

# Seneca - General Background

Post by "Cassius" of July 20, 2024 at 11:42 AM

Seneca was extremely wealthy to have been a promoter of asceticism:

In AD 58 the senator [Publius Suillius Rufus](#) made a series of public attacks on Seneca.<sup>[28]</sup> These attacks, reported by [Tacitus](#) and [Cassius Dio](#),<sup>[29]</sup> included charges that, in a mere four years of service to Nero, Seneca had acquired a vast personal fortune of three hundred million [sestertii](#) by charging high interest on loans throughout Italy and the provinces.<sup>[30]</sup> Suillius' attacks included claims of sexual corruption, with a suggestion that Seneca had slept with Agrippina.<sup>[31]</sup> Tacitus, though, reports that Suillius was highly prejudiced: he had been a favorite of Claudius,<sup>[28]</sup> and had been an embezzler and informant.<sup>[30]</sup> In response, Seneca brought a series of prosecutions for corruption against Suillius: half of his estate was confiscated and he was sent into exile.<sup>[32]</sup> However, the attacks reflect a criticism of Seneca that was made at the time and continued through later ages.<sup>[28]</sup> Seneca was undoubtedly extremely rich: he had properties at [Baiae](#) and [Nomentum](#), an [Alban](#) villa, and Egyptian estates.<sup>[28]</sup> Cassius Dio even reports that the [Boudica](#) uprising in [Britannia](#) was caused by Seneca forcing large loans on the indigenous British aristocracy in the aftermath of Claudius's [conquest of Britain](#), and then calling them in suddenly and aggressively.<sup>[28]</sup> Seneca was sensitive to such accusations: his [De Vita Beata](#) ("On the Happy Life") dates from around this time and includes a defense of wealth along Stoic lines, arguing that properly gaining and spending wealth is appropriate behavior for a philosopher.<sup>[30]</sup>