland' (Omond 1887: 39). Dundas's decision to keep his faith confirmed 'the reputation of one who, at a time when principles were put to the severest test, had proved himself a resolute and conscientious man' (Omond 1887: 39). The wedding was one of the last encounters of the three men. Dalrymple went into exile in 1681 after refusing to take the Test Act, only to return with the Glorious Revolution. James Dundas did not witness this 'period of greater trial ... for the people of Scotland' (Omond 1887: 39), for he had died in late September 1679.

Despite his profound knowledge of the Dundas family, Omond did not know that the wedding had brought together also three of the most important philosophers of Restoration

[1] The research for this paper was possible thanks to the generous support of the Swiss National Science Foundation to the project PP00P1_163751 *Tolerance, Intolerance and Discrimination Regarding Religion* (2016–2020). I would like to thank Althea Dundas-Bekker of Arniston for her kind permission to work on James Dundas's manuscript; Alexander Broadie, Christian Maurer and Donna Delacoste for their insights and comments on an earlier version of this paper; the students of the MA course *La réception du stoïcisme dans la philosophie morale moderne* at the Université de Lausanne in Autumn 2018 for their lively discussions about Seneca, Descartes, Dundas and Stoicism.

Scotland. On 7 April 1679 James Dundas started to write a Reformed scholastic moral philosophical treatise titled *Idea philosophiae moralis* (*IPM*). Dundas died before finishing the book, which has survived as a 313-page Latin manuscript in his family library until its discovery few years ago. The *IPM* is one of the most detailed moral philosophical treatises written in seventeenth-century Scotland and its contribution to Scottish philosophy is now being investigated.[2]

It is highly plausible that the 'intimate friendship' of Dundas, Dalrymple and Mackenzie involved discussions of morality and politics, although no archival evidence of these exchanges exists. The discovery of the *IPM* makes a comparative analysis with Mackenzie's *Religio Stoici* (1663) on the reception of Stoicism now possible. Similar personal, political and philosophical considerations might have inclined Mackenzie and Dundas towards Stoicism. As a first step in this direction, in this paper I expand the analysis of Stoicism and the *IPM* in Broadie (2016a) and (2016b). Broadie convincingly argues that Dundas rejects two fundamental tenets of Stoicism because of his Calvinist theology: that happiness is within our reason's grasp and that suicide is morally permissible. I argue that Dundas is willing to look beyond these Stoic "prideful doctrines" and to recover some Stoic insights for his Reformed scholastic worldview.

However, Dundas's Stoicism is not the kind of 'Christian-Stoic' synthesis attributed to Hutcheson, a 'fundamentally Stoic edifice... buttressed by Hutcheson's Christian principles' (Sher 1985: 176). A merit of the investigation of Stoicism in the *IPM* is to shed more light on the backdrop of the Scottish Enlightenment's relationship with Stoicism, commonly characterised as a 'Christian Stoicism' (Ahnert 2015: 5–6). As Maurer comments:

> the notion of Stoicism is notoriously vague' and '[i]t is therefore crucial to ask *which* variety or principles of Christianity were conjoined with *which* variety or principles of Stoicism. Answering such questions becomes even more pressing if one takes into account that during the seventeenth century a common view was that Christianity and Stoicism were strictly incompatible. (Maurer 2016: 255)

Harris suggests that in seventeenth-century Scotland the interest in Stoicism was weak because 'the grip of Calvinism remained strong'. Also, the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Scottish philosophers were almost all university professors and therefore more inclined to understand religion as the support for virtue, to teach values beneficial for

[2] Alexander Broadie and I are working on the critical edition and translation of the *IPM* for Edinburgh University Press.

different career paths and less inclined to disturb received opinions about religion (Harris 2008: 2–3). Dundas sits slightly at odds with this depiction of seventeenth-century Scottish philosophy. He was a devout Presbyterian, a judge and a university-trained philosopher, but he was not an academic and later in life pursued a philosophical and literary education for his own private interests. It is impossible to know whether the *IPM* was written with publication in mind. Dundas was plausibly free from preoccupations about the public reception of his philosophical views – after all, he was already exiled to private life.

In this paper, I propose to describe Dundas's position as '*Stoic* Christian' or, more precisely, as 'Stoic Calvinist', where 'Stoic' qualifies the foundational Calvinist belief. In what ways? Pride aside, the promise of the practical rewards of Stoicism drives Dundas's interest in showing the affinity between his Calvinist faith and Stoicism, which can play a crucial psychological and moral contribution to a Christian's moral strength and character. Lagrée (2010: 19–20) and Brooke (2012: 77) refer to the classification of seventeenth-century attitudes towards Stoicism proposed by Eymard d'Angers (1976). Dundas would belong to a 'christianisme stoïcisant' (Stoic Christianity), with an inclination towards 'le stoïcisme christianisé qui suit Sénèque comme philosophe mais sans s'y tenir' (Lagrée 2010: 19). The way in which specific Stoic themes interact with Calvinism in the *IPM* reveals central aspects of Dundas's understanding of Calvinism.

Given the variety of the early modern "Christian-Stoic" syntheses and the fact that the *IPM* is not yet accessible in its entirety, in this paper I take an approach which is, as much as possible, expository and text-based. The resulting picture of Dundas's personal view of Stoicism will, perhaps, make Mackenzie's *Religio Stoici* look less isolated in seventeenth-century Calvinist Scotland.

I. PRIDEFUL REASON AND SUICIDE

Like the French Augustinians (Brooke 2012: 127), Dundas believes that he has identified the core of Stoicism, as well as the core issue with Stoicism. They are the same: an excessive, prideful confidence in the power of human reason, and the main reason for the rejection of Stoicism coincides with the main raison d'être of Stoicism. Dundas believes that 'the Stoics trespass the due limits in this, "make yourself happy" says Seneca' (Dundas 1679: 228),[3] and that 'this seems very much to have the flavour of the arrogance, if not idolatry, of the Stoics

[3] 'Stoici in hoc sunt, nimii, fac te faelicem, inquit Seneca.'

towards reason' (Dundas 1679: 125, also cited in Broadie 2016a: 256).[4] Stoicism is in conflict with the Calvinist faith in the corruption of the mental faculties due to the Fall. Regarding our moral life, 'we cannot from within our own resources live an upright life ... from Dundas's Calvinist perspective, [the Stoic picture] is predicated on a false account of the psychology of post-lapsarian humankind' (Broadie 2016a: 259). Broadie concludes that '[Dundas's] interpretation of Calvinist theology cuts vertically across what is arguably a defining feature of Stoic moral philosophy, the doctrine that our happiness is in our power', therefore 'in important respects Dundas stands at a distance from Stoicism' (Broadie 2016a: 261).

For Dundas, another grave point of conflict is the Stoics' defence of the permissibility of suicide, analysed in Broadie (2016b). Suicide is not permissible because it is the sign of a weak mind on the side of the perpetrator, because it is against the laws of nature (which command assent for they are self-evident and mandated by God) and, finally, because life is a divine gift which is not our own to dispose of (Broadie 2016b: 153). Dundas distinguishes between unintended death and suicide, and between direct and indirect suicide. As in the Biblical case of Samson, unintended death or indirect suicide is not morally bad because death is not willed per se, but it is the result of some other action. So the iniquity of suicide is located in the will, in the intention to seek suicide for its own sake, not simply in death as the outcome of the action (Broadie 2016b: 155). Suicide eliminates the possibility of Christian repentance, which for Dundas is more important than the quality of life, which is the main preoccupation of the Stoics.

That happiness was not in humankind's power, that human nature is corrupt because of the Fall and that suicide is morally impermissible were part of the teaching of the Scottish universities of the time, as Broadie (2016b: 146–148) and Maurer (2017) have shown. As Maurer has observed, the understanding of reason outlined in the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1648) seems most at odds with a view that makes happiness dependent on reason's power to achieve it.

II. MORAL PHILOSOPHY AND THE PASSIONS

The *IPM* is not a philosophical exercise on how to achieve happiness in the tradition of Seneca, Marcus Aurelius or Epictetus. It is a Reformed scholastic moral philosophical treatise which treats happiness in a systematic way. Moral Stoicism permeates the *IPM* at crucial moments such as the analysis of happiness, tranquillity, reason and the passions. Classical

[4] 'Hoc nimium videtur sapere μεγαληγοριαν si non idolatriam Stoicorum contra rationem.'

Stoics (almost exclusively Roman) like Seneca, Epictetus, Cicero, Marcus Aurelius, Zeno and Horace are all quoted approvingly. The only contemporary Stoic is Justus Lipsius, mentioned as the editor of Seneca's works. Dundas seeks to recover Stoic doctrines, most notably in Seneca, for the benefit of his Calvinist philosophy and faith. Dundas also echoes several Stoic views without endorsing them explicitly as Stoic, a strategy which gives a general Stoic flair to the *IPM*. Around a third of the *IPM* deals with *faelicitas* in Seneca, between the introduction to moral philosophy (pp. 1–33) and the discussion of the mental faculties and free will (pp. 154 ff.). The reader of the *IPM* cannot escape the impression that Stoicism was of great importance to Dundas.

Stoic themes appear in the *IPM* from the very first pages where the object and aim of moral philosophy are defined, and where the argument that 'there is a moral philosophy' is intrinsically connected to 'why moral philosophy is necessary':

> Men err in their customs too often, vices are embraced as virtues, vice a little too often bespeaks virtue, and in turn prodigality is called liberality, the prodigal is commonly seen as moral, temerity as fortitude, flattery as friendship; and like Cato once complained, as reported by Sallust, that we have long since disregarded the true names of things – the door-bars of a sounder reason more and more often are burst open by hot passions – it is therefore necessary that there is moral philosophy, the cure of such evils, just like a medicine for an adverse condition. (Dundas 1679: 1–2)[5]

Dundas believes, with the Stoics, that morality is a matter of right and wrong judgments or opinions about things ('error vero est in iudicio', Dundas 1679: 223) and that moral philosophy is like a medicine of the mind, another Stoic theme quite prominent in seventeenth-century philosophy (Giglioni 2016). He justifies the need for moral philosophy on the empirical evidence that human beings too often make mistakes in telling vice from virtue, and that vices are publicly praised as virtues. These mistakes are due to the corruption of human nature (the 'adverse condition'), so moral philosophy (and Stoic elements in it) is introduced here as a partial remedy to the Fall. Assigning the right name to things and having the right opinion about things are thus essential to morality, which is understood as a rational

[5] 'In moribus saepius errant Homines, vitia amplectuntur pro virtutibus, vitium saepeuscule audit virtus, prodigalitas dicitur Liberalitas, prodigum vulgo honestum, temeritas fortitudo, adulatio amicitia, et ut olim querebatur Cato apud Salustium iamdudum vera rerum nomina omisimus, passionibus autem aestuantibus saepe saepius perrupta sanioris rationis repagula, opus est igitur Morali philosophia, malorum istius modi medela, sicut adversae valitudinis medicina.'

activity directed at controlling the passional side of human nature. Here Dundas introduces a pivotal opposition in the *IPM*: that of reason against hot or boiling passions. 'This life is a war against temptations and passions' (Dundas 1679: 274),[6] and morality is about reason prevailing over them.

The importance of reason in moral life is understood within the limits imposed by the doctrine of the Fall. 'Moral philosophy gives direction to the practical intellect on how it should judge rightly about the things to do, and that it should, in conformity, announce what is to be done and should tame, rectify and bring back the passions to moderateness' (Dundas 1679: 2).[7] First, the passions. They are described in both Senecan and Aristotelian terms: they should be 'tamed' but also 'brought back to moderateness' (the Aristotelian *mediocritas*). The passions are an obstacle on the way to the goal of moral philosophy, which is happiness: they are not a help or an signpost of what is most fitting for our human nature. On this intuition about the passions, Dundas sees a coincidence of Calvinism and Stoicism. The moral philosopher should teach how to get out of the quicksand of the passions and how to tame the passions of the beast (Dundas 1679: 3),[8] which alone leads to 'tranquillity of the soul and true happiness' ('animae tranquillitas et vera faelicitas', Dundas 1679: 8). These opening passages raise several questions: which tranquillity and happiness? What is εφ ημιν, as the Stoics say? If human nature is corrupt, as the passions show, what is the power for morality left in reason?

'Ratio est legis anima' ('reason is the soul of the law' Dundas 1679: 7–8): morality is the conformity with the rules of morals ('conformita[s] cum morum regulis', Dundas 1679: 5) as they are set out in natural and divine law, against the recalcitrant passions. The object of moral philosophy is a network of rational relations and implications of principles, judgments and actions. Identified with conscience (Dundas 1679: 197), the practical judgment about the conformity of principles-actions-consequences is the cornerstone of moral philosophy. So, Dundas's understanding of the law as external conformity is quite far from the Stoic 'internal organisation of the mind' (Brooke 2012: 111). Haakonssen has observed that the legalistic,

6 'In hac vita, quae est cum tentationibus, et passionibus belligeratio.' Post-lapsarian life is also called, metaphorically, a 'glen of tears' ('valle lachrimarum', Dundas 1679: 150).
7 'Subiectum inhesionis est Anima intellectiva, directionis dicitur intellectus practicus, et Voluntas cum facultatibus sub dominio utriusque; dirigit enim Moralis Philosophia praeceptis suis intellectum practicum quomodo recte judicet de Agendis, et conformiter Agendum pronunciet passiones domet rectificet et ad mediocritatem reducat.'
8 'Moralis philosophus tanquam peritus palmaris docet quibus sanioribus viis effugiendae sint istius modi syrtes quibus etiam mediis domandae sint Bruti passiones.'

externalist and duty-based understanding of the natural law is characteristic of the 'Reformers' political ideas. Social life and political governance are ... seen as the necessary means of compensating for fallen man's loss of moral self-government. They are [not] part of the fulfilment of human nature' (1998: 1319).

The natural law is accessible to the whole of humankind via the Bible (the Decalogue is part of the natural law, Dundas 1679: 194), and thanks to its self-evidence, which is compelling enough even for post-lapsarian reason. Dundas speaks of the existence of 'the eternal and immutable laws [derived] from the hypothesis of the existence of the rational creature, like to love God, not to offend God and all the other moral precepts of the Decalogue' (Dundas 1679: 194).[9] This renders humankind inexcusable. In the subjective sense, reason is the individual faculty which understands the moral law and deduces from it; in the objective sense, reason is the divine and natural law. With the Stoics, Dundas thought that morality could be drawn from reason, albeit only from divine reason, and identified natural law with right reason. Even post-lapsarian reason participates in an essentially rational moral world, in which the rational moral law is implemented, by seeking conformity with it.

Dundas often makes use of the expression εφ ημιν to refer to the 'dirigibile', that which is in our power, hence the proper domain of moral philosophy. Predictably, he is less optimistic than the Stoics regarding what is in our power: happiness certainly is not, for divine concurrence, which is by definition "not εφ ημιν", is necessary for it. However, he is willing to include in what is in our power the moral action in its entirety, from intention to realisation. Dundas's deontology has some space for consequentialist considerations, mainly against a Stoic view criticised as self-absolutory. Contrary to Seneca and Descartes, the good intention to act according to the laws of morals to the best of the agent's knowledge is not enough for the total morality of an action if the good desired outcome of the action fails to obtain. Good intention alone does not exonerate from practical responsibility, nor does it "reason away" the very human response of repentance and regret, for 'when we do wrong in obeying our reason, the fact of our obedience does not absolve us of the need to repent for having done wrong' (Broadie 2016a: 259).

Reminiscent of Stoicism is also the "moralisation", so to speak, of (moral) philosophy which is not a dry exposition of moral content and arguments. Rather, the philosophers who are not also *moral* do not deserve to be called moral philosophers since 'that knowledge

9 '...leges aeternae et immutabiles ex hypothesi existentiae rationalis creaturae, ut de deo amando, non blasphemando, et ut omnia reliqua moralia decalogi praecepta...'

especially practical [moral philosophy] is in vain if it does not become an action (Dundas 1679: 6),[10] and 'that knowledge which does not lead to action is in vain, so, in reason of its end, moral philosophy is called architectonic' (Dundas 1679: 12).[11] Dundas regards moral philosophy as a practical discipline useful for the judge because it teaches justice and prudence, and for the theologian because it teaches the duties and gratitude towards God Dundas 1679: 8). He endorses Cicero's 'lex gratitudinis' in *De Officiis* as the motive for obeying the natural law (Dundas 1679: 175).[12]

We have seen that (divine) reason is the source of morality, which is accessible to post-lapsarian reason via the natural law: the effort to abide by it is εφ ημιν. But Stoicism's promise is not about trying, but succeeding. Moral philosophy is about acquiring happiness '*as much as it is possible* by following the laws of nature' (Dundas 1679: 7).[13] Only grace can overcome this limitation. Hence, with Aristotle 'formal happiness is the action of the rational soul according to the most perfect virtue in the perfect life' but it is achievable only 'in the afterlife' thanks to divine grace (Dundas 1679: 35). This is not a limit of Stoicism but of moral philosophy or natural reason per se: a 'limit' set by the Fall and a 'limit' intrinsic to what can be achieved by the obedience to the natural law in this life. I will return to happiness and tranquillity in Section V.

III. SAVING SENECA AND STOICISM

Lucius Anneus Seneca is by far the most prominent (Stoic) philosopher in the *IPM*. As we have seen above, the main critique of Seneca is that the injunction to 'make yourself happy' is a prideful overestimation of the real powers of post-lapsarian reason. However, besides the condemnation of Seneca on those doctrines which depend on the Christian revelation unavailable to him, Dundas reads Seneca with an admiration revealed by the long citations from the *Epistulae ad Lucilium*, the *De vita beata* and the *De providentia*, in the editions by Justus Lipsius.

[10] 'Licet ergo Tales versati sint in Theoria morales, stabunt philosophi non merentur denominari, nisi tales sint in praxi; nam frustra est illa cognitio praesertim practica, quae non reducitur in praxin.'
[11] 'Frustra est illa cognitio quae non reducitur in praxin, et sic ratione finis architectonica dicitur moralis philosophia.'
[12] 'In officiis erga deum et hominem, prima et certissima est lex gratitudinis. Ciceroni (Officiorum 3tio).'
[13] 'Doctrina actionum humanarum directiva *quoad fieri poterit* legibus naturae ad felicitatem consequendam.' [my emphasis]

An important point is made in Dundas's defence of Seneca against Descartes. In the letter to Elisabeth of 18 August 1645, Descartes complains that Seneca has not clearly understood what he meant, and that his appeal to *vivere secundum naturam* does not explain anything unless he meant it to be same as to live according to reason. It is an odd remark, arguably motivated by Descartes' own desire to distance himself from Seneca and to *parler en chrétien*, to speak as a Christian. Dundas finds in Seneca an understanding of natural law similar to his own, and quite apart from Descartes's clear and distinct perception as the source of morality:

> However, despite what Descartes says, probably and most conveniently Seneca understands [to live by] 'his nature' in the real sense: that is, in agreement or in conformity with the dictates of practical right reason. It is quite clear that for him man is a rational animal and he teaches explicitly in so many words that to live according to reason is to live happily. ... So that it appears well enough that there is a connection with the things which Seneca assumes, ... and that, according to him, the rational nature is the first rule of morals (Dundas 1679: 132–133).[14]

A different strategy is to highlight the affinity of Seneca and Christianity:

> Seneca too acknowledges creation and providence, especially in his booklet *De providentia* (as confirmed by Lipsius), where he gathers it principally on the grounds of the earth's movement, order and constancy; all things which proclaim a ruler (as Lipsius rightly says) notwithstanding the fact that some external bad things occur to good people, [for they happen] to them only because [God] punishes and coerces the good people only in the like of a parent who loves strongly. So that these adverse things are not bad for the good people, but rather some good means by which to exercise oneself (Dundas 1679: 91).[15]

The metaphor of the loving father drawn from *De providentia* I, 2, 6 is repeated on page 95. The positive references to Lipsius suggest that Dundas sympathised with Lipsius's project to

[14] 'Sed contra probabiliter perconveniens naturae suae, intelligit Seneca sc: reali id est convenienter vel conformiter ad dictata rectae rationis practicae, cum ex eo in terminis homo sit animal rationale, et ex professo in terminis doceat, vivere secundum rationem, sit ex eo vivere beate ... Ita ut satis pateat connexio cum iis quae subiicit Seneca, ... ita ut ex eo natura rationalis, sit prima regula morum.'

[15] 'Creationem et providentiam agnoscit, et asserit Seneca, aureo praesertim libello suo (teste Lipsio) de providentia, ubi asserit illam utramque primo a mundi motu, ordine et constantia; quae omnia rectorem clamant (ut Lipsius recte) nec obstare quod bonis adversa quaedam externa adveniant, quibus instar parentis duntaxat fortiter amantis probos castigat coercet tantum; adeo ut ista adversa non sint bonis mala, sed bona media quibus exercetur.'

show the compatibility of Stoicism (especially Seneca) and Christianity on God, grace and the afterlife. Seneca's great lesson is to 'be at one with God' ('deo assimilari', Dundas 1679: 122), he had an intuition of the incarnation ('miraris hominem ad deum ire, deus ad homines venit', Dundas 1679: 120, from Epistle 53) and in the Epistles 56 and 102 'not only does Seneca argues for the immortality of the soul, but also for the resurrection of the body and for the afterlife' (Dundas 1679: 121).[16] Dundas also suggests that Seneca ultimately thought that human virtue was unstable and dependent on divine grace – a central point in Calvinism: 'there is no sound mind without God, and there is no virtue without his assistance and grace' (Dundas 1679: 120, from Epistle 74).[17]

For Dundas, one of Seneca's greatest merit is to have successfully argued against the materialist and quasi-atheist Epicureans. They are quasi-atheist because they worship a 'deus otiosus' ('an idle god') and (Lipsius's version of) Seneca's "Christian-Stoic" theism is the answer to it: '[a God inclined] towards this world which he created and which he protects with a watchful eye, as Lipsius believes – not an idle god like the Epicurean god' (Dundas 1679: 95).[18] Also, Seneca was right to vindicate Epicurus from the Epicurean herd ('pecorum ... grege', Dundas 1679: 100). Dundas cites favourably Seneca's argument that unlike many Epicureans who flock behind the banner of pleasure in a self-justificatory move, Epicurus instead understood 'pleasure' moderately, and 'the law that Epicurus assigned to pleasure, we [the Stoics] assign to virtue. Namely, to follow nature' ('quam nos virtuti legem dicimus, eam illae voluptati, parere naturae.' Dundas 1679: 113–114. Citation from Seneca, *De Vita Beata* 13).

As the interpretation of Seneca shows, Dundas is eager to highlight the intellectual affinity between Stoicism and Christianity. One of the ways is to argue that the Stoics were not rigid determinists, at least not in the way they were usually understood by seventeenth-century commentators. Stoicism is made compatible with freedom as the condition for Christian moral responsibility. The section of the *IPM* 'Quod sit liberum arbitrium' (227–233) begins with citing *Zeno Stoicus*'s argument that there is a free action, as the peoples of all times have always agreed. Zeno is reported to have sharply rebuked the objection that the Stoic *fatalis necessitas* excuses vice with the following example. When a servant distorts the Stoic *fatum*

16 'Ex epistola 102 non modo animae immortalitatem sed etiam corporis resurrectionem, et vitam futuram astruit'.
17 'Nulla sine Deo mens bona, nec virtus sine illius auxiliis et gratia.'
18 [Deus] 'huic mundo quem fecit, et tuetur intuendo, ut habet Lipsius, non otiosus ut Epicureus Deus.'

to present his theft as determined, hence inevitable, the master while beating him should in like manner argue that the beating is determined by the theft, and ask the servant whether he now believes that the master has the power to stop it (Dundas 1679: 227). Regrettably he does not say more about the Stoic *fatum*, betraying some general lack of interest in Stoic physics or in Stoicism as a system spanning beyond moral philosophy.

A valuable lesson of the Stoics lies also in the awareness of the divine presence in all the aspects of creation, a view that Dundas never ascribes to Aristotle. Diogenes Laertius reports that Zeno thought that the human beings should *conspirare* ('act in unison', 'breathe together') with the supreme ruler of the universe, not just in the physical world but also with our intellectual efforts, because god embraces everything and a human being who is truly affected by God is united with God. As Cicero wrote in the *Tusculanae Disputationes* 5.16, that which affects a person, reveals what the person is like (Dundas 1679: 286).

IV. HORACE

Dundas's humanist and literary education is revealed in the important place given to classical poets in the exposition of philosophical views. The poets are as insightful as the moral philosophers, and the difference is mainly a matter of rhetoric. Particularly prominent is Quintus Horatius Flaccus. Horace's importance for the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century reception of Stoicism is revealed by Shaftesbury's interest in the *Pathologia* to explain 'that Horace, in the last of the three phases of his life, is best interpreted as a Stoic, not as an Epicurean.' (Maurer and Jaffro 2013: 208). As Maurer and Jaffro further observe, Shaftesbury thought that after his republican and 'downright Stoic' first phase, the third one is 'Horace's "returning, recovering state", where he becomes a Stoic again. *Naturam expellas furca*–you may drive out nature with a pitchfork, she will ever hurry back.' (Maurer and Jaffro 2013: 209).

While Shaftesbury pays close attention to Horace's *Epistles*, Dundas's chosen quotes are almost exclusively from the *Odes*. Dundas as well believes that Horace's true self lies in a fundamentally Stoic attitude. In the *IPM*, Horace is especially present in the discussion of the virtues of patience, continence, forbearance and prudence: 'A just and constant man / will not be shaken in his resolution, / neither by the threats of tyrants /nor by the clamours of the many-headed multitude' (Dundas 1679: 291).[19] 'In sadness hope, in gladness fear / 'Gainst

[19] 'Fortem [justum] et tenacem propositi virum / Non civium ardor, prava jubentium / Nec Vultus instantis tyranni / Mente quatit solida [neque Auster]', Horace, *Odes* III, 1, vv.1–4.

coming change will fortify / Your breast...' (Dundas 1679: 292).[20] The 'just and constant man' does not change his well-pondered belief by following the multitude. Reason is what defines human beings and justifies the moral behaviour. According to Descartes and Seneca, virtue as the highest good is the 'constant and firm will to act rightly according to the right practical reason' (Dundas 1679: 270),[21] whence tranquillity can be born (Dundas 1679: 133). Except for these quotations, Dundas never uses the key Stoic concept of *constantia*. It was not hard for a Christian to see a familiar view in the Stoic harmony of individual and universal reason. However, reason is not the entirety of human nature, which also includes emotions and passions. The second passage reveals that Dundas favours those Stoics who thought that some specific emotions or passions are good: not in themselves perhaps, but as a sign of a well-functioning reason. Just before citing Horace's *Ode*, Dundas writes that moral 'fortitude does not exclude fear and dread, but only those of a servile kind, which make a person incapable of performing her duty' (Dundas 1679: 292).[22] Shaftesbury would mention these 'calm emotions, or *constantiae* ... usually associated with states of an immaterial soul' (Maurer and Jaffro 2013: 212). In Diogenes Laertius, these are joy, watchfulness, wishing – those emotions which are associated with the correct assessment of the nature of things, which are in our power, and which do not perturb the mind. Like for *constantia*, Dundas does not seem interested in the important debate around the notions of *pietas*, *misericordia*, *benevolentia* and Stoicism (see for example Maurer 2008 on Hutcheson).

Earlier in the *IPM*, Dundas cites Horace in the discussion of Seneca and Epicurus on happiness: 'Should Nature's pillar'd frame give way, / That wreck would strike one fearless head' (Dundas 1679: 96).[23] A very Stoic-sounding idea, that a crumbling world would leave the Stoic sage unaffected in her virtue, the only true good. However, as we have seen, Dundas rejects this very Stoic ideal as 'excessive', 'beyond its due limits' ('Stoici in hoc sunt nimii', Dundas 1679: 228) as he says about the Stoic happiness in human beings' power. It is quite evident though that Dundas admires, on a par with Horace's poetry, the 'wonderful sins' of

[20] 'Sperat infestis, metuit secundis / Alteram sortem bene preparatum / pectus...', Horace, *Odes* II, 10, vv.13–16. Translation in Conington 1882.
[21] 'Cartesio est firmum et constans propositum agendi, secundum rationem rectam practicam agendi.' Or, 'constans et perpetua voluntas agendi' (270).
[22] 'Fortitudo omnem non excludat timorem vel metum, sed servilem tantum; qui ineptum reddit ad officium obeundum'.
[23] 'Si fractus illabatur orbis, impavidum ferient ruinae'. Horace, *Odes* III, 3, vv.7–8. Translation in Conington 1882.

those without faith, in Augustine's famous expression, including the Stoics.[24] Even so, 'excessive' does not necessarily mean 'wrong'. The use of Horace by Dundas and his admiration for the moral stance of the Stoic sage, regardless of its implausibility, shed light on another attitude that Dundas shared with the Stoics. In the final section I suggest that the unifying factor of Dundas's interest in Stoicism is the belief in its practical reward, not in mere knowledge: the resilience and tranquillity of the mind.

V. DUNDAS, MACKENZIE AND THE *STOIC* CHRISTIAN

An interpretative suggestion can be given by the better-studied example of Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh, a close acquaintance of Dundas's, who declared himself 'by Religion, a Protestant ... and by Humour, a Stoick' (*Religio Stoici*, 1663). There are no references to Mackenzie in the *IPM*, but it is highly unlikely that Dundas was unaware of his works. Mackenzie's understanding and use of Stoicism was essentially political. He voiced the quite widespread concerns in Restoration Scotland and England that confessionalism and factional hostility undermined the stability of the state and civil society (Allan 1999; Jackson 2014). His answer was to argue for ecumenism and the right of the magistrate to prescribe *adiaphora* (Jackson 2014: 78), for the ideal of retirement, at once physical and moral, from the city to the countryside, and for the relevance of the intellectual lesson of classical Stoicism, chiefly a tolerant attitude.[25] The comparison with Mackenzie highlights the place that Stoicism has in Dundas's *IPM* from the perspective of the practical rewards promised by the cultivation of Stoic moral philosophy.

Some biographical similarities between Mackenzie and Dundas are worth mentioning. The Restoration put an end to Dundas's career as a judge, for his refusal to renounce the National Covenant (1638) excluded him from the exercise of any public office. Mackenzie, in his own right, retreated to the countryside south of Edinburgh, where he wrote the *Religio Stoici*. When they met at Dundas's daughter's wedding in 1679, only Mackenzie's situation had improved since the 1660s: reconciled with the Stuarts, Mackenzie had become Lord Advocate. But the similar existential situation of the two men in the 1660s is the likely reason

[24] 'Licet enim opera optima sine fide deo plorenda sint ut Augustinus habet splendida tantum peccata'.
[25] I will discuss Dundas's views on toleration and the political use of Stoicism in another paper provisionally entitled *Natural Law and Conscience in James Dundas's Idea Philosophiae Moralis (1679)*.

of their respective interest in Stoicism, and a decisive influence on the composition of the *Religio Stoici* as well as of the *IPM*.

David Allan has argued that the *Religio Stoici* is on a superficial level 'merely a speculative reconciliation between Christian theology and classical Stoicism', while on a deeper level, it argues that 'toleration ... was what deserved particular emulation among bitterly-divided modern Protestants' who should 'imitate the rational self-control and mutual respect achieved by the ancients' (Allan 1999: 259–260). I suggest that Dundas was interested in the same resources that Mackenzie found in moral Stoicism: in this, his philosophy cannot be separated from his personal situation as a Covenanter in Restoration Scotland. According to Allan (1999: 266), Stoicism was considered as the most effective remedy against the Calvinist emphasis on original sin and the corruption of the mental faculties, which in turn implied a limit on human conduct. Harris has made a similar point that 'in Protestant Europe [the Stoic ideas] provided a means of breaking the hold that Augustinianism, with its emphasis on the Fall, human sinfulness and the inscrutable acts of grace, had had on theology and philosophy since the Reformation.' (Harris 2008: 1–2). The question to address is what kind of remedy is Stoicism for Dundas?

The answer to this question suggests the crucial psychological contribution which Stoicism can give to Christian life. For Dundas, Stoicism is essentially the philosophy of resilience, forbearance and self-control. On the one side, this attitude finds expression in the Senecan and Cartesian view of virtue as the constant and firm will to do what reason dictates. And 'reason' here does not mean the Cartesian individual reason, the reason of the clear and distinct perceptions in the investigation of truth. Dundas has rejected it as too close to an unacceptable interpretation of the Stoic view which turns reason into an idol (Dundas 1679: 125). Rather, Dundas equates 'reason' with 'natural law', and in turn natural law flows from God's perfectly rational nature and will. As Seneca says at the close of part 1 of *De vita beata*, we live in a kingdom and 'to follow God – to obey God, that is liberty' (Dundas 1679: 118).[26] The following passage sounds very Stoic:

> the conformity with the rational nature, right practical reason and the divine will should be the motive in every moral virtue, as it leads to true joy, practical advantage and certainly to happiness. (Dundas 1679: 271).[27]

[26] 'Deum sequere – Deo parere libertas est'.
[27] 'Conformitas cum natura rationali recta ratione practica et voluntate divina sit motivum in omni virtute morali, ut conducens ad veram iucunditatem, et utilitatem, nempe faelicitatem.'

Dundas explains that the Stoic element of this passage lies in the fact that 'correctly the Stoics argue that whatever is truly and ultimately advantageous, the same is also truly and ultimately joyful, and obviously only the moral good [is this way]; so every moral good is truly and ultimately advantageous and joyful, and thus there is nothing truly and ultimately advantageous and joyful which is not morally good' (Dundas 1679: 17).[28] However, the Stoics are right only if the right understanding of *honestum*, hence of moral motivation, is in place. For Dundas it is not Stoic virtue, but the glory of God: 'every human act either is for the glory of God ... and so it is morally good, or it is not, and so it is morally bad' (Dundas 1679: 266).[29] There is no moral indifference because the world is exhaustively divided into morally good and morally bad entities. True happiness is only achievable in this life 'in a preliminary way, and by the help of divine grace' ('inchoative, auxiliante divina gratia', Dundas 1679: 148). Seneca was wrong to believe that 'the happy life is located in the perfect reason' (Dundas 1679: 120, in Epistle 74),[30] but he was right to teach, unlike Aristotle, that true happiness can exist without the external goods ('faelicitas vera consistere possit sine illis, ut optime Seneca', Dundas 1679: 149). The Stoics, even the best among them, were wrong to believe that man is self-sufficient and so that there is no happiness beyond the self (Dundas 1679: 151), because that happiness is God.[31] A parallel can be suggested between the Stoic idea that virtue is the only moral value and Dundas's idea that the glory of god is the only end and essence of the moral life.

Another philosophical trademark of the Stoics is self-control, which Augustine had influentially associated with pride (Brooke 2012: 59). Self-control concerning the passions aims at providing working space for reason, since reason is all too easily misled and tricked by the passions. Dundas approves of Marcus Aurelius's advice that 'the soul should be preserved from the mindless body, so that she is not won over by pleasure or pain, and so patience, which embraces forbearance and continence, is necessary' (Dundas 1679: 282).[32]

28 'Imo recte Stoici quicquid est vere et finaliter utile, idem est vere et finaliter jucundum, quippe solum honestum, et omne honestum est vere et finaliter utile, et jucundum, et sic nihil est vere et finaliter et jucundum quod non est honestum.'
29 'Omnis actus humanus vel est ad gloriam dei ... et sic moraliter bonus, vel non, et sic moraliter malus.'
30 'In ea [ratione] perfecta vitam beatam esse.'
31 'Chariolantur Stoici, et in iss etiam optimi ubi volunt hominem se ipso solo esse contentum et sic faelicitatem obiectivam nulla querendam, praeter seipsum'.
32 'Sic Marc[o] [Aurelio] Anto[nino] lib[ro] 2, sect[ione] 17 primo conservanda est anima ab illecebris corporis [sic], ut nec voluptate nec dolore vincatur, et sic necessaria est patientia tolerantiam et continentiam in se complectens.'

The *Appendix de humilitate Christiana* follows and completes the discussion of the virtues. Christian humility is recommended as a cardinal virtue, as a *beatitudo* in Matthew 5:5, and Jesus Christ has squarely placed humility εφ ημιν with the words ‘‘learn of me’, for something which is rarer even among the most demanding moral philosophers will be emphatically clear: ‘I am meek and humble in the heart’’ (Dundas 1679: 294).[33] The Christian revelation has changed the meaning of *humilitas*: whereas ‘among the Greeks it bespeaks pettiness or a lack of magnanimity’ for a Christian it derives ‘from the principle of pleasing God for his glory, for the good of humankind ... and ultimately for one’s own tranquillity (and the highest gratitude)’ (Dundas 1679: 294).[34] Only Christian humility can lead to the great Stoic ideal of tranquillity: a truly “down to earth” person is like ‘someone lying on the ground who cannot fall any further’ (‘humilis vel humi iacens, non habet unde cadat’, Dundas 1679: 294). Following Paul in *Romans* I, 15:1 ‘We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves’ (*King James Bible* version), a truly humble person breaks the unfulfillable series of material desires (‘progressus desideriorum’, Dundas 1679: 146) by desiring God. A truly humble person is also resilient against hardship, shame and those things which might make the life of the Stoic sage unworthy of living, hence suicide is never permissible (Dundas 1679: 294). Christian humility as the realisation of two Stoic ideals.

On the issue of moral character, happiness and fortitude, Dundas believes that some Stoic doctrines can complement a description (and prescription) of the moral life primarily set out in the Bible. The contribution of Stoicism is not on the speculative level, or in the key Stoic virtue of constancy, or in the taxonomy of the calm and violent emotions, which are notably absent from the *IPM*. It is Calvinism, not Stoicism, which dictates the philosophical agenda, but Stoicism’s practical teaching is a fitting complement to it.[35] Unlike the mainstream Aristotelian positive view of human nature, Stoicism could be made more alert to the Calvinist belief in the corruption of human nature by way of the emphasis on limiting, bridling and moderating the passions. The Stoic and the Calvinist could share the belief that the passions are the source of moral badness and that whatever resource humankind has it lies in following reason, understood as the divine law, the external source of morality. Whereas

[33] ‘‘Discite ex me’ ut videtur emphatice quod rarius ex aliis etiam morosioribus philosophis moralibus, ‘ego sum mitis et humilis cordi’.’ In Matthew 11:29.
[34] ‘Audiat apud Graecos quod timiditas vel defectus magnanimitatis ... ex principio placendi deo ad dei gloriam, humani generis bonum, ... et denique ad propriam animi tranquillitatem (iuxta ac gratitudinem summam).’
[35] Certainly, a positive emotion (which I could not discuss in this paper) is Christian love.

the Stoics would consider reason as a sufficient rule for morals and happiness, the Calvinist could see reason as the means to understand God's law, while God's grace is the ultimate source of happiness. Additionally, the Stoic prominence attributed to universal reason was of great appeal to Christians of all confessions. The strong Stoic emphasis on duty and virtue as obedience to reason could be re-interpreted as virtue as legality and duty to God, quite common among the Protestants. Self-containment, self-reliance and forbearance were all readily found in the Bible as recommended to the good Christian. Pride aside, some of the central intuitions of Stoicism could be helpful to a seventeenth-century Reformed philosopher like Dundas.

VI. CONCLUSION

The *IPM* reveals a two-fold attitude towards Stoicism. On the one side, as demonstrated by Broadie (2016a and 2016b), Dundas raises fundamental objections to Stoic views on prideful reason in the pursuit of happiness and on the moral permissibility of suicide. On the other side, themes of moral Stoicism influence the analysis of happiness, tranquillity, reason and the passions. Dundas's main Stoic source is Seneca. The Stoics are prideful, but Stoic doctrines can be helpful for Christianity if they are shown to be compatible with theism and if the Stoic virtue is understood as obedience and gratitude to God.

In the *IPM*, Stoicism is not a principle of organisation of philosophical and theological content in the way scholasticism is. Neither is it the foundational set of beliefs, which is Calvinism. Dundas's philosophy is not a 'Christian-Stoic' synthesis because he is not willing to modify his Reformed theology and philosophy in light of some Stoic principles. There is no negotiation between Calvinism and Stoicism. However, there is a visible sympathy for the Stoic position insofar as it is useful to Dundas's specific Calvinist view of human nature and morality. Dundas appreciates Stoicism's proximity to Christianity on views like natural theology, the psychology of the passions, natural law as divine reason, strength of character and forbearance. If not for happiness, Stoicism is a resource for the tranquillity of the mind. A further analogy could be in the Stoic virtue as the only true good and in Dundas's glory of God as the only truly good motive for human action. Even when Stoicism is rejected, it is rejected with a qualification: the Stoics are 'excessive', not outright wrong. So, I have argued that Dundas is a 'Stoic Christian' in the sense of 'Stoicism' as forbearance, resilience, strength of character: Stoicism as a moral intuition, rather than as a speculative system.

I have also suggested that the main reason behind Dundas's interest in Stoicism might well be in his biography. The Stoic 'humour', in Mackenzie's expression, might have been

catalysed at the start of the Restoration. Stoicism, a philosophy centred on the pursuit of the tranquillity of the mind, a self-contained happiness and acquiescence with unfortunate and ultimately unpredictable external event, must have looked appealing to Dundas. A victim of the Restoration who saw his public life as a judge and his Presbyterian faith as a Covenanter radically challenged, who was forced by external events into the 'moral ideal of retirement' fancied by his friend George Mackenzie, but also someone who refused to find his place among the ranks of the 'fanatical Covenanters who had already rejected the Restoration settlement of 1660–2' (Allan 1999: 258, 260). Both men found a resource in the practical rewards of Stoicism. The lesson for a Christian which Dundas saw in the moral example of the heathen philosophers was how to be a *Stoic* Christian.

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