

Séneca contra Iram

ANNA LYDIA MOTTO

He that is slow to anger is better than
the mighty; and he that ruleth his
spirit than he that taketh a city.

PROVERBS 16:32

In Molière's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* (1670), M. Jourdain wishes to quickly learn how to become a gentleman. But his "instructors," the Music Teacher, the Dancing Instructor, and the Fencing Master get into a sordid quarrel amongst themselves about who is the more professional and important. Another professor, The Philosopher, enters and rebukes them for such bickering.

*Hé quoi? Messieurs, faut-il s'emporter de la sorte?
et n'avez vous point lu le docte traité que Sénèque a
composé de la colère? Y a-t-il rien de plus bas et de
plus honteux que cette passion, que fait d'un homme
une bête feroce?*¹

¹ Act II, scene iii, in *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Georges Couton, 2 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), 2.724.