In the preface to the second, enlarged edition to his main work, *De iure naturae et gentium*, written in 1688, sixteen years after the first edition, Pufendorf presented a catalogue of the desiderata for the study of natural law. Among these desiderata he included the question, as he called it, 'whether anything more finished and sublime than our own moral teachings is to be found in the writings of the Stoics, of Seneca, Epictetus and Marcus Antoninus'. Unfortunately Pufendorf did not have the opportunity nor the time to carry out this project. He died six years later and in these six years he was engaged in his highly absorbing duties as the historian of Brandenburg. We are therefore left to our own wits in our speculations about how he would have answered this question. Here, I will try to convince the reader of my hypothesis, that Pufendorf's answer to that question would had been negative; that is, that according to Pufendorf Stoicism does not provide us with a satisfactory moral philosophy.

To prove my hypothesis I will rely more on the analysis of Pufendorf's criticism of a theory that is very near to Stoic positions, rather than on Pufendorf's explicit statements on the relationship of his moral philosophy to that of the Stoics. In fact, Pufendorf's statements that we find at various places in his polemical works (that is, in the *Eris Scandica*) according to which his principles are very close to those of the Stoics, are vitiated by the apologetical character of the context in which they are set forth (as I indi-
Consequently, we must challenge these statements from the point of view of his actual moral philosophy and see whether they are justified or not, that is whether Pufendorf’s moral philosophy is really indebted to Stoicism or not.

To execute this plan we must first of all answer a quite awkward question: about which kind of Stoicism are we speaking? Or better: which kind of Stoicism had Pufendorf in mind, when he said that his principles were very similar to those of the Stoics? In fact there is no need to explain that the philosophy of Chrysippus can be very different from that of Panaetius, and the latter from that of Seneca. That is to say that ‘Stoicism’ is a vague generalisation under which we can find almost everything and its contrary, approximately as it might be the case for ‘Cartesianism’, for example, in the modern period. It is not here the occasion to examine in detail the question of the sources of Pufendorf’s acquaintance with Stoicism. It is enough to say quite apodictically that – apart from what he could have taken from book VII, the one on Zeno, of the Lives of Diogenes Laertius and from the Moralia by Plutarch – his main source was Roman Stoicism, that is Seneca, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, and of course Cicero. In parentheses, it may be interesting to refer to the very long quotation from Epictetus and his commentator Simplicius made by Grotius in his anthology of Stoic opinions on fate, that was published after his death; this quotation, which dominates over all the others (few as these might be) by the sheer weight of its length, proves that at the times of Grotius and Pufendorf it was absolutely legitimate to present the opinion of Epictetus as typically Stoic, and also that the edition of Epictetus owned by Pufendorf (the one with scholia by Simplicius and the commentarii by Arrianus, edited by the famous German humanist Hieronimus Wolf) was the same edition as used by Grotius.

But let us go back to Pufendorf’s attitude towards Stoicism and start by paying attention to his explicit remarks. One of the most frequent and

